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INDIA UNRECONCILED

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A documented history of Indian political events from the crisis of August 1942 *to February* 1944

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

It would have been in the fitness of things to dedicate this compilation to his Excellency Viscount Wavell. But formal dedication would have entailed prior approval and it would hardly have been possible for the Viceroy to grant the necessary permission, even assuming his willingness to give it, without a minute examination, involving delay, of its contents. It is, however, my profound hope that the book will receive his attention as an effort to place under a single cover the minimum material that may be regarded as essential to the study of the events of the past fifteen months in this country. The angle from which the material is presented is that of the average Indian nationalist. I hope his Excellency will not regard this as a disqualification. But it is open to any student to detach the documents from the frank bias of the compilers and to arrive at his own conclusions. Both sides are presented. The innuendos and aspersions against Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress are there as much as the answers, and the case of the Government of India is fully stated.

It is the view commonly held in this country that Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress have been grievously wronged and misrepresented. Perhaps this is to be partly explained by the war. But that is not the whole of the truth. Personal prejudices, a reluctance to depart from tradition even under pressure and complete disregard for the sentiments and feelings of a people not strong enough to put up successful organized opposition have played a major part. The idealism that has inspired Britain's main war effort has been given no place in India. Nothing has ever caused a greater setback to British prestige in this country than this repudiation in practice of the professed aims of the war. Maybe England has acted in India against her better judgment. But the result has in any case been disastrous. Barring a few individuals whose interest in maintaining internal controversies prevented them from looking beyond their noses, very strong opinions have been expressed by all sections of the people. It would be difficult to find a parallel to such unanimity and strength of view in India. To this the pages of the book bear witness. Nobody can ignore this fact for long. Not even a ruling power conscious of its might.

While I make no apology for presenting this rather bulky volume to the public, it does not profess to be exhaustive and there is much material which it has not been possible to include in the collection. Nor can it lay claim to Congress authority in respect of any opinion expressed. But the reader will hardly wish that the book were heavier. He will judge for himself the value of the book. The loving labour of several members of the staff of the *Hindustan Times* has

gone into it, though the responsibility for its contents rests entirely with me. It will, we hope, be found particularly useful to newspapers and publicmen outside India who are interested in this country and to whom many of the facts and documents of the book may be new. And yet this volume is to be regarded not as a substitute for but a supplement to two earlier publications of the *Hindustan Times*, "Recent Judgments in India" and "Why Cripps Failed." To avoid overlapping and in the interest of economy, relevant material contained in the two publications has not been repeated here.

Acknowledgments are due to Mr Y. S. Pandya, the compiler of "Leaders' Conference," a booklet issued immediately after the all-India Conference held in Delhi during Mahatma Gandhi's Fast in February 1943, the main contents of which are incorporated in this volume.

DEVADAS GANDHI

SECOND EDITION

This second edition has been rushed through the press in the same minimum of time as the first. There is a little addition to the material and some re-arrangement. The Viceroy's recent address to the joint session of the Central Legislature is printed at the end of the volume together with some of the comments it has evoked in India, and there is a selection of foreign Press comments. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's detailed examination of the speech is also included. Mr Syed Abdulla Brelvi's presidential address delivered at the annual gathering of Editors at Madras in December last is reproduced.

The Viceroy's speech is presumably the result of his "study" of the situation. Actually it required no study. He was part of the Government of India in 1942 both when the Cripps Mission came out and when the Government decided to put the leaders in prison. But the ceremony of study, to mark the change of Viceroyalty, had to be gone through. Now the camouflage is dropped, the stalemate is revealed intact and India remains as unreconciled as ever. The only visible gain is that of six months' time to the new Viceroy.

His Excellency, no doubt reflecting the policy of the British Government, practically reiterates the Linlithgow-Maxwell terms of surrender. One point overlooked, I am afraid, is that the leaders have no compelling need to surrender. In fact, surrender has no applicability to the case. I must conclude, therefore, that the terms of surrender cannot have been seriously meant. Moreover, the leaders can have no consciousness of guilt. That is not to say that anyone can take pleasure in the way in which events have shaped themselves in India since the war. But the world knows, from the

correspondence that took place between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow, that the Congress leaders have been nursing a keen sense of grievance. There is thus a double deadlock.

The Congress would like very much to participate in the government of the country. But it must be remembered that having waited, nay worked and suffered, for it for these many decades the leaders are not likely to suddenly lose patience and pay a crippling price. The whole thing must, therefore, turn on whether their co-operation, and, through it the country's wholehearted co-operation, is of any value to the British Government. The Viceroy must know that the almost universal feeling in the country is that it is in his Excellency's Council that the deadlock has its biggest friend. This unreal position does no credit to the Government of India which is supposed to be participating in a global war for freedom and democracy.

To put an end to this and to make a fresh attempt to rally the largest party in the country calls for a degree of initiative and statesmanship not easily found in administrators. But it did require some courage to adopt a decisive change of tone as the present Viceroy did in his speech, almost in defiance of convention, towards the detained leaders. If that also indicates a change of spirit, the world will look for concrete evidence of it in the shape of a logical effort to explore more practical ways of reconciliation.

DEVADAS GANDHI.

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INTRODUCTION

How long is this to continue? This question was put to the British public a few weeks ago by Mr Reginald Sorensen, one of the few Members of Parliament who have shown deep concern at the tragic turn of events in India and protested against Mr Amery's "negations." He pointed out, in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, that ". . . . apart from the subterranean bitterness that accumulates, let us not forget that famine conditions grow more menacing and suffering is acute. Political frustration and physical distress are perilous in association. The urgency of the situation calls for spiritual courage and energetic action alike in the interest of freedom and humanity." In this volume, an attempt is made to bring together, in convenient form, speeches, statements proceedings of Conferences, political correspondence, Press comments and other relevant matter in order to serve as a documented account of the political events of 1942-43. They are intended to show, as succinctly and authoritatively as possible, what political India has been pleading for, what have been the tragic consequences of Britain's failure to respond in the right spirit—the arrests of national leaders, the suppression of political movements and the attacks on civil liberties including the liberty of the Press—and what has been the fate of the repeated attempts made to end this policy of negation and improve the political relations between Britain and India. This book which mainly covers the period subsequent to the ill-fated Cripps Mission, has been designed as a companion volume to the two publications of the *Hindustan Times*—"Why Cripps Failed" by M. Subrahmanyan and "Recent Judgments in India." The former gives a documentary account of the Cripps talks and tries to explain the reasons for their failure. In the latter book judgments of legal and political interest have been brought together to show how, in the name of emergency legislation for the "efficient prosecution of the war," the liberty of the subject has been interfered with in ways unknown to law. As its title itself seeks to impress upon the readers, the present volume is an effort to explain why, in spite of the repeated efforts of Indian leaders to secure reconciliation, the political deadlock has continued, and is still continuing, with all its ruinous consequences.

The book has been divided into six parts for the convenience of the reader. The first part contains Mr Churchill's statements on India—sufficient in themselves to explain why India is unreconciled—important Press reactions and certain other important events like the dismissal of the Sind Premier, the late Mr Allah Bakhsh, the resignation of Bengal's Finance Minister, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the Viceroy's ban on contact with Mahatma Gandhi and certain other related events. In the second section, the full text of the Gandhi-Linlithgow correspondence relating to the Fast, the debates in the Central Legislature, the proceedings of the Leaders' Conference and connected matter have been included. The third gives an account of reconciliation moves after the Fast including the abortive attempt of Mr Phillips to meet Mahatma Gandhi and the latter's letter to Mr Jinnah which was withheld by Government. In part four, comprehensive extracts from the debates in the Central Legislature on the situation in India and the demand for enquiring into allegations of "excess" have been given. The fifth relates to the Chimur incidents of August 1942, and gives an objective account of events presenting both sides and also includes the Presidential address of Mr S. A. Brelvi at the recent annual session of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference at Madras. Part

six reproduces an important letter addressed to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek by Mahatma Gandhi some time before his arrest, an explanation to Americans, Mr Amery's disavowal of allegations of pro-Japanese sympathy against Mahatma Gandhi, and extracts from the present Viceroy's address to a joint session of the Central Legislature in February, 1944 with comments thereon.

For a proper estimate of the events subsequent to the Cripps Mission, it is necessary to have a correct understanding of these negotiations themselves and the reasons responsible for their failure. In the book "Why Cripps Failed" the question has been exhaustively examined, but a brief reference here will not be out of place. At one moment, in the course of the Cripps negotiations, it almost looked as if agreement was possible but suddenly the entire aspect of things changed. A break-down became inevitable. And almost in a hurry, Sir Stafford Cripps closed the talks and returned to England. The full story of the negotiations and their failure has been given by Mr Louis Fischer, the American author and journalist, who had not only closely followed the events but had also the advantage of intimate talks with the principal personalities in those negotiations. Owing to the Government of India's ban on the publication of Mr Louis Fischer's writings without official sanction, we are unable to quote from them in this book, but at this distance of time it is not difficult for the public to understand the real cause for the breakdown.

The Cripps proposals were in two parts—those relating to the post-war future and those concerning the immediate present. Though the Congress had several objections to the proposals as they stood, it was prepared to leave aside the post-war question for the time being. The resolution of the Congress Working Committee on the Cripps proposals stated: "Any proposal concerning the future of India must demand attention and scrutiny, but in today's grave crisis, it is the present that counts, and even proposals for the future are important in so far as they affect the present." What really led to the breakdown was pointedly stated by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad himself in his final letter to Sir Stafford Cripps. The Congress President complained that there had been a progressive deterioration in the British Government's attitude during the negotiations. He said that the whole picture of a National Government functioning as a Cabinet, of the Viceroy in a position analogous to the King in England *vis-a-vis* his Cabinet, of the India Office incorporated with the Dominion Office, which, according to the Maulana, had been sketched before them by Sir Stafford, was "completely shattered" by what Sir Stafford stated at the last interview. Who or what was responsible for this sudden change in Sir Stafford's attitude? More than one explanation can be given, but it serves no purpose to go into that question at this stage. What is of importance is to bring out the actual difference in view-point between the Government and the people. It was not a question of any lack of agreement among Indian political parties, for the Congress had always maintained that if the British Government did not pursue a policy of encouraging disruption, all groups and parties would be able to find a common line of action. The reason for the final break-down was summed up thus by the Congress President:—

> "You had referred both privately and in the course of public statements to a National Government and a 'Cabinet' consisting of 'Ministers.' These words have a certain significance and we had imagined that the new Government would function with full powers as a Cabinet, with the Viceroy acting as constitutional head. But the new picture that you placed before us was really not very different from the old, the difference being one of degree and not of kind. It would just be the Viceroy and his Executive Council with the Viceroy having all his old powers. We did not ask for any legal

changes, but we did ask for definite assurances and conventions which would indicate that the new Government would function as a free Government, the members of which act as members of a Cabinet in a constitutional Government. In regard to the conduct of the war and connected activities the Commander-in-Chief would have freedom, and he would act as War Minister. We were informed that nothing can be said at this stage, even vaguely and generally, about the conventions that should govern the Government and the Viceroy....The picture of the Government, which was so like the old in all essential features, is such that we cannot fit into it."

The Congress President deplored the fact that "the British Government's view seems to be based on an utter lack of confidence in the Indian people and in withholding real power from them." And he ended with the warning: "It would be a tragedy that even when there is this unanimity of opinion in India, the British Government should prevent a free National Government from functioning and from serving the cause of India as well as the larger causes for which millions are suffering and dying today."

Though the Congress pleaded anxiously for a National Government and was prepared to be as accommodating as it could consistently with national interest—in fact Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had categorically stated, "we are not interested in the Congress as such gaining power, but we are interested in the Indian people as a whole having freedom and power"—the British Government were unwilling to contemplate any such proposal during war-time. After the break-down of negotiations Sir Stafford Cripps made two significant statements in Delhi. The first was: "The draft (British Cabinet's Draft Declaration) is, therefore, withdrawn, and we revert to the position as it was before I came out here—though not quite perhaps to that positon." And, later, he added: "The discussions are over, they will slip back into history, and they will leave their impress, a good, clear, healthy impress, which will influence the future. But the present and the future press upon us and must be faced." But though the present and the future pressed, and continued to press, the Government's policy of negation showed no change. The net result of the Cripps failure and the frustration of the hopes which Sir Stafford's mission to this country had aroused, was a feeling of complete disillusionment throughout the country. This expressed itself in the resolution which was passed later in the month at a special meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held at Allahabad. The material portion of the resolution stated:—

"The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the profession of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of non-violent non-co-operation as the British Government has prevented the organization of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would, therefore, expect the people of India to offer complete non-co-operation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our houses and fields we must refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them."

In view of the persistent propaganda carried on for some months past that the Congress was pro-Axis, the resolution—passed at a time when there was talk of the Japanese attempting an invasion—has considerable significance. In the meantime, important developments had been taking place within the Congress itself. In Madras Mr C. Raja-

gopalachari had prior to the Allahabad A.-I.C.C. meeting initiated a resolution recommending that Congressmen should "acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation, should the same be persisted in, when the time came for framing the constitution of India." His idea was that negotiations should immediately be started with the Muslim League "for the purpose of arriving at an agreement and securing the installation of a National Government to meet the present emergency." The resolution urged that "to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a National Government for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is a most unwise policy and that it has become necessary to choose the lesser evil." Mr C. Rajagopalachari was overruled by the A.-I.C.C., but in order to be completely free to propagate his view and secure support for his plan of arrangement with reference to Mr Jinnah, he resigned from the Congress and, in his personal capacity, carried on political talks with Mr Jinnah.

It was at this time that Mahatma Gandhi made also his "Quit India" appeal to the British Government. What did Mahatma Gandhi mean by "Quit India"? What was his object in making this appeal? As there has been a good deal of misunderstanding, chiefly due to malicious propaganda emanating from interested quarters, it is necessary to understand what was exactly in the mind of Mahatma Gandhi. In the course of an interview early in May 1942, he explained his views in the following words:—

> "From the frustration of every effort made to bring about unity by me, among others, has arisen this logical step for me that not until British power is wholly withdrawn from India, can there be any real unity, because all parties will be looking to the foreign power. For the time, it is British, but it may be Chinese, French, nay other powers, it will be the one and the same thing.
>
> "Therefore, I have come to the conclusion that real heart unity, genuine unity, is almost an impossibility unless British power is withdrawn and no other power takes its place, in other words, when India not only feels but is actually independent, without a master in any shape or form."

It was not possible for Mahatma Gandhi to be present at the Allahabad meeting of the A.-I.C.C. The draft resolution which he had sent to the Working Committee was revised and altered in the light of discussions which had gone on for over four days, but even the resolution as finally adopted by the A.-I.C.C. did not prove entirely satisfactory. Two months later, the Working Committee again met in Wardha on July 14 and passed another resolution in order to state the Congress position in the clearest possible terms. It said in the course of that resolution:—

> "In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war, or in any way to encourage aggression in India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the Allied Powers. The Congress is, therefore, agreeable to the stationing of armed forces of the Allies in India should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese aggression and to protect and help China. The proposal of the withdrawal of the British was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India."

After recalling the hope that "real power would be transferred to popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realization of human freedom

throughout the world which is in danger of being crushed," the resolution said:—

"Her hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum consistent with the national demand but to no avail. This position has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill-will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese armies. The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experiences of Malaya, Singapore and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign power. The Congress would change the present ill-will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it, and this is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom."

The resolution concluded with the declaration:—

"Should, however, this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the state of affairs involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and the weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilize all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920 when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of the political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the people of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All-India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose, the A.-I.C.C. will meet on August 7, 1942."

During this period of four months—prior to the fateful 8th of August—the political situation in the country had been rapidly deteriorating. The food situation had also been steadily worsening. The dangers of economic dislocation, interruption of supplies, widespread distress due to the mounting cost of living and other problems facing the public, were far too grave to be ignored. What were the British Government doing during this period to ease political conditions and secure economic stability? In fact, in one of his statements after the August disturbances, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had pointedly drawn attention to this neglect and said: "I have often wondered why between May and August when things reached a crisis, no step was taken by the Government of India or the Secretary of State to deal with that situation." Throughout this period, both in England and in the United States, appeals from various quarters were addressed to the British Government to reopen negotiations for settling the Indian question. There was, for instance, the appeal from twenty-two well-known public men in England, among whom were Mr Vernon Bartlett, Lord Strabolgi, the Dean of Canterbury and Mr H. J. Laski. They urged the British Government through the Viceroy immediately to ask leaders of Indian political thought to discuss with him how best their political and constitutional views could be readjusted in such

a manner as to give them the measure of control they believe essential in the interests of Indian Independence and to make definite proposals for the formation of a National Government.

But what was the response from the British Government? Even as late as July 31, 1942, all that the Secretary of State, Mr Amery, had to say in reply to questions in the Commons was: "The purpose of the British Government with regard to the constitutional future of India was made clear in the Draft Declaration which Sir Stafford Cripps was authorized to offer on behalf of the British Government. It proved impossible to secure the support of the principal elements of India's national life for the specific proposal in the Declaration, and the Draft was accordingly withdrawn. Nevertheless, the British Government stand firmly by the fixed intention of their offer. The present demand of the Congress completely ignores this far-reaching offer and would, if conceded, bring about complete and abrupt dislocation of the vast and complicated machinery of the Government of India—this at a time when in Russia, China, Egypt and other theatres of war, the situation calls for undivided energy, co-operation and concentration of the resources of all Allied Powers." To the definite question from a Member whether it would not be "better for the Government in the present critical situation to seek a further approach in order that negotiations should be resumed," Mr Amery gave the curiously evasive reply: "I think Sir Stafford Cripps has already informed the House of the not inconsiderable amount of discussion which has taken place."

It is against this background—the way in which Sir Stafford Cripps went back on his own scheme of a National Government and abruptly closed the negotiations, and the persistent refusal since then of the British Government to make any further approach for a settlement—that the August resolution of the A.-I.C.C. has to be studied and judged. In order to grasp the full import of the resolution, it is further necessary to study the two speeches of Mahatma Gandhi at the A.-I.C.C. meeting. The main points in the resolution may be gathered from the following passages:—

> "A free India will assure this success (the success of freedom and democracy) by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism, and the taint of that Imperialism will affect the fortunes of the United Nations."
>
> "Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war."
>
> "On the declaration of India's Independence a provisional Government will be formed, and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom."
>
> "Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it."
>
> "The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the people of the United Nations."

"The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle."

"They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement."

No full report of Mahatma Gandhi's speeches at the A.-I.C.C. is available, but the following quotations from published reports may be taken as revealing his mind:

"Be non-violent in action, if not in thought. This is the least I expect from you."

"If there is the slightest communal taint in your mind, keep off the struggle."

"Never believe—as I have never believed—that the British are going to fail. I don't consider them to be a nation of cowards. I know that before they accept defeat, every soul in Britain will be sacrificed."

"We must remove hatred for the British from our hearts. At least in my heart, there is no such hatred. As a matter of fact, I am a greater friend now of the British than I ever was. My friendship demands that I must make them aware of their mistakes."

"Give up the attitude of mind which welcomes Japan."

"I want you to adopt non-violence as a matter of policy. With me it is a creed but so far as you are concerned, I want you to accept it as a policy. As disciplined soldiers, you must accept it *in toto* and stick to it when you join the struggle."

Though the resolution was passed on August 8, 1942, by the A.-I.C.C. it was clearly stated that it was not intended to take effect immediately. Mahatma Gandhi announced publicly his intention to address a letter of appeal to the Viceroy and seek an interview with him. In an interview at Bombay before the passing of the resolution by the A.-I.C.C. Mahatma Gandhi said: "I have definitely contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress resolution and the starting of the struggle. I do not know that what I contemplate doing according to my wont can be in any way described as in the nature of negotiation. But a letter will certainly go to the Viceroy, not as an ultimatum but an earnest pleading for avoiding a conflict. If there is a favourable response then my letter can be the basis for negotiation." In his letter to the Viceroy from detention dated August 14,* Mahatma Gandhi said:

"I have publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know, the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So could I have dealt with every difficulty if you had given me the opportunity. The precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness in which the Congress was moving towards direct action might make world opinion veer round to the Congress, as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the Government's rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the A.-I.C.C. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress

* See page 114.

demand."

In view of the assertion made in the Government's publication, *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, namely: "Only one answer can be given to the question as to who must bear the responsibility for the mass uprising and individual crimes which have disgraced and are still disgracing the fair name of India. That answer is: the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Mr Gandhi," it is necessary to make certain points clear. Firstly, the Congress never contemplated violence in any form. Secondly, though the A.-I.C.C. sanctioned "the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines" no movement was actually started or ordered by the Congress. It was left entirely to Mahatma Gandhi to start it, if and when he considered it necessary. Thirdly, Mahatma Gandhi had announced his intention to write to the Viceroy and make a further appeal to him. But what the Government did was to take the A.-I.C.C. resolution as an unpardonable affront to its authority and bang the door against all further talks with the Congress and clap its leaders in jail. Almost simultaneously with the passage of the A.-I.C.C. resolution came a long Government *communiqué*. The Government's frame of mind may be seen from the following passages from the official *communiqué*:

> "For the demand of the Congress leaders there is no warrant. In the view of the Government of India, that demand is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with a full sense of their responsibility on the part of the leaders of the Congress Party or a full appreciation by them of the realities of the present situation."
>
> "The Congress Party is not India's mouthpiece. Yet in the interests of securing their own dominance and in pursuit of their totalitarian policy, its leaders have consistently impeded the efforts made to bring India to nationhood."

What followed the issue of this official *communiqué*, is now a matter of common knowledge. Early on the 9th morning, Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Congress Working Committee were taken into custody under Defence Rule 26. Wholesale arrests of Congressmen began in every province. Ordinances and new Defence of India Rules were issued imposing official control over the publication of news and comments to such an extent that several newspapers preferred to close down as a protest. No complete figures of arrests and prosecutions are available, but from statements made by the Home Member in the Assembly, the following may be taken as an official estimate for the period up to the end of 1942:—

Persons arrested—60,229.

Persons detained under Defence Rules—18,000.

Persons killed by police or military firing—940.

Persons injured due to police or military firing—1,630.

It was also stated by the Home Member that the military had to be called out in about 60 places, that the police had to resort to firing on about 538 occasions and that planes were used in five places to disperse crowds. This is, in short, the official version, but from the speeches made in the Central Legislature and statements of public men—such as have survived Press censorship—the inference is irresistible that these figures are a gross under-estimate. It cannot, however, be denied that following the passage of the A.-I.C.C. resolution, the Government started a campaign of wholesale arrests of Congressmen with a view to suppressing the Congress organization and at the same time made Press censorship so rigorous that the public had very little information through newspapers about the way in which this policy of total repression was being carried out. Though the Government of India, in their resolution, professed an anxiety that action shall be "preventive of the interruption of the war effort and the other dangers to which they have

referred, rather than punitive," what was done was actually the enforcement of a pre-meditated plan to "outlaw" the Congress altogether and detain—without trial or charge—all its leaders and prominent workers. In his letter to the Viceroy on August 14—within less than a week after his arrest—Mahatma Gandhi asked: "The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause....The Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Was it wise at this time of the day to seek to suppress a popular movement avowedly non-violent?" Yet what was done was a deliberate attempt to suppress the Congress altogether.

There is no need to detail here the new powers assumed by the Government, the measures taken and the restrictions imposed upon the Press and the public in the name of law and order. The truth about these things has not been allowed to be published—even today, much of what is common knowledge cannot be published without official permission. So eminent a jurist as Dr M. R. Jayakar—once a Judge of the Federal Court and later of the Privy Council—said in the course of a public address:—

> ". . . . the Mahatma was clapped in jail and several thousands of our countrymen are now prisoners of the British Government detained without trial. This was done under the Defence of India Act, but that is no justification, for that Act has been put to unjustifiable uses and has been found extremely convenient by the Executive to perpetuate injustices which the ordinary law would not have permitted."

There is no need also to describe here in detail the widespread disturbances which followed the arrests of Congress leaders. In their publication, *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, the Government of India state as follows:—

> "On August 9 there were disturbances in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Poona, but the rest of the country remained quiet. On August 10, disturbances occurred also in Delhi and a few towns in the United Provinces, but still no serious repercussions were reported from elsewhere. It was from August 11 that the situation began to deteriorate rapidly. From then onwards, apart from the *hartals*, protest meetings and similar demonstrations that were to be expected, concerted outbreaks of mob violence, arson, murder and sabotage took place."

Only a full and independent inquiry can bring out the real nature of these disturbances, their causes—whether they were pre-concerted, as alleged by the Government, or merely the result of mob excitement due to the sudden arrest of leaders—the persons responsible and, what is no less important, the truth about the measures taken by the Government to deal with the upheaval. Serious allegations have been made regarding these measures—Chimur, Midnapur, Nandurbar, Poona, Allahabad, to mention only a few. Such methods, as the imposition of collective fines and the enforcement of the principle of collective responsibility on the inhabitants of villages and towns—with communal exemptions—have been the subject of bitter criticism. It was Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who said in a statement: "Collective fines are being realized from Hindus, I do not know on what principles. Talking to an English friend the other day I asked: 'If you distrust Hindus so much that you cannot discriminate between wreckers and friends, why not hand over all political power to Mr Jinnah?'" So far, however, all demands for a judicial inquiry have been ignored by the Government—though a good deal of light on the legality and the propriety of the Government's measures has been thrown by recent judgments of High Courts and other courts.

Certain broad facts, however, emerge in regard to these happen-

ings. Firstly, so early as September 23, 1942,* Mahatma Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy: "The wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control. I feel that the Government, not the Congress, are responsible for the destruction that has taken place. The only right course for the Government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of conciliation. Surely the Government have ample resources to deal with any overt act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness. Since I am permitted to receive newspapers, I feel that I owe it to the Government to give my reaction to the sad happenings in the country.' He has also categorically stated: "In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent." But not only was this letter kept back from the Indian public till the February following, but during the interval, a systematic campaign was carried on against Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress charging them with responsibility for the disturbances, with pro-Axis leanings and the like. This was what Mahatma Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy on February 7, 1943:—

> "You say that there is evidence that I—I leave my friends out for the moment—'expected the policy to lead to violence,' that I was 'prepared to condone it' and that 'the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders.' I have seen no evidence in support of such a serious charge. You admit that part of the evidence has yet to be published. The speech of the Home Member, of which you have favoured me with a copy, may be taken as the opening speech of the prosecution counsel and nothing more. It contains unsupported imputations against Congressmen. Of course he has described the violent outburst in graphic language. But he has not said why it took place when it did. You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence. Surely there is nothing wrong in my asking you to show me the evidence on which you hold them guilty. What you say in your letter carries no conviction. Proof should correspond to the canons of British jurisprudence....You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal? Or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable?"

Another curious fact which has come to light is that even in February 1943, when the Gandhi-Linlithgow correspondence was published, the letter of September 23 in which Mahatma Gandhi had in unmistakable terms reaffirmed his faith in non-violence and repudiated the charges against him, was not given due publicity in England or in the United States. It was a Member of Parliament, Mr Sorensen, who complained in the House that the British and the American peoples should have been told of this letter. A New York message dated as late as June 30, 1943, stated: "The Viceroy-Gandhi correspondence was not released to the Press here either by the British Information Services of New York or by any other agency in Washington. The Government of India's Information Office in Washington issued the India Government's 1,200-word New Delhi release, but that too did not mention the September 23 letter." A London message of the same date stated: "Investigation here reveals that the letter was not released to the English Press when the Viceroy-Gandhi correspondence was published in February last and the general public in England have remained entirely

* See page 117.

in the dark regarding its contents." Mr Sorensen in an interview said: "Until I asked my question in the Commons, and even now, it has not been made quite clear by the Government that Mr Gandhi had condemned acts of violence. I think it quite unfair of the Government of India and of the British Government not to have made this quite clear." The unfairness of it became even more clear when, after withholding the publication of this all-important letter in which Mahatma Gandhi had condemned violence as unequivocally as he could, Mr Amery proceeded to mislead Parliament by saying: "....while referring to the reported deplorable destruction that had taken place, Mr Gandhi claimed that responsibility for it rested with the Government and not with the Congress Party, and did not categorically condemn acts of violence." What a distortion of facts! Mr Amery had chosen to ignore what the Viceroy himself had candidly admitted in one of his letters. "I am very glad," said Lord Linlithgow in his letter dated January 25, 1943,* to Mahatma Gandhi, "to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past."

The importance of this letter of September 23 has often been stressed by prominent public men, particularly by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr C. Rajagopalachari. At a Press conference in New Delhi Sir Tej Bahadur said: "Had that letter been published at that time, the public would have realized that the Mahatma's loyalty to the doctrine of non-violence was as strong as before, and it would have strengthened the hands of men like Mr Rajagopalachari in telling the public that those who were creating the disturbances were doing an injustice to the Mahatma's whole life." In a statement Mr C. Rajagopalachari openly complained that when he saw the Viceroy in November, the Viceroy did not care to mention the September 23 letter though he deplored the absence of any condemnation of violence from Mahatma Gandhi, and he went so far as to state that "if he had told me something about the letter, many innocent people could have been saved from much suffering."

"When I saw Gandhiji during his Fast on February 26 and the following days," proceeded Mr Rajagopalachari, "I had opportunities to discuss these questions of sabotage and violence with him. His disapproval was complete and he said that no one was justified in conducting or encouraging such activities in his name or in the name of the Congress. He shared my grief that his letters to the Viceroy and the Government of India on the subject had not been at once published and were suppressed for such a long time." No explanation has yet been tendered by the officials concerned for this omission.

Why was this important letter kept back from the public? Why were leaders like Mr C. Rajagopalachari—even men like Mr Phillips and the Metropolitan of India—denied permission to see Mahatma Gandhi? And why, at the same time, were official propagandists busily engaged in spreading the libel that Mahatma Gandhi was responsible for the disturbances? The answer is obvious.

If the sequence of events is carefully studied, it will be seen that the Government were not acting without a plan and a purpose. Though after the failure of the Cripps mission India was in a state of high political tension, no attempt of any kind was made for re-opening negotiations. The 'do-nothing' policy of the Government continued even after the July resolution of the Congress Working Committee which was framed as a last-minute appeal to the Government. All through these critical months, the Government's efforts had only one end in view—the building-up of a ruthless repressive machinery for fighting the Congress, and not the removal of political discontent for strength-

* See page 120.

ening national effort to meet the crisis threatening the country. In a statement on July 25, 1942, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru pleaded for a Round Table Conference and said: "For the achievement of internal unity, all parties have got to make their contribution and the Government should not continue to be passive spectators of our internal disharmony but make their active and constructive contribution. Now is the time for the Indian Members of the Executive Council at Delhi to step forward and make their contribution to the solution of the deadlock." A few days later, the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, made an important statement, in which he said: "....When they (the Congress) framed their resolution they had taken the most scrupulous care to see that the change asked for did not weaken the position of the United Nations, and the organized civil administration to be set up would fully co-operate in the efforts of the United Nations to resist aggression. Fundamentally, this whole stand of the Congress was based on a desire to fight for the larger cause of the United Nations and India's defence." To those who talked of Indian disagreement, the Maulana offered the challenge: "I repeat what I had told Sir Stafford Cripps that once the British Government make up their mind to part with power and hand over the Government of this country to the people, we shall produce an agreed solution for setting up a provisional composite Government within twenty-four hours. I am quite confident about it, but if the Government have any illusion about it, let them summon the Muslim League to form a Government. The Congress will not be sorry if the Government summon the Muslim League and give them power. But it must be real independence. The Congress is only concerned about that." It may be mentioned that this point was made clear by Mahatma Gandhi also in his letter to the Viceroy dated January 29, 1943.* He told the Viceroy: "The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress by its August Resolution asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah to form a National Government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected Assembly."

A week before the August resolution, Sir Tej Bahadur came out with a six-point plan for settlement. His concrete suggestions were:—

(1) A declaration that India will have the fullest measure of self-government within a year after the war.

(2) Meanwhile, in all matters of policy the Viceroy should be guided by the collective advice of his Council subject to scrupulous co-ordination between the Government of India and His Majesty's Government in matters affecting the protection of India against the enemy.

(3) The transfer of Home and Finance portfolios to Indian Members.

(4) Coalition Ministries in the provinces.

(5) Abandonment of Civil Disobedience.

(6) A conference to be called by Mahatma Gandhi, Mr Jinnah, Mr Savarkar and the leaders of other parties to discuss (a) a settlement for the period of the war and (b) to set up machinery for the framing of a constitution for the future.

There were also earnest appeals—too numerous to mention—in the columns of the British Press. For instance, the *Daily Herald* wrote on August 1: "....there is still scope for constructive British initiative to get this problem settled. Let us recognize that mistakes were made in the conduct of the Cripps Mission. The most obvious of those mistakes was this: We created the impression that the proposals which

* See page 121.

Sir Stafford Cripps carried were unalterable. The 'take it or leave it' attitude is no foundation even for free bargaining, let alone for democratic discussion. Let us try again—with different proposals. The British Government will lose nothing by doing so, for its hardships in these discussions are well understood by all free nations." The *Sunday Observer*, while critical of the Congress, said that "the bewildering policy of the Congress was no excuse for permitting the deadlock to continue by apathy or vague threats on this side." The *Manchester Guardian* suggested: "If a joint guarantee of America, China and Russia would avail to banish Indian mistrust, we ought to welcome it, indeed to seek it. What happens in India now and hereafter is as properly their concern as it is ours."

What was Whitehall's response to these appeals? Mr Amery's statement in Parliament was short and menacing—it refused to contemplate any suggestion for a further approach to Indian leaders. The only response from the Government was the publication of "certain documents relating to the Congress Working Committee's discussions at Allahabad" seized during a police search. The publication of these private notes of a private meeting was obviously intended to prejudice the public mind against Mahatma Gandhi and give a totally misleading impression to the world that the Mahatma's thought and outlook were all influenced by the belief that Japan and Germany would win the war. Only one sentence need be quoted from Mahatma Gandhi's statement in reply. "I have never, even in the most unguarded moment," said Mahatma Gandhi in July, 1942, "expressed the opinion that Japan and Germany would win the war."

Events subsequent to the August resolution brought out unmistakably the real intention of British policy—the policy of negation and frustration. To keep Congress leaders locked up and allow no outsiders any access to them, to repeat the slogan that unless the Congress and other parties come to agreement among themselves the Government cannot do anything, to do nothing themselves to promote this agreement or even popularize the administration, and to go on indefinitely with the present administration which vests all power and authority in the Viceroy and the Governors—that sums up the Government's policy. The utmost to which the Government were prepared to commit themselves in their statement was: ". . . . as soon as hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself, with full freedom of decision and on a basis embracing all and not only a single party the form of Government which she regards as most suited to her conditions." The Mahatma's reply has exposed the hollowness of this offer. In his letter to the Viceroy, he asked:

> "Has this offer any reality about it? All parties have not agreed now. Will it be any more possible after the war? And if the parties have to act before independence is in their hands? Parties grow up like mushrooms, for without proving their representative character, the Government will welcome them, as they have done in the past, and if they, the parties, oppose the Congress and its activities, though they may do lip homage to independence, frustration is inherent in the Government offer."

It only remains to chronicle here the repeated attempts made in the following months for securing a reversal of the Government's repressive policy. In a statement to the foreign Press late in August, 1942, Mr C. Rajagopalachari gave the warning: "The position in India is dangerous despite anything that may be said to the contrary." Once again, he advanced the suggestion: "A United Nations' guarantee of India's free status, together with a guarantee of a provisional Government, on Britain's own initiative, composed of men whose names are such as must strike the imagination of the people of India, can save

the situation." These appeals, however, were ignored by the British Government—as summarily as previous appeals had been ignored. Within a few days after Mahatma Gandhi's arrest, one of the most important Members of the Viceroy's Council, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar who had joined the Government of India only the previous month, resigned and left Delhi abruptly. The explanation which he gave for his resignation was generally regarded as unconvincing. Both at the time and after, there had been persistent reports that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar felt distressed at the happenings and sought the permission of the Viceroy to meet Mahatma Gandhi at his place of detention and that this permission was refused. If this report is correct, it only shows that even Members of the Governor-General's Council were obstructed in their attempts to bring about reconciliation.

The events that followed may be broadly summed up under four heads: The attempts of various parties and groups like the Hindu Mahasabha, the Sapru Committee and Nationalist Muslims to secure a change in the Government's policy; the attempts of Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee and others to negotiate with Mr Jinnah for an understanding; the all-party gathering which met at the time of Mahatma Gandhi's Fast; the attempts of Mr Phillips, the Metropolitan of India and others to meet Mahatma Gandhi in jail, and the efforts both in England and in America to persuade the British Government to give up repression and adopt a policy of conciliation; and the culminating tragedy of the Linlithgow regime which revealed itself in the Bengal famine resulting in the deaths of several thousands week after week from hunger and starvation.

For an elucidation of the Government's policy in resisting all these attempts and perpetuating the deadlock, one has only to refer to the two statements made by the British Prime Minister, Mr Winston Churchill. On September 10, 1942, he said in the House of Commons: "The Indian Congress Party does not represent all India. It does not represent the majority of the people of India. It does not even represent the Hindu masses. It is a political organization built around a party machine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests. Outside that party and fundamentally opposed to it are 90 million Muslims in British India, who have their rights of self-expression, 50 million Depressed Classes or untouchables, as they are called, because they are supposed to defile their Hindu co-religionists by their presence or by their shadow, and 95 million subjects of the Princes of India with whom we are bound by treaty." This statement professedly made on behalf of the British Cabinet, showed his attitude to the Congress and its demands. Two months later, Mr Winston Churchill made his intentions towards India even more plain by telling Parliament: "We have not entered this war for profit or expansion, but only for honour and to do our duty in defending right. Let me, however, make this clear. We mean to hold our own. I have not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire." It certainly made things clear to India.

Making cheap gibes at his opponents is characteristic of Mr Churchill. His statements have had more than their due share of attention at the hands of the Indian Press and public men. But one effective reply which apparently has not secured wide enough circulation may be cited. Mr Churchill referred patronizingly to "50 million Depressed Classes." It is fashionable to score debating points against the Hindus by referring to certain social customs handed down from the ages. But here is what Mr A. V. Thakkar, a prominent member of the Servants of India Society and General Secretary of the All-India Harijan Sevak Sangh, said in reply to Mr Churchill:—

"I know I am too small a man to criticize the latest bitter speech

of Mr Churchill on the present Indian situation, except on one question of fact which he has grossly exaggerated and that is with regard to the Harijans or scheduled castes, whom he called 'depressed classes or untouchables' and who are said 'to defile their Hindu co-religionists by their presence or by their shadow.' Regarding what he said about the '90 millions of Muslims,' '95 million subjects of the Princes of India' and 'the large elements among Hindus, Sikhs and Christians in British India,' I leave it for politicians to judge. Mr Maxton, a Labour Member, put the question: 'I am sure what Mr Churchill has said is true in fact, but is it good propaganda?' I can say, without any fear of contradiction, that what Mr Churchill said of the Harijans is not a fact, but false propaganda.

"As a matter of fact, a great majority of the Harijans or scheduled castes are not untouchables. Defiling by shadow was confined to a very small section of them in the small area of the Malabar coast, and even this has not existed in recent times. It is now a myth. Even the very small section of Harijans, that is the sweeper or scavenger castes, who form only 5.04 per cent of the total population of Harijans, can be said, only by the widest stretch of imagination, to defile a very orthodox section of their co-religionists, who hardly form 5 per cent of the total Hindu population, by their physical touch and not by their presence. So this defiling by presence or by shadow is past history, and the charge ought not to be levelled against Hindu society of the present day by any fair-minded person.

"Mr Churchill has not at all taken into consideration the great change brought about in the social status of the Harijan community during the last ten years by the reform movement aimed at doing justice to them. Today a large number of them are to be seen in legislative and ministerial bodies, municipal and rural councils, colleges, schools and playgrounds, and even in common messes enjoying equal rights with other sections of the Hindu community. Witness for instance, the marvellous effect of throwing open a large number of important temples in the State of Travancore and Indore and in the British districts of Tamil Nad, which are more conservative areas than other parts of India. But the Hindu community should be grateful to Mr Churchill for calling Harijans the co-religionists of Hindus. For, even that is denied by some malicious propagandists, while abusing the Hindu community.

"It is true that Harijans still suffer from certain social disabilities, to remove which efforts are being made on an extensive scale. But is it fair to say that in the year 1942 '50 millions of Harijans defile their Hindu co-religionists by their presence or by their shadow'? And even though coming from the mouth of the Premier of Great Britain, can it be anything else but false propaganda? The mild Hindus are always attacked by people of other faiths. But this particular defamation from a high personage with very wide and onerous responsibility is nothing less than propaganda of a very bad type and makes a mountain out of a mole-hill."

Early in September 1942, the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha met at Delhi and passed a resolution demanding an immediate declaration of India's independent status and also the opening of immediate negotiations by the British Government with the principal parties in India to solve the present deadlock and form a National Government. A week later, the General Council of the All-India Trade Union Congress passed a resolution on similar lines and appealed to the Trade Union and the Labour movement in Great Britain to urge the British Government to release Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders and concede India's demand for the transfer of power. Several other

important bodies, both political and other, voiced the same demand. In Delhi itself, after a week's talks in the course of which Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee met the Viceroy and later had discussions with Mr Jinnah, the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha issued a joint statement calling upon the British Government to take the initiative and also seeking permission to meet Mahatma Gandhi. The statement said:—

"We can confidently assert as a result of our contacts with different political groups, that the demand for the declaration of India's Independence and for the immediate formation of a Provisional Government is a national demand. Our move has received the support of recognized leaders who are responsible heads of provincial administrations and who are today co-operating with the British Government in working the present Constitution. Both the Premiers of Bengal and Sind have lent their support to our scheme for the solution of the Indian deadlock and the Punjab Premier has expressed his sympathy. The undisputed leaders of the great Sikh community have joined us. Important sections of the great Muslim community have spoken in unmistakable terms through their accredited leaders, the President of the Azad Muslim Conference and the President of the All-India Momin Conference. Seldom in the history of British administration in India has such remarkable unanimity of political opinion been manifested as has been exhibited on this critical occasion. The leader of the Indian Christian community, Sir Maharaj Singh, and other outstanding personalities have given us their good wishes and have promised their wholehearted co-operation. . . . We put the British Government to the test here and now, and call upon them to part with power and not to persist in the authoritarian attitude of forcing down our throats a scheme hatched behind our backs 6,000 miles away without any reference to the people of India."

They told the Viceroy that their efforts had now reached a stage which demanded immediate consultation with Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders in jail. What was the the result of these efforts and appeals made to the Viceroy? Almost immediately came the Viceroy's reply refusing the request of these leaders to meet Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders. It became clear within a few days after the arrest of Congress leaders that the Government's predetermined policy was, firstly, to lock up Congress leaders in jail and refuse any approach to them, official or non-official, on the ground that as they were "rebels," there could be no kind of political association with them, and secondly, to hold no political parleys themselves with other parties or give them any chance to rescue the country from the deadlock—on the convenient ground that without the support of major parties nothing could be done. In a joint statement, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr M. R. Jayakar said:—

"Neither of us belong to the Congress. We both have wide differences with it in regard to many matters, and yet we are bound to say that it comes with ill grace from Mr Churchill, Mr Amery or the officails in India to refer to other parties now, when these have been completely ignored and their position steadily weakened by a persistent refusal to listen to their advice tendered long before the present crisis arose and in good time to rectify matters. . . . . We wonder if it is sufficiently realized that apart from the Congress, all other parties in India are now insisting that India's position as a free country should be declared during the war and that she should have a National Government. . . ."

As Mr Arthur Moore said significantly in a public statement: "What the British public have not been told is that Indian differences are the excuse, but not the cause, of Britain's refusal to transfer power.

Our refusal has hitherto been absolute, and would remain so, even if all Indian differences were composed. That this is so has been told to me in the most authoritative manner, leaving no room for misunderstanding. All can be changed. The Congress has learnt its lesson and is willing to let the Muslims have the guarantees they ask for by letting the Muslim League form the National Government and giving the League its full co-operation. Propaganda concealed this important fact from the British and American public in July and August, but in September the truth is known. I can answer for Mr Gandhi that if Britain will declare her willingness to transfer power now, he will call off non-co-operation."

Not only from independent-minded non-official Europeans like Mr Arthur Moore but even from the leaders of the Anglo-Indian community came the demand for a National Government as the only solution. Mr F. R. Anthony, President-in-Chief of the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association of India, affirmed that though the community would not subscribe to any political stunt or any big demands of any particular party, their desire was to see India ruled by a real National Government. Another Anglo-Indian leader, Mr Prater, President of the Bombay branch, warned the Government: "Suppression is no solution to the problem. It is bringing the Government and the people no nearer. On the contrary, it is creating a volume of hatred and discontent and an underground army of Quislings which would lead to enormous and grave disaster. There is only one solution, and that is the establishment of a Government in the country which will have the support of all the Indian people."

Many other Europeans in India gave vigorous expression to their views. At the Leaders' Conference held in Delhi in February, for instance, Dr John Mackenzie spoke quite candidly and said: "Firstly, we are concerned for the preservation of Mahatma Gandhi's life. This is the first concern, and on this we are all agreed. Secondly, we are concerned for the restoration of goodwill in this country. I speak as completely outside political parties or political programmes. But we are convinced as Christians that goodwill should be restored."

In answer to these insistent demands from many quarters, Indian and European, the only statement which Mr Amery permitted himself to make was: "The British Government remain most anxious to further a settlement of the Indian problem. In the absence, however, of sufficient common measure of agreement among Indians themselves, which is the real obstacle to a settlement, they do not consider that any modification of their proposals would contribute to the desired result." The next few weeks yielded ample evidence of the hypocritical nature of this claim.

In the meantime, an unprecedented thing happened which brought out in a striking manner the real character of British policy. The Premier of Sind, Mr Allah Bakhsh, who the previous week had publicly protested against the Government's repressive policy and given strong expression to his conviction that "only a National Government can fully mobilize this country to its maximum strength against every aggression and further, that once a transfer of power was made, there would be no difficulty in bringing all parties together for forming a National Government," was peremptorily dismissed from his office by the Sind Governor. The extraordinary reason given was that Mr Allah Bakhsh no longer possessed the Governor's confidence and that he could not in consequence continue to hold office. For the first time since the 1935 Act came into force, this new principle was enunciated—that a Minister, though no motion of "no-confidence" had been passed against him in the Legislature, could be dismissed from office by the Governor on the ground that he did not possess his (the Governor's)

confidence. This meant that even though a Minister might command the confidence of the Legislature, he could be dismissed at any time by the Governor. So far as one could see from the Governor's *communiqué* the only offence of Mr Allah Bakhsh was that, as a protest against Mr Churchill's statement, he renounced the honours which he had received from the Government. This was what the *New Statesman and Nation* had to say on the dismissal:—

> "Mr Allah Bakhsh, the Premier of Sind, of course a Muslim, who renounced his titles as Khan Bahadur by way of protest against the tone of Mr Churchill's recent statement on India, has been dismissed from his office. Few Englishmen would retain their posts in this country if approval of that statement was required as a test of loyalty....Far more serious, however, than the local consequences are the general conclusions which will now be drawn about our readiness to tolerate independence of mind among provincial Ministers. The formula used in this case was staggering. Mr Bakhsh was dismissed because he had lost the confidence of the Governor. But what if he retained, as is probable, the confidence of the electors or their representatives? By this unhappy performance we tempt Indians to conclude that Ministers in the provinces must be our puppets. That would, doubtless, be an excessive inference, but we have assuredly lowered the prestige of these Ministers at a time when we ought to have fostered it."

The totalitarian policy of the Government is revealed also in the way in which even Europeans in positions of authority who dared to differ from the Government were treated. Even a person in the position of Mr Arthur Moore became a victim of intolerance. A journalist of renown in India, wielding a powerful pen, Mr Moore is also exceptionally independent-minded. In 1942 he wrote several straightforward articles in the *Statesman*, of which he was the editor, criticizing the policy of Lord Linlithgow and to a lesser extent of Mr Amery. He was, however, no admirer of the attitude of the Congress either, and at one stage incurred unusual hostility from the Indian Press and public by running a semi-humorous feature which he called "Cranks' Corner" in his paper. The underlying idea was probably missed by his critics, but the fact remains that it provoked a storm of protest. The Government on the other hand were never pleased with him and rumour has it that the most powerful influences were used to persuade his employers to remove him from the editorship of the paper. There has never been any satisfactory explanation for the severance of his connection with the *Statesman*.

This is not the only instance of intolerance in high places. There is the story of Mr E. P. Moon, one of the most brilliant I.C.S. officers in the Punjab, who for some time held even the coveted position of the Governor's Secretary. According to a Press report his sudden resignation from the I.C.S. was merely due to a private letter which was intercepted in the course of censorship. The *Statesman* dated July 28, 1943, said:—

> "The loss in war-time of reputedly able officials such as Mr Moon, in the midst of their career when their value is personally greatest, ... calls for remark . . . . Our efforts to ascertain in New Delhi the accuracy of the reports reaching us about the circumstances of Mr Moon's departure have yielded no results. These reports are disquieting. . . . They are to the effect that last year, after the arrest in the Punjab of an Indian lady of distinguished family and attainments, and not of tender years, who had been a close associate of Mr Gandhi, Mr Moon wrote to a high official of the Punjab Government to inquire whether it was true that this

lady, whom he knew, was being dealt with as an inferior class prisoner; that he received a reply confirming this supposition and contending that the origin and world-setting of last August disorders justified sterner treatment of Congress detenus than formerly; that then (very unwisely) he posted this letter, with critical comments thereon to the lady's brother who is himself a retired Government official of eminence; that the letter was intercepted in internal censorship; and that the consequent fuss, and the light it threw on Mr Moon's future prospects in the Service, resulted in his resignation and departure, pensionless, to Britain."

There have also been equally disquieting reports about other high officials whose departure from important positions came as a surprise. A notable instance is Sir Thomas Stewart, the Governor of Bihar. The *Hindu* published on March 24, 1943, the following report from its Delhi correspondent:—

"It appears Sir Thomas Stewart, late Governor of Bihar, addressed an earnest appeal to all District Magistrates in the province last November, stressing the great need for winning the confidence and goodwill of the people in order to secure their hearty co-operation in the war effort. With this end in view, Sir Thomas suggested that District Magistrates should pay serious attention to all complaints of excesses by the police in the restoration of law and order and take care that no bitterness was left behind as a result of allegations that instances of loot, extortion and blackmail had occurred under cover of measures intended to prevent lawlessness and sabotage. The District Magistrates were asked to do everything to make the National War Front a real organization and obtain the active support of local leaders. Such support, observed the Governor, would not be forthcoming in an adequate measure unless the local leaders were first convinced that the Executive was sincere in not tolerating excesses on the part of its subordinate officers. The Governor made it clear that he did not want a general inquiry into such allegations; at the same time he had noticed with regret the reluctance on the part of some officials to take prompt notice of serious complaints. This, he pointed out, was bound to leave behind a sense of unredressed grievance with unfortunate results on the province's war effort. Not content with issuing such a circular over his signature, Sir Thomas took disciplinary action against a number of Police officers who, he was satisfied, had exceeded their authority."

Sir Thomas was officially stated to have resigned on grounds of health.

On behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha, an appeal was sent to President Roosevelt and Marshal Chiang Kai-shek requesting them to intervene and help in the formation of a National Government for India. "The British official attitude is mainly responsible for the Indian deadlock which has been intensified by the refusal of the Viceroy to allow us to see Mahatma Gandhi," said the cable. Appeals also continued to be made to the British Government calling upon them to set up a "genuine Indian Government." A former Member of the Government of India, Sir George Schuster, said in a public statement:—

"Have we gone as far as we could to set up and strengthen a genuine Indian Government? Have we given a right and inspiring leadership in the war?....if war preparation in India had been tackled with the right vision and urgency from 1939, could not Indian divisions have been sent to Burma sufficiently trained and equipped to resist the invader? Indian war production was not tackled with vision and drive from the beginning. Colonel Louis

Johnson, the U.S. Representative, reviewing the position last April said: 'India has done a fairly good job of war production, but it is a peace-time job.' That is not good enough. Let us be frank. It has been a record of failure to give inspiring leadership or rise to the needs of the occasion....The old ritual of stiff-necked officialism is out of date. In the live field of politics, it is Indian Ministers that should hold the platform. Our endeavours must be to strengthen them to do this."

In answer to these appeals, the Duke of Devonshire, the Under-Secretary of State for India, came out with an apologia and said: "We offered India all that we had to offer, but we were not prepared to offer what was not ours. Now it is suggested that we should do something and that, in some way, some further advance should be initiated from here. I believe the next move must come from India. When that fact is realized, the next move may come, but until it is realized, the deadlock will continue." In spite of these discouraging statements, persistent efforts were made in India for resolving the deadlock. Mr C. Rajagopalachari proceeded to Delhi in the second week of November and after certain preliminary talks with Mr Jinnah, interviewed the Viceroy in order to seek permission to meet Mahatma Gandhi. This permission was promptly refused. At a Press conference, Mr Rajagopalachari gave frank expression to his feelings: "This refusal means that a settlement of the political deadlock has been blocked. Even according to the British, no settlement is possible without the Congress or Gandhiji or both being in it, and when the Viceroy refuses permission to me to see Gandhiji, it means all chance of a settlement is shut off." In the course of another statement Mr Rajagopalachari added: "My hope was to make him (Mahatma Gandhi) see clearly what has happened since his retirement into prison and make him agree to what I felt would satisfy Mr Jinnah and thereby render an immediate solution of the political deadlock possible .... It would be the highest injustice to punish India because the British Government feels that the Congress should not have threatened civil disobedience. The country has a right to ask, if no one is to be allowed to see Gandhiji, whether anything else was being done to achieve the same object, or whether it is only a question of mere drift." In order to pursue his efforts, Mr Rajagopalachari offered to go to England, but Mr Amery discountenanced the proposal by stating in Parliament that as "agreement must come about in India between the Indian parties," the Government saw "no advantage" in Mr C. Rajagopalachari visiting England.

Later in the month, still another proposal was made for ending the deadlock, this time by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. He suggested that the Governor-General should place himself at the head of the National Government and call a conference of all parties, including the Congress. Sir Tej made two significant statements in the course of a Press interview. "The first thing to do," he said, "before the Indian problem is sought to be dealt with is to ask the Secretary of State to make his exit. I should shed no tears at all if tomorrow morning I read that the India Office had been abolished. The Secretary of State must go. I have held that view for years past, and that view has been strengthened since the advent of Mr Amery. It is the one paralysing influence on the growth and development of the Indian Constitution." And, secondly, regarding Lord Linlithgow he frankly declared: "Today, I say, after seven years of Lord Linlithgow's administration the country is much more divided than it was when he came here." This was followed by an informal conference of leaders at Allahabad, after which a statement was issued by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other members of the Non-Party Leaders' Conference Committee. It said, among other things:—

'. . . . If the Government are now insistent that the major parties in India should present an agreed demand, how do they reconcile this with their refusal to allow public men of the eminence of Dr S. P. Mookerjee, Working President of the Hindu Mahasabha, and of Mr Rajagopalachari, ex-Premier of Madras, even to interview Mahatma Gandhi in prison? If the intention is to treat the Congress for the period of the war as a body of rebels, then all reference to agreement between the major elements in India's life should be discarded for the moment. Profession and practice should not be so cynically inconsistent.

". . . . while violent crime has to be put down with a firm hand, methods which aim at terrorizing the people or humiliating them should be discouraged and discarded. The imposition of collective fines, irrespective of individual guilt, their summary realization and the fact that they are almost exclusively levied on one community has created a bitter feeling of injustice. There should be a radical alteration of policy in this respect, and in view of the many and persistent complaints regarding the manner in which law and order have been restored, an inquiry should be held into the alleged official excesses.

"The present policy of the Government has created an acute and profound feeling of frustration and resentment in the country. The existing state of things shows not merely lack of statesmanship but also lack of efficiency. Judging by the industrial policy favoured by the Government even during the war and their failure to provide the people with sufficient food at reasonable prices, they have failed in vital matters affecting the nation in this crisis. Even those who are not associated with extreme policies are deeply dissatisfied with the authorities and are beginning to feel that the Government have no settled policy of a progressive character to follow. Britain can gain the friendship of India not by boasting that the number of British troops in this country is greater now than it was ever before in the history of the British connection, but by transferring the largest amount of power to India during the war and thus convincing them that the British authorities genuinely desire to make India free and self-governing."

This statement put the case in a nutshell—it was more or less a direct appeal to the Viceroy who was to make his annual speech at Calcutta a week later. But what Lord Linlithgow had to say in reply showed no desire whatever to end the political impasse. He repeated the same old convenient charge that the "various parties" had not been able to "come together and co-operate in forming the Executive Government of this country." In a non-chalant effort to answer the Liberal leaders in their own language he went one step further at this stage and asserted: "We are familiar with the suggestion that the troubles of India are due to Great Britain's refusal to part with power. I would say exactly the contrary. Those troubles are not due to Great Britain's refusal to part with power. It is because agreement cannot be reached between the conflicting interests in this country as to who is to take over the responsibilities which Great Britain is only too ready to transfer to Indian hands that the deadlock has arisen. It is for no reluctance on our part to transfer them."

The only new and surprising thing in the Viceroy's speech was his reference to the importance of Indian unity. He said in the course of his address: "Geographically India, for practical purposes, is one. I would judge it to be as important as it ever was in the past, nay more important, that we shall seek to conserve that unity in so far as it may be built up consistently with full justice for the rights and the legitimate claims of the minorities, whether these minorities be great or small . . . . A divided people cannot carry the weight that it ought to

carry, or make its way in the world with the confident expectation of success." This declaration, belated though it was, was welcome on merits but considering the setting in which it was made it was generally regarded as little short of mischievous. The theory widely held at the time was that the motive behind this belated lip homage to unity—after every thing possible had been done to shatter unity by demanding agreement between unity and partition—was to please the Hindu Members of the Viceroy's Council who supported the basic anti-Congress policy of the British Government. Why was it that, though he had several opportunities for making this declaration earlier, the Viceroy waited till December 1942, for asserting his new desire for unity? No wonder that the public felt puzzled over the Viceroy's sudden change of front. For an interpretation of the Viceroy's declaration one may refer to Mr C. Rajagopalachari's statement at the time:—

> "The Viceroy's speech produced a feeling in me which may be best described as sad amusement. Lord Linlithgow has chosen this time to give the first place to, and emphasize the correctness of, the *Akhand Hindustan* cry. I had good reason, I may say in fact first-hand evidence, in the middle of November last to think that he agreed with me, and thought I was wise in realizing that we must pass through an Ulster phase in the preliminary stage of free India. When this realization is gaining ground in public opinion, against heavy odds, Lord Linlithgow thrusts emphasis in the opposite direction so that some may shout in joy: 'A Daniel has come to judgment!' . . . Lord Linlithgow's glowing appeal for unity and his reiteration of the Cripps offer of complete freedom remind me of the Greek legend which has given the name to a species of torture. Tantalus was kept up to the chin in a lake of beautiful water, but the water just receded each time he bent to quench his burning thirst. There was some reason to punish Tantalus with this eternal thirst. But what crime has India committed to be thus tortured? India is kept standing chin-deep in the British promises of complete freedom which recedes each time she bends to slake her thirst."

The "first-hand" evidence is evidently a reference to what transpired at his interview with the Viceroy. The position as it emerged towards the end of the year 1942, was summed up thus by the London paper, the *New Statesman and Nation*:—

> "The Indian problem, they say, is a domestic problem, and Indian leaders must find a solution. But when any solution is proposed, they reply that the people supporting it have no following. When Mr Rajagopalachari after spending many hours discussing the Hindu-Muslim problem with Mr Jinnah feels confident that a discussion with Mr Gandhi would help bridge the gap, the Viceroy turns down his proposal for a visit. What is the explanation? If the British Government really desires a settlement, there is no lack of responsible and moderate men like Mr Rajagopalachari, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr Joshi who are ready to work for a settlement and whose desire is to form a National Government to compromise with the British Government in the defence of India."

The New Year opened with a first-class crisis in the relations between the Government and the Press. As a protest against the orders of certain Provincial Governments banning the publication of any news relating to Prof. Bhansali or his fast in connection with the Chimur controversy, the Standing Committee of the Newspaper Editors' Conference decided that all newspapers in India should be asked to suspend publication for a day and, until the Government's restriction was withdrawn, refuse to publish circulars from Government Houses, the New Year Honours List and speeches of members of the

British Government, the Government of India, and Provincial Governments except portions which contained decisions and announcements. The response to this appeal of the Standing Committee was magnificent and effectively demonstrated the solidarity of the Indian Press. A few days later, a settlement was reached between the C.P. Government and Prof. Bhansali, who was at that time on the 63rd day of his fast. As a part of this settlement the C.P. Government gave assurances which included permission for a visit to Chimur by Prof. Bhansali, accompanied by Mr M. S. Aney, the promise of respect for the honour of women and their protection from molestation as the first essential of good discipline among the military and the police and the removal of the ban on the Press relating to the Chimur and Bhansali affairs. With this announcement the retaliatory measures enforced by the Indian Press were also withdrawn. Prof. Bhansali, for his part, dropped his demand for a formal inquiry.

It came as a curious coincidence that just in the midst of the Chimur crisis and the Press boycott of Government—the first of the kind in India—Mr William Phillips arrived in New Delhi as the Personal Representative of President Roosevelt. In view of the active, though unsuccessful, part played by his predecessor Col. Louis Johnson, in the Cripps negotiations, the arrival of Mr Phillips aroused country-wide interest. On the very day of his arrival in New Delhi, he met the Press and revealed something of his mission. "My duty," he said, "will be to know India as well as I can and report to the President." He hoped to meet the leaders of all political parties, but when he was pointedly asked whether he would meet Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders in detention or try to find a formula to settle the Indian question, he merely answered: "I shall reserve that question for another day." Mr Phillips spent altogether four months in India. He travelled widely, had long discussions with Indian leaders and certainly strove hard to understand every point of view. Just before he left India, he did make an effort to meet Mahatma Gandhi, but the Viceroy was as peremptory in refusing him permission as he was with the Metropolitan of India and Indian leaders. "I should like to have met and talked with Mahatma Gandhi," said Mr Phillips at a farewell meeting with the Press. "I requested the appropriate authorities for permission to do so and was informed that they were unable to grant the necessary facilities." Why was permission refused to so distinguished a person as President Roosevelt's Representative? Could Mr Phillips have made this request without previously consulting Washington? And what was the object of Mr Phillips himself in seeking this interview? All these questions are still shrouded in mystery. An inspired message from Washington, professing to give the British official view, sought to make out that had the British allowed such an interview, it might have aroused unjustified hopes in Indian circles of U.S. intervention in the Indian controversy. "Since there is not the slightest indication," said the message, "that the United States intends any activity in the Indian problem beyond mere gathering of information, it is assumed the British thought it best not to permit any misapprehension among Indians." On the other hand the same source tried to make out that Mr Phillips himself applied for facilities to see Mahatma Gandhi merely to impress Indian opinion without expecting the Government to take him seriously.

In India, at any rate, there has been more than one explanation given for the Government of India's action. There have for a considerable time been widespread reports that, as a result of discussions in India, Mr Phillips had prepared a plan for settling the Indian question. According to certain messages from America, though they had no official confirmation, Mr Phillips put this scheme even to Mr Churchill, but found him obdurate. If Mr Phillips had been allowed to meet

Mahatma Gandhi, it was quite possible that he would have tried to ascertain Mahatma Gandhi's reactions to his proposals. According to one explanation, it does not suit British policy in India that anybody, —Mr Phillips or anybody else—should help in making a settlement with the Congress. The second explanation has reference to the strong criticism which has been appearing in the American Press regarding British policy in India—particularly the criticism of influential and able journalists like Mr Louis Fischer who have been in India and studied political conditions closely. The Viceroy's "no" to Mr Phillips may have been intended as a broad hint to the American public that it is not their business to meddle in Indian affairs. As a letter by Mr John Gunther and others published in the New York *Times* put it, "the refusal has stamped Britain's India policy with a finality it seemed to have lacked before."

One of the many reasons urged in favour of the immediate formation of a National Government was the growing seriousness of the economic situation. Particularly after the failure of the Cripps mission, the economic dangers facing the country began to be felt more and more acutely as months passed. In January 1943, the seriousness of the food situation showed itself even in Delhi, the headquarters of the Government of India. Even the Secretary of State, Mr Amery, was forced to admit in the course of answers in Parliament that "the food situation in India is causing considerable anxiety." But instead of taking warning in time and trying to understand the deeper causes of food shortage in India, he deceived himself and misled the British public by taking an overcomplacent view of the food position. He told Parliament that there was "no cause for alarm." His understanding of Indian conditions was so annoyingly meagre that he stated in Parliament: "At first, the problem was mainly one of distribution, but it must now be accepted that there is a shortage though it affects only urban and a few rural areas where crops have failed." He assured them that the question of shipping wheat to India from overseas was being urgently considered. If only the warning signs visible for many months past had received adequate attention, the calamity which has now overtaken Bengal and other famine areas could have been averted. But neither the Secretary of State nor the Government of India cared to understand the problem. And even the promise to ship wheat was soon forgotten by the authorities owing to their overcomplacent ideas about Indian requirements.

In the meantime ominous clouds had been gathering again in the political sky. For a number of days, there had been rumours that Mahatma Gandhi was in correspondence with the Viceroy and had already intimated to the Government of India that he intended to impose on himself a three-week fast. On February 10, came the official announcement that the Fast had already commenced at noon. Simultaneously with this announcement the Government of India released to the Press the correspondence between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi. The public was stunned by the news. The correspondence revealed the anguish that was passing through Mahatma Gandhi's mind and the reasons which led him to take this grave decision. In one of his later letters to the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi himself described his feelings thus: "I wanted to fast, and should still want to if nothing comes out of our correspondence, and I have to be a helpless victim to what is going on in the country, including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land." He told the Viceroy: "Despite your description of it (the fast) as 'a form of political blackmail,' it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the Highest Tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal, I shall go to the Judgment Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge

between you as representative of an all-powerful Government and me as a humble man who has tried to serve his country and humanity through it." His charges against the Government were mainly two. Firstly, he pointed out that the rejection of the Congress demand and the precipitate repression started by the Government were responsible for all the sad happenings in the country. He accused the Government of having "goaded the people to the point of madness" and "started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests." Secondly, he complained against the false propaganda carried on against him and wrote to the Viceroy: "I seem to be the *fons et origo* of all the evil imputed to the Congress . . . . I find that all the statements made about me in Government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth."

In one of his letters, Lord Linlithgow had himself suggested to Mahatma Gandhi: ". . . . if I have failed to understand your object, you must not hesitate to let me know without delay in what respect I have done so, and tell me what positive suggestion you wish to put to me. You know me well enough after these many years to believe that I shall be only too concerned to read with the same close attention as ever any message which I receive from you, to give it the fullest weight, and to approach it with the deepest anxiety to understand your feeling and your motives." To this Mahatma Gandhi immediately replied: ". . . . (1) If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make amends. (2) If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress, you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members. I do plead with you to make up your mind to end the impasse." The Viceroy, however, was not prepared to accept either of these suggestions. Though he conceded in his letter, "I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past," he insisted on having from Mahatma Gandhi not only an admission of guilt but an undertaking for the future —on the basis of charges which Mahatma Gandhi had already repudiated. The Viceroy said in his letter: "If therefore you are anxious to inform me that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of August 9 and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me appropriate assurances as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further." Mahatma Gandhi again pleaded that it was "for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence, not by mere *ipse dixit*." As the Government would not yield, he wrote to the Viceroy: "If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for Satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. . . . Usually, during my fast, I take water with the addition of salts. But nowadays my system refuses water. This time, therefore, I propose to add juices of citrus fruit to make water drinkable. For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills." So the Fast began on February 10, 1943.

It was a period of terrible anxiety throughout the country during these 21 days. Few indeed dared to hope that Mahatma Gandhi, at the advanced age of 74, would be able to stand the severe strain of a long fast. Though Mahatma Gandhi had himself declared that it was "a fast according to capacity" and that it was his deliberate intention "not to fast unto death but to survive the ordeal," it was universally felt that it was too grave a risk to permit Mahatma Gandhi to continue his fast and endanger his life. As a matter of fact, his condition "changed considerably for the worse" on the ninth day and developed to a crisis three days later, but fortunately he soon rallied. From all over the country and abroad had come hundreds of appeals demanding of the British Government that they should immediately release

Mahatma Gandhi and relieve the people of their grief and anxiety. As no one could say whether Mahatma Gandhi would be able to survive the ordeal, there was only one thought in the mind of everyone at the time—that Mahatma Gandhi's life should somehow be saved. For who could not visualize the terrible consequences to the country if he had been allowed to die in detention as a result of the Fast? The Viceroy was, however, completely unmoved by these appeals. He would not budge from the position which the Government had taken up. Mr Churchill in reply to an urgent appeal from leaders described it as an attempt on the part of Mahatma Gandhi to secure his unconditional release by fasting and said: "The Government of India decided last August that Mr Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress must be detained for reasons which have been fully explained and are well understood. The reasons for that decision have not ceased to exist. . . . There can be no justification for discriminating between Mr Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The responsibility therefore rests entirely with Mr Gandhi himself." That was the British Government's answer to the nation-wide appeal for Mahatma Gandhi's release.

Whatever the Fast may or may not have achieved, it has once more demonstrated the unforgettable fact to the whole world—how little Indian opinion counts with the British Government. It was Mr C. Rajagopalachari who powerfully brought out this issue in the course of a speech of his at the time:—

> "The struggle now is between positive force—I will not call it brute force, it is too stale—and the force of public opinion. Every heart would be gladdened if by any means Mahatmaji could be released now and his fast could terminate. I don't think there can be any difference of opinion on that point, though there may be difference of opinion as to the policies and programmes from time to time pursued by Mahatmaji or other people. In the whole of this country, there is nobody who would stand against his release but everybody would want it and be gladdened by it. What is it that prevents such a thing happening? It is positive force as I have called it. If nothing else can prove and expose the present situation this can, that Mahatmaji is kept in prison though everybody in India wants him to be released. The character of the present Government needs no further evidence to be thoroughly understood."

It was at this time that one of the largest gatherings of leaders and public men—persons of every shade of opinion and representing all communities and interests—was convened in New Delhi with the veteran Liberal leader, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, in the chair to consider the situation and urge the British Government to respect public opinion. On the eve of the Conference, three of the most prominent Members of the Viceroy's Council—the only three in the Council who had some representative capacity as elected members in the Legislatures when they accepted office in the expanded Council—tendered their resignations to the Viceroy and dissociated themselves from the Government's policy. In a joint public statement, they declared: ". . . . certain differences arose on what we regarded as a fundamental issue (the issue of the action to be taken on Mahatma Gandhi's Fast) and we felt we could no longer retain our office." These resignations—it being the first time in the history of the Government of India that as many as three Members resigned jointly as a protest against the Government's policy—created a profound impression on the public mind and greatly strengthened the efforts of those who had convened the All-Party Conference, but as the Viceroy had no intention of revising his policy, he readily accepted these resignations. To those who were shaping the Government's policy, it evidently seemed a good riddance that these dissentient Members, independent and Nationalist-minded, walked

out of the Government.

The contemptuous disregard with which the authorities dismissed the disinterested efforts of the Conference served as an object lesson to those who still pinned their faith to the possibilities of re-opening negotiations with the Amery-Linlithgow Government. At this Conference, which was attended by many of the most eminent men in the country, both Indians and Europeans, a resolution was unanimously adopted "that, in the interest of the future of India and of international goodwill, Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally." In response to the long and detailed resolution sent to the Viceroy on behalf of the Leaders' Conference, all that resulted was a curt ten-line reply received from the Private Secretary, which concluded with the words: "No new factor has emerged since that date (the Government of India's *communiqué* dated February 10) and, as the Government of India's *communiqué* brings out clearly, responsibility in connection with his fast rests solely with Mr Gandhi, with whom, and not with the Government, the decision to bring it to an end must rest." In a cable to the British Prime Minister signed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other leaders, they stated: "The charges brought by the Government against the Mahatma do not rest upon an examination by any impartial tribunal or independent body of men. We firmly believe that much of the trouble which has arisen was preventible by timely action on the part of Government last summer and that the Mahatma should have been allowed to see the Viceroy to find a solution as he desired. . . . We are convinced that wise and liberal statesmanship will solve the Indo-British problem more speedily and effectively than stern repression." This cable to Mr Churchill shared the same fate as Sir Tej Bahadur's previous letter to the Viceroy.

A somewhat puzzling statement was issued at this time by Mr Phillips to say that "phases of the situation in India requiring discussion are being handled by high officials of the Governments of the United States and Great Britain," but, as subsequent events showed, these discussions came to nothing.

At a Press conference following the Viceroy's rejection of the demand made by the Leaders' Conference to release Gandhiji unconditionally, Sir Tej Bahadur declared that as he did not credit the Government with much wisdom or imagination, he did not anticipate any change in the situation which would lead to Mahatma Gandhi's release. Regarding Government's charges against the Congress, he gave it as his considered opinion: "The conclusion I have formed by reading newspapers and examining such evidence as has been allowed to appear in newspapers is this: That there were certain Congressmen who took part in the disturbances I have no doubt. I am not prepared to draw the inference from this that the Congress as a body either inspired this active rebellion or could be legally responsible for it. These are facts which require to be investigated by an independent tribunal." He went on to say that if the issue were raised before a Court of Law or before an independent tribunal, whether Mahatma Gandhi had repudiated acts of violence or not, the verdict most undoubtedly would be against the Government, "who were fighting shy of placing their case before an independent tribunal."

A month later another attempt was made to persuade the authorities to reconsider their policy. A number of leaders headed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru met in Bombay and decided to approach the Viceroy "to permit a few representatives to meet Gandhiji to authoritatively ascertain his reaction to the recent events and to explore with him avenues for reconciliation." They explained in their statement: "The recent talks which some of us have had with Gandhiji (during the Fast) lead us to believe that a move for reconciliation at the present

juncture will bear fruit. It is our conviction that if Gandhiji is set at liberty, he will do his best to give guidance and assistance in the solution of the internal deadlock and that there need be no fear that there would be any danger to the successful prosecution of the war." This move also failed owing to the Viceroy's obduracy. It was originally intended to lead a deputation to the Viceroy on behalf of the Leaders' Conference, but as the procedure proposed by the Viceroy that the deputation should merely read their memorandum and hear the Viceroy's reply without any personal discussion of the points raised did not commend itself to the leaders, it was resolved to drop the idea of the deputation altogether. The conclusion can hardly be resisted that the Viceroy fought shy of a discussion and was conscious of his own weak case.

In their memorandum, the leaders told the Viceroy:—

> "We feel that though order might have been restored on the surface, every day that passed without a solution of the Indian problem intensifies the hostility between Britain and India and renders any future solution more and more difficult to attain, until, we apprehend, it may become even impossible....We cannot help feeling that refusing to permit us to have any contact with Gandhiji now would be equivalent to a determination on the part of Great Britain that there should be no attempt at a settlement of the problem and no reconciliation between nationalist India and Britain....As the war is getting long-drawn out, measures to solve the economic problem arising out of it as well as plans for increasing production of food and other essential articles and improving transport and distribution as well as measures of control have to be evolved. Such measures can be organized and regulated only by a national administration or a Government that can reasonably claim to approach that character and is in a position to justify policies adopted from time to time, although they may involve considerable hardships on all sections of the people. The situation is growing more and more serious every day, and we feel that a Government commanding the loyal and affectionate co-operation of all the people can be constituted for the period of the war only if we are permitted to talk with Gandhiji, consult him and obtain his support."

Even before the deputation was due to meet the Viceroy, Mr Amery had banged the door against any negotiation by bluntly announcing in Parliament that it was "difficult, indeed dangerous, to consider any concession for Mr Gandhi, in the absence of the most explicit assurances and effective guarantees of a complete change of attitude...." This statement of the Secretary of State was paraphrased by the Viceroy in his long reply to the Leaders' memorandum. It was, as usual, a bundle of mis-statements, wrong assumptions and contradictions. "I have no reason to believe," said the Viceroy, "that Mr Gandhi is any more ready now than he was at an earlier stage to repudiate the policy as the result of which the Congress leaders are at present under detention." Then he went on to say: "With every respect for your good intentions and your anxiety to see a happy solution, I cannot agree to give special facilities such as you ask for contact with Mr Gandhi and the Congress leaders while conditions remain as I have described them." In reply, however, to the demand for a National Government, he insisted "as an essential preliminary" that there should be "agreement between parties, communities and interests." In other words, the Government's position amounted to this—the Government were not prepared to allow any talks with Congress leaders for evolving an all-party agreement, and at the same time, they were not prepared to consider any demand for a National

Government unless there was agreement between all parties. Commenting on the Viceroy's refusal, Mr C. Rajagopalachari said: "I must infer from the reply that the Government do not desire reconciliation, however proper their reasons may be from their point of view. Not only do they not desire reconciliation, but they wish to humiliate the Congress and even all those who love to hear the name of the Congress." He further warned the Government: "It is illogical to speak of discharging the responsibility of defending India against Japan by increasing the gulf between the Government and the people. Increased bitterness and ill-feeling is not the 'price paid' for the discharge of defence responsibility but the direct contradiction of a sound defence policy....His Excellency's refusal to alter his attitude towards the Congress and the policy of seeking to humiliate nationalist India are bound to drive hostility underground and into undesirable channels. But apart from that it is most unfortunate that his Excellency, while admitting the necessity for a National Government, insists on a policy which means in effect that throughout the period of the war with the economic conditions created thereby, there can be no such government in India, and that we must be content with an administration, like the present, with no backing except that of force." Incidentally, reference may be made here to the statement in the Viceroy's reply that at the Leaders' Conference there was "no one in a position to speak for the Indian States." The Rulers of Indian States have always maintained that they do not wish to interfere in the affairs of British India. Still, is it not a fact that at the time of Mahatma Gandhi's fast, more than one important Ruler appealed to the Viceroy to release Mahatma Gandhi?

A new situation arose in April when the Federal Court held that Rule 26 of the Defence of India Act under which Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders were arrested was invalid in law.* As in effect the Federal Court's judgment meant that their arrest and detention were illegal, the Government of India should have immediately ordered their release, but they proceeded to issue a new Ordinance to "legalise" the illegality. It is still open to question whether even this new Ordinance is legal. At the end of May, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr M. R. Jayakar and a number of other leaders referred to this question in a public statement and said:—

> "Instead of availing themselves of the opportunity to restore these men to freedom under the sanction of a decision by the highest judicial authority in India, we regret that the Government of India have tried to legalise their action by a validating Ordinance. No well-wisher of the country can contemplate without grave concern a continuance of the present state of things which forbodes ill for mutual relations between India and Britain. The sense of frustration is now deeper if less vociferous. We sincerely hope that our suggestion that the imprisoned leaders may be given a chance of clearing themselves may be accepted. If Government for any reason are not perpared to set up an impartial tribunal, then justice, no less than expediency, demands that Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues should be set at liberty so that they may apply themselves as free men, as we expect that they will, to a review of the situation and to the solution of the present deadlock in consultation and co-operation with other important parties."

It was clear, however, that the Government were neither prepared to accept the Federal Court's decision and release Congress leaders nor appoint an impartial tribunal to investigate the truth of the Government's charges against them.

* Details in "Recent Judgments in India."

More light on the Government's fixed policy—and more light also on the curious way in which Mr Jinnah's mind works—was furnished when the full story of Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr Jinnah in May 1943 and the Government's refusal to forward it became known. According to the Associated Press of India's report published on the morning after the League session in April—a report said to have been submitted to Mr Jinnah himself for scrutiny—Mr Jinnah had said: "Nobody would welcome it more than myself if Mr Gandhi were now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League. Let me tell you that it will be the greatest day both for Hindus and Muslims. If that is Mr Gandhi's desire, what is there to prevent him from doing so? What is the use of going to the Viceroy? Strong as this Government may be in this country, I cannot believe that they would have the daring to stop such a letter if it were sent to me. It would be a very serious thing indeed if such a letter were stopped....Mr Gandhi gets all the information and knows what is going on. If there is any change of heart in his party, he has only to drop a few lines to me. Then the Muslim League will not fail, whatever may have been our controversies before." Ten days later, the Muslim League organ came out with a revised and corrected version which read: "Nobody would welcome it more than myself if Mr Gandhi is even now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan....If he has made up his mind, what is there to prevent Mr Gandhi from writing direct to me?"* When actually Mahatma Gandhi addressed a letter to Mr Jinnah—we do not know whether it was of his independent volition or with the knowledge that Mr Jinnah had asked for a letter—expressing a desire to meet Mr Jinnah, the Government took no notice of Mr Jinnah's threat—that it would be "a very serious thing"—and withheld the letter. Mr Jinnah found himself in a quandary, for it certainly did not suit him to come into conflict with the Government—particularly at a time when the Government were using all their good offices to instal Muslim League Ministries in the provinces. Forgetting all that he had said at the League session, Mr Jinnah suddenly turned against Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress and the "Congress Press" and accused them of trying to embroil him in a dispute with the British Government. He went further and accused Mahatma Gandhi of trying to contrive his release from jail by writing the letter. There is the story of a prominent Muslim Minister who, immediately after the Government's announcement refusing to forward Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr Jinnah, prepared a long statement of protest—in his indignation he had suggested that all the Muslim League Ministries should be prepared to resign their offices and should send at once their letters of resignation to Mr Jinnah to be used by him if and when he considered necessary. As soon as the news of Mr Jinnah's *volte-face* reached him, he hastened to withdraw his statement. This incident shows the amusing way in which dictatorship works in Muslim League politics.

When Mr Jinnah made the statement in the League session, there were indeed many who, knowing Mr Jinnah's political tactics, were not disposed to take his "offer" seriously. It was obviously intended as a propaganda stunt for the foreign Press. The object was to show to American and British readers how reasonable Mr Jinnah was, how anxious he was for a settlement with Mahatma Gandhi, and how generously he had gone out of his way to appeal to Mahatma Gandhi—and impliedly, to make out that if there had been no settlement, it was because Mahatma Gandhi had been unwilling even to

* When the Government announcement of Gandhiji's letter to Mr Jinnah was made, the "Associated Press of India" circulated along with the announcement the revised version of Mr Jinnah's utterance, reproduced on page 237. The earlier version appeared in the Press immediately the speech was made.

write to Mr Jinnah. And as the language of threat came to him naturally, he added his "warning" to the Government. It probably came as a shock to Mr Jinnah that Mahatma Gandhi had addressed a letter to him. His subsequent statement betrayed his feelings, for nothing has exposed Mr Jinnah's discomfiture more effectively than this statement of his—abusing Mahatma Gandhi, attributing unworthy motives to him, trying to "explain" away his own words, and, of course, attacking the Press. But, significantly enough, he had not a word to say to the Government for stopping the letter. Mr Jinnah has never been known for consistency or a sense of fairness to leaders of other parties, but this statement beat all his previous records. And, what is more, it mystified his own followers.

Then, again, there is this question—what happened between then and the last session of the Muslim League that Mr Jinnah should turn with this fury against Mahatma Gandhi? Put in plain words, what Mr Jinnah had said was: "I am anxious to come to a settlement. If you are also willing, write to me." And when Mahatma Gandhi wrote and said that he wished to meet him, Mr Jinnah abruptly turned against him and said that it was all "a move on his part to embroil the Muslim League to come into clash with the British Government solely for the purpose of helping his release." He did not say how the question of "release" came in. Though the Government of India had not published the letter, Mr Jinnah put his own interpretation upon it and refused to see anything but base motives in it. If Mahatma Gandhi had not written, Mr Jinnah would have had a grievance that though he had made a clear and straight appeal to Mahatma Gandhi to write to him, he had not cared to respond. Someone had rather unkindly remarked at the time Mr Jinnah made his speech at the League meeting inviting Mahatma Gandhi to write to him: "If the Government want to expose the Jinnah bluff, they can easily do it now. If Mahatma Gandhi writes any letter the Government should stop it. Mr Jinnah will submit to it like a lamb, for he is in no mood to come to a clash with the Government, though he may go on threatening." And that was exactly what happened. It is not unlikely that the Government of India wished to use the episode to give a broad hint to Mr Jinnah not to be intoxicated by his own pretensions. The Government's policy was made doubly clear in the short *communiqué* issued on the Gandhi letter—the policy associated with Mr Amery and Lord Linlithgow that, so far as they were concerned, there was no question of opening negotiations or permitting talks with Congress leaders. And as there can be no National Government without the major parties, it follows that there is no intention of ending the deadlock. But what Mr Jinnah made equally clear was, firstly, that, so far as he was concerned, he did not want a settlement with the Congress, and, secondly, despite protestations to the contrary what he really wanted was an alliance with the Government for furthering the League's ambitions and destroying the Congress if he could. But to leave no doubt whatever in the matter the Government *communiqué* made it plain that no letter whatsoever from Mahatma Gandhi, *i.e.*, even if it granted all that Mr Jinnah wanted would be delivered. This went counter even to the revised version of Mr Jinnah's League speech. Mr Jinnah's reply to that was to abandon his previous attitude and to join the Government in the demand that Mahatma Gandhi should withdraw the resolution of August 8, 1942.

What independent-minded Muslim leaders thought of Mr Jinnah's *volte-face* could be seen from the statement issued then by Dr Abdul Latif: "Mr Jinnah had a splendid opportunity to play the role of mediator between the Congress and the British Government and bring about a reconciliation and achieve the League's object too with their

mutual goodwill. But obsessed as he is with his innate and insatiate desire to humiliate his political opponents, particularly Mahatma Gandhi, he could not display qualities befitting that role. Mr Jinnah's latest behaviour has placed the League in a decidedly false position. What is Muslim politics worth if it chooses to discard its moral touch? The hour indeed calls for a serious searching of heart on the part of the League's Working Committee and Council and for a reorientation of their policy and method of work. Or else they will be leaving for the younger generation a legacy of troubles by no means easy to surmount."

It is evident that Lord Wavell, the new Viceroy, who has this evil inheritance in his hands—an unsolved political problem, a continuing deadlock, and an embittered people—has no illusions about his task. In one of his London speeches after his appointment as Viceroy he referred to three problems—the need to carry the war with Japan to decisive and speedy victory, the need to deal with day-to-day problems of Government, economic and social, which are so vital to India, and lastly, the political advancement of India. "I fully realize," said Lord Wavell, "the great weight of opinion, both here and in India, in favour of loosening as early as possible the present deadlock and also the duty of doing so." As the events chronicled in the following pages show, all these problems have been complicated by the perverse political policy of the Amery-Linlithgow administration. Instead of reconciling India and winning the people's co-operation, it has led to an ever-widening gulf between the Government and the people. It is due to this policy that the year's efforts have ended in failure and frustration—the failure of Congress efforts to come to a settlement, the tragic blunder of the Government in trying to crush the Congress by arresting Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders, the unavailing persistence with which leaders of the standing of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr C. Rajagopalachari and others have tried to secure a reversal of British policy and the deliberate aloofness of Mr Jinnah who, despite the many attempts of Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee and others to negotiate with him, will neither define his demands clearly nor agree to co-operate with others. All these efforts have failed—thanks to the intransigence of official policy. If the tragic events of the year which, as one can only see clearly, have led to economic collapse and political frustration, have any lesson at all, it is the folly of persisting in a policy which is ruinous both to India and Britain.

CHURCHILL SPEAKS ON INDIA

SPECIAL STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT

The violent disturbances that broke out in India as the direct and immediate consequence of the arrest in the early hours of August 9, 1942, of Congress leaders and the round-up of thousands of other Congressmen and nationalists became the subject of a special statement made to Parliament by the British Prime Minister, Mr Winston Churchill, on September 10, 1942. This was his first comprehensive reference to India since he became Prime Minister. The statement, which was typically his, is remembered in India and will be recalled in future years chiefly for the declaration it contained that "the number of white soldiers now in that country are larger than at any time in the British connection" and the originality of certain other startling assertions. In other respects the statement fully maintained the mailed-fist attitude always associated with Mr Churchill and while paying a tribute to the loyalty of the "brave Indian police" gave no hint of the slightest suggestion of a desire to conciliate the vast masses of India to enlist their moral support in the war. The statement caused dismay among Indians including circles which in the past had provided the staunchest allies of British rule in the country. Some of the strong criticisms which it evoked are also published here.

LONDON, September 10, 1942.

Mr Churchill during his eagerly awaited statement in the House of Commons today said:—

"The course of events in India has been improving and is on the whole reassuring. The broad principles of the Declaration made by the British Government which formed the basis of the mission of the Lord Privy Seal (Sir Stafford Cripps) to India must be taken as representing the settled policy of the British Crown and Parliament. These principles stand in their full scope and integrity. No one can add to them and no one can take anything away.

"The good offices of Sir Stafford Cripps were rejected by the Indian Congress Party. This, however, does not end the matter. The Indian Congress Party does not represent all India. (Cheers.) It does not represent the majority of the people of India. (Cheers.) It does not even represent the Hindu masses. (Cheers.) It is a political organization built around a party machine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests. (Cheers and laughter.) Outside that party and fundamentally opposed to it are 90 million Muslims in British India (here a member interjected 'Nonsense' and there were cries of 'Order') who have their rights of self-expression, 50 million depressed classes or untouchables, as they are called, because they are supposed to defile their Hindu co-religionists by their presence or by their shadow, and 95 million subjects of the Princes of India with whom we are bound by treaty. In all there are 235 millions in these three large groupings alone out of the 390 millions in all India. This takes no account of the large elements among Hindus, Sikhs and Christians in British India who deplore the present policy of the Congress Party.

"It is necessary that these main facts should not be overlooked here or abroad because no appreciation of the Indian problem or of the relations between India and Britain is possible without recognition of these basic data. The Congress Party has now abandoned the policy in many respects of non-violence which Mr Gandhi has so long

inculcated in theory and has come into the open as a revolutionary movement designed to paralyse communications by rail and telegraph and generally to promote disorder, looting of shops and sporadic attacks upon the Indian police accompanied from time to time by revolting atrocities—the whole having intention or at any rate effect of hampering the defence of India against the Japanese invader who stands on the frontiers of Assam and also upon the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal.

"It may well be that these activities by the Congress Party have been aided by Japanese fifth-column work on a widely extended scale and with special direction to strategic points. It is noteworthy, for instance, that communications of the Indian forces defending Bengal on the Assam frontier have been specially attacked. In these circumstances the Viceroy and the Government of India with the unanimous support of the Viceroy's Council, the great majority of which are Indians—patriotic and wise men—have felt it necessary to proclaim and suppress the central and provincial organs of this association which has become committed to hostile and criminal courses. Mr Gandhi and other principal leaders have been interned under conditions of the highest comfort and consideration and will be kept out of harm's way until the troubles subside. It is fortunate indeed that the Congress Party has no influence whatever with the martial races on whom the defence of India, apart from the British forces, largely depends. Many of these races are divided by unbridgeable religious gulfs from the Hindu Congress and would never consent to be ruled by them nor shall they ever be against their will so subjugated." (Prolonged cheers.)

Mr Churchill resumed: "There is no compulsory service in India, but upwards of one million Indians have volunteered to serve the cause of the United Nations in this world struggle. The bravery of Indian troops has been distinguished in many theatres of war and it is satisfactory to note that in these last two months when the Congress has been measuring its strength against the Government of India over 140,000 new volunteers for the army have come forward in loyal allegiance to the King-Emperor, thus surpassing all records in order to defend their native land.

"So far as matters have gone up to the present, they have revealed the impotence of the Congress Party either to subdue or even to sway the Indian army, to draw from their duty the enormous body of Indian officials or, still less, to stir the vast Indian masses. India is a continent almost as large and actually more populous than Europe and divided by racial and, above all, religious differences far deeper than any that have separated the Europeans. The whole administration of the Government of 390 millions who live in India is carried on by Indians, there being under 600 British members of the Indian Civil Service. All public services are working. In five Provinces including two of the greatest and comprising 110 million people, provincial Ministers responsible to their Legislatures stand at their posts. In many places both in town and country the population has rallied to the support of the civil power. The Congress conspiracy against communications is breaking down. Acts of pillage and arson are being repressed and punished with an incredibly small loss of life. Less than 500 persons have been killed over this mighty area of territory and population and it has only been necessary to move a few brigades of British troops here and there in support of the civil power. In most cases rioters have been successfully dealt with by the Indian police. I am sure the House would wish me to pay a tribute to the loyalty and steadfastness of the brave Indian police as well as to the Indian official class generally whose behaviour has been deserving of the highest praise. To sum up: The outstanding fact which has so

far emerged from the violent action of the Congress Party has been its non-representative character and powerlessness to throw into confusion the normal peaceful life of India. It is the intention of Government to give all necessary support to the Viceroy and his Executive in the firm but tempered measures by which they are protecting the life of the Indian communities and leaving the British and Indian armies free to defend the soil of India against the Japanese.

"I may add that large reinforcements have reached India and that the number of white soldiers now in that country, although very small compared with its size and population, are larger than at any time in the British connection. I, therefore, feel entitled to report to the House that the situation in India at this moment gives no occasion for undue despondency or alarm."

DID WAR CABINET APPROVE STATEMENT?

In a barrage of questions which followed Mr Churchill's statement, Mr Shinwell asserted that the background of Mr Churchill's statement was just that which Mr Churchill had adopted when he opposed the Government of India Bill years ago. He further declared that everyone was anxious to secure India's defence against the Japanese, but Mr Churchill's statement would profoundly disappoint and shock millions of people.

Labourite Aneurin Bevan asked if the War Cabinet approved the actual text of the Prime Minister's statement.

Mr Churchill: "It is my business to speak in the name of the War Cabinet and I have every reason to believe I am doing so. I do not mean I submit every word of the statement and go through it line by line, but the general policy is the policy of the British Government." (Cheers.)

Amid many interruptions Mr Bevan demanded information as to whether the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Attlee, and the Leader of the House, Sir Stafford Cripps (who are Labour Members), agreed to the actual form of Mr Churchill's statement.

Mr Churchill: "I have every reason to believe that my colleagues approved the statement as, I think, did the House in general." (Cheers.)

Mr Bevan interjected: "They ought to be ashamed of themselves."

Mr Churchill, amid loud cheers and some interruptions, retorted: "Mr Aneurin Bevan is a merchant of discourtesy. I was about to say that up to a very late hour last night Mr Attlee and I were at work on the actual words of the statement."

Conservative William Astor declared that the statement would be very welcome to the gallant Indian troops in the Middle East whose conduct had filled all with the utmost admiration. Another Conservative asked that the House should be given an opportunity to associate itself with Mr Churchill's tribute to those Indians who were carrying on their work in difficult circumstances.

REACTIONS TO CHURCHILL'S STATEMENT

SIR CHIMANLAL SETALVAD

The Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons is indeed most unfortunate at this juncture. It misses the realities of the Indian situation. The attempt to belittle the position and influence of the Congress and to make out that it represents a minority of the Indian people will raise a smile. However much one may disagree with the principles and methods of the Congress, it is no use shutting one's eyes to the fact that the Congress, and Mr Gandhi in particular, has a great hold on the masses in the country. To say that 95 million subjects of the Princes of India are outside the Congress influence or are opposed to it is not true. There are State Congress organizations in almost all important Indian States. Similarly, there can be no denial of the fact that the League has a great hold on the Muslims of India. If the Prime Minister has taken his brief from the European bureaucracy of India he is being grievously misled. After the Working Committee of the Congress passed the resolution about 'Quit India' and the A.-I.C.C. was being convened, the bureaucracy stuck to the belief that the A.-I.C.C. would reject the Working Committee's resolution, when all persons properly reading the situation had never any doubt that the A.-I.C.C. would confirm that resolution. The Prime Minister has now made a wonderful discovery that the Congress after all has not much influence and represents only a small portion of the Indian population. Strangely enough, when Sir Stafford Cripps was in India, he ran after the Congress all the time and acted as if nobody else mattered except the Congress, not even the Muslim League. If the Congress was so unimportant as the Prime Minister now seeks to make out, why did not Sir Stafford Cripps and the British Government negotiate with those who, in the Prime Minister's opinion, formed the majority of the Indian population?

Many people disapprove of the action of the Congress in starting a mass civil disobedience movement, especially at this critical juncture in the war, but all interests and parties are agreed in the demand that Britain should transfer power to Indian hands with such reservations as may be necessary for the successful prosecution of the war. While it is necessary that lawlessness and violence should be sternly put down in the interests of the country, the Prime Minister should have realized that mere repression will not solve the difficult tangle of the Indian situation. There must be pursued a constructive policy which would satisfy the universal feeling in India about transfer of real power to Indian hands and would bring about appeasement and restore unity among the Indian people. It is also the obvious duty of all political organizations and their leaders to act in a spirit of compromise and bring about harmony in the country. I am afraid the Prime Minister has forgotten that in certain circumstances silence is golden.

MR C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Mr Churchill has tried to cover his Indian policy of drift with invective. The formal adherence to the Cripps offer is substantially falsified by the nature of the pleas and defences put forward against the Indian demand. They serve to confirm the widespread distrust of British promises and intentions. It is unnecessary to show up the many fallacies in detail of the British Premier's propaganda speech. The main and fatal error of the attitude is that it aggravates the already dangerous isolation of the Indian civil population from the defence of India,* an attitude that cannot be justi-

fied even by the imperialists of Britain, unless they are assured that Japan has been finally held up in the Pacific. If there is need to be on the alert in India, what has been done by Mr Churchill is a definite disservice to the cause of Indian defence.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU AND DR JAYAKAR

INDORE, September 16, 1942.

We have read with much concern and with great disappointment Mr Churchill's speech on the Indian situation in the House of Commons. In our considered opinion, a speech like this will in no way help but may worsen the situation. It may have a reassuring effect in America and other countries belonging to the United Nations. Perhaps the hope of such a reaction was the dominating factor in shaping that speech.

We have read also with equal concern Mr Amery's speech.* Both these speeches give rise to certain questions. If, as Mr Amery says, "very soon after Sir Stafford Cripps left India, it became clear that under Mr Gandhi's inspiration the Congress was steadily swinging towards a policy of direct defiance and paralysis of the existing Government of India," the people of this country was entitled to know what steps Mr Amery and the Government of India took to prevent matters reaching a catastrophic climax. If, as Mr Churchill attempts to make out, the Congress does not represent the vast masses of the people, may we ask why the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and other political bodies and general public were ignored during the whole of this critical period?

We wonder what Sir Stafford Cripps will say to Mr Churchill's plea about the unrepresentative character of the Congress. Will he recall what he told both of us during our interview in Delhi, that in his opinion the Congress and the Muslim League alone mattered for the purposes of the settlement and that if he saw no prospect of such a settlement with them then we need expect no change? Has the Government of India or Mr Amery done anything during these years to strengthen the position of these bodies outside the Congress?

It is not enough to say that since the departure of Sir Stafford Cripps the number of Indians in the Viceroy's Council has been increased to 10. The controversy was not with regard to the number of Indians, but with regard to quantum of power to be transferred and the nationalization of the entire Government. At the time of Sir Stafford Cripps's visit, when the Congress in the last resort demanded an assurance that the Viceroy would be guided by the advice of his Indian Council, it was not forthcoming. It was then said that this could not be done during the war under the existing constitution. The increase of the number of Indian Members to 10 is definitely less than if Sir Stafford Cripps's proposal had been accepted. The old position remained unchanged, that the advice of the Indian Ministers would not ordinarily be binding on the Viceroy. If it be true, as Sir Feroze Khan Noon said the other day in his speech at Aligarh‡ that the Viceroy acts as a "constitutional monarch" then we wonder where the difficulty lay in publicly giving the assurance.

Neither of us belongs to the Congress. We both have wide differences with it in regard to many matters and yet we are bound to say that it comes with ill grace from Mr Churchill, Mr Amery or the officials in India to refer to other parties now, when these have been completely ignored and their position steadily weakened by a persistent refusal to listen to their advice tendered long before the present crisis arose and in good time to rectify matters.

Our position since the Non-Party Conferences held in Bombay in March 1942, has been that the three biggest parties in India, the Con-

* See chapter headed "Government's Policy."
‡ See chapter headed "Functions of Viceroy's Council."

gress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, should be invited to form a National Government and that if this invitation is declined then other political parties or public men commanding the confidence and esteem of the people should be approached. We said this at Bombay, Poona and again at Delhi and further suggested that during the period of the war the National Government should be responsible to the Crown.

In this matter, we knew that we were opposing the Congress view. We venture to think that if our advice had been accepted in time matters would not have reached the present crisis. We wonder if it is sufficiently realized that apart from the Congress all other parties in India are now insisting that India's position as a free country should be declared during the war and that she should have a National Government with liberty to organize the country's defence against Japan with due reservations in regard to defence in the interest of the country.

If political feeling in this behalf has rapidly developed, it is because neither the Government of India nor Whitehall had the statesmanlike prevision to foresee its growth. They were flattering themselves with the delusion—and they are doing so even now—that all this mass of agitation was not genuine, but represented only Mr Gandhi's selfish attempt to regain his lost prestige. We knew that this was not so. We knew that the craving for freedom was a genuine growth shared by vast masses of the people and even by those who differed from the Congress.

This is not the first time in Indian history that the political estimate of the Government of India and its advisers has proved to be wrong. In the Provinces, the Governors stand to this day stripped of all non-official advice in the discharge of their duties grown more onerous since the war began and at the Centre there is practically no touch with non-official Indian public opinion. Even the Indian Legislature has not been taken into confidence to the extent necessary under present circumstances.

We in no way minimize the gravity of the present situation or condone the acts of sabotage or violence which have taken place at so many places. But was it not possible to avoid it? Why was Mr Gandhi's offer to meet the Viceroy before starting his agitation treated with scorn? A conference with him along with representatives of other important political bodies was an expedient worthy of the attention of the Viceroy, on whose Government, we are now told, lies the sole responsibility of the present catastrophe.

While we deeply deplore and condemn the present violence, we equally strongly deplore the bankruptcy of policy on the part of the Government and also the nature of the steps which have been taken at some places in putting down disorder and lawlessness. Before the fateful date August 8, we both implored Mr Gandhi to drop his threat of civil disobedience and, while we did so, we advised the Viceroy or the Indian Members of his Government to call a conference. We were anxious that no efforts should be spared to ease the situation and that the Viceroy should place himself at the head of such an effort. Unfortunately we failed in both directions.

We cannot help feeling that, if proper steps had been taken at that critical time to mobilize stable opinion and to assure the people that the Government were alive to their responsibility to satisfy public opinion and were not going to treat either the declaration of August 8, 1940, or the later declaration of Sir Stafford Cripps as the last word in political statesmanship and wisdom, this situation could have been averted.

We keenly realize that it is the A B C of Government that when acts of violence and disorder take place, steps should be taken to

restore order and peace, but we venture to observe that the whole of India cannot be treated as a body of rebels, actual or incipient. The essential problem of statemanship is not to deal only with loyalists, true or fancied, but to win over those who are 'rebels' before a large scale resort is had to force.

British history in Ireland, Canada and other parts is replete with instances in which Government have negotiated with rebels and successfully won them over. One of us can say from personal knowledge that on a similar occasion in the past a noble Viceroy, when a British official made uncomplimentary comments about the late Mr C. R. Das (who was then behind the bars), observed: "Remember his Majesty's prisoners today may be his Majesty's Ministers tomorrow and his Majesty's Ministers today may be his Majesty's prisoners tomorrow."

This being the position we are compelled to say that Mr Churchill's and Mr Amery's speeches will produce the most deleterious effect on the Indian mind.

Having offered our criticism, we shall venture to make a few suggestions as follows:—

(1) Even now an attempt should be made to establish without delay a National Government, with the help of the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and other political parties. These bodies should be left free to treat with Congress leaders behind the bars. If the Congress leaders are unable to negotiate with them in their places of detention, they should be set free to deal with their own countrymen of other parties.

(2) It should be declared by those who negotiate that in any attempt which they will make for the purposes of a settlement and the establishment of a National Government they will do nothing to prejudice, or prejudge the demands of any minority community on which it sets a value, at the time of the framing of the permanent constitution.

(3) Congressmen should be persuaded by their own countrymen who negotiate with them to call off civil disobedience, but if they declined to do so, then those belonging to other parties, who may be called upon to assume responsibility, should be left free to deal with the movement.

(4) Those who are called upon to form a National Government should make it unequivocally clear that they will make their best and genuine effort to resist enemy aggression and will not interfere with or obstruct in any manner but will help actual military operations or the execution of military policy during the period of the war and that all such matters will be left entirely in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief guided by the War Cabinet in London.

(5) We further suggest that the India Office should be forthwith abolished. It is the one part of British machinery which is most distrusted in India and never more so than during the last two years.

(6) Outstanding questions between England and India in regard to other interests should be left for settlement after the war.

(7) The question of the defence of India is not an isolated one. In its proper solution all the United Nations are vitally interested. We therefore suggest that, having regard to the proportions which the present unrest has assumed in India, the United Nations should bestir themselves and make their contribution to a happy appeasement of Indian feeling. We fear that speeches in England and official statements in India are at times too much dominated by a callous spirit of propaganda. This must stop.

HINDU MAHASABHA LEADERS

"This statement of Mr Churchill betrays lamentable lack of statesmanship and will cause deep resentment throughout India," says a

statement issued by Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Dr B. S. Moonje, Raja Maheshwar Dayal, Mr N. C. Chatterji and Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna, members of the Hindu Mahasabha Special Committee.

"The crux of the whole problem is: Is the British Government prepared to part with power? To indulge in the irritating repetition of the Cripps Scheme which was unanimously rejected by all the Indian political parties is merely to provoke India and to deepen the prevailing sense of frustration. The Cripps Scheme gave us practically nothing during the war. We want Mr Churchill to formulate his definite scheme for an interim National Government in India.

"The internal situation in India today is more serious than what is depicted to be. The reign of repression has accentuated bitterness and has deepened anti-British feeling. Let Mr Churchill along with some representatives of America, Russia and China visit India and see things for himself.

"The British Government should approach the Indian problem from a constructive standpoint. The acid test of sincerity of the Allied cause lies in the manner in which the Indian problem is settled."

MR ALLAH BAKHSH

(then Premier of Sind)

NEW DELHI, September 17, 1942.

Mr Churchill's statement in the House of Commons confirms the belief that the British Government had at no time any desire to part with power and to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of India, and that, although they are waging the present war in defence of democracy and freedom, so far as India is concerned they wish to continue their imperialistic domination over this country. This is not only unfortunate but tragic both for India and for the interest of the United Nations. Every Indian is fully convinced that the communal, racial or political differences are the creation of British diplomacy as an excuse for continuing the British hold over India. Mr Churchill's juggling with figures and attempt to minimize the widespread discontent in this country may deceive the British public, but it will surely not deceive those who know the real situation in India.

The urgent need of the hour was and still remains the maximum united effort of the whole country to ward off the dangers of invasion by a ruthless and crafty enemy. The British Government, had it been sincere in its professions of the lofty ideals for which the United Nations are fighting this war, would have exerted itself in uniting the various interests and communities in India for waging this war to a successful conclusion. Instead we see the extraordinary phenomenon of Mr Churchill emphasizing, accentuating and even creating new differences in the body politic of India.

On behalf of the Azad Muslims we emphatically repudiate the vile allegation that 90 million Muslims of India do not desire immediate independence for their country or are in any way less patriotic than any other community in India. Mr Churchill can rest assured that repression is no solution of the present crisis and, although he may find no cause for despondency or alarm, responsible men in India cannot but feel despondent at the obstinacy and lack of statesmanship shown by the British Government towards India at this great juncture in the world's history. Nothing but sympathy, understanding, and a proper psychological approach to the Indian problem and aspirations can save us from the impending catastrophe.

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

NEW DELHI, September 17, 1942.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in a lengthy statement on the political situation, expressed great

concern and anxiety at the situation as it had developed during the last few weeks after the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders.

At this critical juncture when the country might well have expected some constructive and statesmanlike approach from the highest quarters, the statement proceeds, the utterance of the British Prime Minister on September 10, instead of easing the tension, has served only to aggravate the situation. The statement of the Prime Minister is biased, disingenuous and provocative enough to exacerbate public feeling in this country and can only result, as it has done, in increasing the sense of frustration and despair. It has only tended to confirm the widespread and deep-rooted distrust of British promises and intentions with regard to India's freedom and to strengthen the growing conviction that Britain does not desire to give up her imperialistic domination over India.

The Federaton cannot but express its amazement at the colossal ignorance displayed by the Prime Minister, as for instance, in his estimate of the influence and hold of the Indian National Congress over the country—a statement for which the Government of India, as suppliers of information to His Majesty's Government, cannot be absolved of their responsibility.

The Indian public also expects the Indian Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council to discharge the grave responsibility that rests upon them at this juncture and calls upon them to interpret and convey, as faithfully and strongly as possible, the intense feeling of public resentment at the policy pursued by the Government and to persist in their demand that, unless a truly representative National Government is forthwith installed at the Centre in the country and real power is immediately transferred from the British to the Indian hands, there can be no fully effective mobilization of all forces for the defence of India or an adequate solution of the existing turmoil.

While the Federation unreservedly condemns the reign of ruthless repression instituted by Government, it looks with horror upon the recent tendency to acts of violence and sabotage which can ultimately recoil on the country itself and bring in its train a vicious circle of repression and violence. It emphatically submits that no amount of repressive measures can reconcile the people to the present unrepresentative form of Government or rally them for effective resistance against the invaders. It is hardly necessary to stress that the Federation is primarily concerned with the maintenance of the normal economic structure of the country as well as its economic advancement It represents a section of the community with a large stake in the country which has nothing to gain and everything to lose by unrest, disturbance and dislocation.

The Federation states, therefore, with all the greater emphasis and full realization of its responsibilities that the present policy can only lead to further deterioration of the situation and will tend to impede war effort and react prejudicially on civilian morale which are both essential for achieving victory.

THE "CIVIL AND MILITARY GAZETTE"

Typical of the Indian Press comments was that of the British-owned *Civil and Military Gazette*. The paper said: "Every real nationalist—and their ranks include many who harbour the liveliest regard for Britain and who are unequivocally sincere in their support for the cause of the United Nations—can truly say that India asked for bread and has been given a stone."

"It is merely fatuous casuistry," adds the paper, "to seek to lower the prestige of the Congress by subtracting from India's myriads the millions who do not owe allegiance to this organization and displaying

the remaining few as possible Congress adherents. To the 90 million Muslims, the 50 million untouchables and the 95 million State subjects whom he counted as non-Congressmen, Mr Churchill might have added 200 millions who are politically unawakened and thus have had the satisfaction of proving that the Congress has a following of minus 45 millions—and the utter futility of his own outlook on India."

The paper considers that the Prime Minister could have fully satisfied the aspirations of the large bulk of sane nationalist feeling in this country if he had reduced the conditions of transfer of power from Britain to India to the constitution of a representative National Government fitted to be the repository of that power. Had this been done Britain would have demonstrated as baseless the mass of suspicion which exists in this country and, at the same time, would have placed on the shoulders of Indians themselves the burden of resolving the present imbroglio. A valuable opportunity has been wasted.

THE LONDON "TIMES"

LONDON, September 10, 1942.

Discussing Mr Churchill's statement on India in the House of Commons on Thursday, *The Times* in a leader says: "The Congress Party does not represent all thinking Indians or perhaps even a majority of them. But though no settlement could possibly be reached by taking account of Congress opinion alone, it is equally true that no settlement can be made which ignores it." Stating that the demand for independence which is the basis of Congress policy is heard from all other leading Indian political groups, *The Times* declares: "To rally the goodwill of all Indians at a moment when the enemy is at the gate is a task of supreme importance." *The Times* concludes that the most hopeful symptom of the past few weeks has been the series of attempts, patient though hitherto abortive, by Indian party and non-party leaders to find a way out through discussions among themselves.

THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

MANCHESTER, September 11, 1942.

The *Manchester Guardian* states that Mr Churchill contradicted some oversimplified versions of the situation that have found currency in the United States. "Our friends must be told that we did not arrest Indian leaders without grave cause and the revolt of the Congress leaves a vast bulk of the Indian peoples calmly following normal activities. But it would impress them far more if we could tell them also that we are making determined efforts to heal the tragic breach.

"It is not enough to affirm that we have won the fight. The very fact that the fight broke out will everywhere be held against us. While the suppression of disorder is thankfully welcomed, there will be deep disappointment in this country as well as among the United Nations overseas if Mr Churchill's statement is the last word.

"What Indians are almost all asking for now is an Indian Government at the Centre which would be broadly representative and would support the war. Have we anything against that if it can be accomplished?" asks the *Manchester Guardian* in another leader. "Indian leaders who have been talking to each other proceed on the principle that the Indians should help themselves and should deal with one another. Some of them ought to negotiate with the arrested Congress leaders. If as is said the Viceroy has refused his consent he is unwise. Even if he himself refuses why should not other Indians be allowed to discover chances of agreement and take risks and failure to themselves? If unexpectedly some progress to a settlement were made it would be of immense relief to the whole Allied cause. If there were still a deadlock Indians would have done what they could with the Indians and they could go on considering—as they are already considering—whether

they should not try to bring about a National Government without the Congress in it."

THE "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION"

"With the tropical rains coming to an end the Japanese may decide to launch an attack upon India," says the *New Statesman and Nation*. "At such a time the creation of an Indian government to collaborate fully in the defence of their own country would seem to be the first object of policy. When Sir Stafford went to India and even when he left most people in India as well as in Britain believed in the sincerity of Britain's intentions. Now after Mr Churchill's speech Indian nationalists of all kinds will take more persuading of British *bona fides*. Only a prompt change of policy would remove this impression. Mr Amery in an otherwise unhelpful statement referred in high terms to the statesmanlike efforts for peace made by men like Mr Rajagopalachari. Could Mr Amery go a stage farther and ask the views of this able and honest Indian statesman, precisely what steps he would urge in order that he might be able to form a National Government for defence which he has throughout advocated?

"No one who has followed the discussions in India during the last few days can fail to be impressed by the virtual unanimity amongst most of the various Indian groups and individuals, Muslims, Hindus and Christians, that a National Government is now necessary and possible in India provided that Indian independence is conceded. We believe that if there were no doubt about effective authority to be handed over to a National Government it would not be impossible even now under the threat of a Japanese invasion to form in India a government in which not all but most of the leading and most of the representative Hindus and Muslims could co-operate. But it would have to be a Government and not Viceroy's Council."

THE "SPECTATOR"

"It is all but impossible to carry through a fundamental constitutional change now. It is not utterly impossible and the Government has gone too far in insisting that it is. Given goodwill and universal co-operation in India the risk might be taken and a change made even at this grave moment when preparations to meet an invasion are being made throughout the length of India's eastern seaboard.

"A united and resolute India co-operating unreservedly with the British and American forces now engaged in India's defence and with the rest of the United Nations in any way possible, would form a far stronger barrier against a Japanese attack than an India which has only just been saved from the disaster of a civil war by the swift, courageous and effective action of a predominantly Indian executive. If the great Indian parties and communities, Congress and Muslims and the depressed classes in particular, could agree on the creation of an executive on which they would all be represented in rough proportion to their numerical strength, then the case for transference to such a body of complete power except in the purely military sphere—and this even the Congress Party does not claim—would be almost unanswerable. . . . While there is no sign anywhere of any kind of *rapprochement* (between Indian parties) it is not merely foolish but profoundly mischievous to attack the British Government for failure to achieve Indian unity. Only Indians can achieve that and they will not. Indeed, such working unity as does exist—and fortunately there is enough of it for practical purposes—is due to the determination of the British elements in the administration to treat Indians without discrimination of party." Stating that there is no need for undue pessimism, the *Spectator* concludes: "There is still opportunity for moderates like Mr Rajagopalachari, to organize a reasonable centre of opinion effectively. That is the hope."

THE "ECONOMIST"

"The Prime Minister's statement on the Indian situation has found many critics both of its content and its manner. It would be a mistake to assume that Mr Churchill is not alive to the full and baffling complexity of the Indian problem or that he fails to diagnose it with blunt realism but his approach still smacks of his oppositional phase. The imprisonment of the Congress leaders and the use of strong measures are not the ideal way of procuring unity but it is better than passively permitting civil war and revolution. Nor can there be any real prospect of reopening negotiations until a working basis can be found. The Prime Minister's failure to point out that all parties in India and not the Congress party alone rejected the Cripps proposals robbed his statement of perspective. The efforts of Mr Rajagopalachari and others to find a formula capable of solving communal differences as a pre-requisite of fresh negotiations deserve every encouragement and sympathy, for they point to an ideal solution. But there can be no negotiating which detracts from the Allied ability to defend India."

CRIPPS'S BELATED THEORY

CHARGE AGAINST MAHATMA GANDHI ANSWERED

Among the various reasons put forward for the failure of the Cripps negotiations one is that Mahatma Gandhi interfered at the last stage and successfully prevented the Congress Working Committee from setting its final seal of approval to the proposals. It is true that Gandhiji himself disliked the scheme brought by Sir Stafford Cripps. But there is no foundation for the suggestion that, after his departure from Delhi, Mahatma Gandhi had any communication with the Congress Working Committee in connection with the negotiations which had continued. The breakdown occurred when the section of the Working Committee most keen on a settlement felt that the final proposal fell short of the minimum they regarded as essential. Below are reproduced some of the statements that have appeared in Britain and India on the subject.

LONDON, September 11, 1942.

Sir Stafford Cripps intervening in the India Debate in Parliament on September 11, 1942, and referring to the breakdown of his negotiations in India, said: "The change which occurred took place on the intervention of Mr Gandhi. The Congress Working Committee had passed a resolution accepting the proposals. Mr Gandhi intervened and subsequently the resolution was reversed."

Mr Davies (Labour): Was that resolution passed by the Congress on April 2 which was not divulged until April 10?

Sir Stafford Cripps: The Hon. Member was not there. I was. He is asking me what happened. I am not suggesting that the first resolution as published bound the Congress or anything else. It constantly happens in the course of negotiations you get a resolution and after further consideration, it is reserved and there is a narrow majority one way or the other.

Mr Davies: The leader of the Congress, M. Azad, and Pandit Nehru, stated in public on April 10, when that resolution was made public, the position about the resolution but nothing has been known until now that Mr Gandhi intervened and in some way or other that altered the resolution. Extraordinary!

MR RAJAGOPALACHARI'S CONTRADICTION

MADRAS, September 14, 1942.

It is a matter for regret that Sir Stafford Cripps has again made the allegation that Mahatma Gandhi intervened and made the Working Committee break off negotiations while the latter had been agreeable to a settlement.* Gandhiji is in prison and cannot again contradict this baseless story that will go into *Hansard*. I was present from beginning to end during these talks, and I can say authoritatively that Mahatmaji who was absent from Delhi during the later stages was not responsible for anything that took place. In spite of Mahatmaji's adverse opinion expressed at the preliminary stage, the Working Committee entered into discussions with Sir Stafford and carried on according to their own policy, and Mahatmaji did not interfere.

Sir Stafford Cripps has again chosen to repeat this story even though it was definitely contradicted when it was first put forward by him. Sir Stafford seems to be suffering from some obsession in

* Later Sir Stafford made a different statement. See page 71.

this regard. Whatever may be the sources of his information, this is to assure everyone concerned that the story has no foundation. I am afraid that some one has deceived Sir Stafford Cripps in the matter and has put an idea into his head which he is unwilling to give up. Probably if he had known that there was no truth in the story that Gandhiji intervened against a settlement, Sir Stafford would not have broken off so suddenly and flown back to England as he did. Whoever was responsible for this mischievous invention, he had done the greatest disservice to Indo-British relations and is largely responsible for the present tragic situation.

A PRESS VERSION

The New Delhi Correspondent of the *Hindu*, Madras, in his message, dated September 18, 1942, said:—

"In view of the propaganda that is going on to throw responsibility on Gandhiji for the breakdown of the Cripps negotiations, it is worth recalling that Gandhiji left Delhi on a Monday evening for Wardha and met Pressmen on the eve of his departure. He showed signs of obvious disappointment that the Working Committee was continuing negotiations. The final interview between Azad, Nehru and Cripps took place late on Thursday afternoon. Gandhiji's intervention, if any, could have been only by telegram or telephone. It is open to Government to disclose the details of this intervention, but certain facts may be mentioned in this connection. On Tuesday evening, one Executive Councillor told me that Congress was only pretending to conduct negotiations but would ultimately refuse Cripps's offer. On Wednesday, Lord Halifax made a statement in Washington that the negotiations had broken down. Actually on Thursday afternoon, Congress leaders at the time of dispersal from Birla House, seemed confident that a settlement was in sight. On Friday morning, came the startling news that negotiations were at an end and Cripps had arranged to leave for London on Sunday morning. The sense of unconcealed relief with which it was received in official circles makes it difficult for those who watched these negotiations at close quarters to believe that they were disappointed or worried over the final result."

EX-GOVERNOR FOLLOWS UP CRIPPS

LONDON, September 16, 1942.

In a letter to *The Times* on Wednesday, Lord Erskine, former Governor of Madras, says: "In view of the Lord Privy Seal's disclosure in the House of Commons that Mr Gandhi was alone responsible for the rejection by the Congress Party of the British Government's latest proposals for an Indian settlement, it may be of interest to recall another occasion on which his influence brought about a like result.

"After the 1937 elections to the Madras legislature had been held, the local Congress Party, having obtained a large majority, were anxious to accept office. Conversations ensued between the Governor and Mr C. Rajagopalachari to see if it was possible to devise a formula that would enable the Congress Party to form a ministry. These negotiations were proceeding not unsatisfactorily when Mr Gandhi suddenly appeared in Madras and, on his arrival, they came to an abrupt sterile conclusion. There is little doubt that Mr Gandhi, fearing that the negotiations might succeed, hurried to South India for the express purpose of preventing any agreement being reached and unfortunately he gained his object. Indeed, the chief responsibility for the delay in the advancement of the cause of Indian self-government must be placed on Mr Gandhi's shoulders. Had his great influence been used to

further the working of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and the 1935 Act, India would, in my view, have already achieved Dominion Status."

ERSKINE'S STATEMENT REFUTED

MADRAS, September 17, 1942.

Referring to Lord Erskine's letter to *The Times*, Mr Rajagopalachari, ex-Premier of Madras, says:—

"Lord Erskine's fantastic story about Gandhiji's interference in the formation of the Madras Ministry has as little truth in it as its predecessor, the Lord Privy Seal's story about the breakdown of his own negotiations. It is regrettable that responsible men should make accusations of this kind merely upon the strength of their own conjectures and try to buttress one story with another. We are not told on what data these two eminent accusers based their allegations. If the data were furnished we could apportion the blame for these inventions. Chivalry at least should have prevented the circulation of these accusations against one who is kept as a close prisoner unable to contradict the allegations."

VIEWS AND EVENTS

BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S POLICY CRITICIZED

If official circles in Britain and in India adopted an uncompromising attitude in relation to the Congress and its demands designed to enable Indians to participate whole-heartedly and conscientiously in the war of liberation, non-official circles furnished many noble examples of a searching of the heart and comments appeared which evoked the keenest appreciation in India. Below are reproduced some of those comments covering the period August 1942, and after. They include some frank criticisms of the Congress.

LONDON, August 7, 1942.

Declaring that it has always stood for the right of the peoples of India to freedom and self-government, the *News Chronicle* in an editorial says that no one who reads impartially the new resolution put before the All-India Congress "can deny that it is a highminded document inspired by sincere belief. In many respects it makes a good case—but it is a case unfortunately that ignores the indispensable needs of British defence at the most critical hour in our history. The demand for the immediate end of all British rule is one which a best-disposed British Government could not dare to grant at this perilous moment with its knowledge of the immense risks and uncertainties. Even were the enormous difficulties that would face India on a sudden withdrawal of British control to be at once miraculously resolved (which is in the highest degree improbable) how could the British Government and the people be sure of the efficiency and experience of those who would then become responsible for India's defence—and ours? Or how, knowing Mr Gandhi's hatred of the British and admitted partiality for appeasement, could we jeopardise our security with Japanese forces mustering at the very gates?

"This is impossible. And yet there is neither morality nor security in accepting blank inaction as the only remaining alternative. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has proposed the calling of a representative conference to make a final bid for at least an interim agreement. Mr Gandhi himself today (Friday) throws out the prospect of negotiation. Is there no hope at all here? Should not the British Government at least make an attempt?"

Referring to the statement by Mr Rajagopalachari, the *News Chronicle* continues: "When he remarks that Britain should act swiftly to receive the approval of history and not as counter-passion leads her, he is uttering words that must find an echo in the hearts of all British and Indians who long to see tragedy averted and an honourable solution found. In the long run it will have settled nothing to damage the Congress in the eyes of the world and perhaps set its own leaders at variance by the publication of the draft agreement and discussions which the Indian Government recently seized. Still less will it settle anything to indulge in wholesale jailing and to set in motion the incalculable forces of disorder and bitterness that would inevitably flow from the renewal of repression. The India Office and India Government must take no such short-sighted and adventitious views of their responsibilities. The British authorities can have no sanction for accusing the Congress of playing politics if by setting the stage to justify repression, they play politics themselves. Before they resort to extremes—as they may be forced to do—they must be certain before history that they have not failed because—and to quote Mr Rajagopalachari—they felt

'ashamed to do the right thing."

"But what is true for us is emphatically true for Indians. They too—and most especially the Congress—must be able to answer to posterity that they are not ashamed or afraid to do the right thing. An indelible page of history is about to be written; the destinies of many peoples lie in the balance. Both Britain and India desire in their mutual interest the victory of the United Nations and defeat of the aggressors. Cannot both sides even now if occasion be created, rise to the full heights of their greatness and determine on an agreement?"

II

LONDON, August 13, 1942.

The *News Chronicle* suggests that there is no reason why leading members of the United Nations—the United States, Russia and China—should not be associated in some way with a settlement of Britain's pledge to India of full self-government after the war. This offer has been put forward in all good faith. We should lose nothing —and perhaps gain much—by securing at this stage the friendly backing of our Allies."

THE LONDON "TIMES"

LONDON, August 12, 1942.

Repression, unaccompanied by any constructive policy, is likely to prove as vain and ineffective in war as in peace—and far more dangerous, says *The Times* in a leader today on India.

"The capital of goodwill which the Cripps proposals created for Great Britain in India and in other countries will be retained and increased only if the necessity is recognized of giving a positive and constructive lead," the paper continues. "Even the present crisis may open the door to a fresh opportunity. Much of Indian opinion remains fluid and hopeful. Distinguished Indian Members who form a great majority of the Viceroy's Council, all of them men who stand for Indian national aspirations, have willingly taken their full share of responsibility for the decision to act against Mr Gandhi and his followers.

"Virtually every organized Indian group and party from the Hindu Mahasabha to representatives of organized labour have dissociated themselves from the policy of the Congress resolution and have urged their members to abstain from any lot or part in the policy of civil disobedience. These demonstrations of support are valuable tokens of the growing sense of responsibility and of increased recognition of the overriding needs of unity for the conduct of the war.

"But the political situation will not remain static and the present Indian support for Government policy is combined in many quarters with a demand for more active Indian participation in the conduct of affairs. This is a reasonable, constructive and welcome demand. The Cripps declaration invited immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian peoples in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations; and it was in the same spirit that Mr Rajagopalachari last week in expressing his dissent from Mr Gandhi called an interim popular Government for the prosecution of the war. The rejection of the Cripps plan does not entail withdrawal of the invitation which it embodied. Mr Amery in his broadcast last Sunday night gave timely notice that the plan remains intact. The defect of the present system which makes it most vulnerable to criticism is the divorce between the Government and leadership of the principal parties. The rift with the Congress leaders makes it more

urgent to do everything possible to bridge the gap elsewhere. The needs of the war no less than the interests of future Indian unity demand the closing of the ranks among all who are prepared to work actively in partnership for the defence of India, for the cause of the United Nations and for the full attainment of national self-government while standing resolute against the policy of disorder and disruption."

THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

MANCHESTER, August 13, 1942.

"A wise Government will be looking beyond its police and troops to the possibilities of restoring real peace to India. It is ridiculous to speak as though we should never again negotiate with the Congress. Wrong and misguided as its recent policy has been, we cannot ignore a political body which represents a large part of Hindu India and whose co-operation is essential to the carrying out of our own plan for India's future. A sensible and practical course is first to seek out the elements of common ground which exist between us and the various strains of India's opinion, including the Congress and the Muslim League and, secondly, so far as we possibly can put into the hands of Indians the whole business of dealing with their difficult fellow countrymen."

THE NEW YORK "TIMES"

I

NEW YORK, August 7, 1942.

The New York *Times*, in an editorial commenting on the Indian situation, says: "The closest we can come to an impartial jury to try the case is to call upon the Government and the people of the United States. In no formal sense can we render a verdict . . . . because we are detached; and because our detachment will not save us from paying an awful price if India falls, the Americans are under an obligation to speak."

The paper adds: "We do not believe that Mr Gandhi, Mr Nehru, Mr Jinnah and other responsible Indian leaders desire Japanese and German victory. We do not believe that Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr Churchill and other responsible British leaders desire to withhold freedom from India for a single unnecessary day. We believe the very magnitude of the Gandhi-Nehru movement proves that the British have failed to awaken the people of India to a knowledge of what this war means for them. We believe that Mr Gandhi and Mr Nehru have failed to weigh the reasons which forbid the British to take the chance of abandoning India to a civil war between the Hindus and the Muslims. We believe that the Muslims, however fearful of becoming an oppressed minority in a free India, have to take into account the imminent danger that they will become an oppressed minority in a slave world. We believe that the British must refuse to withdraw administrative agencies and laws if withdrawal is likely to produce anarchy. We believe nevertheless that they should explore to the last breath and syllable every prospect of adjustments that will increase Indian self-respect and lead the Indian people of all races on the road to self-government."

Warning that time is short, the paper adds: "This is a historic opportunity for men of goodwill in India and London to throw non-essentials to the winds. Our future is involved in the Indian-British crisis."

II

NEW YORK, Septetmber 23, 1942.

A plea for further efforts to obtain a settlement of the Indian problem was made by the New York *Times*. Mr Herbert Matthews, its chief correspondent in India, has reported in a dispatch that he

found that "virtually all Indians are convinced that the British will have no friend in India after the war."

Commenting on this his newspaper said: "It is difficult to believe that the best method of defence in India is being employed if the state of mind of the Indian people is as Mr Matthews describes it. In our judgment the Government of India had no alternative but to arrest and imprison Mr Gandhi and his fellow leaders, but the wisest statesmanship would be to continue to explore the possibilities of a settlement which would remove distrust."

SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR RESIGNS

NEW DELHI, August 21, 1942.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Member for Information and Broadcasting on the Viceroy's Council, resigned today and his resignation has been accepted by the Viceroy.

A *communiqué* announcing the resignation says that Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar has intimated to the Governor-General that he takes so serious a view of the suggestions which have now been made in the public Press as to the attitude of the Indian National Congress towards the Indian States, and regards with so much concern the suggestion attributed to Mr Gandhi that India "including Indian India" should be made over to the Muslim League, that he does not feel that he can, consistently with his obligations to the Indian States, with which his association has been so long and so close, and his anxiety to be free to organize against any threat to their integrity and their position, continue to remain a Member of the Government of India; and he has asked the Governor-General to set him free, so that he may be at liberty to take up this matter, which he regards as of the first importance.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, in his letter of resignation* adds: "I wish to make it clear beyond all possibility of doubt that I am in full agreement with the action taken and the policy pursued by the Government of India, of which I have been a Member, in respect of the civil disobedience campaign contemplated in the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee of which we see the calamitous results today, and that resignation is solely due to my desire at this critical period of Indian history to express my views and take the necessary action with complete freedom of speech and movement with reference to the mass action that, if unchecked, is bound to hamper India's progress and war efforts and the constitutional changes that may be proposed in so far as they affect the Indian States in whose well-being and fortunes I am vitally interested."

MR. C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

I

MADRAS, August 9, 1942.

My words have fallen on deaf ears both on my colleagues and on the British Government. Repression of the Congress, even if successful, does not solve the problem of the defence of India. Without a united people's close co-operation behind the State, the defence of the country is very slippery. The present Congress demand is very different from the position first taken up by Gandhiji. Both Gandhiji and the Congress can have agreed to armed resistance and the maintenance of British war policy and international relations. There can thus be no difficulty in the transfer of full responsibility to an interim popular Government. If the British agree to do this, my earnest advice to the Congress would be to ask the Muslim League to dictate its terms for co-operation. Government has, however, created fresh difficulties for this *rapprochement* by the precipitation of their measures.

* Further explanatory statement appears a few pages ahead.

II

MADRAS, August 11, 1942.

Interviewed by the *Associated Press* regarding Sir Frederick Whyte's statement that it was difficult to examine the Congress political demand isolated from the declaration of civil disobedience in view of the Congress decision on Saturday (August 8), Mr Rajagopalachari said: The Indo-British political relationship has to be put in order so that India may be protected against the Axis. The Congress decision on Saturday does not alter this. Repression does not carry us any distance towards this objective. It perhaps takes us much in the contrary direction. Sir Frederick Whyte's rejoinder makes me doubt whether the Congress resolution of Saturday last has been put fully and in proper form before the British public. It is very different from the position first taken up by Gandhiji. I wonder if this has not been lost sight of. The resolution adopted on Saturday contemplated fullest co-operation in armed resistance against the Axis if a transfer of power takes place by agreement on the basis of Independence. Gandhiji believed that there was ample opportunity for exchange of ideas with the Viceroy before starting his campaign. But Government's precipitate action prevented negotiation and adjustments and has created a most unfortunate and dangerous situation. In spite of this I believe a calm examination by British statesmen of the Congress position will not be impossible or useless.

III

MADRAS, August 13, 1942.

It is impossible to be silent any longer. Hooliganism is raging in many places in India. Unsigned slips of paper, I understand, are being widely distributed by hand, wherein the sabotage of public property is programmed. It is clothed in Gandhiji's language, and stepped up in stages to give it the semblance of authority and the appearance of an ordered movement. The last and worst stages are already being put in practice, and arson, mischief and deliberate dislocation of social order is afoot.

It is true that Gandhiji's arrest has deprived the movement of its legitimate guidance and precipitated violence. The removal of leaders in a civil disobedience movement organized against Government is an inevitable sequence and the thought that it might have been otherwise had Government not arrested Gandhiji so suddenly cannot help us. I can easily set out the grievous sins of the British Government from September 1939, onwards up to this moment, and counterpoise this appeal with a condemnation of Government. But my purpose will not be served by dilating on other people's errors. Had there been any hope that by hooliganism such as is now practised we could achieve our political objective, we might not mind other people's nerves and carry on. But where it is suicidal folly, barren of any good whatsoever, it does not profit us to find explanations.

Our urgent duty is severely to discourage and stop the folly. We should remove all delusion in the minds of people that this programme of hooliganism is what the official Congress wants done on its behalf.

Leading Congressmen protested strongly against a scorched-earth policy in the defence of India. That was a policy which was in the last resort to be put into effect by the military authorities in the event of enemy progress. But now, in the name of the Congress, a scorched-earth policy worse than what was contemplated by the military authorities is being practised with wanton recklessness by men claiming to be patriotic. The burning down of municipal public halls and railway stations and warehouses, the digging up of the permanent way so as to derail or prevent trains from running and setting fire to bogies—such mad destruction and disregard of the safety of human life cannot bring us Swaraj of any type or further any plan of Gandhiji. Assum-

ing that the authorities fail to check these disorders, what is it that will be established—not freedom, not happiness, not courage, or mutual confidence, not the power of the spirit to resist brute force, but sheer mob rule of the worst type. If this goes on and the authorities fail to check it, as indeed the men who guide and carry out such operations must be hoping, our towns and our countryside will be ruled by the leaders of goondas, and decent people will have to live under blackmail and trembling in fear of insult and outrage. God forbid that our intelligence should be so clouded as to encourage what may lead to such a disastrous result.

It is well known I disagreed from Gandhiji's plan in the present crisis and strived to deflect him from it, and I am not seeking to argue and justify myself now. I write this only to say that if any believe that they are helping Gandhiji in his plan by doing or directing these ruinous activities, they are deluding themselves, bringing cruel discredit on him, destroying our progress and postponing the day of our salvation.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

ALLAHABAD, August 15, 1942.

I returned here on August 12, after an absence of over a month. On my way back I stayed for a day at Lucknow. It was not until I reached Lucknow or Allahabad that I was able to have some idea of the nature and extent of the trouble that has arisen in the country. I do not wish to say anything which may exacerbate feeling on any side at this hour of crisis in our history. I was anxious that before any final decisions were taken at Bombay there should be a conference of all parties and that Government should not be a passive spectator of it but actively support the movement. I deeply regret that those who could effectively respond to this suggestion thought otherwise. Similarly, it is to me a matter of great regret that New Delhi which might have shown some imagination and courage in inviting a conference did not do it. Perhaps it was a race against time.

Nevertheless, the fact is that ordinary civil life is being seriously interrupted and hooliganism is rampant at so many places. There has already been much regrettable loss of life. Any government, be it foreign or national, would feel itself called upon to take steps to restore order.

It, is, however, quite obvious that when there is a situation like this, things do happen and are bound to happen, which would not be tolerated in ordinary life, but the problem of law and order cannot, in my opinion, be effectively dealt with in the existing circumstances merely by resorting to stern steps or using threatening language on either side, nor can it do good to any one either to exaggerate or to underrate the gravity of the situation. Taking things as they happened and are happening, without exaggeration or underrating them, I think in all conscience that they are very serious and even though strong steps may lead to the suppression of the mischief that is being done at the present moment, I do not think that the bitterness and anger produced for the time being can be easily eradicated from the minds of the people. The magistrate, the police and the military have their functions to perform, but statesmanship has also its responsibility to discharge.

To the meanest intellect it had been abundantly plain during the last four or five months that the situation in India was rapidly deteriorating. I suggest that simultaneously with the resort to legal powers for the restoration of order and the preservation of peace in the country, constructive steps should be taken without loss of time. Members of Parliament cannot divest themselves of their responsibility. They must wake up and not allow themselves to be lulled into a false sense of security. It is doing no good either to this country or to England to tell everybody in England that the situation in India is not an anxious

one. This country must be saved from those calamities which are certain to overtake it in the footsteps of all that is happening at present. Indeed, it is up to Parliament to send immediately a delegation to India to talk to the leaders.

In my opinion things have not gone yet so far that mutual discussions with broad-minded Members of Parliament can be ruled out as impossible—impossible either on the ground of prestige or on the ground that they will be evidence of weakness. I have very carefully considered in the light of the last five days' happenings as to whether it will serve any useful purpose at this stage for anyone not belonging to the two big political parties in India to act as an intermediary between them and the Government. I am not by any means hopeful of a step like this leading to any fruitful result. No intermediary can succeed unless he has the authority to speak on behalf of the Government.

The position of non-Congressmen has been, I am bound to say, so considerably weakened by the refusal of the authorities to listen to their advice in time either because they were supposed to be amiable theorists or because they had no large followings.

I have given this warning repeatedly, and I do give it once again. Overshadowing everything else is the danger from the enemy who is alert and follows events in India from day to day and is carrying on a propaganda by radio which is apt to still further inflame the popular mind. There is not now, in my judgment, much time for a conference to be called to discuss the situation. The time, however, is overripe for decisions and swift decisions in the political field. Thus and thus alone can the psychology of the people be changed and the forces of law and order restored and strengthened. This is not the time for throwing challenges or accepting challenges. This is the time for constructive statesmanship with some imagination and courage. On our side we cannot in the name of freedom and patriotism directly or indirectly allow hooliganism, which has been so rightly denounced by Mr Rajagopalachari, to go on playing havoc with the life of the country.

SIR SHADI LAL

(Privy Councillor and former Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court)

BOMBAY, August 13, 1942.

Mahatma Gandhi and other members of the All-India Congress Working Committee have been arrested. This was not entirely unexpected, though it was thought that the Government of India would be wise in not taking such a step. There can be no doubt that Indians, high or low, realize the racial distinction between Europeans and Indians and feel that the Indians are treated as inferior persons. The Government have not so far taken steps to remove this grievance. The arrests now made by the Government will not improve the political situation in the slightest degree.

LADY WAZIR HASAN

LUCKNOW, September 9, 1942.

Every section of the Indian people is feeling a deep anxiety about the present unfortunate situation in the country. The responsibility for this situation lies primarily with the unstatesmanlike attitude of the British Government.

The A.-I.C.C. in its resolution at Bombay unequivocally declared that the Congress wanted to fight the Jap invaders in co-operation with the United Nations, and that it considered the defeat of world fascism essential to the independence of India, but it added that in order to defeat the Japs total mobilisation of Indian manpower and resources was essential. This total mobilisation was not possible, in the opinion of the A.-I.C.C., without a free National Government in India. In order to achieve this object the Congress wanted to negotiate with the British Government

and other parties with a view to arrive at a settlement for a composite National Government.

This demand for a composite National Government to fight fascism has been endorsed by all major political parties in the country. By replying to this legitimate demand of the Indian people with the arrest of Congress leaders and the inauguration of an era of severe repression, the British Government has dealt a severe blow to the cause of the United Nations. By this provocative action it is converting the helathy patriotic urge for the independence of our people into a defeatism which is only providing a base for the activities of the fifth column. I, therefore, appeal to the British people to force their Government to release the Congress leaders and negotiate with Indian political parties.

MR ARTHUR MOORE

(Prominent European Journalist in India and, at the time, Editor of the "Statesman")

I

CALCUTTA, September 11, 1942.

Discussing the practicability of the formation of a real national war government in India which will include representatives of both the Muslim League and the Congress, Mr Arthur Moore says, in the course of a statement, that he is "forced to the conclusion that the root of India's mistrust of Britain's promises for the future lies in the distrustful attitude towards Indians of those directing the British policy at present and that the essential obstacle to coalition is the British Government's failure hitherto to say that they want such National Government as the Australian and Canadian Governments enjoy. This they can do without any constitutional overhaul by merely operating the emergency legislation passed by Parliament for India in June 1940. The emergency contemplated there has all too evidently arisen. Had Sir Stafford Cripps been empowered to offer such a transfer he would have succeeded. Success is still to be had, but the sands are running out."

II

CALCUTTA, September 18, 1942.

Throughout the Allied world there is a passionate desire that the internal strife in India shall cease, the quarrel with Britain be ended and the energy of the country directed against the common enemies of India and China—the Japanese and the Germans. This can be done.

In a few weeks the evil that has been wrought can still be ended, production intensified. We can have a real war Government with the people at its back. All that is required is that the British Government shall say that it is willing to transfer to such a Government, if it can be formed, the same powers as the Canadian and Australian Governments enjoy and shall then invite Mr Jinnah to form such a Government. He will succeed. Mr Nehru and Mr Rajagopalachari will co-operate with him. Mr Gandhi can be released and will give no further trouble. The country will be enthusiastic and will swing wholeheartedly into the war.

Let us learn the lessen from Burma. There is little time to lose. "Do wrong and stick to it" is no motto for war-time. What the British public have not been told is that Indian differences are the excuse but not the cause of Britain's refusal to transfer power. Our refusal has hitherto been absolute and would remain so even if all Indian differences were composed. All can be changed. The Congress has learnt its lesson and is willing to let the Muslims have the guarantees they ask for by letting the Muslim League form the National Government and giving the League its full co-operation. Propaganda concealed this important fact from the British and American public in July and August,

but in September the truth is known. I can answer for Mr Gandhi that if Britain will declare her willingness to transfer power now, he will call off non-co-operation.

Mr Jinnah speaking of the possibility of the Muslim League forming a coalition Government has said, "I don't proceed on the hypothesis that this party or that is to be excluded. If we have to undertake the responsibility, I think it is obvious that those who want to undertake the responsibility would naturally do their utmost to get all the help, assistance and co-operation from every section of the people."

In the present circumstances Mr Jinnah will succeed if he is allowed to try. But he neither can nor will try till the British Government informs him that it is willing to transfer power to the resulting government.

III

CALCUTTA, October 5, 1942.

Everything is governed by two recent statements of Mr Amery. In Parliament on September 11, he said: "There is an immensely powerful case, while war is on, for retaining the ultimate control of India policy in the hands of His Majesty's Government."

Two days ago, on October 1, again speaking in Parliament, Mr Amery said that Sir Sultan Ahmed's statement* in the Assembly, to the effect that Britain would not be able to resist a united Indian demand, referred to a situation which was not likely to arise, but if it did arise power would not be transferred. Here are his exact words as telegraphed to India: "In any such National Government that were constituted there would of course have to be ultimate responsibility to Parliament." That—equally of course—is not what Sir Sultan meant at all nor would any British Dominion call that self-government or tolerate the interference of Parliament.

The Secretary of State now tells us that "there is no such thing as an Asiatic," and that India's natural affinities will more and more lead her towards Europe rather than towards China. I see no possibility of success for British policy so out of relation to facts, and since we nowadays learn so many surprising things about India from London I hope it will not be taken amiss if I express an opinion about Britain, where I spent half of last year. That opinion is this: Mr Amery claims that a British Parliament elected in 1935 on quite different issues is the best repository of responsibility for the Government of India. But in my view the 1935 Parliament is the last British Parliament which any Secretary of State will succeed in persuading that this is true, and if there were a general election now a very different Parliament would result.

With complete confidence I repeat that if the British Government will declare its willingness to transfer *de facto* power now, without prejudice to the future constitution as outlined in the Cripps proposals and if Mr Jinnah be asked to form a National Government, with absolute freedom to choose his own colleagues, he will accept the offer, he will invite and will secure the co-operation of the Congress and the Mahasabha and will succeed. The enthusiasm throughout the country will be unbounded. The whole Allied cause will be rejuvenated, and we shall drive the Japanese out of Burma and open the road to China in the cold weather. But such a transformation cannot be made while the wrong faces are in the front news.

Negotiations will not succeed when they are undertaken by those who have an interest in their failure, in order to prove that they themselves were right all along. For three years Britain has been dangerously weakened by the new disastrous precedent set when Mr Chamberlain was allowed to cling to office after his policies had crashed, and to

* See Assembly debate on "Situation in India."

assert claim to be the right man to lead us in the opposite direction because he had been so monumentally wrong before.

MEETING OF EUROPEANS IN CALCUTTA

CALCUTTA, September 8, 1942.

Mr Arthur Moore presided over a meeting of a group of Europeans drawn from most sections of the community in Calcutta, held to consider the present situation in the country. The meeting unanimously adopted the following resolution:—

"That this meeting is of the opinion that the British Government should forthwith announce its readiness to transfer full powers to a National Government of India and provide immediate facilities for its formation."

LEADERS' JOINT STATEMENT

NEW DELHI, September 10, 1942.

The following joint Press statement asking for a declaration of immediate transfer of real power to Indian hands was issued by the leaders who gathered here to consider the serious situation in India by the arrest of Congress leaders and the disturbances that resulted. A copy of the statement was forwarded to the Viceroy, and the full text was cabled to Mr Churchill, British Prime Minister.

"The present war, which has involved all the nations of the world, is proclaimed to be a struggle between democracy and freedom on one side and tyranny and race superiority on the other. From the beginning of this titanic struggle India has been demanding that Great Britain where she has the power should implement the profession of equality and freedom so that her moral prestige might rise and her cause be endowed with justice. For some reason or other she has been evading this obvious duty and postponing the accomplishment of the great ideals for which she professes to fight. The failure of her policy in Egypt and Ireland, in Burma and Malaya indicates that if she is to be successful in India she must enlist the popular will and enthusiasm. The Indian people must be made to feel that they are defending their honour and freedom, their hearths and homes against foreign aggressors. The examples of China and Russia are there to indicate that only a people's war can be waged successfully under modern conditions. The most influential political party in a mood of utter despair finding no adequate response to this legitimate demand wished to change their policy of non-embarrassment to achieve freedom. But before they could promulgate the same, they were incarcerated and a policy of repression ensued.

We feel that an atmosphere of violence and counterviolence is hardly the atmosphere for a satisfactory reconciliation between India and Great Britain. If Great Britain is willing to grant self-Government to India after the war, what is it that prevents it accomplishment today? A National Government pledged to the support of the war against the aggressors consisting of representatives of major political interests with complete autonomy in the internal administration during the period of the war and unfettered freedom thereafter, will satisfy the demand for Independence put forth by all the political parties in the country. Such a declaration of immediate transfer of real power to Indian hands postponing all controversial issues until after the war will produce the right atmosphere for dissolving differences and harmonising the divergent tendencies which are now over emphasized. By solving the Indian problem, Britain will help the Allied Nations, improve her own case and be a powerful instrument for the overthrow of the aggressive powers which are menacing civilizations today.

There does not seem to be any justification for shirking the issue any

longer. Here and now His Majesty's Government must proclaim that India is independent. We have not the least doubt that a free India will not negotiate any separate treaties with the enemy powers but will wholeheartedly fight the aggressors along with the Allied nations. Events in India are rapidly moving towards a dangerous climax and there never was a period in the last hundred years when the feeling against Britain was so bitter as it is today.

Before it is too late we urge the British Prime Minister who has, if he chooses, courage, vision and statesmanship, to settle this problem now and for all time in the interests of Britain and India.

Signed: Khan Bahadur Allah Bakhsh, President, Azad Muslim Conference and Chief Minister of Sind; Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Working President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha and Minister, Bengal; A K. Fazlul Huq, Premier of Bengal; K. K. Habibullah, Nawab of Dacca, Minister, Bengal; Sardar Baldev Singh, Minister, Punjab; Master Tara Singh, President, Shiromani Prabhandak Committee; Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor, Benares Hindu University; Sir Gokul Chand Narang; Giani Kartar Singh, M.L.A., Punjab; Mohd Zaheer-ud-Din, President, All-India Momin Conference; N. C. Chatterjee, Working President, Bengal Hindu Mahasabha; Mehr Chand Khanna, President, Frontier Hindu Mahasabha; Raja Maheshwar Dayal, Working President, U.P. Hindu Mahasabha; Dr S. S. Ansari, General Secretary, Azad Muslim Board; and K. C. Neogy M.L.A. (Central).

MR WILLIAM DOBBIE

LONDON, August 10, 1942.

The *Manchester Guardian* has published today an important letter from Mr William Dobbie, Socialist M.P., in which he urges Mr Churchill to make a declaration to the world that "India is the land of Indians and Britain has renounced her right to hold India by force of arms, in accordance with the spirit of the Atlantic Charter."

Mr Dobbie states: "The Congress resolution (of August 8) asks Britain to renounce her power and domination over India. The Indian National Congress wants Britain to declare that we have no moral right to rule over India and exploit her politically and economically for our ends, as we have undoubtedly done in the past. Such a declaration is not impossible to make even in the midst of war and it will go a long way to strengthen our military position."

After emphasizing the fundamental anti-Fascist stand of the Congress and Mr Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders, "who opposed Fascist agggression in China, Abyssinia and Spain long before we realised the full force of this aggression," Mr Dobbie declared his conviction that Indian leaders will never submit to Japan.

He asks: "Cannot Britain and its unquestioned voice, the Prime Minister, declare to the world that India is the land of Indians and Britain has renounced her right to hold India by force of arms in accordance with the spirit of the Atlantic Charter?"

REACTIONS IN CHINA

CHUNGKING, August 12, 1942.

"If there is anything China can do, we will be glad to do it," observed a Chinese Government spokesman, answering a question whether China was willing to mediate in India. He added: "The Chinese Government ardently hopes that methods will be found to improve the situation in India....We want first of all wholehearted war-efforts and co-ordination of the Indian people."

Questioned whether he thought the disturbances would interfere with supplies to China, the spokesman said: "The present troubles will

have that result." He added: "The Indian situation is a matter concerning all the United Nations."

CHINESE PRESS COMMENTS

CHUNGKING, August 12, 1942.

Breaking their silence for the first time, Chinese newspapers today all carried headlined articles on the Indian political situation, unanimously deploring the aggravation of the tension.

The official *Central Daily News* said: "We receive the news of the arrest of Mr Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad with regret. We cannot refrain from appealing to the British Government in India to exercise forbearance and continue to look for a real settlement."

The *Juomin Kung Pao* says: "We are confident that wise statesmen in Britain and the United States will not forget what the main principles contained in the Atlantic Charter are."

"The news of Mr Gandhi's arrest and of the disturbances and bloodshed in India has been received here with great sorrow," says the *Ta Kung Pao*. "Both Britain and India are our friends and so we have appealed for a compromise and have never expressed an opinion as to who is right or wrong. The spirit behind the present war is resistance against aggression in the struggle for freedom, without which the present war is meaningless. India's struggle for freedom is identical with the war aims of the united Nations and we have no reason not to be sympathetic."

AN APPEAL BY PROMINENT AMERICANS

NEW YORK, September 28, 1942.

In a full page advertisement published in the *New York Times* today prominent American stress to President Roosevelt and Marshal Chiang Kai-shek that "they recognise the interest of the United Nations in the Indian dilemma and that they use their good offices to ask the British Government and the National Congress of India and other leaders to open a new conference with mutual determination to find a way of action which will most speedily bring India into the ranks of our Allies by beginning now a programme of her independence."

The signatories include author Mrs Clare Boothe Luce, Mr George S. Counts, the former president of the American Federation of Teachers, author Fanny Hurst, Bishop Francis J. McConnell, former president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and Mr Henry Harriman, former president of the United States Chamber of Commerce.

MR LIN YUTANG

NEW YORK, October 21, 1942.

Momentous events are happening in Asia affecting not only the 390 million people of India, but also the future progress and essential character of the war the United Nations are fighting. As a Chinese I know China would be the first to be directly affected by it. It is imperative that we examine the events in India not as idle critics, but as responsible participants in a conflict between our two Allies—England and India. By our applause given to one or the other or by our very tolerance of the conflict, we prolong or shorten the conflict. The United Nations have a moral duty. I, therefore, plead for a stern sense of realities of the Indian situation. We have been feeding ourselves on anti-Hindu propaganda. We might accept for our own peace of mind the fiction that Congress is not representative of India, the lie that it does not include Muslims, that Mr Jinnah is very very important, that the English are loved in India and everything is very

pretty. We acquire a sense of moral triumph by accepting the version that it is not we who do not want to give India freedom, but it is India who is not united in wanting it. By the acceptance of that fiction and our passive inaction in the months following the Cripps Mission, we have ourselves precipitated this inevitable conflict. The time for delusions is past and we must now pay for it. But our own fate is involved in it. We must break through the pall of abuse, misrepresentation and calumny against India that is being spread in America. Intelligent citizens know that India's case has never been represented to Americans except through the eyes of British censors at Calcutta and New Delhi, that the news about India is incorrect and inaccurate and very often distorted. It is a law of human nature that we must abuse those whom we injure, to prove that we are injuring them for their own good. It is a law of human nature that should and must go on: Gandhi is an appeaser, Gandhi is a wily and crooked politician, Gandhi has no sense of reality, Gandhi wants only the ruin of the British.

The question is: Why is Gandhi such a fool? Why are men like Nehru and the leaders of the Congress such fools? Why are Indians such fools as to be misled by them? There is something terribly incomprehensible to many American critics and editors about the Hindus. Gandhi is a fool, because he is fighting for what George Washington was fighting for, his country's freedom and independence from England. Nehru is such a fool because he feels as keenly about the little word 'Liberty' as Washington or Thomas Paine ever felt. The whole Indian nation is feeling exactly as keenly as the thirteen colonies about their country's freedom. Gandhi and Nehru are as stubborn as Washington was and De Valera is today. The injustices in India are exactly like the injustices in the American colonies and in Ireland of the past. Now that Americans have liberty, they forget what that little word means when people have lost it. That is what is so incomprehensible about India.

That is the terrible force which Gandhi and Nehru have unleashed today, which the spirit of Washington whom both admire, helped to unleash, the great cry of a great people for national freedom during our war for national freedoms. Recently, Secretary Hull was urging the nations to fight for liberty and Indians are obeying him. Hull cannot turn round and tell Indians, "You must not fight for liberty." We are anxious for the freedom of Greece, Yugoslavia or occupied France, but we shut our eyes to the greatest single national movement for freedom in the world in India. India wants her freedom. Cripps denied it. They want to fight as a free nation alongside the United Nations. The Congress resolution clearly showed that they wanted Allied soldiers to remain in India and help defend their country if they were given the status of a free and equal nation. India is united in demanding freedom immediately. Her splendid leaders, who qualified her for it, are pledged to use that freedom not for a decrease, but an increase, in her share of responsibility to fight the Axis Powers. I warn that India will not give up the fight for liberty until she gets it.

Against these obvious truths, the refusal to return what we stole from her is based on sectional and national politics. Those who are clever at playing politics will by their indecision and narrow vision, help defeat the common war effort. We cannot win this war with nineteenth century psychology and imperialistic politics. The war has gone ahead of us, let us catch up with it.

MR. RAYMOND CLAPPER

I

NEW YORK, August 13, 1942.

The Scripps-Howard columnist, Mr Raymond Clapper, writing

under the heading "Not Too Late," said: "Last March and April when India sensed the coming storm and felt the depressing weakness of the United Nations' position in the East I felt deeply that the United Nations had not made their case clear east of the Suez. Whatever the past wrongs, the only hope for freedom lies in a United Nations victory. Vice-President Wallace and Under-Secretary of State Welles and some others spoke about it, but got the horse's laugh from so-called realists who, so intent on being hard-boiled realists, missed the true reality which is Mr Gandhi.

"Still it is not too late. As long as the impression remains that when the war is won the western nations will climb up the back of the East again and that they will be offered the old meal ticket—that long we will be let down to face our enemies. Our intentions regarding the post-war world are very real weapons in this war. Thus far these weapons have been used against us instead of by us."

II

WASHINGTON, September 30, 1942.

Mr Raymond Clapper, writing on "The Danger of India" in the *Washington Daily News*, observed: "India has dropped out from the news. But it is an artificial silence. Lack of news from India has been caused by tight censorship. Washington's silence arises from self-imposed censorship.

"War in the East is being placed in serious jeopardy by the conditions in India. War production there is seriously crippled by strikes. . . . . Washington is watching this situation with much anxiety. It is the subject of discussion in high quarters. Aside from all other questions, the matter of keeping up the war effort in India where American troops are now stationed causes most concern. Thus far, Washington's efforts to persuade the British Government to undertake new negotiations with the Congress Party have been unfruitful. Censorship has prevented the American public from seeing how the trouble in India is interfering with production. The general disposition has been to follow the Government's lead and hope the British would soon attempt to improve the situation. It is still a question how long this will last. There is a strong under-current of impatience that London has neglected vital strategic areas in which American troops are now being prepared to fight.

"The British Press is critical of its own Government's India policy. Press comment in England indicates a widespread belief there that the British Government should make further overtures towards reaching an agreement with Indian nationalists. The London *Times* said recently that a constructive policy on India was as much a Government responsibility as preservation of order. *The Times* says that the Indian demand for a more active participation in the conduct of affairs is reasonable. The *Manchester Guardian* says that there can be no satisfaction in the policy of simple repression in India. The *News Chronicle* says that the British must take the initiative in trying for a settlement. Those are responsible and moderate newspapers.

"One hesitated to write about this kind of matter which is so intimately an affair of a friendly nation. Yet I think it is worth while reporting that a number of officials here and some outside the Government are deeply disturbed by London's delay in acting to reopen negotiations. The trouble with a situation of this kind is that it rocks along and nothing is done until it is too late and then as in Burma, the embittered native population turns on its defenders and helps to drive them out. We cannot fight both the Japs and the Indians in India. But that is what we will be doing unless conditions are improved before the Japs strike."

PEARL BUCK

The well-known authoress, Pearl Buck, in a message to a meeting

in New York, said British efforts to paint Mr Gandhi as an appeaser of Japan were "false propaganda." "It is high time that we in the United States understand the reasons for the present situation in India in order that we may help to bring India to aid in the cause of democracy," she said.

II

NEW YORK, October 1, 1943.

Addressing a meeting of the India League, Pearl Buck said: "I do not think any Indians expect full freedom now. They are a very reasonable people like the Chinese. They have had so long a human history that they take into account the motives and situations of other nations. They understand how dependent upon the British Empire India has been, and I have not heard of one Indian who has thought it reasonable suddenly to remove that foundation. What they ask is an assurance for the future."

LASKI, JOAD, HUXLEY AND OTHERS

LONDON, October 3, 1942.

The following cable has been sent by the Union of Democratic Control to the former Premier of Madras, Mr C. Rajagopalachari: "Please accept our gratitude for the efforts you and other Indian leaders have made to end the deadlock. The following statement with its signatories are indicative of support to your demands. Will you convey the same to the Bishop of Calcutta, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr M. R. Jayakar and others in India also working for a settlement?"

The statement referred to in the cable is as follows:—"The present deadlock in India is dangerous and discreditable; so much is common ground among responsible people in the countries of the United Nations. We believe that a solution can still be found and we therefore desire to see the largest possible response in this country to those in India who are putting forward constructive ideas for a settlement. This is the more important in view of the Prime Minister's statement of September 10 which 'was not calculated to improve Anglo-Indian relations' and which suggested that the only positive policy of His Majesty's Government at this critical moment was to oppose the Congress. We welcome specially the efforts of Bishop Foss Westcott, the Metropolitan of India, and of Indian statesmen like Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr Jayakar. These statesmen do not speak for themselves alone. Evidence has accumulated during the past few weeks that leaders of all Indian political parties desire an Indian National Government which will collaborate in the defence of India against Japan.

"The Muslim League, the Mahasabha and other political parties as well as the Congress are now in accord in asking for an Indian Government of defence. We support the suggestion of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr Jayakar that 'these bodies should be left free to treat with the Congress.' We agree with them that in the present circumstances those who form the National Government should be willing to leave the direction of military operations to the Commander-in-Chief and to put aside until after the war controversial questions about the future constitution of India and the relations of the various communities. One provision on which all groups are agreed, Muslim no less than Hindu, is that the new Government must be not the Viceroy's Council but a National Government possessing the substance of power. To neglect the offer of co-operation at such a time as this and to reject the proposals of responsible leaders of Indian opinion is to incur a very grave responsibility. The issue of the whole war as well as of India and of this country may depend upon Britain's response today."

The signatories include Lords Marley and Strabolgi, Members of

Parliament, Messrs C. G. Ammon, E. J. Bellenger, J. J. Davidson and G. Haden Guest, and Messrs Harold Laski, C. E. M. Joad, and Julian Huxley, Dame Elizabeth Cadbury, Mrs Corbett Ashby, Mrs Pethick-Lawrence, Barbara Eyrton Gould, Dr Hewlett Johnson, Sir John Maynard and Prof. C. H. Reill.

LONDON "TIMES" ON READINESS TO SETTLE

LONDON, October 9, 1942.

The Times in a leader headed "Negative Debate" says: "Yesterday's discussion on India in the House of Commons leaves the constitutional deadlock where it was. Mr Amery set out once more the familiar and admitted difficulties. The majority which Government received yesterday was not a vote for leaving matters where they are. India's co-operation in the war, already abundantly proved in bravery and loyalty on many fields, could beyond doubt be multiplied ten-fold if the constitutional issue was removed from its path.

"Mr Attlee yesterday urged Indians to think again. Certainly readiness to settle here must be matched by readiness to settle there. Indian responsibility is not less than our own. In this apparent and no doubt temporary lull in the imminence of external danger there should be new occasion for thoughtful and public-spirited Indians to seek a way which is essential to progress."

THE "DAILY HERALD"

LONDON, October 9, 1942.

"The British Government's refusal to negotiate with Congress unless the civil disobedience campaign is abandoned has the support of public opinion in this country," writes the *Daily Herald* in an editorial. "But there is no public support for political paralysis. One after another leaders in India of political thought have deplored the deadlock that exists and have urged our Government to make a fresh attempt at a solution. These are men as anxious as we for winning the war. When so much eager goodwill exists, how can the British Government justify its negative attitude? At the present we are asserting authority but shirking leadership. The time is not only ripe for a new initiative. It is overripe. India asks Britain to do her duty as the Paramount Power. However great the difficulties, however remote the prospect of success, the Government should respond to that desire. We appeal to Mr Churchill to throw off his fatalistic state of mind towards the Indian problem.

CRIPPS ON GANDHIJI'S BELIEF IN NON-VIOLENCE

The *Manchester Guardian* published the following:

Mr Dewitt Mackenzie, visiting correspondent of the *Associated Press of America,* has interviewed Sir Stafford Cripps on the Indian position. The following is an extract from his interview:—

"Sir Stafford says the key to the situation is Gandhi's persistent support of the policy of non-violence. This makes it impossible for Gandhi's personal adherents to take part in any Government, no matter what its nature, which wages war. Thus England, which is in the midst of a life-and-death struggle, is asked to countenance an Indian Government that not only would not fight but might even insist on making peace with Britain's enemies."

"I do not believe that Gandhi, who was not present when the decision was taken, was personally responsible for the rejection of the Government's proposals," adds Sir Stafford. "However, his influence and ideas dominated those of the Working Committee of All-India Congress, who did turn down the offer. We must have the agreement of the Congress for any solution."

Sir Stafford speaks in the highest terms of Gandhi as one of the great thinkers and leaders of our time. " I believe Gandhi is

quite sincere," he said, "but with his passionate belief in non-violence he must keep the Congress non-violent and so non-co-operative with a Government which is at war. He is the greatest single influence in India, or at least in the All-India Congress. We must have Congress for any complete solution.

"The tragedy of it from the Indian standpoint is that had there been an agreement Indians would have had absolute control of the situation."

I asked Sir Stafford if there was still a chance of a settlement. He nodded, but it was not a helpful gesture. However, the door remains open to the acceptance of the Cripps proposals.

SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER

LONDON, October 14, 1942.

Sir George Schuster in the course of a letter to *The Times* says:—

You rightly characterized last week's Parliamentary discussion on India as a "negative debate" and I believe that there will be many who share our own uncomfortable feeling about the way the British case has been put—both by the defenders and attackers—together with my still deeper feeling that British expression both in words and deeds is failing to rise to the needs of the occasion.

But the worst weakness in the recent Parliamentary discussions has been the failure to give adequate attention to what we ought to do now. We cannot allow the rightness of the present course to rest on our own record of past centuries or on the wrongness of our political opponents. We need a positive line of action now and for the future. We claim—unanswerably, I believe—that we cannot without a betrayal of right principles or the risk of chaos hand over full constitutional responsibility to Indian Ministers except on the foundation of a balanced constitution agreed upon between the main elements in India. We say that, pending this, we want a genuine Indian Government retaining only the ultimate constitutional responsibility and leadership in war effort. Can we be satisfied with the way in which we have fulfilled the purposes? Have we gone as far as we could to set up and strengthen a genuine Indian Government? Have we given a right and inspiring leadership in the war? In the Viceroy's Council the two key portfolios (Home and Finance) are still held by British officials. Need this continue?

What of our relationship? Let us if we will excuse the loss of Malaya and Singapore by the disaster of Pearl Harbour which knocked the foundation out of the whole plan. But if war preparation in India had been tackled with the right vision and urgency from 1939 could no Indian divisions have been sent to Burma sufficiently trained and equipped to resist the invader? Indian war production was not tackled with vision and drive from the beginning. Colonel Johnson, the United States Representative, reviewing the position last April said: "India has done a fairly good job of war production, but it is a peace-time job." That is not good enough.

Let us be frank. It has been a record of failure to give inspiring leadership or rise to the needs of the occasion. British leaders connected with this failure cannot now create the atmosphere which is needed. The right men must be found, and there is more than that. British leadership must be conceived in a new way. The old ritual of stiff-necked officialism is out-of-date. In the live field of politics it is Indian Ministers that should hold the platform. Our endeavour must be to strengthen them to do this and they must have a vigorous and inspiring policy not merely in war production but in the field of social measures for which the full pulse of war economy offers so many opportunities.

I am not so optimistic as to imagine that action on these lines

will bring any quick alleviation of the ill-feeling into which we have so unfortunately drifted in India, but it will nonetheless be the right action and worthy of our past record and present responsibility. Also, if steadily pursued, it will help us to retain the prestige and initiative without which we cannot play the part we need to play in achieving our final purpose, helping the Indian parties to find an agreement among themselves and thus make possible the establishment of real self-government in India.

THE "DAILY HERALD"

LONDON, October 21, 1942.

"The Duke of Devonshire added no lustre to the Government's India policy when he spoke in the House of Lords yesterday," wrote the *Daily Herald.*

The paper said: "He faithfully reflected the stolid and self-righteous attitude of his chief, Mr Amery. The Under-Secretary's speech was yet another attempt to justify Government's fatalistic acceptance of a deadlock. 'The next move' he echoed, 'must come from India.' 'Political agitation and exhortation from outside India,' he claimed, 'were giving encouragement to disorderly Indian elements.' But that is a misrepresentation. Not only from outside but from inside India the British Government is being urged to take the initiative again. 'There is one statement in the Duke of Devonshire's speech in the interests of accuracy we welcome. There is no direct evidence,' he said, 'that any enemy influences have been at work in India.' When the Prime Minister spoke about the civil disobedience campaign to the Commons on Septetmber 10 he said: 'It may well be that these activities by Congress Party have been aided by Japanese fifth column work on a widely extended scale and with special direction to strategic points.'"

MR WENDELL WILLKIE

NEW YORK, October 27, 1942.

Mr Wendell Willkie referred to doubts that he had encountered during his trip round the world, when he was asked: "Is there to be no charter of freedom for a billion people in the East? Is freedom supposed to be priceless for the white man of the western world, but of no account in the East?" He continued: "Many of them asked the question which has become almost a symbol all through Asia: What about India? Now I did not go to India and I do not propose to discuss that tangled question, but it is one aspect in the East that I should report. From Cairo onwards it confronted me at every turn. The wisest man in China told me 'when the aspirations of India for freedom were put aside to some future date, it was not Britain that suffered in the public esteem in the Far East, it was the United Nations.' This wisest man was not quarrelling with the British, it was just with British Imperialism in India. He does not happen to believe in it, but he was telling me that by our silence on India we have already drawn heavily on our reservoir of goodwill in the East. The people of the East, who would like to count on us, are doubtful. They cannot ascertain from our Government's wishy-washy attitude towards the problem of India, what we are likely to feel at the end of the war about all the other hundreds of millions of Eastern peoples. They cannot tell from our vacillating talk whether we do stand for freedom or what we mean by freedom. In Africa, the Middle East and throughout the Arab world, as well as in China and the whole Far East, freedom means the orderly but scheduled abolition of the colonial system. I can assure you that the rule of some people by other peoples is not freedom and that is not what we must fight to preserve.

"You must understand that I am not talking about the Common wealth of Free Nations, but I am talking about the colonial system wherever it exists under whatever nation. Americans are still too apt to think and speak of the British Empire. You must recognize the truth that in vast areas of the world there is no longer any British Empire, but instead the Commonwealth of Free Nations. The British colonial possessions are but remnants of their Empire.

"India is our problem. If Japan should conquer that vast subcontinent, we will be the losers. We must believe these simple truths and speak them loudly or there will be lots of tough problems. Not all the peoples of the world are ready for freedom or can defend it the day after tomorrow. But they all want a date to work towards it and some guarantee that the date will be kept. They do not ask us to solve their problems. They ask only for a chance to solve their own problems with our economic and political co-operation. The peoples of the world intend to be free not only for their political satisfaction, but also for their economic advancement."

WILLKIE IS RIGHT, SAYS "THE TIMES"

LONDON, October 28, 1942.

Discussing Mr Willkie's broadcast in an editorial *The Times* states: "He rightly records the anxiety with which other nations are watching the difficulties and hesitations that beset the growing phase of Indian political evolution. In a military sense—and that can have broad application—India is very much a concern of the United Nations. Yet there can be no question about the reality of opportunity which India with British aid has now to grasp nor that it is the outcome of a long, consistent historical process implicit in the British connection itself. But the consummation of that process in complete self-rule depends now primarily upon facts, parties and persons in India itself."

Welcoming Mr Willkie's conception of "common purpose, common counsel and common action," *The Times* declares that the new world for which Mr Willkie and millions in many countries are willing to work cannot be created without the full and sustained participation of the United States."

THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

MANCHESTER, October 28, 1942.

A *Manchester Guardian* editorial says that Mr Wendell Willkie's speech should stir Britons. "The core of the speech was its interpretation of the new spirit of the East and its questions as to what response the West is making to it," the paper declares. Saying that the touchstone is India, the *Manchester Guardian* continues: "Let us hope the British Government will read between the lines and generous phrases how failure in India reacts on the common cause. Mr Willkie will find more people in this country to agree with him about the future of empires and colonial policy than many of his American hearers may think. He has said what diplomatic convention has prevented others from saying. Our leaders will now see perhaps that clearly stated peace aims are themselves part of an offensive."

THE "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION"

Editorially speaking under the title "A plan for India," the *New Statesman and Nation* says: "On the subject of India, Mr Willkie lashed not so much our inaction as America's silence. He wants not merely wishy-washy exhortations but a demand which Britain could not ignore. We agree with him that India makes a problem which concerns the United Nations hardly less than us. It is not enough that Indians should give us advice on the government of their coun-

try. Britain must transfer power to them.

"The excuse that Indians must take the next step is not even plausible. How can they while we refuse access to imprisoned Congress leaders? Mr Rajagopalachari has a plan which he wishes to lay before us here in England. We wish we could be sure that facilities and welcome would be extended to this able and courageous man. His plan errs—if it has a fault—on the side of over-elaboration, but in essentials stresses what must certainly be done and done without delay. He has confident belief that the Congress and the Muslim League would accept the plan. We owe to India, ourselves and the United Nations to give him a chance."

WHY SIR C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR RESIGNED

NEW DELHI, August 22, 1942.

On the eve of his departure Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, in an interview, said: "Speaking in Trivandrum just before I left for Delhi to assume the position that I have relinquished, I said that my main, if not my sole, endeavour would be to help in bringing about reconciliation of the various elements in the body politic that are now following divergent, if not antagonistic, paths. I added that if I succeeded, I should have done my bit for my country. If I failed, I should feel at least, that I had tried hard. There is little doubt that I had failed. I deplore that the most influential political organization in India coupled with their constitutional demand—which whether immediately accepted or not, were still an appropriate basis for discussion and mutual adjustment—programmes which, whatever the intentions of the originator were, have produced, and could not but produce, violent demonstrations of mass feeling and an orgy of purposeless destruction. This is, however, not the time to content one-self with levelling reproaches, for I believe that the issues are so great and the impending risks of the continuance of present conditions so pervasive and so imminent that immediate and resolute action is needed.

"I am even now hopeful that if by the determined and conjoint efforts of all well-meaning persons, the present civil disobedience movement can be immediately called off without the need for further executive action, all that political India is longing for can be soon achieved. Success in constitution-building can only be the result of political compromise, and if the feeling is aroused in British India and in the Indian States that everything will be lost by mutual acerbities and everything can be gained by the cordial discussion of basic issues, the posture of affairs is such that the goal of India can be reached sooner than many persons imagine.

"So far as I know, there is no force than can check the inevitable advance towards complete nationhood if the unity of India and the harmonious alignment of the great elements of the State were achieved. I have been recently unconnected with British Indian politics, but I do not yield to anyone in my adherence to their ideals. May I appeal to the Congress, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the great minorities to come together amongst themselves and with the Indian States (whose place in India must be secure; whose importance cannot be ignored and the all-round progress made by many of them is far in advance of what has been achieved in British India).

"Let us proceed without any doctrinaire preposessions and without *non possumus* attitudes, resolved to end anarchy and as soon as practicable to make India one of the predominant factors, as she is entitled to be, in world affairs during and after this war. Such are and should be the heartfelt prayers of all men and women of goodwill and high hope."

DR E. FORRESTER PATON

(A Christian Missionary working in India)

TIRUPATTUR (North Arcot), August 12, 1942.

The urgency and the gravity of the present situation in India has prompted me to write this open letter to my fellow Britishers. Naturally we may feel somewhat resentful at the demand of the Congress for the immediate withdrawal of the British Power from India, and we may object that this is an impossible time to make such a demand. But if we consider it with an unbiased mind, we shall see that the demand is both just and also clearly in line with the ideals for which the Allied Nations stand. Indeed this should have been done long ago, at the very least, at the beginning of the war. For those who are enjoying the profits of British rule in India to plead that Britain should protect the country from civil war and anarchy and continue implementing our old treaty obligations to exploiting Princes, is unconscious self-deception, and sometimes I fear even conscious hypocricy. When the majority of thinking and public-spirited Indians say that foreign rule must go, we, as liberty-loving people, must be at once prepared to withdraw, and do so in the quickest and most friendly way possible. Only then will a sense of reality come upon the scene and Indians will be set to carve out their (own) destinies even as the Chinese have done and risen to real nobility in doing so.

But we may argue, "Why should this demand be made at this time when India is in danger of invasion? Cannot India wait for the promised independence six months after the end of the war?" There are two cogent reasons against such delay. First, there is no honest man, who can tell what may be the position six months after the war, or what new exigencies may have developed before that time. The second and far more important reason is that the whole world needs just such a proof that Britain is willing to divest herself of all Imperial interests wherever these interests conflict with the expressed desires of the majority of the people affected. It will show the people of subjugated nations and especially the "coloured races" that our ideals of racial equality and freedom are not mere talk, but that we are in dead earnest about them. Above all, the result in India itself would, I believe, be dramatic in uniting the nation behind the Allied cause. During peace time it is not unlikely that Hindus and Muslims might want to haggle and fight with one another, but when faced as they are today by a common danger, they would be drawn into common action with one another and so be led to find a working basis for unity. In this way, I trust that the new India will be born and that she will be a true and willing ally of Britain. I do not doubt that this would involve big difficulties and much upsetting of plans and policy, but for the man of faith that which is right and just is always the most practical thing, because in doing it we bring ourselves into line with God's plan for the world.

Since writing the above I have read the splendid appeal by the Metropolitan for a settlement by impartial arbitration and neutral consent, and I would urge that we all co-operate along the lines he suggests.

ALL-INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS

NAGPUR, September 5, 1942.

A meeting of the General Council of the All-India Trade Union Congress was held here today with Mr V. R. Kalappa in the chair, when a resolution urging the Government to carry on negotiations with the political organizations to secure the early establishment of a National Government both at the Centre and in the Provinces, thus enabling free India to organize complete and effective defence of the country was passed.

The resolution appealed to the Trade Unions and Labour movement in Great Britain to urge their Government to immediately release Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Azad and other Congress leaders and to concede the demand of India for immediate transfer of power to the people as no settlement was possible while the leaders were in jail. An appeal was also sent to the Trade Unions and Labour movement in the United States to bring pressure on their Government to urge the Government of Britain to concede the national demand for the transfer of power.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ASSEMBLY

WASHINGTON, September 5, 1942.

The International Students Assembly representing 38 nations passed a resolution at their Conference here today urging that "on the basis of a National Coalition Government of India negotiations be reopened at once between Great Britain and the Indian people for granting political freedom to mobilize the Indian people for all-out war effort alongside the United Nations.

THE "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION"

LONDON, September 5, 1942.

"At any cost to our Imperial pride this deadlock must be broken," writes the *New Statesman and Nation* today in an editorial headed "Try Again in India."

The paper contends that "India is the most urgent problem facing the Commons when it meets," and terms the situation "dangerous," adding that the Commons must be informed what response the British Government has made to the efforts of responsible persons in India who continue to protest their belief that a National Government to defend India can still be created.

Suggesting finally that President Roosevelt should be requested to nominate a mediator the paper writes: "Given a mixed Hindu-Muslim Government it would suffice to say that there should be no interference so long as this coalition held together. Both would accept the British Commander-in-Chief and agree to shelve the minority issues till after the war. Obstructive as Mr Jinnah is, dare he incur the anger of Indians by rejecting such an offer? The first step should be to request President Roosevelt to name a mediator. The offer of Independence after the war to be realized at India's choice, either within or outside the Commonwealth, should be made in the name of the United Nations."

DR A. D. BELDON

LONDON, September 10, 1942.

Dr A. D. Beldon, former Superintendent of Whitefields Tabernacle, London, stated today that he had sent telegrams to the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury on the Indian situation. He begs the Archbishop to advise the King to intervene constitutionally as the Emperor and invite Mahatma Gandhi to London for a new discussion. "Unprecedented peril demands unprecedented action," he says in the telegram to the Primate.

"OBSERVER'S" WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

LONDON, September 27, 1942.

"Perhaps a specific thing that can be said about the Indian problem from the American standpoint today is that it is very definitely up for review in the light of the mounting demand for a settlement of the differences that are undermining the Allies' moral as well as their material position," says the Washington correspondent of the *Observer*.

Declaring that the Washington authorities believe it important for Britain to realise that American opinion about India is not what it was a few weeks ago, he writes: "The difficulty of Britain's position is of

course appreciated but it is necessary to record that the Prime Minister's statement of September 10 did not make a favourable impression here. It was interpreted as unnecessarily arbitrary and as indicating that Britain having got one foot through the door had been rebutted and she had nevertheless forced her way in, slammed the door shut and determined to keep it shut. From the American standpoint this interpretation was confirmed by subsequent events."

FABIAN SOCIETY

LONDON, October 5, 1942.

Following the recent emergency conference on India organized by the Fabian Society, Fabian socialists are now circularising a statement among Labour Members of the House of Commons and others, emphasizing the urgency of reopening negotiations with responsible Indian leaders. Declaring that "we need India as an ally, she must therefore be approached as an ally and not as an enemy," the statement demands the immediate constitution of a fully responsible National Government. As proof of the sincerity of the offer, the Fabians suggest that an Indian be appointed Viceroy and that the functions of the India office be transferred to the Dominions office.

UNITED STATES RELIGIOUS LEADERS

NEW YORK, October 12, 1942.

United States religious leaders, in an open letter, have asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to join them in a statement urging President Roosevelt to mediate on the India question. Dr Temple is asked to join in the statement because "it would have an added force, if its objective of a mutually satisfactory settlement of the Indian crisis, were to find a strong, sustained response in Great Britain."

The open letter stated: "Not only because of the eminent position you occupy in the Church, but also because of the view on world affairs which has for so long and so widely been associated with your name, there could be no response approving the purpose of this statement which could be more effective than yours."

Both the letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the statement are published in the *Churchman*, the journal of the American Episcopal Church.

MR EDWIN HOWARD

LONDON, October 20, 1942.

Mr Edwin Howard, a former journalist in India and an Information Officer in the India Office from 1928 to 1930, in a letter to the London *Times* today suggests that the Government should set up at once in India a permanent Mixed Commission to prepare for the transfer of authority to "a constituted Government which would emerge from the labours of the yet to be appointed constitution-making body." He adds: "The composition of the Mixed Commission should be of such a character as to command respect from all concerned in India's future."

U.S. SOCIALISTS

The Socialist Party in the United States of America has sent messages of greetings to Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and Mr V. V. Giri conveying the assurance both on behalf of the Socialist Party and the Post-war World Council and also unofficially on behalf of millions of Americans that they support India's demand for Independence, and expresses the hope that the association of India with the free nations in resistance to Japanese aggression will guarantee peace and freedom for mankind. The Socialist Party attaches the greatest importance to co-operation of the peoples of India and China.

MR PAUL HUNTER

NEW YORK, October 21, 1942.

The suggestion that the British Parliament should pass a law im-

mediately providing for full and complete independence for India with effect from say January 1, 1948, is made by publisher Paul Hunter in the American magazine *Liberty* today.

Asserting that this seems to be a simple and easy solution of the difficulty, provided both sides are sincere in their protestations, Mr Hunter writes: "By that time, the war should be won. India will have had five years to prepare for Independence. British interests in India will have had five years to withdraw. This was the procedure the United States followed in the Philippines."

"LIFE" EDITORS' OPEN LETTER

NEW YORK, November 8, 1942.

The following are relevant extracts from an "Open Letter" addressed by the Editors of the American magazine *Life,* to the people of England, on the war and peace aims of the United Nations.

"Doubtless it is presumptuous for a single periodical to attempt to speak for the American people. Nevertheless, the editors of *Life,* in writing you this open letter, make no apology for their presumption. We assure you that we do speak, in this instance, for a large portion of our 134,000,000 fellow citizens. We are writing you in a crisis of civilization that mortally concerns us both. No two peoples on this earth are so close as we, whether in their institutions, or their language, or by ties of blood. It is important for us in a most selfish sense that England stand. We therefore take the liberty of addressing you as members of our own family...."

After describing the contribution in men, money and materials of the United States during this war, the letter continues: "But now to get down to the particular point of this letter, we want to know frankly what you are prepared to do to help us....What we need is something that we have never in all our history—with but few exceptions—received from the English people, namely, concessions in policy. We Americans may have some disagreement among ourselves as to what we are fighting for, but one thing we are sure we are not fighting for is to hold the British Empire together....If your strategists are planning a war to hold the British Empire together, they will sooner or later find themselves strategizing all alone....Quit fighting a war to hold the Empire together and join with us and Russia and your other Allies to fight a war to win by whatever strategy is best for all of us. But if you cling to the Empire at the expense of a United Nations' victory you will lose the war, because you will lose us."

Defining the war aims of the Americans in this war the letter adds: "But let us remind you that one reason we haven't defined them is that we are not convinced that you would fight for them, even if they were defined. For instance we realize that you have a difficult problem in India, but we don't see that your 'solution' to date provides any evidence of principles of any kind. In the light of what you are doing in India, how do you expect us to talk about 'principles' and look our soldiers in the eye?

"The nearest we can get to explaining what we take for the foundation principle of this war is the plain fact which most of us in America have discovered: that if one wants to be free, one cannot be free alone—one must be free with other people. In order to have our own freedom we are learning that others must have freedom."

A PREMIER "DISMISSED"

SEQUEL TO RENUNCIATION OF TITLES

KARACHI, October 10, 1942.

Premier Allah Bakhsh has been removed from office by the Governor this morning as he no longer possessed the Governor's confidence. It is understood that before removal Mr Allah Bakhsh refused to resign his Premiership and the removal followed.

Mr Allah Bakhsh, as he was leaving the Secretariat this afternoon, was asked by journalists: "Is it true you are no longer Premier?" To this Mr Allah Bakhsh replied: "Yes, I am no longer the Premier. Ask me nothing more."

The following *communiqué* was issued from Government House at 2-20 p.m.:—

"His Excellency the Governor of Sind has discussed with Mr Allah Bakhsh his recent renunciation of honours and the reasons for the renunciation given in his published letter. In the light of that discussion he has had no option but to inform Mr Allah Bakhsh that he no longer possesses the Governor's confidence and that he cannot in consequence continue to hold office."

"My dismissal had no connection whatever with any constitutional issue," said Mr Allah Bakhsh when he met journalists this evening. He disclosed that when he met the Governor at 11 this morning the Governor handed him a message from the Viceroy in reply to his (Mr Allah Bakhsh's) letter renouncing his honours. This message from the Viceroy read:—

"I have received your letter regarding the honours that had been conferred on you and I observe with regret the precipitate and discourteous way in which you have released it to the Press. I can not accept the suggestions you make in that letter, which you must well know are without any foundation. His Excellency the Governor will communicate to you regarding the effect on your present position of the decision taken."

In reply to other questions Mr Allah Bakhsh said: "There was no point in not recognizing that under the constitution as it stands the Premier remains the Premier only if he has the confidence of the Governor and not merely if he has the confidence of the legislature." He admitted that the Premier could be dimissed, but he could not say whether dismissal was under a particular section of the Government of India Act or under the Instrument of Instructions. Asked how exactly it was that he was told that he had to go, Mr Allah Bakhsh said, that after delivering the Viceroy's message the Governor communicated to him the 'effect' mentioned in the Viceroy's message and that effect was that he could not any longer continue as Premier. He was told it was open to him to resign but he declined to do so.

TWO-FOLD OBJECTIVE

KARACHI, September 26, 1942.

"I believe in two things, defeating British imperialism, at the same time resisting Nazism and Fascism. It is my birthright to fight both," Premier Allah Bakhsh said this at a Press conference today, announcing the renunciation of his titles, at which he was asked whether the step would make any difference to his retaining his seat in the National Defence Council. The Premier added: "Whatever I think will help my twofold objectives I shall retain. Whatever I consider useless I shall throw away."

Replying to the question whether the renunciation was a direct result of Mr Churchill's speech, the Premier said: "It is the cumu-

lative result of the feeling that the British Government does not want to part with power, but Mr Churchill's speech shattered all hopes."

Asked how he thought a solution of the impasse could be brought about, the Premier said: "By the creation of a National Government. If there is a will there can be a way. There need be no constitutional difficulties. For example, representatives to the Centre could be selected through provincial legislatures. The Government could satisfy themselves that those to whom they will be handing power would be prepared to give the fullest support in resisting aggression. If the proposals are such that real power is imparted and the Congress does not agree, then the Congress could be blamed." The Premier added: "In this connection I have no doubt the Congress has no sympathy whatever either with Germany or with Japan."

Asked whether he would take further steps to bring about a settlement, the Premier said: "Wait and see." "Do you think any change for the better will take place?" "It must. The National demand cannot be suppressed. It only means more sacrifices. The more the repression the greater the bitterness, and the harm caused would be more to British interests than to ours."

A correspondent asked: "Do you support the Congress movement?" "Which Congress movement?" asked the Premier. "The civil disobedience movement?' I do not know if there is any Congress civil disobedience movement. Sporadic disturbances seem to have resulted from a movement without leaders. I have no hesitation in condemning them. They do the greatest harm to the interests of the country."

LETTER TO VICEROY

The following is the full text of Mr Allah Bakhsh's letter to the Viceroy:—

I beg to inform your Excellency that I have decided to renounce both the honours I hold from the British Government as I feel I cannot consistently with my views and convictions retain them any longer.

India has been struggling for her national freedom for a long time past. Upon the outbreak of the present war it was hoped that under the very principles and ideology, in defence of which the Allies were waging a titanic conflict, India would be made free and participate in the world struggle as a free country. Convinced as I am that India has every right to be free and that the people of India should have conditions in which they could live in peace and harmony, the declaration and action of the British Government have made it clear that, instead of giving their co-operation to various Indian parties and communities in settling their differences and parting with power to the people of the land and allowing them to live happily in freedom and mould the destinies of their country according to their birthright, the policy of the British Government has been to continue their imperialistic hold on India and persist in keeping her under subjection, use the political and communal differences for propaganda purposes, and crush the national forces to serve their own imperialistic aims and intentions.

The latest speech delivered by Mr Winston Churchill in the House of Commons has caused the greatest disappointment to all men of goodwill who wish to see rendered to India justice which is long due to her. As that hapless pronouncement withholds such justice from India and adds to the volume of evidence that Britain has no desire to give up her imperialistic hold on India, I feel I cannot retain the honours I hold from the British Government which in the circumstances that have arisen I cannot but regard as tokens of British imperialism.

BAN ON CONTACT WITH GANDHIJI

VICEROY REFUSES MR RAJAGOPALACHARI'S REQUEST

Following the grave disturbances which occurred in the country and the severe measures adopted to quell them, Mr C. Rajagopalachari, former Premier in the Congress Ministry in Madras during the years 1937-39, interviewed the Viceroy to seek facilities to discuss the political situation with Mahatma Gandhi. The interview took place on November 12, 1942, at New Delhi. Permission to see Mahatma Gandhi was refused to Mr Rajagopalachari. Strong protests were voiced in the country against the refusal. The Viceroy issued a statement justifying his action. This, however, carried no conviction, and the charge that the Viceroy had taken upon himself the responsibility of arriving at a decision on Mr Rajagopalachari's request, without consulting his Council, remained. The Viceroy therefore held a meeting of his Council on the 13th, which was followed by a further *communiqué* associating the Government of India with the Viceroy's policy. It, however, failed to give a straight answer to the question as to whether the Council had been consulted prior to the refusal. Indeed there could possibly have been no consultation, since the categorical refusal was given to Mr Rajagopalachari straightway at his interview with the Viceroy.

NEW DELHI, November 12, 1942.

The following is a Press account of an interview Mr Rajagopalachari gave to Indian and foreign correspondents immediately after his meeting with the Viceroy:—

"The Viceroy has been pleased to refuse me permission to meet Gandhiji," said Mr C. Rajagopalachari at a Press conference in New Delhi on November 12, 1942, referring to the Viceroy's refusal of his request to meet Mahatma Gandhi so as to resolve the political deadlock. The interview with the Viceroy started at the unusually early hour of 9-15 a.m., and ended a few minutes before 10. Mr Rajagopalachari continued: "He was very prompt in giving me the interview I asked him for it last night and I was able to see him this morning."

"Was this refusal a surprise to you?" asked a correspondent. "It was a surprise to me," replied Mr Rajagopalachari. "I would not have bothered to ask permission to see Gandhiji if there was not a reasonable chance of a political settlement. I had no other object except to get a political settlement."

"His refusal means," he went on, "that a settlement of the political deadlock has been blocked. Even according to the British, no settlement is possible without the Congress or Gandhiji or both being in it, and, when the Viceroy refuses permission to me to see Gandhiji, it means all chance of a settlement is shut off."

Replying to another question, Mr Rajagopalachari said: "Mr Jinnah knew that I was going to ask for permission to see Gandhiji and Mr Jinnah now knows the result also. Everybody interested in the solution of the political deadlock, including Mr Jinnah—in my opinion, whatever other people may think about him, he is as interested in a solution as others—will be deeply disappointed with the refusal of the Viceroy, because, without any immodesty on my part I may say I am the only person at this present juncture who can and who ought to go to Gandhiji, and when I am refused permis-

sion everybody interested in the solution must be disappointed. It is not as if I am proud of my position. It is a difficult position. I cannot ask Mr Jinnah to go. I am the only man who could go. I could go on his behalf, but on my own account and not with his authority.

"Permission to me to go and speak to Gandhiji would not have made anybody believe that the Government was climbing down. That cannot possibly be the reason for the refusal. It is only at my request that the Viceroy would be permitting me. It would not in any manner have prejudiced the authority or prestige of the Government."

Asked about his future plans, Mr Rajagopalachari said: "You will sympathize with me that I am suffering from a certain amount of confusion at the present moment and you cannot expect me to make my plans in this state of mind. Even if I had secured permission this morning, I would not have gone to see Gandhiji the day after tomorrow. I would have had some work to do in the country before seeing him. Since permission has been refused, it is difficult for me to settle my plans straightway. My plans are difficult to make."

Questioned about his plan to go to England, he said: "Two views may be taken. It may be said I should go to England all the more because the Viceroy has refused permission. On the other hand, it may be asked: 'What can I do in England without having seen Gandhiji? Any plans that I could suggest and press in England would depend on previous knowledge of Gandhiji's mind. That has been cut off.' "

"In spite of what I have said," he went on, "I would like to go to England. Though the refusal makes me feel pessimistic about the utility of going to England, I would like to go there to protest against the state of things here."

"I think my work lies in England and India," he reiterated in reply to another suggestion that he should visit America. "If America takes notice of these things of her own accord, if the things happening in India are important enough from America's point of view, America should take notice of them. I do not want to put pressure on England by putting pressure on America."

"I believe the Viceroy is the authority and his is the final voice. In fact I think he has the key in his hands," he asserted. He expressed his belief that the Viceroy would communicate to London their conversation that morning. "If you ask me whether the Viceroy would change his decision later, I would say this that this decision is so wrong that it must be altered. I think it is bound to be altered. I think it is bound to be altered soon. Apart from the time factor, the error factor is also there."

"Did the Viceroy give you the impression that he was giving his decision in consultation with the Members of the Executive Council?" asked a questioner. "I got no such impression," replied Mr Rajagopalachari.

GOVERNMENT 'COMMUNIQUE'

NEW DELHI, November 12, 1942.

A *communiqué* issued from the Viceroy's House this evening states:

The Governor-General saw Mr C. Rajagopalachari today at his own request. Mr Rajagopalachari explained the endeavours he had been making to find a political solution and asked to be allowed to interview Mr Gandhi. Mr Rajagopalachari made it clear that he was not representing any party organization and could speak only for himself. He was unable to produce any evidence of complete support for his proposals. The Governor-General is most anxious at

all times to further all reasonable efforts to achieve a settlement and he made his attitude clear to Mr Rajagopalachari. But he added that the attitude of the Congress leaders appeared to remain entirely unchanged. There had been no expression of regret for a policy that had for the last three months resulted in so much violence and bloodshed and there was no sign of any change of heart. The attitude of the Congress leaders appeared to be the same as it was before the arrest of Mr Gandhi and the meeting of the Working Committee last August. In the absence of a change of attitude on the part of the Congress leaders there could be no question of special facilities for discussions with persons under restraint for revolutionary activities whose expressed and published aims were wholly inconsistent with the maintenance of peace and order in India and the prosecution of the war. It was not possible in these circumstances to give Mr Rajagopalachari the permission for which he had asked."

THE KING'S SPEECH

The following passage relating to India occurred in the King's speech proroguing Parliament on November 10, 1942:—

My Government in the United Kingdom have declared to the Princes and people of India their desire to see India assume full freedom and independence within the British Commonwealth of Nations on the basis of a constitution framed by Indians themselves immediately after the termination of hostilities. In the meantime representative Indian political leaders were invited to co-operate fully in the government of their country and in the prosecution of the war. I regret profoundly that hitherto they had not been willing to accept this offer. I sincerely hope wiser counsels may prevail and that a speedy and successful conclusion of these difficulties may be brought about through a wider measure of agreement among the Indian peoples themselves.

MR RAJAGOPALACHARI REPLIES TO 'COMMUNIQUE'

NEW DELHI, November 13, 1942.

Mr Rajagopalachari in a statement to the British Press on the Viceroy's refusal observed:

I feel strongly that Lord Linlithgow has done a substantial disservice to the very cause which he sought to serve, namely, the evolution of a United India behind the Allied forces in the East and more particularly the abandonment of sabotage and subversive activities, which began with the arrests of national leaders. I went to see the Viceroy in great hope. But I got a disappointing answer which has, for the time being, blocked completely all prospects of a settlement. This has disappointed not only me. Mr Jinnah's paper, *Dawn,* writes this morning: "The political situation, bad as it is, would not have been worsened by Mr Rajagopalachari meeting Mr Gandhi and giving him a true account of the 'big move' together with the President of the All-India Muslim League." The paper comments on the event almost in the same terms as I did after returning from the Viceroy when about forty representatives of Indian and foreign papers met me.

Referring to the Governor-General's Press *communique* issued later on Thursday evening defending the refusal of permission to see Gandhiji, Mr Rajagopalachari said: "We had no discussion over my proposals for a Provincial Government or support secured for them among political groups in this very country. Our conversation was wholly spent on the single question of my being permitted to visit Gandhiji. I put before him my conviction and necessity for conversation with Gandhiji and the hope of a settlement with the Muslim League based thereon. I am puzzled by the relevancy of the state-

ment in the *communiqué* that I was unable to produce any evidence of concrete support to these proposals. Had such a question been put, I should have gladly discussed it. But I felt my proposals for a Provisional Government and support from important political parties could arise only after my talks with Gandhiji. The Viceroy's action has caused deep disappointment to me and equal dissatisfaction to Mr Jinnah.

The King's speech reiterating in explicit terms the declaration of India's future status conveyed in the Cripps Memorandum was an event of importance. But what Mr Churchill said at the Mansion House about British war aims has surged up a fresh wave of distrust in India, too violent to be set right by the passage in the King's speech. The Viceroy's refusal of my request has aggravated the situation. Neither Muslims nor Hindus can now believe that the British Government are really anxious to bring about a speedy and successful conclusion of the difficulties in the way of a satisfactory interim Government being established in India through a wider measure of agreement among Indian peoples, as declared in the King's speech. The task of making India trust Britain was difficult enough. But the refusal of facilities for coming to an agreement has added greatly to that difficulty. But for the Viceroy's assurance to me that this was not the final word on the subject, I should have called this a fatal blunder. The refusal of the Viceroy and the argument on which it is based amount to this, that what Congress leaders did in Bombay should be visited with the punishment of preventing a truly efficient Government being set up for the war period. My views regarding the present disturbances and sabotage are no less clear and emphatic than the Viceroy's. I felt my seeing Gandhiji would probably help in terminating the disturbances. Gandhiji has always considered himself civilly dead as soon as he was put in confinement by the Government. He has never considered it right to seek to direct the progress of events from inside the prison. He would take up the direction of events only if called upon by the Government. My hope was to make him see clearly what has developed since his retirement into prison and make him agree to what I felt would satisfy Mr Jinnah and thereby render an immediate solution of the political deadlock possible.

DID VICEROY CONSULT HIS COUNCIL?

BOMBAY, November 13, 1942.

The following statement was issued by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad:—

The refusal of the Viceroy to give permission to Mr C. Rajagopalachari to see Mr Gandhi is, to say the least, most unfortunate. The ground given for such refusal is that until the Congress leaders change their attitude and give up their revolutionary movement, such permission cannot be granted. It is strangely forgotten, however that if Mr Rajagopalachari succeeded in persuading Mr Gandhi to accept some scheme of settlement with the Muslim League, that itself would involve the giving up by the Congress of the revolutionary movement. If on the contrary Mr Rajagopalachari had failed in inducing Mr Gandhi to arrive at a resolution of the political deadlock acceptable to all parties, then the action of the Government in interning him and the other Congress leaders would be more than justified. . . .

In this connection another point arises, namely, whether the refusal of Mr Rajagopalachari's request by the Viceroy was on his own responsibility or had the concurrence of the Members of his Executive Council. The responsibility for the internment of the Congress leaders is in law the responsibility not of the Viceroy alone but of the Governor-General in Council, and I believe Mr Amery the other day said so. If I remember rightly, a good many of the Indian

Members of the Executive Council said publicly that they had agreed to the internment of the Congress leaders. Either the Indian Members were consulted by the Viceroy before refusing Mr Rajagopalachari's request or they were not. If they were not consulted, it is expected of them that they should assert their right to be consulted. Moreover, it was in the air for a long time that Mr Rajagopalachari would seek permission to see Mr Gandhi. Knowing this, did the Indian Members or any of them tender advice or express their view in favour of granting such request? Or is it true what Sir Mahomed Usman said, that the Indian Members give advice only when such advice is asked for?*

SECOND GOVERNMENT 'COMMUNIQUE'

NEW DELHI, November 13, 1942.

The following Government 'communiqué was issued today in reply to criticisms that the Viceroy did not consult his Executive Council in refusing permission to Mr Rajagopalachari:—

"In view of the statements which have appeared in the Press, the Government of India desire to make it clear that the decision recently taken on Mr Rajagopalachari's request to be allowed to see Mr Gandhi represents the considered policy of the Government of India."

SIR TEJ ASKS FOR FRESH HANDS

ALLAHABAD, November 15, 1942.

"I deeply regret that Mr Rajagopalachari should have been refused permission to go and interview Mr Gandhi," said Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, in an interview to the *Hindu* and the *Manchester Guardian.*

He added: "It is no use admiring Mr Rajagopalachari and then blocking his way to a settlement. No man in his position can give a guarantee as to results, but an effort like this, to restore peace and to win over those who, in the loss of their faith, have taken a step which others like me not connected with the Congress might reject, should have been positively encouraged. Mr Rajagopalachari's motives cannot be questioned, nor his judgment nor his gifts as a negotiator. I do not know if the Governor-General is himself directly responsible for this decision or whether he sought confirmation of it afterwards from his Councillors, but whoever be responsible for this decision I trust his judgment will not be endorsed in circles in England which are anxious that the present deadlock should come to an end. Mr Rajagopalachari might or might not succeed with Mr Jinnah or Mr Gandhi, but why should anyone deter him from making an effort to bring about that unity between Britain and India or between different sections of Indians which is the crying need of India today?

"This is not going to help in the fruition of that hope which the Sovereign expressed the other day for a wider measure of agreement. I personally think, though I regret to have to say it, that the solution of the Indian problem now needs to be entrusted to fresh hands. Will England rise to the occasion or succumb to considerations of prestige? The longer the delay in taking the necessary steps for the revival of a spirit of goodwill of the people, the worse would be the consequences. The problem today, in my opinion, is not merely one of law and order which can be restored by firm measures. It is essentially a political problem, and political faith can be revived only by remedies of the right type."

* See chapter headed "Functions of Viceroy's Council."

THE "STAR OF INDIA"

CALCUTTA, November 14, 1942.

Writing under the caption "Regrettable," the *Star of India* says: "Surely the political situation, which is very bad indeed at the moment, would not have been worse if Mr Rajagopalachari was allowed to meet Mr Gandhi."

Referring to Mr Rajagopalachari's statement before the Press conference at Delhi that "Mr Jinnah made me see the prospect of a settlement distinctly before me," and that "we are very close together and there is a very small gap to be bridged," the paper writes: "That being the case, all who sincerely wish to see India get over the nightmare of the Congress 'big move' and take to the imperative task of mobilizing all resources for the defence of India against Axis aggression, will regret that a splendid opportunity has been lost by the Viceroy."

VICEROY'S TERM EXTENDED

CRITICAL TREND OF COMMENTS

NEW DELHI, December 7, 1942.

The following announcement has today been made from 10, Downing Street, London, says an official *communiqué*:—

"His Excellency the Most Honourable the Marquess of Linlithgow, P.C., K.T., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., with the approval of the King-Emperor, at the special request of His Majesty's Government, who place on record their high confidence in him, has consented to a further extension of his term as Viceroy and Governor-General of India for six months, namely until October 1943."

LONDON "TIMES" ON VICEROY'S EXTENSION

LONDON, December 8, 1942.

In an editorial on the announcement of the extension of Lord Linlithgow's term as Viceroy, *The Times* writes: "Some advantages of varying weight may no doubt be claimed for the retention of Lord Linlithgow's services for a further half year, though they must have been in the mind of the Government already when the search for his successor was going forward. The military situation in India must still be accounted critical and the devoted assistance which the present Viceroy has rendered to successive Commanders-in-Chief in India is well known and widely appreciated." The paper thinks that "an unfortunate impression will be left in many places that Government have again failed to make up their minds on a question of paramount importance."

Pointing out that it is the third successive extension, the paper says: "It cannot be supposed that Lord Linlithgow would himself have welcomed this further exacting demand, though he will once more recognize the obligation to sacrifice his own interests and predilections to the call made upon him. It would be equally difficult to pretend that the decision will be greeted with general satisfaction in India, in this country or in other countries where the destinies of India are being followed with sympathetic and anxious attention. The conviction reigned almost everywhere that the appointment of a new Viceroy would be the signal for a fresh approach to the far-reaching issues of Indian policy."

The paper concludes: "Meanwhile, no occasion should even now be missed of eliciting by forward action sufficient agreement among Indians to render possible further transfer of authority to Indian hands."

"MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" ON "HAPPY SILENT FAMILY"

LONDON, December 9, 1942.

The *Manchester Guardian* in an editorial says:—

There is after all no reason to be surprised that Lord Linlithgow should be asked to prolong his term as Viceroy of India for another six months. He has been in full agreement so far is known with the policy of the Home Government both when it is making new proposals and when it is saying that no new proposals could be made. He has just decided again fully agreeing with the Government that no one is to see Congress prisoners even in order to find out whether the parties can come together, it being understood of course that nothing can be done until they do. It is not to be expected in such a situation when the new Viceroy will have to carry out the Government's fixed negative policy that anyone should decide to take the post. So Lord

Linlithgow, Mr Amery and the Government remain together a happy silent family patiently saying 'no' to anyone who interrupts.

"DAILY HERALD'S" COMMENT

LONDON, December 9, 1942.

Commenting on the extension of Lord Linlithgow's term as Viceroy of India, the *Daily Herald* suggests that in his failure to find an eligible successor the Prime Minister took too restricted a view of the qualifications which fit a man to be Viceroy, and continues: 'We hope that during the six months' grace he will look farther and choose boldly. If the delay saves us from what we have feared—the appointment of some dreary political stick-in-the-mud—it will have been worth while. We hope for more. We hope that during the six months, positive steps will be taken by the Government to improve our political relations with India and to end the deadlock over which Mr Amery so self-righteously presides. For it is not enough to choose a good Viceroy; the chosen man must begin his work in a good atmosphere.

NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL

LONDON, December 26, 1942.

Officers of the National Peace Council have sent a cable to Lord Linlithgow, Viceroy of India, urging him to mark the extension of his term of office by a "fresh effort with Indian leaders to end the present political deadlock." Among the signatories are, Sir Arthur Eddington, President; the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr E. W. Barnes; the Chief Rabbi Dr J. H. Hertz; Lady Parmoor and the Dean of Canterbury, Dr Hewlett Johnson.

NON-PARTY LEADERS' STATEMENT

RESPONSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT STRESSED

ALLAHABAD, December 15, 1942.

A statement issued by the Standing Committee of the Non-Party Leaders' Conference which met here says:—

The recent Indian speeches of prominent British statesmen may be described as savouring of skilful propaganda designed to persuade the Allied Nations, and more particularly the doubting Americans and the sympathetic Chinese, that the root cause of Indian unrest lies deep in the historic diversities of race, religion, culture and political outlook of the Indian people and not in British reluctance to part with real power.

It is an incontestable fact that the British are the real repositories of power, both political and administrative. Since the outbreak of the war this power has been greatly increased by the suspension of the Constitution in six Provinces. In these Provinces British Governors wield absolute authority with the exclusive help of advisers drawn largely from the British members of the Indian Civil Service. The executive heads of the police force, called Inspectors-general, are British. The exigencies of the war have placed in the hands of Governors the widest power of arrest and detention without trial; special courts have been created. There is control over the Press and over all public associations. The legislatures, of course, are not functioning. In brief, the rule of law has been to a great extent replaced by rule by ordinance. The constitutional position is thus in some important respects worse than it has ever been since the Crown assumed responsibility for the Government of India nearly a hundred years ago. In Provinces where the Constitution is still functioning the discretionary powers of the Governor are frequently used with regard to questions relating to law and order.

As regards the Central Government, the power of the Governor-General to pass ordinances has seriously affected the position of the legislature and the Executive Council. Much stress is laid on the fact that the Governor-General's Executive Council has an Indian majority. This is true, but it is also true that the vital departments of Finance, of Home affairs and of War Transport are in charge of British Members, and the first two departments have always been so held since the advent of British rule in India. Even Secretaryships of these two departments have never to this day been permanently held by Indians. Besides, the working of the expanded Council has created no little dissatisfaction. Some Indian members of the Council have publicly stated that the initiative for discussing vital political questions agitating the country in the Executive Council can be taken not by them but only by the Governor-General. Such confessions and the general situation have shaken the confidence of the people in the Council. They have shown that while the Indian Members are supporting administrative and legislative measures adopted by the British authorities which have curtailed the liberties of the people and hit hard large sections of the population which have taken no part in the recent disturbances, they are powerless to mould the policy of Government in regard to the freedom of the country. It seems that they are treated only as administrative heads of departments and have no decisive share in political matters.

Indians are now told that they must take the initiative and present a united demand to the British Government before the present deadlock can be removed. They are entitled to ask what Government were doing during the fateful weeks after the failure of the Cripps mission.

Was there not a regrettable lack of initiative on their part when the situation was so rapidly deteriorating? And in view of their possession of all real power have they no responsibility for solving the Indian problem? They have refused hitherto to shoulder their moral responsibility to take steps which will facilitate a political settlement, but will they even now declare unequivocally that if an agreement is arrived at they will part with power so that India may occupy the position which Australia does? Apart from this, if Government are so insistent that the major parties in India should present an agreed demand, how do they reconcile this with their refusal to allow public men of the eminence of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Working President of the Hindu Mahasabha, and of Mr Rajagopalachari, ex-Premier of Madras, even to interview Mahatma Gandhi in prison? If the intention is to treat the Congress for the period of the war as a body of rebels then all reference to agreement between the major elements in India's life should be discarded for the moment. Profession and practice should not be so cynically inconsistent.

The Standing Committee hold strongly that acts of sabotage, or arson, murder and loot cannot advance the real interests of this country and must be unequivocally condemned. But while violent crime has to be put down with a firm hand methods which aim at terrorising the people or humiliating them should be discouraged and discarded. The imposition of collective fines irrespective of individual guilt, their summary realization and the fact that they are almost exclusively levied on one community has created a bitter feeling of injustice. There should be a radical alteration of policy in this respect and in view of many and persistent complaints regarding the manner in which law and order have been restored an inquiry should be held into the alleged official excesses.

The present policy of Government has created an acute and profound feeling of frustration and resentment in the country. The existing state of things shows not merely lack of statesmanship but also lack of efficiency. Judging by the industrial policy followed by Government even during the war and their failure to provide the people with sufficient food at reasonable prices they have failed in vital matters affecting the nation in this crisis. Even those who are not associated with extreme policies are deeply dissatisfied with the authorities and are beginning to feel that Government have no settled policy of a progressive character to follow. Britain can gain the friendship of India not by boasting that the number of British troops in this country is greater now than it was ever before in the history of the British connection, but by transferring the largest amount of power to Indians during the war and thus convincing them that the British authorities genuinely desire to make India free and self-governing.

AMERICAN INTEREST IN INDIA

NEW YORK, December 15, 1942.

The *New York World Telegram's* diplomatic correspondent, William Simms, commenting on Mr William Phillips's appointment, says: "Officially Anglo-Indian relations are none of our business, but with over a million dough-boys overseas, many within or on the fringes of the British Empire, we cannot help being interested in what is going on."

Pointing out India's enormous offensive and defensive importance in the East Asia war, Simms says: "Even if we are lucky and everything goes well for the duration, India will be one of the greatest post-war problems which the Allies have to face. In India and China, neighbour nations, swarm over half the world's population and on their political and economic status after the war, to a very large extent, depend our own and Europe's future. So the United States cannot wash her hands of India even if she wanted."

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

LONDON, December 16, 1942.

Removal of the ban on conversations between the interned Congress Party leaders and responsible third parties is urged by the Society of Friends in a plea for conciliation in India. The Society "earnestly asks for the co-operation of our fellow Christians in promoting steps to an understanding and in impressing upon the Government that the policy of the closed door is contrary to Christian public opinion."

"JOHN BULL" ON EASY WAY OUT

LONDON, December 1, 1942.

"The one great danger is India. For the Indian crisis has not been resolved by the arrest of Gandhi, Nehru and Azad. There is a grave risk of further civil strife. If our army there is engaged in dealing with civil disorders, Japan will be tempted to invade," writes *John Bull*, one of the oldest and influential political journals in Britain, commenting on the Indian situation.

Continuing, the journal writes: "Yet if both sides could but see it, there is an easy way out for the British Government and the Indian people. Let an effort be made to increase the scope of that chiefly Indian Council. Let us try to include Congress and Muslim leaders among its members. Let us try to convince the Indian masses of the truth—that here, right now, they have the opportunity to govern themselves."

In conclusion, the paper says: "Our promise has gone forth that, after the war the Indian people will have Dominion Status. The means already exist by which they can be made to feel that the struggle against Axis aggression is a part of their own struggle for freedom. But it is our duty to make it clear that self-rule is theirs for the asking—not in some halcyon paradise, but quickly and definitely."

MR ROBERT NORTON ON CONCILIATION

NEW YORK, December 1, 1942.

Urging an early solution of the Indian problem, the Secretary of the "American Round Table on India," Mr Robert Norton, in a letter to the New York *Times*, says: "The Indian deadlock must be broken to prepare an offensive *via* Burma in order to re-establish overland communications with China. . . . The greatest need of the United Nations for preparing the Burma offensive is a conciliatory solution of the Indian deadlock which will bring about the full participation of the Indian people in the war alongside of the Allies with a unified command."

"INDIA OUR PROBLEM"

NEW YORK, December 2, 1942.

Speaking here Mr Melvin J. Maas, Representative for Minnesota, said that real victory could only be achieved by destroying the causes which produced Hitler and the Japanese war lords. He added: "We cannot hope to accomplish this objective if we fight or if the people fear that we fight only to preserve and restore the British Empire or create a new American Empire. India is as much our problem as it is England's."

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN ON NON-VIOLENCE

CALCUTTA, December 12, 1942.

Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University, delivering his 'Kamla Lecture' today at the Calcutta University, expressed the belief that one day the world would look back on Mahatma Gandhi and salute him as one born out of his time, as one who had seen the light in a dark and savage world.

The present war and Mahatma Gandhi's policy of non-violence, he said, were turning their attention to the problem of the use of force in society. According to the Hindu view, non-violence as a mental state was different from non-resistance. It was absence of malice and hatred. Himsa or violence was different from danda or punishment which was the legal restraint of the guilty. "Force is not the law-giver but the servant of the law in such cases. Even ascetics are obliged to use violence. Only by great effort they reduce it to a minimum. Our endeavour should be to substitute persuasion for force and reduce the scope for the employment of force as much as possible."

Remarking that it was not right to contend that war satisfied a natural instinct, Sir Sarvapalli pointed out that man was not a beast of prey. "Human behaviour was full of acquired attitudes. Man was the only animal that killed for reasons which were more or less metaphysical. Once upon a time war might have been relatively cleaner when it was conducted to rules. But now we have moved from flint to steel, from steel to gun-powder and from gun-powder to poison gas and disease germs, and we are called upon to fight with hatred for our enemy, with our heads full of scientific cunning and our hearts full with savage hatred. We throw ourselves against masses of humanity for attaining national aggrandisement. We cannot say that our wars are always just. In this war all the belligerents appeal to God and look upon their case as absolutely just. Humility becomes us all. A new technique which will break the vicious circle of hate is to be devised."

Sir Sarvapalli discussed the failure of the League of Nations in its objective, and said that it did not give up rights acquired by the use of violence and it did not involve the instrument of peaceful change and it had not an effective sanction. It was just like a gun that fired blank cartridges. He emphasized that if the new method of life which the League of Nations stood for was effectively carried out "we must set up a world organization with a world court and an international police to support it. We cannot attain to the ideal of non-violence at one rush."

He said that now and then there arose above the common level some rare spirit who reflected more clearly the divine purpose and put into practice more courageously the driving guidance. "Gandhiji's suffering," he remarked, "embodies the wounded pride of India and in his Satyagraha is reflected the eternal patience of her wisdom. Gandhiji admits that submission to injustice is worse than suffering it. He tells us that we can resist even through an act of non-violence which is an active force. If blood is to be shed let it be our blood. Cultivate the quiet courage of dying without killing for man lives freely only by his readiness to die, if need be at the hands of his brother, never by killing him."

"Those few who practise this ought not merely to talk of peace and think of it but will it with all their soul. When faced by crisis they would prefer the four walls of a cell to a seat in the cabinet or tent in the battlefield. They would be prepared to stand against a wall, to be spat upon, to be stoned, to be shot. Gandhiji today is not a free man; you may crucify the body of such a man but the light in him which is from the divine flame of truth and love cannot be put out."

LORD LINLITHGOW ON UNITY

"INDIA GEOGRAPHICALLY ONE"

CALCUTTA, December 17, 1942.

Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, in the course of his speech at the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce today said:—

"....In the internal field we have, to my keen and deep regret, had to deal since I last addressed you with an uprising, consequent on the programme of the leaders of the Congress Party, of great gravity and great severity. That uprising, which had no support from great sections of the Hindu community, from which the Muslim community and other important parts of the population of India dissociated themselves, which affected only in the smallest degree the Indian States, was perhaps the work of a numerically small but very important section. But that section, carefully organized and unscrupulous, I am sorry to say it, in the methods it adopted, indifferent to the creed of non-violence to which such prominence has been given, was able to cause immense damage, serious dislocation of communications, much destruction of public and private property, heavy loss to the tax-payer and deaths of many innocent persons. At a time when the efforts of all of us were directed to protecting India against Japanese aggression and to building up supplies and stores for our own defence and for the battle against the Axis it resulted in a serious diversion of military forces and an interruption, deeply to be regretted, in the war effort.

To the sorrow of all of us who care for the good name of India those disturbances were disfigured by very shocking cases of brutality and violence. And a grievous feature of them is the use to which designing men endeavoured to turn, and indeed succeeded in many cases in turning the young enthusiasm, the intelligence, and the lack of experience of the student community. Those who diverted those young men, young men of such promise, with their future just opening before them, into the dangerous paths of civil tumult and disorder, carry an immense responsibility to India, and to the ardent and generous youth which they have led astray. To restore order everything possible was done to use the minimum degree of force, and to cause the minimum disturbance. The success of that policy is shown by the very low figures of casualties. The situation is well in hand as I speak to you today, though even now in certain areas it continues to call for the utmost vigilance and care.

I would like to pay a tribute to the admirable work done in restoring order by the services, military and civil alike, and in particular by the police, on whom there fell so heavy a burden. And I would like to say a word of warm and sincere thanks on behalf not only of myself and of my Government but on behalf of India, to those solid and sober elements throughout the country who in times of great difficulty stood by Government, gave their full co-operation to those whose business it was to maintain law and order, and at great risk to themselves and sometimes at the cost of grave injury, formed rallying points around which the law-abiding and the loyal citizens would gather, and from which he could get assurance and support.

Since the war began you and I have had heavy anxieties. We have realized how great a burden the war has placed upon the Empire and upon India. We have realized, too, as I ventured to say to you in 1939, that the fate of India in the international sphere turns on the success of the Allied arms. We have been heartened and supported in

those dark days by India's response, by her generosity in men, money, and materials, by the heroism of her sons, whether from British India or the Indian States.

As I speak to you today the outlook is brighter. We are far still from the end of our troubles. There lie ahead of us before final and decisive victory can be won, much hard fighting, inevitable reverses, possibly even serious disasters. All those things are what war is made of. They must be expected. They must be provided against so far as we can hope to make such provision. If things go badly, reverses must be borne with a stout heart, with a resolution to amend what has been faulty, and to go ahead with confidence and courage, and with the certainty that we have right behind us, and that victory is ours in the end. But you and I, whether in our private lives or in public affairs, are all of us conscious today of the improvement that has taken place, of the immense difference made by the brilliant campaigns that have been waged last year and this year by the Russian Allies; by the successes of the Allied arms in Africa, successes in which Indian troops played so distinguished and outstanding a part; and by the great battle that even as I speak the forces of the United States and those of the Commonwealth of Australia are fighting in the Far East. It is too early yet for optimism. But we can feel that our earlier confidence in the successful outcome of the struggle, however dark at times things may have seemed, has been justified, and that, while no effort can be relaxed, we can look forward with an easier mind to the concluding stages of the war.

I listened with deep satisfaction to the remarks which you, Sir, were kind enough to make about the Governor-General and his Executive Council, and the tribute which you were good enough to pay to its work. Since we last met, that Council has undergone a material expansion. Working in the closest of contact with its Members and with the Council as a whole, I can, from my own knowledge and experience, speak of its capacity, its courage, its unity, its devotion to the interests of India. I need not tell you how great is the value to the Governor-General of colleagues such as those with whom it is now my good fortune to work in the Executive Council.

I have spoken often to you in my earlier addresses of the importance of unity in this country. Geographically India, for practical purpose, is one. I would judge it to be as important as it ever was in the past, nay, more important, that we should seek to conserve that unity in so far as it may be built up consistently with full justice for the rights and the legitimate claims of the minorities, whether those minorities be great or small. That that would be a desirable aim no one, gentlemen, can doubt who tests that proposition in terms of foreign policy, of tariff policy, of defence policy, of industrial development. Can India speak with the authority that she is entitled to claim? Can she play her part effectively at international discussions, at discussions with other parts of the empire, if she is to speak with two voices? Indian unity, subject, as I have said, to full and sufficient provision for the minorities, accepted as such by those minorities, is of great and real importance if India is to carry the weight which she ought to carry in the counsels of the empire and of the world.

INDIA TREATED LIKE TANTALUS

MADRAS, December 18, 1942.

Commenting on the Viceroy's speech to the Associated Chambers of Commerce yesterday, Mr C. Rajagopalachari says:—

The Viceroy's speech produced a feeling in me which may be best described as sad amusement. Lord Linlithgow has chosen the time to give first place to and emphasize the correctness of the Akhand

Hindustan cry. I had good reason, I may say in fact, first-hand evidence in the middle of November last, to think that he agreed with me and though I was wise in realizing that we must pass through an "Ulster phase" in the preliminary stage of free India. When this realization is gaining ground in public opinion against heavy odds, Lord Linlithgow thrusts the emphasis in the opposite direction so that some may shout in joy "A Daniel has come to judgment!" I do not wish to raise a needless controversy or indulge in carping criticism. But I hope people will not fall into this or any other such trap of empty unity which serves only to maintain the political and administrative *status quo* in the Central Government and the Provinces.

Lord Linlithgow's glowing appeal for unity and his reiteration of the Cripps offer of complete freedom reminds me of the Greek legend which has given the name to a species of torture. Tantalus was kept up to the chin in a lake of beautiful water, but the water just receded each time he bent to quench his burning thirst. There was some reason to punish Tantalus thus with eternal thirst. But what crime has India committed to be thus tortured? India is kept standing chin-deep in the British promise of complete freedom which recedes each time she bends to slake her thirst.

MUNSHI ANSWERS NEWSPAPER SLANDER

BOMBAY, December 18, 1942.

I am shocked at the slanderous attack levelled by the *Daily Herald* at the Congress which is not free to defend itself. It says that in return for its co-operation the Congress has been promised by the Japanese that they would establish the Congress as the sole Government of India. Though not members of the Congress, some of us, like Sri Rajagopalachariar and myself, were in sufficiently intimate touch with Mahatma Gandhi and other principal leaders of the Congress and are in a position to say that this is the blackest lie ever uttered against the Congress. Those who know Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders know full well that none of them was capable of having any truck with any totalitarian Power. The British newspapers might help to crush the Congress, but let them at least do so with clean weapons.

"NEWS CHRONICLE" DEPLORES DRIFT

LONDON, January 4, 1943.

The *News-Chronicle* in an editorial today on the failure of the British Government to take any further steps "to safeguard the future of India" states:—

"Sir Stafford Cripps undertook the role of a mediator and carried to India the Government's offer of Dominion Status after the war with in the meantime an enhanced measure of responsibility for the conduct of Indian affairs. The Government reserved to itself the sole responsibility for India's defence."

Stating that Sir Stafford failed more than eight months ago, the paper continues: "Since then the Japanese threat to India has happily become less grave. But in every other respect the situation has steadily deteriorated. The Government, disappointed in the rejection of its solitary conciliatory gesture, has failed to make any further constructive effort."

The paper states that since then everything has tended to emphasize this attitude. "Mr Churchill and Mr Amery made stone-walling speeches in Parliament. Mr Rajagopalachari, the most moderate of Indian leaders, has been refused permission to visit Mr Gandhi. An Englishman has been appointed Chief Justice in defiance of Indian opinion. Finally Lord Linlithgow's term of office has been extended by six months. Meanwhile, there is little to be learned of

what is actually happening in India. We can only be sure that the position is drifting."

MISS CLARE SHERIDAN

(*Sculptor and author, and niece of Mr Churchill*)

Having recently sculptured the British Prime Minister, I referred in a Press interview to certain similarities between his head and Lenin's. I did Lenin in the Kremlin in 1920, and because he seemed to me a giant of our epoch, I cannot resist comparisons with others of our famous contemporaries whom it was my privilege to study.

In the case of Lenin and Churchill there is a curious similarity of skull construction; great domes contain their brains and there is an unusual flatness of the back cranium.

Gandhi, whom I place in the first rank of contemporary greatness, is also comparable with Lenin, but in a different way, that is to say, spiritual rather than physical or intellectual. To me, Gandhi and Lenin represent symbols of sincerity and truth. Neither of these men are capable of the slightest deviation from their ideals. They were uncompromisingly outspoken and supremely indifferent to the effect they created. Truth was all that counted.

In saying this of Gandhi and Lenin, I am not inferring any disparagement to Churchill, whom I know to be a man of great integrity. But democracy necessitates an appeal to popular opinion. Lenin and Gandhi were more untrammelled, freer to concentrate upon their truths.

To my mind, Gandhi's greatness is spiritual and for this reason he is greater and more formidable than any of the famous men of today. He has a spiritual awareness which humanity must develop if the world is ever to be raised from the hell of its own making.

My estimate of Gandhi is corroborated by my friend and rival American sculptor, Joe Davidson, who also "collects" heads. He told me that the "great" always seem to him so small when he meets close up to them; all except Gandhi, the only one who retained his greatness.

MR BERTRAND AND MRS PATRICIA RUSSELL

NEW YORK, December 22, 1942.

Discussing the international significance of the Indian problem Mr Bertrand and Mrs Patricia Russell, offer in a magazine article, suggestions based on two premises. The first premise they say is that there should be grant of the Indian demand for Swaraj (home rule) not through the conception of Dominion Status as an integral part of the British Commonwealth of Nations but admitting that India has the same right of independence as any other country in the modern world. The second premise is that this right of independence on the part of nations is strictly limited. The Russells assert, 'No nation should be the subject of another nation. But each nation should be subject in some respects as all others. This would imply extension of the principle of democratic government to international affairs.'

They declared that two classes of decisions ought to be taken: First as to the war period and second as to the status of India after the war. Each must be taken while the war is in progress since they affect the attitude of India towards the war. During the war period, the problem should be treated in relation to the Axis in the war. They emphasize that the danger of a hastily devised solution could be avoided and a United Nations commission should go to India to ascertain the main facts and converse with the leaders of various parties with a view to discovering and recommending (a) interim measures for the war period designed to attack and help the war effort; (b) a long-run solution of the Indian problem to be put into

effect when the war is over. The commission should in fact resume the talks in which Sir Stafford Cripps failed with more hope of success since they would not represent only the British Raj or only the white man.

"UNITY" SURE OF INDIAN FREEDOM

CHICAGO, January 10, 1943.

The rejection of Britain's proposals to India was forecast from the moment the terms were announced. How the American newspaper Press could believe that there was any chance of acceptance argues not so much propaganda deception or wishful thinking as sheer ignorance of India. A promise of Dominion Status after this war!—this to satisfy Gandhi and Nehru and the multitudes they lead after the deliberate repudiation of a similar promise in the last war followed by the Rowlatt Acts and Amritsar, and after the heroic sufferings and sacrifices of the last twenty and more years for Independence? India has already paid too much for her dream to sell it back again for such counterfeit payment as Britain offered. The only surprising thing in the whole business is how such an able and well-informed man as Sir Stafford Cripps, and so true a friend of the Indian people, could have journeyed to India as Churchill's emissary with what apparently was the sincere conviction that his mission would be successful. He must have been counting on the war pressure to break down Indian resistance. But if this bargaining attitude was his, then he forgot that the war pressure was as heavy upon Britain as upon India itself. And Gandhi in any case does not yield to that kind of pressure. With such weapons as he wields, the Mahatma fears the new enemy as little as the old. One may well mourn this outcome, not only for the direful results impending, but also for the tragedy of missing an opportunity which might have been so easily won. What could have been simpler, or more effective, than for Britain to have said, in a large spirit of magnanimity and goodwill: "I bring you liberty! Organize your government forthwith. The Empire here and now withdraws, save as it may be invited to remain as a friendly ally for victory in this war." Can anybody doubt that the invitation would have been instantly proffered—and that a free India, like a free China, been bound, by bonds tighter than any that now exist, to the great cause of the United Nations? But, alas, Britain seems under some curse in India, as earlier in America and in Ireland. Yet will freedom come in India, as earlier in America and in Ireland!

"INDEPENDENCE DAY" IN AMERICA

NEW YORK, January 26, 1943.

Speaking at an Independence Day (January 26) dinner under the auspices of the India League of America here today Pearl Buck said: "When Englishmen tell us that we must help them to bear the burden of Asia if we want India free, Isolationists among us come to new life. We see in India, thanks to England's emphasis on all possible differences there, something even more troublesome than Europe. We Americans really have no wish to take any share of the white man's burden. There never was a white man's burden, except in the sense that the white man made a burden for himself by trying to force his rule upon reluctant peoples."

MR AMERY ON CONTACT WITH CONGRESS LEADERS

LONDON, January 28, 1943.

Mr Amery was asked in the Commons today by Labourite Mr Sorensen to raise the ban on contact between Congress leaders and non-Congress representatives to enable them to discuss possible political developments.

Mr Amery replied: Decision in the matter was taken by the Government of India and I see no reason to ask them to reconsider it.

DR B. S. MOONJE ON PAKISTAN AND INDEPENDENCE

CAWNPORE, January 2, 1943.

A suggestion that Mr Savarkar and Mr Jinnah should now sit in a closed room and come to a compromise on the Hindu-Muslim question was made by Dr B. S. Moonje, General Secretary, All-India Hindu Mahasabha, in the course of an interview to the *United Press apropos* Mr C. Rajagopalachari's recent statement to the Press asking the Sabha to settle with the League.

Dr Moonje said: "I am really sorry that Rajaji still thinks that Mr Jinnah will come to a settlement with the Hindus. After the Cripps proposals, Mr Jinnah has further changed his position and has now made acceptance of the principle of Pakistan as a condition precedent to any talk for compromise when he knows and sees that the British Government is playing the diplomatic game of patting the Muslims once and then the Hindus. Mr Jinnah knows that possibly the British Government will give Pakistan to the Muslims. And even supposing that Pakistan is granted by the British Government to him what guarantee is there for Mr Jinnah to suppose that the British Government will surrender its sovereign power to Indians?

"The British people are not fools to commit harakiri, because with the possible lapse of Hindustan, the British Empire and England will be quite a secondary or third-rate power. India is the 'Brightest Jewel,' as they say, 'in the Crown of England,' and no one will part with his jewel unless he is forced. Even supposing Mr Jinnah comes to a settlement for the interim period of the war and a National Government is established, this National Government will be for six months or at the most one year. What can we do within such a short time for the resurgence of India? Even if a National Government is established, the British Government has plainly told us that this National Govrnment will not be in control of the military and this National Government will not be able to recruit a national army because the army that is being recruited is for the purpose of the war that is being waged and this war is under the exclusive control of their Excellencies the Commander-in-Chief and the Viceroy.

"Under the circumstances the only compromise possible is to tell Mr Jinnah plainly that India is one nation and the majority community is prepared to abide by the formulae evolved by the League of Nations for the solution of the communal interests and classes, which, it should be noted, represents the combined wisdom and statesmanship of Europe, including England and America."

DR S. P. MOOKERJEE'S RESIGNATION

HAD TO WORK UNDER IMPOSSIBLE CONDITIONS

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Minister for Finance, Bengal Government, resigned his office on November 16, 1942, as a protest against the Central Government's policy with regard to the political situation in the country, and what he regarded as the Bengal Governor's constant encroachments in the field of the Ministers. Below is the full text of his letter to the Governor:—

CALCUTTA, November 16, 1942.

DEAR SIR JOHN,

I have decided to resign from my office as Minister. My formal letter of resignation is being sent to you through the Chief Minister. A copy of my letter to him is enclosed. In this letter I propose to place on record the main events which have led me to take this step. When I accepted office nearly a year ago I was fully aware of the task I was undertaking. The province was then surcharged with communal tension almost unprecedented in its history. The war situation was also fast developing into serious proportions and the problem of strengthening the defence of the country was certainly one that required the combined co-operation of Government and the people. I have striven during the period of my office to maintain a healthy communal atmosphere, believing as I do that this province can never advance unless the two great communities comprised within it feel that its administration is being carried on in a fair and just manner. I have also maintained that in the interest of India herself our national war efforts must be strengthened and vitalized. I have not however always seen eye to eye with you in regard to the manner and method of mobilizing public opinion in favour of the country's defence.

I shall not recapitulate all the matters I had discussed in my letters to you in March and July last and also in my letter to the Viceroy on August 12 last. They are to be read along with this letter in order to appreciate how I have tried over and again to persuade Government to change its present barren policy but failed to produce any tangible results.

Broadly speaking, my reasons for resignation are two-fold. First as I intimated to you at the earliest opportunity on August 9 last, I disapprove of the policy adopted by the British Government and the Government of India with regard to the present political situation in the country. I am aware that you, as a Provincial Governor, have hardly any responsibility for the formulation of this policy. But my second reason mainly concerns you. And that is connected with the manner, in my opinion unwarranted, in which you have interfered with the work of the Ministry and have rendered so-called provincial autonomy into a meaningless farce. Although you could not be held responsible for any all-India decisions, you might have risen to the full height of statesmanship and by pursuing a bold and straightforward policy of trust and co-operation, changed the tone of the administration in Bengal, leading to a wholesome relaxation of the political situation and ensuring the safety of a province which is now one of the north-eastern war frontiers in India.

Let me refer briefly to the general political situation in the country. My letter to the Viceroy fully explains my view-point. But I should record here the extraordinary manner in which you acted when you received information of the policy as determined by the Govern-

ment of India regarding the threatened Congress movement When the letter from the Government of India came to the Chief Secretary, you showed it to and discussed it with the Chief Minister who rightly suggested that the policy enunciated by the Government of India on so important a subject should be fully discussed by Cabinet. You deliberately rejected this advice and even asked the Chief Minister to keep back the contents of the letter from his colleagues, although some permanent officials saw it and recorded their plans for giving effect to the directions. You decided that Cabinet would consider the letter only after information had been received from the Government of India that effect had actually been given to the policy formulated by it, following the arrest of the Congress leaders. Consultation at this stage was utterly useless as it gave no opportunity to Cabinet to record its views and communicate them for the effective consideration of the Government of India.

When on August 9, after the arrest of the Congress leaders at Bombay, you called us together and asked us either to accept the policy or to resign, I pointed out to you that your action was extraordinary and brought provincial autonomy to a state of ridicule. You expected Ministers to stand by you on the basis of collective responsibility but declined to trust them and consult them on such a vital matter except at the very last moment when consultation was indeed fruitless. On that day I intimated to you that I disapproved of the policy of the Government of India as I felt strongly that every effort should be made by the British Government and its representatives in India to secure an honourable and peaceful solution of the Indian problem rather than that it should attempt to over-awe the country by a ruthless policy of repression during the period of war. I did not resign at that time as I told you that I was going to write to the Viceroy on the subject. That letter was sent through you on August 12 and I received his reply early in September after my return from Delhi. I believe my letter has been forwarded to the British Government but it is clear that there is no desire whatsoever on the part of Government to bring the present impasse to an end. I had not in the meantime sat idle but had humbly attempted to organize public opinion in favour of an immediate settlement. Large sections of representative opinion in the country did openly approve of the steps that I along with others had taken. I got into touch with all the important political parties except the Congress and when I asked for permission to interview Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders, my request was rejected by the Viceroy.

I have all long felt that the principal responsibility for settling the present deadlock must rest with Government. The deadlock will not be solved until and unless Government makes up its mind to transfer power to Indians. Immediate establishment of composite National Government at the Centre and in the Provinces, enjoying real power and pursuing an all-out Defence policy, co-ordinated with the general war policy of the Allied Powers, is essential as much for India's welfare as for that of the Allied Powers themselves. We want to regard ourselves just as free to mould our destinies as Englishmen would like to feel in the land of their birth. Lack of Indian unity is a false plea put forward by British spokesmen. No political advance in the past was made conditional upon complete unity within India. If British Government decides to transfer real power and not play the old game of 'divide and rule,' the parties must unite in their own interests. Those who do not unite, in spite of real transfer of power, will automatically fall in the background. The fact is that the British Government wishes to hold India under its sway at any cost. The demand of India is simple and straightforward. A slave cannot fight

wholeheartedly for any noble cause. India wants that she should be a free country and she should fight along with other free nations for the liberation of humanity against the onslaught of Axis Powers. You have enjoyed freedom in your own country for too long a period to realize fully what it means to be a subject-race that feels oppressed and down-trodden. The tragedy of it all is that at this critical hour when large territories under British rule in the East have been snatched out of its control mainly on account of its failure to fill the minds of their native people with a burning zeal for maintaining their integrity—one must have freedom before one can die for it—it should even now persist in following the same mistaken policy with regard to the Indian people.

If it is a crime to aspire to see one's country free and shake off foreign domination, including British, every self-respecting Indian is a criminal. There are administrators in India who dream constantly of fifth columnists walking on the roads and lanes of Indian towns and villages. These estimable gentlemen themselves belong to this category, if treachery to India's genuine interests is the real criterion of a fifth columnist in India. The great bulk of the Indian people can have possibly no sympathy with Japan or with any other Axis Power. Why should we Indians be at all anxious to invite Japan to this country? We want you to return to your own home safely and as speedily as possible, and does it stand to reason that we would welcome a new master with fresh vigour and unsatisfied lust for widespread possession? We want to be rid of alien rule altogether. We want this country to belong to and to be governed by ourselves. India has for a long time allowed herself to be sacrificed at the altar of Imperial greed. The doctrine of benevolent trusteeship stands exploded and you can no more throw dust into our eyes. Indian representatives therefore demand that the policy of administration of their country in all spheres, political, economic and cultural, must be determined by Indians themselves, unfettered by irritating acts of unsympathetic bureaucrats and bungling Governors. There was however ample room for mutual help and trust between England and India for, after all, it is a common menace that threatens both today. We recognize that the war must for the present absorb our whole attention, but only with a free and willing partnership between India on the one hand, and England and other Allied nations on the other, could we have fittingly organized ourselves for keeping the enemy out of our own country and saving the cause of the Allied nations themselves. The British Government has failed to realize that India cannot be roused to a passionate fervour and devoted activity, such as is witnessed in Russia and China, unless Indians feel that they are free men and their freedom is to be saved, no matter at what sacrifice.

These are natural sentiments fully consistent with the declared war aims of the Allied nations. If you are sincere in your assertion that you are anxious for a new world order and want to see that the cause of human freedom is never again imperilled, why should you hesitate to do a little act of self-abnegation by acknowledging India's freedom and thus save yourselves from being branded as guilty of hypocrisy? Instead of doing what is just and natural, for three months Government has carried on a reign of repression, which will serve as a good model to those deeply attached to totalitarian rules of conduct and whose alleged misdeeds are widely circulated through British agencies. During these months people have lost their fear of bullets. What can possibly be your next sanction to hold India in chains? Today India seethes with discontent and bitterness. It is the easiest thing in the world to fight with a people that are unarmed and defenceless. Some of the British spokesmen have said that India or a section of the country has declared war. If that is their belief,

then let arms be provided to Indians and let the fight take place on a basis of equality. The most dangerous symptom today is that people feel so completely frustrated at the turn that events have taken that they would welcome any change to get rid of the present tyranny.

It is indeed regrettable that men responsible for Indian administration should have forgotten the simple truth that Britain cannot fight India and the Axis Powers together. On account of sheer bankruptcy of statesmanship, much goodwill and co-operation on the part of Indians have been allowed to flow in the channel of distrust and resentment. Many of the administrators have lost their equilibrium and cannot hide their animosity towards Indians as a class. I am not suggesting that many of the senseless acts of outrage and sabotage committed during the last three months will help us to obtain our country's freedom. Let lawlessness be checked. But that is not the only problem. Violence and counter-violence have moved in a vicious circle and vitiated the atmosphere of the country today. You have failed to go to the root cause of the Indian unrest. It is the hunger of liberty that is to be satisfied, if peace is to reign in India again. Mere suppression of external manifestations of disorder by force, or worse still, a deliberate policy of terrorism, without any attempt to move along constructive lines to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of India only widens the gulf of difference between Britain and India and is hardly of any good to either country or to the cause of world freedom. India cannot be held against her will merely at the point of bayonet. Notes of warning are being sounded by well-meaning Britishers in their own country and here, and also by influential sections of public opinion in America and China. But a false sense of power, prestige and possession chokes the voice of reason and justice.

I wish I could have closed my letter at this point and had not to refer to your own administration which has also contributed in no small measure to the worsening of the situation. In my letter to you written in July last I had given an idea of my feelings of dissatisfaction and disappointment at the manner in which I had seen you administer the affairs of this province. With much apparent goodwill you have bungled stage after stage. For the first time since the Reforms of 1919, Bengal had a Ministry enjoying the support of large sections of Hindus and Muslims. Parties and persons who were violently opposed to each other on political and communal considerations had agreed to stand on a common platform for the good of the people specially during the period of war. There are certain people occupying high positions in this country and also abroad, who for obvious reasons do not like a strong combination of Hindu and Muslim elements. The co-operation offered by us was not responded to by you and a certain section of the permanent officials. I regret to say that from the very beginning of our association with you, you have failed to rise to that impartial height of a provincial Governor which could have given you courage and foresight to respect the Constitution, establish new conventions and broaden the base of the provincial administration so as to win the affection and confidence of the people. You have all along permitted yourself to be guided by a section of permanent officials—loyal die-hards, according to you; short-sighted and reactionary, according to us—resulting in the establishment of a government within a government which has proved disastrous to the interests of the province.

I shall not go into details. But let me remind you that you showed no sympathy whenever proposals for the recognition of the people's rights in various fields of activity were made. They were turned down by you because of deep-rooted distrust and suspicion. Our proposal for raising a Bengal Army was not acceptable to you for reasons which would not even bear scrutiny. This alone would have revolutionized

public opinion in Bengal. The scheme for popularizing the Home Guard was rejected by you in spite of unanimous advice of all the Ministers, simply because you and your officials were afraid of trusting the people. You have systematically resisted the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries and the expansion of Cabinet, just to embarrass the Ministry. Even before the Congress started any movement, you declined to give back to thousands of Bengalees their freedom which had been denied to them on suspicion or for participation in political movements, although we were prepared to take full responsibility for their future behaviour and activities consistent with the war situation. Recommendations for individual releases or even for temporary relaxation were turned down by you, utterly oblivious of any assurance given by us. In matters relating to the Denial Policy you failed to realize the untold suffering into which thousands of people would be thrown and the discontent that was bound to follow; and only after a good deal of efforts could that policy be only slightly modified. We do not yet know what plans have been kept ready for destruction of plants, machinery and other properties in case of enemy invasion. Even in matters relating to supply of food and control of supplies you have interfered with ministerial action and have rendered our task extremely embarrassing. You have discouraged the growth of collective responsibility among Ministers while taking momentous decisions on vital issues. Ministerial advice has been brushed aside in regard to selection and posting of officers, while your unabashed softness for the present Opposition Party is in marked contrast to the treatment we used to receive in a similar capacity when the last Ministry was in office. Even with regard to a simple question like prorogation of the last session of the Assembly, you have declined to accept our advice. Indeed I did not even receive a reply from you to my letter written early in October, pointing out how the Province had to incur wasteful and avoidable expenditure due to your decision not to prorogue the Assembly, simply to harass the Ministry. In matters affecting the rights and liberties of the people you have constituted yourself into an appellate authority and you claim to act in exercise of your special powers under the Government of India Act. I have repeatedly told you that this is an absurd situation. During the war you can function with success only if you regard yourself as primarily responsible to the people of this province and act on the advice of their chosen representatives. But you have regarded yourself as one who is beyond anybody's control, enjoying powers without being required to give account to any other authority. You have expressed your annoyance from time to time, that Ministers are not more active in rousing public opinion in respect of matters relating to war or the general political situation. You will not allow Ministers to function and administer according to their own light and judgment. You and some of your officers will commit Government to policies and acts which Ministers do not approve of and afterwards you expect them to stand up as obedient persons fully justifying the results of your mistaken policy. The brunt of the attack falls on Ministers. The Legislature is even precluded from criticizing or commenting on your conduct. You in your turn do not hesitate to take advantage of, and sometimes even go beyond the spirit of the provisions of the Government of India Act and the Instrument of Instructions, thus reducing ministerial administration to a mockery.

But the most difficult situation has been created with regard to the manner of suppression of the political movement. I have told you repeatedly that while it is the duty of any Government to see that acts of lawlessness are not committed or that disturbances are not created specially during this grave emergency, Government must not in any manner provoke a crisis or encourage or make it possible

for officers to commit excesses or to inflict injury on innocent people. Where persons deliberately commit offences, they must face the the consequences of the law. But in spite of our best efforts, indiscriminate arrests have been made, innocent persons assaulted and shot down and oppression has been carried on in some parts in a manner hardly creditable to any civilized Government. The fact that some British prisoners of war under German control were put under fetters roused the loud and angry protests of the British Government and its supporters. Can you not express even a fraction of that moral indignation for similar and even worse outrages committed on Indians by the agents of the British Government itself? You have persistently refused to have allegations enquired into and have also helped in the suppression of publication of accurate news.

The political movement took a grave turn in some parts of Midnapore and none can say anything in respect of any legitimate measures taken to deal with persons guilty of serious offences against the law. But in Midnapore repression has been carried on in a manner which resembles the activities of Germans in occupied territories as advertised by British agencies. Hundreds of houses have been burnt down by the police and the armed forces. Reports of outrages on women have reached us. Muslims have been instigated to loot and plunder Hindu houses; or the protectors of law and order have themselves carried on similar operations. Orders were issued from Calcutta that it was not the policy of Government that houses should be burnt by persons in charge of law and order. I have ample evidence to show this order was not carried into effect and even after the unprecedented havoc caused by the cyclone on October 16 and our visit to the affected areas a fortnight later, the burning of houses and looting were continued in some parts of the district. Apart from the manner in which people were fired at and killed, these acts of outrage committed by Government agencies are abominable in character. Let us condemn by all means acts of lawlessness perpetrated by volunteers. To my knowledge they did not take the life of any Government servant. In any case the wrongs perpetrated by breakers of law and order are no justification whatsoever for the upholders of law and order to terrorise innocent people and to oppress one and all in a ruthless manner.

The reports which I have received about the callousness and indifference of some of the officers even after the cyclone perhaps find no parallel in the annals of civilized administration. The suppression of news of the havoc by Government, and even of appeals for help, for more than a fortnight was criminal. In the presence of the District Magistrate complaints were received that boats were not made available on that fateful evening or even later to save the lives of the people who were perilously resting for a brief while on the roofs of their houses that ultimately collapsed. One gentleman gave a harrowing description of the manner in which he and others begged of officers to allow a boat found by them to ply for a couple of hours in order to rescue some men, women and children lying near the area concerned. This request was summarily rejected and the men who had used the boat were threatened with dire consequences. Later on, all the people whom this party wanted to rescue were washed away, never to be found again. After the cyclone curfew orders are continuing even in areas where people offered every co-operation. Our intervention in this respect proved fruitless. Transport facilities and movements were extremely restricted even when we visited the district a fortnight later. Cows were requisitioned under the Defence of India Rules. The total destruction of cattle owing to flood and storm would be somewhere between 75 and 85 per cent. Of the cows that remained, although they were giving milk and some were with calf, a good many were snatched

away from private houses by the police and the military for the purpose of feeding the troops. Such inhuman callousness is indeed unparalleled. One officer's report in writing to Government was that relief, whether organized by Government or any private agency, should be withheld for a month and thereby people taught a permanent lesson. Relief measures adopted by local officers were utterly inadequate. Even *bona fide* private relief workers from Calcutta, though they produced their credentials, found themselves in Jail under the Defence of India Rules. There is no chance on our part to get these officers removed from that area because prestige will then suffer. There is no chance of any inquiry being held, although other Provincial Governments have held inquiries, under far less serious circumstances, for then again prestige will suffer. The only chance that people of this province apparently have is to suffer patiently at the hands of the upholders of law and order and wait for the day when nemesis is bound to come.

We have been told that there are indications that political agitation is still in progress in some parts of Midnapore. There may have been sporadic outbursts but from my personal knowledge I can definitely assert that the bulk of the people, including supporters of the Congress, genuinely want peace to be restored immediately. From my talks with many inside and outside the Midnapore Jail I am satisfied that if officers dealt with the situation with tact and sympathy, subversive activities would completely stop and the whole of Midnapore would rise to a man to work whole-heartedly with Government for giving relief. It is disgusting how valuable time has been wasted for one month because of the apathetic and dilatory attitude of some of the local officers on the one hand, and the strange obstructiveness of some of the representatives of the department of law and order in Calcutta, on the other. Meanwhile, thousands are suffering for want of food, shelter, medicine, clothings and drinking water. The present methods of persecution and slow action are both cruel and fatal and they will not die out nor the atmosphere improve until some officers are transferred from the district. Ministers feel that both for the correct maintenance of law and order and for the sake of suffering humanity this should be done immediately, but they are powerless to give effect to it. You too declined to accept our advice in this respect. Could you not as Governor issue in time a public message of sympathy,—the Viceroy could do it—for the unprecedented loss following the flood and cyclone, costing the lives of at least thirty thousand people and colossal destruction of cattle and property, a havoc which British troops describe as similar to the worst ravages that may be caused by enemy bombing? Let an impartial inquiry be conducted into the affairs of Midnapore and the correct version on both sides see the light of the day. Will you have the courage to agree to this?

The manner in which collective fines have been imposed by Government throughout the province deserves severe condemnation. The scheme of imposition of collective fines on Hindus alone, irrespective of their guilt, has been an all-India feature and is a British revival of the ancient policy of *Jizia* for which Aurangzeb made himself famous. In Bengal the Chief Minister had been averse to the imposition of such fines and tried again and again to lay down certain principles which were unimpeachable from the point of view of elementary justice. You have interfered with the Chief Minister's decision and have prevented him from giving effect to these directions. Amounts have been imposed in many cases without any regard to the total damage caused or to the part played by the inhabitants concerned. In at least one case I know the Collector was not even consulted, in some others local officers were invited by Government itself to propose the imposition of fines. I have carefully examined the papers with regard to a number of these cases and the monstrosity of the imposition has staggered me. I chal-

lenge you to place the materials on which decisions have been taken before any impartial judge and I have not the least doubt that in most cases the verdict will be that the fines are not at all leviable in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance, or that the discrimination made is completely unjustifiable or that the amounts fixed are entirely disproportionate in character. Fines have been imposed in many cases without the Chief Minister knowing what was being done. Only recently it was suggested by the Chief Minister that the realization might be delayed by a fortnight and the entire policy considered at a Cabinet meeting. Your answer to this request, which was made on behalf of us all, was in full conformity with the traditions which you had already established. You had no objection to a Cabinet meeting being held. But you indicated beforehand with sufficient clearness, but with unbecoming impropriety and discourtesy to Ministers, that you would in any case pass orders in exercise of your individual judgment for the immediate collection of the fines.

It is amazing how in every matter concerning the rights and liberties of the people or where racial considerations were likely to arise, you have acted with singular indifference to the genuine interests of the people of this province. A difficult and tense situation, such as the present, might have been eased by a policy of administration actuated by sympathy, understanding and goodwill. Irresponsible possession of powers by persons without a high degree of administrative ability, ignorant of Indian mind and conditions and blindly guided by unsympathetic bureaucrats, leads to disastrous consequences during the period of war. If ever a time comes when an impartial stock is taken of what you and others did and omitted to do, the verdict will be that at a critical hour you hopelessly failed to serve a province of great strategic importance, although, if correctly approached, its people were capable of being roused to an intense patriotic fervour and would have readily agreed to face any sacrifice and suffering for saving their own country from the impending invasion of the enemy. What you and others have done has only helped the enemy who cares not for our future. Whatever happens, it is we, the people of the land, who will suffer as much at the hands of our so-called protectors as of the avowed destroyers. Military matters are kept dead secret from us. We still hope Bengal and India will be successfully defended. But if the worst happens, you and others, who now feel overpowered by special responsibilities will, like your friends similarly situated in Burma, desert the province, we remaining here, unarmed, unprepared and emasculated, to face your parting bullets and the yet unknown operations of the Denial Policy on the one hand; and the oppression of the invading enemy, on the other. And yet with goodwill and statesmanship on your side to which the great bulk of Indians would have warmly responded, what a bulwark a Free India and the Allied Nations would jointly have been against the combined forces of the Axis Powers?

I am sorry that our official association should end like this at this critical hour in the history of my province. I honestly feel I can be of no use to my countrymen or to you by remaining in office so long as the general all-India policy remains what it is and the province is administered by you on lines which I consider inimical to its best interest.

Yours Sincerely,
SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE.

PRESS STATEMENT

CALCUTTA, November 23, 1942.

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, whose resignation was accepted by the Governor with effect from November 20, issued today a statement to the Press in which he says:...."It will be idle for me to deny that we (the Cabinet) did pass through a period of constant struggle, a struggle between us and those administrators who still fondly cling

to the old ideas of Imperialism, and believe that India can be ruled for ever against the will of her people. I have expressed my disapproval of the policy pursued by Government. No Government can allow serious disturbances of public order to take place specially during a period of grave emergency without detriment to the welfare of the country as a whole. But I felt and I do feel now that mere suppression of external manifestations of discontent is not the sole function of a Government calling itself civilized and progressive and fighting the doctrine of totalitarianism out of existence. The problem in India today is that we Indians have not the power to mould the destinies of our country, according to our will. We want to maintain the integrity and freedom of our country. We do not want the domination of Axis Powers or of any foreign rule. We want the era of Indian slavery to end for good. There was and is ample room for co-operation between a Free India and the Allied Nations to fight the menace of Axis aggression.

The continuance of the present deadlock is inevitable so long as the policy of the British Government remains unchanged. I did my best during the last three months to mobilise public opinion in favour of a settlement which would be consistent with the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Indian people and at the same time vitalise the national defence of India in full collaboration with the Allied Powers. There was however no response whatsoever from Government. The real obstacle to a settlement is not Indian disunity but the unwillingness on the part of the British Government to transfer power to Indians.... The Constitution that functions under the so-called Provincial Autonomy is a colossal mockery. My experience as a Provincial Minister for 11 months justifies me in stating clearly and categorically that Ministers, while possessing great responsibilities for which they are answerable to the people and the Legislature, have very little powers, specially in matters concerning the rights and liberties of the people. In Bengal a dual Government has functioned during the last one year. The Governor has chosen to act in many vital matters in disregard of the well-wishes of the Ministers. If the British Prime Minister or the Secretary of State has the courage to direct an enquiry into the manner in which popular rights have been disregarded against the advice of responsible Ministers, the hollowness of their claim that Dominion Status is already in action in India will stand exposed...."

Dr Mookerjee ends the statement by saying that he had felt during the last few weeks that his capacity for doing good and for preventing mischief, to whatever little an extent, was being curbed more and more, and that he was therefore resigning.

PART II

- GOVERNMENT RELEASES FAST CORRESPONDENCE
- A.I.C.C. RESOLUTION AND GOVERNMENT'S POLICY
- CENTRAL LEGISLATURE DEBATES FAST
- VICEROY'S COUNCIL MEMBERS RESIGN
- LEADERS' CONFERENCE IN DELHI
- THE FAST IN POONA
- REACTIONS IN THE COUNTRY

MAHATMA GANDHI DECIDES TO FAST

CORRESPONDENCE WITH GOVERNMENT

The violent repercussions of the arrest of Congress leaders in August 1942 continued throughout the rest of the year and did not appear to abate until the end of January, 1943. But while the drastic country-wide measures adopted by the army and civil authorities brought the disturbances under control, at no stage did public opinion in general waver in its support of the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi. This was true as much of the "man in the street" as of the average businessman, lawyer, school-teacher, social worker, student, doctor and Government servant. While the disturbances were deplored as an unfortunate lapse from the tradition of non-violence set for the country by the Congress, there was no disposition to regard them as having been planned by Congress leaders. The almost universal belief was that the disturbances would never have occurred but for the precipitate mass arrests of Congress leaders. But the active expression of public support for and faith in the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi was confined to the Press. Of the 2,000 dailies, weeklies and periodicals, and 100 leading dailies published in the country in different languages, newspapers which did not, within the limits of the most arbitrary restrictions imposed by authority, uphold the point of view of the Congress as against that of the Government were few and far between. On the other hand, to all outward appearances the Government sat firm in its saddle, and its unilateral war effort with Indian poverty as its chief asset recovered its full momentum. It was in this setting that on February 10, 1943, the Government of India released "for information" the correspondence which had taken place between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and the Viceroy and the Government of India on the other. This was the first intimation to the world of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi had from his incarceration addressed a letter to the Viceroy as early as August 1942 within a few days after his arrest and again to the Additional Home Secretary in September, on hearing of the disturbances in the country, and that a series of letters had been exchanged between him and the Government since then.

The following is the text of the 'communiqué' issued by the Government of India in releasing the correspondence:—

PRESS 'COMMUNIQUE'

Mr Gandhi has informed his Excellency the Viceroy that he proposes to undertake a fast of three weeks' duration from the 10th of February. It is to be a fast according to capacity, and during it Mr Gandhi proposes to add juices of citrus fruit to water to make water drinkable, as his wish is not to fast to death, but to survive the ordeal. The Government of India deplore the use of the weapon of fasting to achieve political ends. There can in their judgment be no justification for it, and Mr Gandhi has himself admitted in the past that it contains an element of coercion. The Government of India can only express their regret that Mr Gandhi should think it necessary to employ such a weapon on this occasion, and should seek a justification for it in anything which Government may have said or done in connection with the movement initiated by him and his co-workers in the Congress Party. The Government of India have no intention on their

part of allowing the fast to deflect their policy. Nor will they be responsible for its consequences on Mr Gandhi's health. They cannot prevent Mr Gandhi from fasting. It was their wish, however, that if he decided to do so, he should do so as a free man and under his own arrangements, so as to bring out clearly that the responsibility for any fast and its consequences rested exclusively with him. They accordingly informed Mr Gandhi that he would be released for the purpose and for the duration of the fast of which he had notified them, and with him any members of the party living with him who may wish to accompany him. Mr Gandhi in reply has expressed his readiness to abandon his intended fast if released, failing which he will fast in detention. In other words, it is now clear that only his unconditional release could prevent him from fasting. This the Government of India are not prepared to concede. Their position remains the same: that is to say, they are ready to set Mr Gandhi at liberty for the purpose and duration of his fast. But if Mr Gandhi is not prepared to take advantage of that fact and if he fasts while in detention, he does so solely on his own responsibility and at his own risk. He would be at liberty in that event to have his own medical attendants, and also to receive visits from friends with the permission of Government during its period.

The Government of India propose to issue, in due course, a full statement on the origin and development of the movement which was initiated in August last, and the measures which Government have been compelled to adopt to deal with it, but they think this is a suitable occasion for a brief review of the events of the last few months.

Mr Gandhi, in his correspondence with the Viceroy, has repudiated all responsibility for the consequences which have flowed from the "Quit India" demand which he and the Congress Party have put forward. This contention will not bear examination. Mr Gandhi's own statement, before the movement was launched, envisaged anarchy as an alternative to the existing order, and referred to the struggle "as a fight to the finish in the course of which he would not hesitate to run any risk, however great." As much has been made of his offer to meet the Viceroy, it is necessary to point out that at a Press interview on the 14th of July, after the Working Committee Resolution was passed, Mr Gandhi stated that there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation; there was no question of one more chance; after all, it was an open rebellion which was to be as short and as swift as possible. His last message was "Do or die." The speeches of those most closely associated with Mr Gandhi have been even more explicit, and have given a clear indication of what the Congress High Command had in mind in launching their attack—an attack which would, if realized, have most seriously imperilled the whole cause of the United Nations—against Government as by law established, and against the agencies and services by which the life of the country was being conducted—in a period, be it noted, of exceptional stress and strain, and of grave danger to India from Japanese aggression.

The instructions issued by the various Congress organizations, contained in leaflets which were found to be freely circulating in almost every part of India—and which, on the evidence, cannot all be disowned as unauthorized—gave specific directions as to the methods which were to be employed for bringing the administration to a standstill. The circular of the 29th of July emanating from the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee is an instance in point. It is noteworthy in this connection that in widely separated areas all over the country identical methods of attacks on railways and other communications were employed, requiring the use of special implements and highly technical knowledge. Control rooms and block instruments in

railway stations came in for special attention, and destruction of telegraph and telephone lines and equipment was carried out in a manner which denoted careful planning and close knowledge of their working. If these manifestations of rebellious activities are to be regarded as the result not of Congress teachings, but as a manifestation of the popular resentment against the arrest of Mr Gandhi and the Congress leaders, the question may well be asked to which section of the public the tens of thousands of men engaged in these violent and subversive activities belonged. If it is claimed that it is not Congressmen who have been responsible, it would be extraordinary, to say the least, if the blame was to be laid on non-Congress elements. The country is, in effect, asked to believe that those who own allegiance to the Congress Party have behaved in an exemplary non-violent manner, and that it is persons who are outside the Congress fold who have registered their resentment at the arrest of the leaders of a movement which they did not profess to follow. A more direct answer to the argument is to be had in the fact that known Congressmen have been repeatedly found engaged in incitements to violence, or in prosecuting Congress activities which have led to grave disorders.

That political parties and groups outside the Congress Party have no delusions on the subject may be judged from the categorical way in which they have dissociated themselves from the movement, and condemned the violence to which it has given rise. In particular, the Muslim League has, on more than one occasion, emphasized the character and intentions of the policy pursued by the Congress Party. As early as the 20th of August last, the Working Committee of the League expressed the view, reiterated many times since, that by the slogan "Quit India" what was really meant was supreme control of the Government of the country by the Congress, and that the mass civil disobedience movement had resulted in lawlessness and considerable destruction of life and property. Other elements in the political life of the country have expressed themselves in a similar vein, and if the followers of the Congress persist in their contention that the resultant violence was no part of their policy or programme, they are doing so against the weight of overwhelming evidence.

Mr Gandhi in his letter to the Viceroy has sought to fasten responsibility on the Government of India. The Government of India emphatically repudiate this suggestion. It is clearly preposterous to contend that it is they who are responsible for the violence of the last few months which so gravely disorganized the normal life of the country—and, incidentally, aggravated the difficulties of the food situation—at a time when the united energies of the people might have been devoted to the vital task of repelling the enemy and of striking a blow for the freedom of India, the Commonwealth and the world.

HOME DEPARTMENT,
Government of India,
10th February, 1943.

THE CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence which has passed between his Excellency the Viceroy and Mr Gandhi is published for information. Mr Gandhi has agreed to the publication of his personal letters of December 31, 1942, and January 19, 1943:—

[The three letters dated August 14, 1942, from Mahatma Gandhi to Lord Linlithgow, August 22 from Lord Linlithgow to Mahatma Gandhi and September 23 from Mahatma Gandhi to the Secretary, Home Department, Government of India, which are of special significance and were issued by Government as an annexure rather than in the order of receipt, are here reproduced in their proper order.]

FIRST LETTER FROM MAHATMA GANDHI TO LORD LINLITHGOW

August 14, 1942.

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

The Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis. The Government resolution* justifying this step is full of distortions and misrepresentations. That you have the approval of your Indian "colleagues" can have no significance except this that in India you can always command such services. That co-operation is an additional justification for the demand of withdrawal irrespective of what people and parties may say.

The Government of India should have waited at least till the time I inaugurated mass action. I have publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know, the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So could I have dealt with every difficulty if you had given me the opportunity. The precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action might make world opinion veer round to the Congress, as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the Government's rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the All-India Congress Committee. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them, and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand.

The resolution says: "The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope." I suppose "wiser counsel" here means abandonment of its demand by the Congress. Why should the abandonment of the demand, legitimate at all times, be hoped for by a Government pledged to guarantee independence to India? Is it a challenge that could only be met by immediate repression instead of patient reasoning with the demanding party? I venture to suggest that it is a long draft upon the credulity of mankind to say that the acceptance of the demand "would plunge India into confusion." Anyway the summary rejection of the demand *has* plunged the nation and the Government into confusion. The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause.

The Government resolution says: "The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware too for some days past of dangerous preparations by the Congress Party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities directed among other things to interruption of communications and public utility services, the organization of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants, and interference with defence measures including recruitment." This is a gross distortion of the reality. Violence was never contemplated at any stage. A definition of what could be included in non-violent action has been interpreted in a sinister and subtle manner, as if the Congress was preparing for violent action. Everything was openly discussed among Congress circles, for nothing was to be done secretly. And why is it tampering with your loyalty if I ask you to give up a job which is harming the British people?

Instead of publishing behind the backs of principal Congressmen

*Published later in this book.

the misleading paragraphs, the Government immediately they came to know of the "preparations" should have brought to book the parties concerned with the preparations. That would have been the appropriate course. By their unsupported allegations in the resolution they have laid themselves open to the charge of unfair dealing.

The Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Was it wise at this time of the day to seek to suppress a popular movement avowedly non-violent?

The Government resolution further says: "The Congress is not India's mouthpiece. Yet in the interests of securing their own dominance and in pursuit of their totalitarian policy its leaders have consistently impeded the efforts made to bring India to full nationhood." It is a gross libel thus to accuse the oldest national organization of India. This language lies ill in the mouth of a Government which has, as can be proved from published records, consistently thwarted every national effort for attaining freedom, and sought to suppress the Congress by hook or by crook.

The Government of India have not condescended to consider the Congress offer that if simultaneously with the declaration of the Independence of India they could not trust the Congress to form a stable provisional Government they should ask the Muslim League to do so, and that any National Government formed by the League would be loyally accepted by the Congress. Such an offer is hardly consistent with the charge of totalitarianism against the Congress.

Let me examine the Government offer. "It is that, as soon as hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself, with full freedom of decision and on a basis embracing all and not only a single party, the form of Government which she regards as most suited to her conditions." Has this offer any reality about it? All parties have not agreed now. Will it be any more possible after the war? And if the parties have to act before Independence is in their hands? Parties grow up like mushrooms, for without proving their representative character, the Government will welcome them as they have done in the past, and if they, the parties, oppose the Congress and its activities, though they may do lip-homage to Independence, frustration is inherent in the Government offer. Hence the logical cry of withdrawal first. Only after the end of British power and a fundamental change in the political status of India from bondage to freedom, will the formation of a truly representative Government whether provisional or permanent, be possible. The living burial of the author of the demand has not resolved the deadlock, it has aggravated it.

Then the resolution proceeds: "The suggestion put forward by the Congress Party that the millions of India, uncertain as to the future, are ready, despite the sad lessons of so many martyr countries, to throw themselves into the arms of the invaders is one that the Government of India cannot accept as a true representation of the feeling of the people of this great country." I do not know about the millions but I can give my own evidence in support of the Congress statement. It is open to the Government not to believe the Congress evidence. No imperial power likes to be told that it is in peril. It is because the Congress is anxious for Great Britain to avoid the fate that has overtaken other imperial powers that it asks her to shed imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. The Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motives. The Congress seeks to kill imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India. Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress has no interests of its

own, apart from that of the whole of India and the world.

The following passage from the peroration in the resolution is interesting: "But on them lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of her people without fear or favour." All I can say is that it is a mockery of truth after the experience of Malaya, Singapore and Burma. It is sad to find the Government of India claiming to hold the "balance" between the parties for which it is itself demonstrably responsible.

One thing more. The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in the most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of India think that the freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can—and, may I say, than even you can. In that misery he tried to forget his old quarrel with Imperialism. He dreads much more than I do the success of Fascism and Nazism. I have argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally. If, notwithstanding the common cause, the Government's answer to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will not wonder if I draw the inference that it was not so much the Allied cause that weighed with the British Government as the unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of the imperial policy. The determination led to the rejection of the Congress demand and precipitated repression. The present mutual slaughter on a scale never before known to history is suffocating enough. But the slaughter of truth accompanying the butchery and enforced by the falsity of which the resolution is reeking adds strength to the Congress position.

It causes me deep pain to have to send you this long letter. But, however much I dislike your action, I remain the same friend you have known me. I would still plead for reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy. Do not disregard the pleading of one who claims to be a sincere friend of the British people. Heaven guide you!

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI.

THE VICEROY'S REPLY

August 22, 1942.

DEAR MR GANDHI,

Thank you very much for your letter dated August 14, which reached me only a day or two ago.

I have read, I need not say, what you have been good enough to say in your letter with very close attention, and I have given full weight to your views. But I fear in the result that it would not be possible for me either to accept the criticisms which you advance of the resolution of the Governor-General in Council, or your request that the whole policy of the Government of India should be reconsidered.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW.

MAHATMA GANDHI ADDRESSES HOME SECRETARY

To the Secretary, Home Department,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

September 23, 1942.

SIR,

In spite of the chorus of approval sung by the Indian Councillors and others of the present Government policy in dealing with the Congress, I venture to assert that had the Government but awaited my contemplated letter to his Excellency the Viceroy and the result thereafter, no calamity would have overtaken the country. The reported deplorable destruction would have most certainly been avoided.

In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent. The wholesale arrest of the Congress leaders seems to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control. I feel that the Government, not the Congress, are responsible for the destruction that has taken place. The only right course for the Government seems to me to be to release the Congress leaders, withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of conciliation. Surely the Government have ample resources to deal with any overt act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness.

Since I am permitted to receive newspapers, I feel that I owe it to the Government to give my reaction to the sad happenings in the country. If the Government think that as a prisoner I have no right to address such communications, they have but to say so, and I will not repeat the mistake.

I am,
Yours, etc.,
M. K. GANDHI.

NOTE (By Government): --A formal acknowledgement was sent to this letter.

LETTER ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

New Year's Eve, 1942.

[Personal]

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

This is a very personal letter. Contrary to the biblical injunction, I have allowed many suns to set on a quarrel I have harboured against you, but I must not allow the old year to expire without disburdening myself of what is rankling in my breast against you. I had thought we were friends and should still love to think so. However, what has happened since August 9 last makes me wonder whether you still regard me as a friend. I have perhaps not come in such close touch with any other occupant of your *gadi* as with you.

Your arrest of me, the *communique* you issued thereafter, your reply to Rajaji and the reasons given therefor, Mr Amery's attack on me and much else I can catalogue go to show that at some stage or other you must have suspected my *bona fides*. Mention of other Congressmen in the same connection is by the way. I seem to be the *fons et origo* of all the evil imputed to the Congress. If I have not ceased to be your friend, why did you not, before taking drastic action, send for me, tell me of your suspicions and make yourself sure of your facts? I am quite capable of seeing myself as others see me, but in this case I have failed hopelessly. I find that all the statements made about me in Government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth. I have so much fallen from grace that I could not establish contact with a dying friend; I mean

Prof. Bhansali* who is fasting in regard to the Chimur affair, and I am expected to condemn the so-called violence of some people reputed to be Congressmen, although I have no data for such condemnation save the heavily censored reports of newspapers. I must own that I thoroughly distrust these reports. I could write much more, but I must not lengthen my tale of woe. I am sure that what I have said is enough to enable you to fill in details.

You know I returned to India from South Africa at the end of 1914 with a mission which came to me in 1906, namely, to spread truth and non-violence among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life. The law of Satyagraha knows no defeat. Prison is one of the many ways of spreading the message, but it has its limits. You have placed me in a palace where every reasonable creature comfort is ensured. I have freely partaken of the latter purely as a matter of duty, never as a pleasure, in the hope that some day those that have the power will realize that they have wronged innocent men. I had given myself six months. The period is drawing to a close, so is my patience. The law of Satyagraha as I know it prescribes a remedy in such moments of trial. In a sentence, it is: "Crucify the flesh by fasting." That same law forbids its use except as a last resort. I do not want to use it if I can avoid it. This is the way to avoid it, convince me of my error or errors, and I shall make ample amends. You can send for me or send someone who knows your mind and can carry conviction. There are many other ways if you have the will. May I expect an early reply? May the New Year bring peace to us all.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI.

VICEROY'S "ENTIRELY PERSONAL" REPLY

January 13, 1943.

DEAR MR GANDHI,

Thank you for your personal letter of December 31, which I have just received. I fully accept its personal character, and I welcome its frankness. And my reply will be, as you would wish it to be, as frank and as entirely personal as your letter itself.

I was glad to have your letter, for, to be as open with you as our previous relations justify, I have been profoundly depressed during recent months, first, by the policy that was adopted by the Congress in August, secondly, because while that policy gave rise, as it was obvious it must, throughout the country to violence and crime (I say nothing of the risks to India from outside aggression) no word of condemnation for that violence and crime should have come from you, or from the Working Committee. When you were first at Poona I knew that you were not receiving newspapers, and I accepted that as explaining your silence. When arrangements were made that you and the Working Committee should have such newspapers as you desired I felt certain that the details those newspapers contained of what was happening would shock and distress you as much as it has us all, and that you would be anxious to make your condemnation of it categorical and widely known. But that was not the case; and it has been a real disappointment to me, all the more when I think of these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these young students, which has done so much harm to India's good name, and to the Congress Party. You may take it from me that the newspaper accounts you mention are well founded—I only wish they were not, for the story is a bad one. I well know the immense weight of your great authority in the Con-

*See Section on Chimur.

gress movement and with the party and those who follow its lead, and I wish I could feel, again speaking very frankly, that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you. (And unhappily, while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to bear the consequences, whether as lawbreakers, with the results that that involves, or as the victims.)

But if I am right in reading your letter to mean that in the light of what has happened you wish now to retrace your steps and dissociate yourself from the policy of last summer, you have only to let me know and I will at once consider the matter further. And if I have failed to understand your object, you must not hesitate to let me know without delay in what respect I have done so, and tell me what positive suggestion you wish to put to me. You know me well enough after these many years to believe that I shall be only too concerned to read with the same close attention as ever any message which I receive from you, to give it the fullest weight, and to approach it with the deepest anxiety to understand your feeling and your motives.

Yours sincerely,

LINLITHGOW,

MAHATMA GANDHI SUGGESTS MEETING WITH COLLEAGUES

January 19, 1943.

[Personal]

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I received your kind letter of 13th instant yesterday at 2-30 p.m. I had almost despaired of ever hearing from you. Please excuse my impatience.

Your letter gladdens me to find that I have not lost caste with you.

My letter of 31st December was a growl against you. Yours is a counter-growl. It means that you maintain that you were right in arresting me and you were sorry for the omissions of which, in your opinion, I was guilty.

The inference you draw from my letter is, I am afraid, not correct. I have re-read my letter in the light of your interpretation, but have failed to find your meaning in it. I wanted to fast and should still want to if nothing comes out of our correspondence and I have to be a helpless witness to what is going on in the country, including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land.

If I do not accept your interpretation of my letter, you want me to make a positive suggestion. This I might be able to do, only if you put me among the members of the Working Committee of the Congress.

If I could be convinced of my error or worse, of which you are evidently, I should need to consult nobody, so far as my own action is concerned, to make a full and open confession and make ample amends. But I have not any conviction of error. I wonder if you saw my letter to the Secretary to the Government of India, of September 23, 1942. I adhere to what I have said in it and in my letter to you of August 14, 1942.

Of course I deplore the happenings which have taken place since August 9 last. But have I not laid the whole blame for them at the door of the Government of India? Moreover, I could not express any opinion on events which I cannot influence or control and of which I have but a one-sided account. You are bound *prima facie* to accept the accuracy of reports that may be placed before you by your departmental heads. But you do not expect me to do so. Such reports have before now often proved fallible. It was for that reason that in my

letter of December 31 I pleaded with you to convince me of the correctness of the information on which your conviction was based. You will perhaps appreciate my fundamental difficulty in making the statement you have expected me to make.

This, however, I can say from the house-top, that I am as confirmed a believer in non-violence as I have ever been. You may not know that any violence on the part of the Congress workers I have condemned openly and unequivocally. I have even done public penance more than once. I must not weary you with examples. The point I wish to make is that on every such occasion I was a free man.

This time, the retracing, as I have submitted, lies with the Government. You will forgive me for expressing an opinion challenging yours. I am certain that nothing but good would have resulted if you had stayed your hand and granted me the interview which I had announced on the night of August 8, I was to seek. But that was not to be.

Here, may I remind you that the Government of India have before now owned their mistakes as, for instance, in the Punjab when the late General Dyer was condemned, in the United Provinces when a corner of a mosque in Cawnpore was restored, and in Bengal when the Partition was annulled. All these things were done in spite of great and previous mob violence.

To sum up—

(1) If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends.

(2) If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress, you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members. I do plead with you to make up your mind to end the impasse.

If I am obscure or have not answered your letter fully, please point out the omissions and I shall make an attempt to give you satisfaction.

I have no mental reservation.

I find that my letters to you are sent through the Government of Bombay. This procedure must involve some loss of time. As time is of the essence in this matter, perhaps you will issue instructions that my letters to you may be sent directly by the Superintendent of this camp.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI.

REPLY BY VICEROY

January 25, 1943.

[Personal]

DEAR MR GANDHI,

Many thanks for your personal letter of January 19, which I have just received, and which I need not say I have read with close care and attention. But I am still, I fear, rather in the dark. I made clear to you in my last letter that, however reluctantly, the course of events, and my familiarity with what has been taking place, has left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered spokesman at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the sad campaign of violence and crime, and revolutionary activity which has done so much harm, and so much injury to India's credit, since last August. I note what you say about non-violence. I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past. But the events of these last months, and even the events that are happening today, show that

it has not met with the full support of certain, at any rate, of your followers, and the mere fact that they may have fallen short of an ideal which you have advocated is no answer to the relations of those who have lost their lives, and to those themselves who have lost their property or suffered severe injury as a result of violent activities on the part of Congress and its supporters. And I cannot, I fear, accept as an answer your suggestion that "the whole blame" has been laid by you yourself at the door of the Government of India. We are dealing with facts in this matter, and they have to be faced. And while, as I made clear in my last letter, I am very anxious to have from you anything that you may have to say or any specific proposition that you may have to make, the position remains that it is not the Government of India, but Congress and yourself that are on their justification in this matter.

If therefore you are anxious to inform that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of August 9, and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me appropriate assurances as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further. It is of course very necessary to be clear on that point, and you will not, I know, take it amiss that I should make that clear in the plainest possible words.

I will ask the Governor of Bombay to arrange that any communication from you should be sent through him, which will I trust reduce delay in its transmission.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S DECISION TO FAST

January 29, 1943.

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I must thank you warmly for your prompt reply to my letter of 19th instant. I wish I could agree with you that your letter is clear. I am sure you do not wish to imply by clearness simply that you hold a particular opinion strongly. I have pleaded and would continue to plead till the last breath that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of opinion you hold that the August resolution of the Congress is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on August 9 last and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrest of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence?

You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by the Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against Fascism in every shape or form. It tenders co-operation in war effort under circumstances which alone can make effective and nation-wide co-operation possible. Is all this open to reproach? Objection may be raised to that clause of the resolution which contemplated civil disobedience. But that by itself cannot constitute an objection since the principle of civil disobedience is impliedly conceded in what is known as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact." Even that civil disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting for which I was to seek from you an appointment.

Then take the unproved and in my opinion unprovable charges hurled against the Congress and me by so responsible a Minister as the Secretary of State for India.

Surely I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence, not by mere *ipse dixit*.

But you throw in my face the facts of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of the murders as clearly, I hope,

as you do. My answer is that the Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organized on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic law of tooth for tooth by that of ten thousand for one—not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic law, *i.e.*, of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all-powerful Government of India.

Add to this tale of woe the privations of the poor millions due to India-wide scarcity which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a *bona fide* National Government responsible to a popularly elected assembly.

If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain I must resort to the law prescribed for Satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. I must commence after the early morning breakfast of February 9, a fast for 21 days ending on the morning of March 2. Usually, during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts. But nowadays my system refuses water. This time therefore I propose to add juices of citrus fruit to make water drinkable. For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills. This fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

I am not marking this letter personal as I did the two previous ones. They were in no way confidential. They were a mere personal appeal.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI.

P.S.—The following was inadvertently omitted:

The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress by its August resolution asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Q.-A. Jinnah to form a National Government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee except Shrimati Sarojini Devi, I do not know its present mind. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

VICEROY ON "HIMSA"

February 5, 1943.

DEAR MR GANDHI,

Many thanks for your letter of January 29, which I have just received. I have read it, as always, with great care and with every anxiety to follow your mind and to do full justice to your argument. But I fear that my view of the responsibility of Congress and of yourself personally for the lamentable disorders of last autumn remains unchanged.

In my last letter I said that my knowledge of the facts left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered leader at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the campaign of violence and crime that subsequently broke out. In reply you have reiterated your request that I should attempt to convince you that my opinion is correct. I would readily have responded earlier to that request were it not that your letters gave no indication, such as I should have been entitled to expect, that you sought the information with an open mind. In each of them you have expressed profound distrust of the published reports of the recent happenings, although in your last letter, on the basis of the

same information, you have not hesitated to lay the whole blame for them on the Government of India. In the same letter you have stated that I cannot expect you to accept the accuracy of the official reports on which I rely. It is not, therefore, clear to me how you expect or even desire me to convince you of anything. But, in fact, the Government of India have never made any secret of their reasons for holding the Congress and its leaders responsible for the deplorable acts of violence, sabotage and terrorism that have occurred since the Congress Resolution of August 8 declared a "mass struggle" in support of its demands, appointed you as its leader and authorized all Congressmen to act for themselves in the event of interference with the leadership of the movement. A body which passes a resolution in such terms is hardly entitled to disclaim responsibility for any events that followed it. There is evidence that you and your friends expected this policy to lead to violence; and that you were prepared to condone it, and that the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan, conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders. The general nature of the case against the Congress has been publicly stated by the Home Member in his speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on September 15* last, and if you need further information I would refer you to it. I enclose a complete copy in case the Press versions that you must have seen were not sufficient. I need only add that all the mass of evidence that has since come to light has confirmed the conclusions then reached. I have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions, circulated in the name of the All-India Congress Committee; that well-known Congressmen have organized and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder; and that even now an underground Congress organization exists in which, among others, the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee plays a prominent part, and which is actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism that have disgusted the whole country. If we do not act on all this information or make it publicly known it is because the time is not yet ripe; but you may rest assured that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world if you can. And if in the meanwhile you yourself, by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, the judgment will go against you by default.

I have read with some surprise your statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Delhi Settlement of March 5, 1931, which you refer to as the "Gandhi-Irwin Pact." I have again looked at that document. Its basis was that civil disobedience would be "effectively discontinued" and that certain "reciprocal action" would be taken by Government. It was inherent in such a document that it should take notice of the existence of civil disobedience. But I can find nothing in it to suggest that civil disobedience was recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate. And I cannot make it too plain that it is not so regarded by my Government.

To accept the point of view which you put forward would be to concede that the authorized government of the country, on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow subversive and revolutionary movements described by you yourself as open rebellion, to take place unchallenged; that they should allow preparations for violence, for the interruption of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for the murder of police officers and others to proceed unchecked. My Government and I are open indeed to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against you and the Congress leaders. But my anxiety and that of

* See Assembly debate on "Situation in India."

my Government has throughout been to give you, and to give the Congress organization, every possible opportunity to withdraw from the position which you have decided to take up. Your statements of last June and July, the original resolution of the Working Committee of July 14, and your declaration on the same day that there was no room left for negotiation and that after all it was an open rebellion, are all of them grave and significant, even without your final exhortation to "Do or die." But with a patience that was perhaps misplaced, it was decided to wait until the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee made it clear that there could be no further toleration of the Congress attitude if Government was to discharge its responsibility to the people of India.

Let me, in conclusion, say how greatly I regret, having regard to your health and your age, the decision that you tell me that you now have it in mind to take. I hope and pray that wiser counsels may yet prevail with you. But the decision whether or not to undertake a fast with its attendant risks is clearly one that must be taken by you alone, and the responsibility for which and for its consequences must rest on you alone. I trust sincerely that in the light of what I have said you may think better of your resolution; and I would welcome a decision on your part to think better of it, not only because of my own natural reluctance to see you wilfully risk your life, but because I regard the use of a fast for political purposes as a form of political blackmail (*himsa*) for which there can be no moral justification and understood from your own previous writings that this was also your view.

Yours sincerely,
LINLITHGOW.

THE LAST LETTER TO LORD LINLITHGOW

February 7, 1943.

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I have to thank you for your long reply dated the 5th instant to my letter of January 29 last. I would take your last point first, namely, the contemplated fast which begins on 9th instant. Your letter, from a Satyagrahi's standpoint, is an invitation to fast. No doubt the responsibility for the step, and its consequences, will be solely mine. You have allowed an expression to slip from your pen, for which I was unprepared. In the concluding sentence of the second paragraph you describe the step as an attempt "to find an easy way out." That you, as a friend, can impute such a base and cowardly motive to me passes comprehension. You have also described it as "a form of political blackmail." And you quote my previous writings on the subject against me. I abide by my writings. I hold that there is nothing inconsistent in them with the contemplated step. I wonder whether you have yourself read those writings.

I do claim that I have approached you with an open mind when I asked you to convince me of my error. "Profound distrust" of the published reports is in no way inconsistent with my having an open mind.

You say that there is evidence that I—I leave my friends out for the moment—"expected this policy to lead to violence," that I was "prepared to condone it," and that "the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders." I have seen no evidence in support of such a serious charge. You admit that part of the evidence has yet to be published. The speech of the Home Member, of which you have favoured me with a copy, may be taken as the opening speech of the prosecution counsel and nothing more. It contains unsupported imputations against Congressmen. Of course he has described the violent outburst in graphic language. But he has not said why it took place when it did.

You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence. Surely there is nothing wrong in my asking you to show me the evidence on which you hold them guilty. What you say in your letter carries no conviction. Proof should correspond to the canons of English Jurisprudence.

If the wife of a member of the Working Committee is actively engaged in "planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism," she should be tried before a court of law and punished if found guilty. The lady you refer to could only have done the things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests of August 9 last, which I have dared to describe as leonine violence.

You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charge against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal? Or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable?

I reiterate the statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Settlement of March 5, 1931, arrived at between the then Viceroy on behalf of the Government of India and myself on behalf of the Congress. I hope you know that the principal Congressmen were discharged before that settlement was even thought of. Certain reparations were made to Congressmen under that Settlement. Civil disobedience was discontinued on certain conditions being fulfilled by the Government. That by itself was, in my opinion, an acknowledgment of its legitimacy, of course under given circumstances. It therefore seems somewhat strange to find you maintain that civil disobedience "cannot be recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate" by your Government. You ignore the practice of the British Government which has recognized this legitimacy under the name of "passive resistance."

Lastly you read into my letters a meaning which is wholly inconsistent with my declaration, in one of them, of adherence to unadulterated non-violence. For, you say in your letter under reply that "acceptance of my point of view would be to concede that the authorized government of the country, on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow movements to take place that would admit preparations for violence, interruption of communications, for attacks of innocent persons, for murders of police officers and others to proceed unchecked." I must be a strange friend of yours whom you believe to be capable of asking for recognition of such things as lawful.

I have not attempted an exhaustive reply to the views and statements attributed to me. This is not the place nor the time for such a reply. I have only picked out those things which in my opinion demanded an immediate answer. You have left me no loophole for escaping the ordeal I have set before myself. I begin it on the 9th instant with the clearest possible conscience. Despite your description of it as "a form of political blackmail," it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the Highest Tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal, I shall go to the Judgment Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as representative of an all-powerful Government and me as a humble man who has tried to serve his country and humanity through it.

My last letter was written against time, and therefore a material paragraph went in as postscript. I now send herewith a fair copy typed by Pearey Lal who has taken Mahadev Desai's place. You will

find the postscript paragraph restored to the place where it should have been.

I am,
Your sincere friend,
M. K. GANDHI.

The following letters which were not released along with the correspondence on February 10 were released on February 12 with the following Press 'communiqué':—

The text of certain letters that passed between the Additional Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department and Mr Gandhi is published to supplement the correspondence already released to the Press:—

OFFER OF CONDITIONAL AND TEMPORARY RELEASE

February 7, 1943.

DEAR MR GANDHI,

The Government of India have been informed by his Excellency the Viceroy of your intention as communicated to him of undertaking a fast for 21 days in certain circumstances. They have carefully considered the position and the conclusions that they have reached in the light of such consideration are set out in the statement of which a copy is enclosed, which they would propose, in the event of your maintaining your present intention, to release in due course to the Press.

The Government of India, as you will see from their statement, would be very reluctant to see you fast, and I am instructed to inform you that as the statement makes clear they would propose that, should you persist in your intention, you will be set at liberty for the purpose, and for the duration of your fast as from the time of its commencement. During the period of your fast there will be no objection to your proceeding where you wish, though the Government of India trust that you will be able to arrange for your accommodation away from the Aga Khan's Palace.

Should you for any reason find yourself unable to take advantage of these arrangements, a decision which the Government of India would greatly regret, they will of course suitably amend the statement of which a copy is now enclosed before it issues. But they wish me to repeat, with all earnestness, their anxiety and their hope that the considerations which have carried so much weight with them will equally carry weight with you and that you will not pursue your present tentative proposal. In that event, no occasion will of course arise for the issue of any statement of any kind.

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM.

MAHATMA GANDHI DOES NOT DESIRE RELEASE

February 8, 1942.

DEAR SIR RICHARD,

I have very carefully studied your letter. I am sorry to say that there is nothing in the correspondence which has taken place between his Excellency and myself, or your letter, to warrant a recalling of my intention to fast. I have mentioned in my letters to his Excellency the conditions which can induce prevention or suspension of the step.

If the temporary release is offered for my convenience I do not need it. I shall be quite content to take my fast as a detenu or prisoner. If it is for the convenience of the Government, I am sorry, I am unable to suit them, much as I should like to do so. I can say this much that I, as a prisoner, shall avoid, as far as is humanly possible, every cause of inconvenience to the Government save what is inherent in the fast itself.

NO CHANGE OF POLICY

"The Government of India have no intention on their part of allowing the fast to deflect their policy." —*communiqué.*

The impending fast has not been conceived to be taken as a free man. Circumstances may arise, as they have done before now, when I may have to fast as a free man. If therefore I am released, there will be no fast in terms of my correspondence above-mentioned. I shall have to survey the situation *de novo* and decide what I should do. I have no desire to be released under false pretences. In spite of all that has been said against me, I hope not to belie the vow of truth and non-violence which alone makes life livable for me. I say this if it is only for my own satisfaction. It does me good to reiterate openly my faith when outer darkness surrounds me, as it does just now.

I must not hustle the Government into a decision on this letter. I understand that your letter has been dictated through the telephone. In order to give the Government enough time, I shall suspend the fast, if necessary, to Wednesday next, 10th instant.

So far as the statement proposed to be issued by the Government is concerned, and of which you have favoured me with a copy, I can have no opinion. But if I might have, I must say that it does me an injustice. The proper course would be to publish the full correspondence and let the public judge for themselves.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI.

CORRESPONDENCE CLOSES

February 9, 1943.

DEAR MR GANDHI,

I am instructed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 8th February, 1943, which has been laid before the Governor-General-in-Council. The Government of India note your decision with great regret. Their position remains the same, that is to say, they are ready to set you at liberty for the purpose and duration of your fast. But if you are not prepared to take advantage of that fact, and if you fast while in detention you will do so solely on your own responsibility and at your own risk. In that event you will be at liberty to have your own medical attendants, and also to receive visits from friends with the permission of Government during its period. Suitable drafting alterations will be made in the statement which the Government of India would, in that event, issue to the Press.

Yours sincerely,
R. TOTTENHAM.

ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE RESOLUTION

BOMBAY, August 8, 1942.

The following is the text of the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee on the evening of August 8, 1942:—

The All-India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution, and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathize with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and Colonial countries, and the continuation of the Imperialist tradition and method. The possession of Empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperialism and the taint of that Imperialism will affect the fortunes of the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The A.-I.C.C., therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional Government will be formed, and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them

in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a Federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to this freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other Colonial Power.

While the A.-I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the pretection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression

An independent India would gladly join such a world federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems.

Such a federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the Governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards world federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign Press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India

and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

The A.-I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian Government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens, every man or woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the A.-I.C.C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the A.-I.C.C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on a mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

MR SATYAMURTI ON CONGRESS AIM

BOMBAY, August 10, 1942.

The Congress President was arrested before he could write to President Roosevelt, Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and the Russian Ambassador, M. Maisky; the United Nations should, nevertheless, take it that he has written the letter," observed Mr S. Satyamurti, M.L.A. (Central), who attended the session of the Working Committee by special invitation, in an interview to the Press today.

He added: "I have neither the strength nor the desire to make any detailed comment on contemporary events in India. But I think there is one aspect of the present situation which has not been noted as prominently as it should be. The Congress demand is not inconsistent with the efficient prosecution of the war until Japan is defeated with the help of a free India. On the declaration asked for by the Congress being made, there will be no hiatus or anarchy or chaos in the country. The Congress does not want it. There will be a provisional Govern-

ment immediately, if not simultaneously, which will carry on the Central Government of the country and the war against aggressor nations. The words in the Congress resolution are that 'a free India will become the ally of the United Nations.' Moreover, a free India will use all her strength, including armed forces, to defeat the Axis Powers. A free India will govern herself. I see that no objection has been raised to the Congress demand for Indian freedom, but it is urged that Indian freedom is promised after the war, as it is not possible to make such far-reaching changes during the war. I may answer that Mr Churchill offered an Anglo-French Union during this war. Moreover, if eleven Indians can be found representing no political party to carry on the Government of India in the midst of the war with only four important portfolios reserved, fifteen Indians can be found to carry on the entire Government of India during the war without any dislocation.

"The Congress aim is the same as the British Government's aim—to fight Japan until she is defeated and India's freedom is secured. The British Government may not agree with the methods pursued by the Congress, but unless they question the *bona fides* of the Congress, they must accept that the Congress resolution has overcome all legitimate objections. There will be no anarchy or chaos. A free India will become the ally of the United Nations, *i.e.*, fight the war to a finish using all her strength including armed forces.

"I have no desire to advise the Government. I have not the strength to do it, but I do suggest to the United Nations that they must accede to the reasonable demands of the Congress. As to the other parties objecting to it, I know only one party openly objecting to the Congress demands being conceded, *viz.*, the Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah says that he and the League will govern India fairly, justly and generously. Let the Muslims take the Government of India and govern it like that. Anyhow, the Congress will make no difficulty about the composition of the provisional Government so long as it is an Indian Government. Nobody knows what the future is going to be, but I know that the freedom of India is bound to come. The only question is whether it will come with goodwill on both sides or otherwise."

GOVERNMENT'S POLICY

RESOLUTION OF GOVERNOR-GENERAL-IN-COUNCIL

NEW DELHI, August 8, 1942

The following resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council (referred to in Mahatma Gandhi's letter dated August 14, 1942, to the Viceroy) * *has been published:—*

The A.-I.C.C. have ratified the resolution passed by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on August 5. That resolution demands the immediate withdrawal of British power from India, and sanctions "the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale." The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware, too, for some days past of dangerous preparations by the Congress Party for unlawful, and in some cases violent, activities, directed among other things to the interruption of communications and public utility services, the organization of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants and interference with defence measures, including recruitment.

The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope. To a challenge such as the present there can only be one answer. The Government of India would regard it as wholly incompatible with their responsibilities to the people of India, and their obligations to the Allies, that a demand should be discussed the acceptance of which would plunge India into confusion and anarchy internally, and would paralyse her effort in the common cause of human freedom.

For the demand of the Congress leaders there is no warrant. In the view of the Government of India that demand is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with a full sense of responsibility on the part of the leaders of the Congress Party, or a full appreciation by them of the realities of the present situation. The Congress Working Committee admit that "there may be risks involved." They are right.

Acceptance of the resolution must mean the exposure of India to Axis attack from without. Internally the withdrawal of British rule invites civil war, the collapse of law and order, the outbreak of communal feud, the dislocation of economic life with its inevitable hardships. Nor can the Government of India accept the claim of the Congress Party to speak for India as a whole.

The Congress Party has for long occupied a position of great prominence and great importance in Indian political life. At this day its importance is substantial. But it is the duty of the Government of India to take a balanced view of the interests of all sections of Indian thought and Indian opinion.

And looking as they must to the repeated protests even in these last few days by the leaders of great communities and solidly established interests, by so many leaders of liberal thought, by those great sections of the population which are giving unstinted and invaluable support to the war against Axis aggression, they are confirmed in their view that that claim has no solid foundation, and that acceptance of the proposals now put forward by the Congress Party must mean the abandonment of all those large and powerful elements in the population which have condemned the course of action proposed by the Congress Party and which resent and resist the widespread dislocation which its acceptance would involve of India's

* Appearing on page 114.

war effort and of the general life of the community.

Nor, can the Congress leaders claim that only thus can India's future be assured. The Congress Party is not India's mouthpiece, yet in the interests of securing their own domination and in pursuit of their totalitarian policy, its leaders have consistently impeded the efforts made to bring India to full nationhood. But for the resistance of the Congress Party to all constructive endeavours, India might even now be enjoying self-government.

British policy for India's future stands clear. It is that when hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself with full freedom of decision, and on a basis embracing all and not only a single party, the form of government which she regards as most suited to her conditions: and that in the meantime Indian leaders shall fully participate in the government of their country and in the counsels of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. The fullest opportunity for the attainment of self-government by the people of India has been guaranteed by his Majesty's Government. It is on the basis, fully accepted by his Majesty's Government and by the people of Great Britain, that the fullest opportunity shall be given for the attainment of self-government by the Indian people, that when the day of victory comes the final structure of India's constitution will be erected by Indians themselves. That those guarantees given by the British Parliament and the British people are accepted by the people of India we firmly believe.

The suggestion put forward by the Congress Party that the millions of India, uncertain as to the future, are ready, despite the sad lessons of so many martyr countries to throw themselves into the arms of the invaders is one that the Government of India cannot accept as a true representation of the feeling of the people of this great country.

The leaders of the Congress Party have claimed that the withdrawal of British rule "with good-will" will "result in establishing a stable provisional government in India, and co-operation between this government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China." There is no justification for those claims. Nor can the Government of India accept the suggestion that a stable provisional government could be formed in a moment of time, within a day or two of the withdrawal of British power.

Past experience has shown, to their profound regret, the existence of deep differences in this country, the harmonizing of which must be the object of all on whom responsibility falls, the removal of which is the ambition and the hope of the present Government of India. But to deny that those problems confront India today would be to ignore the facts; and the Government of India are satisfied that the interval between the withdrawal of British rule and the establishment of a stable provisional Government would provide an open opportunity for the enemies of order and for all dissident elements in the population.

In the view of the Government of India it is not too much to say that acceptance of the demand now put forward by the Congress Party must mean the betrayal of the Allies, whether in or outside India, the betrayal in particular of Russia and China, the betrayal of those ideals to which so much support has been given and is given today from the true heart and mind of India, the betrayal of India's fighting men whose glory is so great, and the betrayal of all those loyal and co-operating elements which do not support the Congress Party, but which have played so active and so valuable a part in British India and the Indian States in the prosecution of the war.

India has today a Government stronger and more representative than ever in the past, a Government predominantly Indian and non-

official, a Government determined to prosecute the war and no less determined to lead India on to her political goal. There is nothing that the Government of India regret more than this challenge at so critical a juncture.

But on them there lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of her people without fear or favour. That task the Government of India will discharge in the face of the challenge now thrown down by the Congress Party with clean determination, but with an anxiety that action shall be preventive of the interruption of war effort and the other dangers to which they have referred rather than punitive, and with a full consciousness of responsibility to India and to the cause of the Allies and of civilization.

Their duty is plain and they have to discharge it, profoundly as they must deplore the situation which they have been called upon to face. They urge the people of India to unite with them in resistance to the present challenge of a Party. They appeal to them to lay aside all political differences, and for the period of war to place before all other considerations the defence of their country and the achievement of those common aims on which depends the future not only of India but of all the freedom-loving peoples of the world.

INDIA OFFICE STATEMENT

LONDON, August 12, 1942.

The following statement was issued by the India Office today: "Official quarters in London report that the authorities in India have the situation completely in hand, and it is emphasized that any picture of widespread disorder in that country is utterly distorted. There is no indication of any widespread mass movement in the country. There is virtually no interference whatever with the war effort. In Calcutta, for instance, which with its neighbourhood is responsible for by far the greater part of India's war industrial activity, there are no repercussions to the arrests of Indian National Congress Party leaders."

RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON PRESS

NEW DELHI, August 8, 1942.

Following on the steps taken by them on the morning of August 9, Government virtually suspended the Delhi Agreement between themselves and the All-India Editors and brought control over the Press—even in the matter of selection and presentation of factual news relating to the disturbances. A Press Note, explaining the control, said:—

The declaration of various Congress Committees to be unlawful associations renders liable to prosecution under the Criminal Law Amendment Act anyone who assists their operations. It follows therefore—and this is a matter with regard to which in the circumstances no previous warning to the Press or consultation with advisory committees was possible—that the editor of any newspaper who supports or encourages the mass movement sponsored by the bodies referred to above, or who opposes the measures taken by Government to avert or suppress that movement, will be guilty of an offence against the law. Moreover, it is undeniable that the publication of factual news, both by the selection of events reported and by the manner in which they are displayed, can do even more to advertise, and thus support, the movement than editorial comment thereon.

Government have no desire to suppress all news or comment relating to the movement, for they believe that public opinion in general already condemns it and that a complete embargo placed upon the Press would not only prevent expression from being given to that

opinion, but also encourage baseless and pernicious rumours. Further they are not unmindful of the assurance, on which the "Delhi Agreement" with the Press was based, namely, that the Press as a whole will not support obstruction to the war effort, such as would inevitably result from a successful mass movement of the kind under contemplation. They are, therefore, reluctant to impose upon the Press any further restrictions than are implicit in the exposition of the law with which this statement commences.

The responsibility of the Press is, however, as great as its undoubted influence, and in order to ensure that that responsibility may be exercised in a manner that will not bring the Press into conflict with authority, Government consider it necessary—

(a) to exercise a measure of control over the origins of factual news relating to the movement so as to secure that what is published is derived only from recognized and responsible sources, and

(b) while imposing no statutory control over the expression of editorial views, to leave editors themselves in no doubt as to the limits beyond which it will not be in their own interests to go.

For the first of these purposes Government have accordingly issued a general order under Defence Rule 41(1)(b) which is self-explanatory and which leaves a wide discretion to responsible editors and their correspondents. It will be appreciated that the registration of correspondents which this order contemplates is of a voluntary nature; but that the effect of failure to register or of cancellation of a registration once made will be automatically to render illegal the publication of messages from that particular correspondent so far, but so far only, as they relate to the Congress movement. For the second purpose mentioned above Government wish it to be clearly understood that they do not propose to allow any newspaper to continue to publish matter, whether it takes the form of news or views, which, in their opinion, will encourage the movement or incite people to take part in it or which will excite popular feeling in favour of the movement or against the measures that Government will be compelled to take to combat it.

The normal rule is for Governments to consult their Advisory Committees before taking action against the Press and whenever possible to issue a warning before punitive action is decided upon. In the exceptional circumstances now created by the action of the leaders of Congress, the initial action described above has had to be taken without previous consultation with the Press, nor can Government do more now in conformity with the spirit of their undertaking than replace individual warnings by this general warning. In doubtful cases Governments will continue to do their best to consult their Advisory Committees, but where the offence is clear they must be free to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that it is not, or cannot be, repeated.

It is needless to add that Press advice will continue to be freely available, both from District, Provincial and Central Press Advisers, to all who seek it.

HOW THEY TOOK IT

MAHATMA GANDHI'S COUNTRYMEN DISTRESSED

The stunning blow of the news of the Fast was received throughout the country with dignified calm. It, however, broke the earlier spell of terrible silence and isolation and made Mahatma Gandhi a reality again in the hearts of multitudes. At the same time the occasion was one of desperation, and the British Government, by an act of callous bravado which will go down in history, had thrown discretion completely to the winds. This challenge of force wiped off any moral debt India may ever have owed to Britain. But the very nature of the published correspondence, revealing as it did the mind of Gandhiji and his reiterated emphasis on non-violence, kept tempers and passions in check. There was prayer, constant and ardent, in the humble cottage and the mighty palace alike, but no whining or wailing. The Fast went through without tragedy. Below are reproduced a few typical opinions expressed by representative people at the time:—

MR N. M. JOSHI

(Prominent Labour Leader and Nominated Member of the Central Assembly)

NEW DELHI, February 11, 1943.

I feel that Mahatma Gandhi and other Congressmen should have been released long ago. If at least Mr C. Rajagopalachari had been permitted to interview Mahatma Gandhi, a way would have been found for easing the political tension. The Government should release him immediately and unconditionally. I have no doubt that the release will be helpful for the pacification of the situation and may even lead to a settlement.

DR P. N. BANERJEA

(Leader of the Nationalist Party in the Central Assembly)

NEW DELHI, February 11, 1943.

Gandhiji's fast is a matter of grave importance to the country as well as the Government. In his letter to the Viceroy he has definitely deplored the happenings which have taken place since August 9 and has emphasized that he is as confirmed a believer in non-violence as he has ever been. In this circumstance it would be wise on the part of the Government to release him unconditionally. The deadlock has now existed for six months and it is time that it was ended. There has been considerable difference of opinion among Indian politicians in regard to the resolution adopted by the Congress, but it is no use blaming one party or the other. It should be the endeavour of the Government as well as all sections of the people of India to find a solution for the present deadlock.

The arrest of Gandhiji has created bitterness in the country, and if his fast leads to his death, the situation will be aggravated. I have no doubt that if Gandhiji is released now, the step will create a considerable measure of goodwill in the country. Nothing but good will come of the move of the Government. It will pave the way towards the removal of the deadlock.

KHWAJA SIR K. NAZIMUDDIN

(Leading Muslim and now Prime Minister of Bengal)

CALCUTTA, February 11, 1943.

I am glad that Mr Gandhi has not undertaken a fast unto death.

I hope that this ordeal to which he is subjecting himself will help him to bring about a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim problem.

MR K. C. NEOGY

(Member, Central Legislature, and a prominent Indian Leader)

NEW DELHI, February 11, 1943.

The correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy leaves no doubt in one's mind that the action of the Government in arresting the Congress leaders was precipitate. The world at large will acquit Mahatma Gandhi of any direct or indirect support to violence, in spite of all the evidence the Government may have in its possession implicating him in the mad outburst of mob violence that we witnessed.

MR C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

(Former Congress Premier of Madras)

MADRAS, February 12, 1943.

I have differed from Gandhiji and perhaps even more than that I have differed from the Congress. It is therefore difficult to find proper expression for my feelings on the fast that Gandhiji has undertaken. Nation-wide grief and anxiety over the fast may be ignored by the British Government in India. They may plant themselves firmly on their policy undeflected by the fast. They believe that their case is so just and their exposition thereof so clear that there will be not a stir in world opinion.

National goodwill is, however, a far more precious asset than temporary administrative success. Such success at the cost of goodwill is fraught with evil for the future. If we lived only for the present, then why this war and all the carnage and suffering involved?

For what specific purpose has Gandhiji undertaken this fast for twenty-one days? He has not undertaken it as a mere demonstration of his disapproval of what the Viceroy has done. Behind the fast is a hope that there will be a change of heart on the part of the Viceroy and that something that was denied to him will now be granted. The fast is not an end in itself to Gandhiji. Release for the purpose and for the duration of the fast obviously does not meet the situation.

Whatever might have been the apprehensions of the Government and the grounds therefor which they say compelled them to arrest him, there is no doubt whatsoever that he expected that he would be free for some time and that he would have conversations with the Viceroy as well as his own fellow-workers before he would be called upon to execute the resolution passed in Bombay. It is clear that Gandhiji was taken by surprise at the action of the Government. The question is not whether he was entitled to expect delay on the part of the Government. It is certain that in fact he expected to be given time and scope for frank and full discussion. The telegrams exchanged between him and me on August 6 and 7 last will show that he was confident he would have further opportunities for negotiations with the Muslim League and the British Government. It is for Lord Linlithgow to consider the position calmly and do what a few days later may be too late.

If I may indulge in some prognosis, if Gandhiji is set free he will be able to see for himself how events have developed. From inside prison his creed does not permit him to judge things or advise the nation. But it is obvious that he thinks the time has arrived for him to review the position. Whatever may be the Government's suspicions, I am certain that he will do all he can, when he is free, to stop all underground activities of sabotage and violence. He may, no doubt, do his best at the same time to push forward the claim for a real National Government responsible to a popularly elected assembly,

the machinery being adjusted to meet war-time difficulties and the Muslim League's claim. But do the British Government think that this should be discouraged? Would the setting up of a National Government be bad in the opinion of the British Government or would the goodwill of India be too dear a purchase at this price?

When I asked the Viceroy in November last to let me see Gandhiji, it was to further a Congress-League settlement. It is obvious that during the fast it would not be permissible to put on him the strain of discussing such questions. The present issue awaits solution at Delhi.

Mr Rajagopalachari released the following telegrams that passed between him and Mahatma Gandhi on August 6 and 7, 1942:—

Telegram from Mr C. Rajagopalachari to Mahatma Gandhi, Bombay, dated August 6, 1942:

> Your letter. Forgive persistence, nothing new in Jinnah's allegation. Feel you should ignore them and definitely offer him such quota of provisional Government as he wants and ask him to nominate his men. This along with your names on behalf of Congress will rationalize your demand of Britain and force acceptance of proposal—Rajagopalachari.

Telegram from Mahatma Gandhi at Bombay to Mr C. Rajagopalachari dated August 8, 1942:

> Every effort has been and will be made in direction indicated by you though not identical love.—Bapu.

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

(Vice-Chancellor, Benares Hindu University.)

BENARES, February 12, 1943.

Mahatma Gandhi is the symbol of national consciousness of this great country, and in his suffering is reflected the humiliation of the country. He has an intrepid spirit with an impregnable will and a superhuman passion for truth and non-violence. In the correspondence between the Viceroy and Mahatmaji that has just been released, Mahatmaji asserts that he is today as complete and as ardent a votary of truth and non-violence as at any time before. He believes that Congressmen are followers of non-violence, and leaflets and circulars emanating from the so-called Congress organizations suggesting a programme of subversive activities are unauthorized. He pleads with the Viceroy to take steps to end the present impasse.

We are relieved to know that he has declared his intention not to fast unto death. It is a fast undertaken under limited conditions and with proper care. We hope and pray that he will be able to survive this ordeal. His immediate unconditional release is essential for allaying public apprehension and easing the present tension. The independence of India is her birthright. The cause of the Allied nations, the peace of the world and the good name of Great Britain demand it. We do hope that Gandhiji will be released and his advice sought and National Government established.

MR LIONEL FIELDEN

(Former Controller of Broadcasting, India)

If Mr Gandhi should die, hatred engendered in India will be a grave and lasting consequence. The general point as to whether the Congress Party can be proved guilty of instigating violence lies at the heart of the Indian problem. 'Proofs' so far adduced would satisfy no court of law.

Yet it is from this issue that continued imprisonment of leaders of India's largest party and continued deadlock in India and Mr Gandhi's fast all spring. Congress leaders, if guiltless of violence and imprisoned, must be regarded as doughty, honourable champions of freedom; if guilty of violence and sabotage they are clearly whatever their logical rights may be, an obstacle to the war effort of the

United Nations. In this strange wordy contest both sides are, according to their lights, right. It must be remembered the Viceregal policy is a short-term policy of war expediency, whilst Mr Gandhi's policy rests on the long-term issue of freedom. Sooner or later the latter issue has to be faced.

If Mr Gandhi dies, it will be vitiated for a long time to come. The Government statement while clearly wishing to fasten responsibility for violence on the Congress, obviously fails to do so."

DR KHAN SAHEB

(Former Congress Premier of the Frontier Province.)

Mahatma Gandhi's fast has perturbed the whole of India and is a constant source of anxiety. He should not be allowed to die at this stage and this can only be done by standing united.

In resigning their offices, the three Executive Councillors have done what every patriot would do for his country."

MR V. D. SAVARKAR

(President, Hindu Mahasabha.)

A national appeal to Mahatma Gandhi himself to break his fast is the only way now which is likely to prove more effective than any other to save his life. We must face boldly the stark situation as it stares us in the face. We must now turn our faces from the alien, unsympathetic doors of the Viceregal Lodge to the bedside of Mahatma Gandhi himself and request him to break his fast in the very national interests to serve which he must have undertaken it.

We have tried our best up to this time to persuade the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi and spare his life. It is no use now hoping against hope that the fast or its moral or human appeal would bring about any change of heart on the part of the Government. Millions of us have disagreed with the Government and even resented this attitude on their part, but now the sands of time are running so fast that we cannot waste even a moment in resenting and protesting."

MR NALINI RANJAN SARKER

(Former Member, Viceroy's Executive Council.)

If I decided to lay down my office, it was on an overriding consideration in connection with the latest policy of the Government of India regarding the greatest man of India, who embodies our national aspiration for freedom and stands foremost in the sphere of our progressive social activities, and whose life is ever so vital for bringing about a real and lasting reconciliation between the various communities in India and between India and Great Britain. Our humble power could not be of much avail in saving his life. I am, however, confident that where we have failed Almighty God will step in to help us and save him for us. It is my prayer at this hour that he may yet live for many years to serve the country's cause. It is also my earnest hope today that the political technique for winning national freedom may be readjusted in full appreciation of the realities of the present situation.

At the same time I will appeal to the British Government to reorientate their present policy and take a realistic and helpful attitude in solving the present deadlock."

MR TAN YUN SHAN

(Director, Cheena-Bhawana, Santiniketan.)

We, Chinese people, regard Gandhiji as the living Buddha of modern India and have the profoundest love and the greatest veneration for him. We can imagine how deeply the people of China are concerned about Gandhiji's health. I must honestly pray with

my Indian brethren that God may spare Mahatmaji to us for many years to come and he will live in this world for the full span of life of 120 years as he himself had once said.

SIR WILLIAM ROBERTS

(President, European Association, Lahore.)

The country has been agitated over Mr Gandhi's fast. I for one think he had been more a politician than a saint in this world crisis, yet it would have been a calamity for the Empire if his fast had been fatal. We can ill afford to despise anyone willing to sacrifice for his ideal. If the Mahatma lives he can yet be of great influence in bringing India to better realization of the issues at stake. Let us also search our hearts and see if we cannot even at this late hour do something to bring about a better atmosphere in this great country.

COTTON ASSOCIATION

BOMBAY, February 12, 1943.

The Board of the East India Cotton Association at its meeting today authorized its Chairman to send a telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy urging unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi. The meeting then adjourned without transacting any business.

MR A. M. ALLAPICHAI

(Secretary, Madras Presidency Muslim League)

MADRAS, February 13, 1943.

Is there any Indian so base that will not feel anxious about Gandhiji who has almost risked his life by his decision to fast for 21 days? We have our great differences with him and the Congress, but we cannot help loving and admiring him for all the good he has done to India. Generosity always pays. If Gandhiji is unconditionally released, it will do good. Gandhiji feels that he has a duty by his country now and when once he is convinced that things said about organized violence are substantially correct, he will do all that lies in his power to stop this.

This we can safely assert in the light of all that he did in the past under such circumstances. Such being the case, his Excellency the Viceroy as a very great man should make the best use of this opportunity to end the deadlock in the country and see that the whole nation puts forth its full energy for defeating our terrible foes.

THE HINDU MAHASABHA

(Authoritative body representing Hindu opinion)

NEW DELHI, February 13, 1943.

A meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha held in New Delhi today under the presidency of Mr V. D. Savarkar adopted a resolution expressing anxiety at the health of Mahatma Gandhi in view of his fast and urging his release.

The Committee asserted that any move on the part of Congressmen and others to negotiate with the Muslim League or arrive at an agreement without consulting the Mahasabha would be resisted.

BOMBAY STOCK EXCHANGE

BOMBAY, February 13, 1943.

The necessity for immediate unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi is urged in a telegram sent by the Bombay Stock Exchange to the Private Secretary to his Excellency the Viceroy.

The meeting of the Governing Body of the Bombay Stock Exchange then adjourned without transacting any business as a mark

of its deep concern at the three weeks' fast undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi.

PARSI OPINION

BOMBAY, February 13, 1943.

Prof. P. A. Wadia, Chairman of the Freedom Group, has sent the following telegram to Lord Linlithgow:—

"Freedom Group representing Parsi opinion urge immediate release of Gandhiji and other leaders unconditionally as a token of goodwill and indispensable preparatory measure creating favourable atmosphere for ending the deadlock."

BENGAL NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CALCUTTA, February 13, 1943.

The Committee of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce have sent a telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy at New Delhi expressing their concern at Mahatma Gandhi's fast and requesting his Excellency to release Mahatma Gandhi forthwith.

SIR PADAMPAT SINGHANIA

(Leading Indian Industrialist)

CAWNPORE, February 13, 1943.

It will be very unfortunate for the country if anything untoward happens by this great fast taken up by Mahatma Gandhi. I strongly maintain that for the salvation of the country and the maintenance of its will and morale, the most peaceful way to be adopted is the path of non-violence method and for its technique Mahatma Gandhi is a master and he only knows the innermost details for improving the will-power of every human being through this non-violence. Without having a strong will-power it is not possible for any country to acquire anything on a mass basis. Therefore Mahatma Gandhi will have to live for a few years more to increase and resuscitate this strong will in our countrymen. The sooner it is done the better, and at this juncture Mahatma Gandhi should be spared through this ordeal for giving us the advantage of his experience on non-violence.

CENTRAL COMMUNIST PARTY

BOMBAY, February 14, 1943.

"Mahatma Gandhi's statements have swept off every obstacle, every prejudice, that stands in the way of our great patriotic parties uniting among themselves and with the peoples of the United Nations," says a resolution by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India.

Making a stirring appeal to all political parties, including the Congress, the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha, to unite in demanding Mahatma Gandhi's release, the resolution says: "We appeal to all our brother Congress patriots to uphold the call which Gandhiji has given from behind prison bars. Stop sabotage and anarchy, win the League to join you in demanding Gandhiji's release."

Addressing the Muslim League, the resolution says: "On your shoulders rests the biggest responsibility today. They are now few barriers of prejudice or misunderstanding left between you and the Congress. Mahatma Gandhi has disavowed the campaign of anarchy and sabotage. He has stretched out the Congress hand of friendship towards you from across the prison bars. Nothing but these bars stand between you and your great brother party, between you and National Government which you so ardently desire and urgently want, between you and the satisfaction of your just demand for self-determination.

"To allow the Congress call to you to go unheeded is to miss your biggest chance of winning freedom for the Muslim masses and salvation for all. In the name of the Muslim masses of the threatened Provinces, in the name of the traditions and aspirations of your own great organization, throw in your entire weight to get Gandhiji out."

TRADE UNION CONGRESS

BOMBAY, February 14, 1943.

Urging immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi, a resolution of the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress opines that the only way out of the present political deadlock in the country is for the Government to release all Congressmen and withdraw the measures with a view to renewing the negotiations that were interrupted by the arrests of Congress leaders and the policy pursued by the Government since August last.

The B.P.T.U.C. holds the view that the responsibility for not ending the present impasse rests with the Government, particularly in view of Mahatma Gandhi's willingness to survey the situation *de novo* and to make a fresh proposal on behalf of the Congress if he is placed amongst the members of the Congress Working Committee.

CENTRAL LEGISLATURE DEBATES FAST

DEMAND FOR UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF GANDHIJI

The unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi was demanded through an adjournment motion moved by Mr V. V. Kalikar in the Council of State on February 15, 1943, when Gandhiji was on fast. The motion was talked out. An interesting feature of the debate was that while all the elected members whole-heartedly supported the motion two nominated non-officials, Sir A. P. Patro and Sir K. Ramunni Menon, attempted to justify Government's action. Sir Mahomed Usman was the only Government Member who took part in the debate.

NEW DELHI, February 15, 1943.

Mr V. V. Kalikar: Sir, I beg to move:—

"That the House now do adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz., the situation arising out of the refusal of the Government of India to release unconditionally Mahatma Gandhi, who is fasting."

As the House knows, Mahatma Gandhi started his fast on Wednesday last after completing his correspondence with his Excellency the Viceroy. The Government of India issued a *communiqué* on February 10 deploring the action proposed to be taken by Mahatma Gandhi and allowing him certain concessions. In that *communiqué* they have stated that he would be allowed free liberty for the purpose of the fast and during the period of the fast, that he would be allowed to take his medical assistants with him who are in jail and that he would be allowed perfect liberty to receive visitors. Mahatma Gandhi, Sir, declined to agree to the conditions laid down by the Government. He wants that he should be a free man to see things for himself and if he thinks that certain wrongs have been done about which he has no knowledge he is ready to make amends for them. One thing has come out of this correspondence between his Excellency the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatma Gandhi, Sir, has in unequivocal terms condemned acts of sabotage and violence. He has also asked in his personal letter to the Viceroy if his Excellency the Viceroy convinces him he is prepared to make the necessary amends. I do not hold any brief for Mahatma Gandhi. He is an all-powerful man. In fact, I disagreed with his programme and I have been disagreeing with him for the last 20 years. I am putting up the case from a humanitarian point of view. I do not want to enter into the controversy as to who is responsible for sabotage and acts of violence which occurred after the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and Congress leaders because, Sir, it is admitted that there is evidence for connecting Mahatma Gandhi and the acts of sabotage and violence but as the time is not ripe—these are the exact words in the correspondence—the Government are not ready to place that evidence before the public. I therefore, Sir, want to suspend my judgment as to who is responsible for the acts of sabotage and violence but two issues arise from this correspondence and that is, that Government wants Mahatma Gandhi to plead guilty to the charge though the evidence is not disclosed and wants the public to be convinced about it. Mahatma Gandhi says that he is innocent. He wants to review the whole situation, make amends if there is necessity for it, and he says, in his last letter to the Viceroy, that as he has not been convinced by his Excellency or by the Press *communiqué* issued by the Government, he wants to make an appeal to the highest seat of justice as he thinks that he is not able to get justice from the authorities concerned.

Sir, the House knows that Mahatma Gandhi is respected in spite of his political views throughout the whole world. The news of his fast has caused deep concern not only to people in India but to those outside India who think him as a real servant of his country and who wish that he may live long to serve his country loyally.

Sir, the question before the House is, whether the Government policy of not allowing him to go out of the prison walls is correct or not. Admittedly, the Government want to set him at liberty for a particular period. If really they can take the risk of letting him out for a particular period I do not understand, Sir, why he should not be let out unconditionally. Government should take that risk. If after his release he is found taking an active part in violent activities—which nobody believes he would do—the arm of the law is long enough, and he can be dealt with accordingly.

But, Sir, the Government *communiqué* reveals an attitude of frightfulness. I do not want to weary the House by reading the whole *communiqué*, as it has already been published in the papers. But I attach importance to one fact mentioned in the *communiqué*. In fact the whole trend of the *communiqué* is to the effect that Mahatma Gandhi and his associates are responsible for the acts of violence and sabotage. His creed does not allow him to review things from behind the prison walls. He has specifically mentioned in his correspondence that he does not want to coerce Government by observing the fast, but that he is observing it as a Satyagrahi. So far as India is concerned, nobody can challenge the sincerity of his purpose.

Then, Sir, the next question that is to be decided by Government is as to the situation that is likely to be faced not only by the Government but by the whole country if anything untoward happens—if the fast is continued, and if both the parties are adamant. We have precedents of heart-to-heart talks with the head of the executive by Mahatma Gandhi in the past. Some years ago when Mahatma Gandhi started his movement, the head of the executive had a heart-to-heart talk with him, and the matter was settled peacefully. Sir, prestige should not come in the way of saving the life of a very great man. If the Government pursue their present policy and do not reconsider their decision in time, nobody can foreteil what may happen. If Mahatma Gandhi loses his life, nobody can foretell what may happen. It is not a risk worth taking. From the country's point of view, from the point of view of accelerating the war effort, from the point of view of gaining national goodwill, I think, the Government, if they have any statesmanship in them, should take courage in both hands and seize this golden opportunity of gaining national goodwill by setting him at liberty.

Sir, I know that my time is limited. Moreover, I do not want to enter into controversial questions. I appeal to the whole House to agree to my motion and bring pressure to bear on Government to reconsider their policy. It is the desire of all people in India—some of them do not agree with his political programme and views—that he should not lose his life, and that he should be set at liberty. Readers of newspapers have seen that various important institutions in India have appealed to the Government of India and to his Excellency the Viceroy to release Mahatma Gandhi unconditionally and to solve the deadlock in the country. I humbly submit that if he is released he will help the Government in solving the deadlock. Mahatma Gandhi is regarded, not only by his followers and friends, but by his political opponents also, as a great friend of Britain. It is no use following a rigid policy—the policy which has been followed by the Government of India since August last. If you follow the policy of conciliation, the feeling of bitterness and resentment that

exists in the country will certainly disappear. Therefore, I submit, Sir, that the Government ought to seize this opportunity and allow Mahatma Gandhi to come out of the prison walls.

With these words, I move my motion for the acceptance of the House.

PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU

Mr President, I shall try to deal with the important question that my honourable friend, Mr Kalikar, has raised today in such a way as to steer clear of controversial matters as far as possible. It is not my purpose to apportion blame between the Government of India and Mahatma Gandhi; I want to concentrate my attention on larger matters, matters that concern not the unhappy past but the future of this great country. When I read the correspondence that took place between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy, it was in order to find out whether it gave any hope of the question at issue between the Government and the nationalists being approached in a new spirit. It seems to me that the second letter written by Mahatma Gandhi to the Viceroy, which is dated January 19, does create the hope that a new approach to the problem, which constantly engages the attention of all of us, is possible in spite of all that has happened during the last six months. Towards the end of his letter Mahatma Gandhi says two things to the Viceroy:—

> "To sum up," he says. "Firstly, if you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends. Secondly, if you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress, you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members. I do plead with you to make up your mind to end this impasse."

Sir, the two requests made by Mahatma Gandhi to the Viceroy seem to me to be the essence, the most important part, of the Gandhi-Linlithgow correspondence. I do not think that it can be disputed that the position taken up here by Mahatma Gandhi is a perfectly reasonable one. Whatever the Viceroy may think of Mahatma Gandhi's refusal to regard the official version as reliable, there can be, at the very least, no harm done if an attempt is made to convince Mahatma Gandhi of the truth of the reports that reached the Government. In any case, I should have thought that when this letter was received, some effort would be made to get into touch with Mahatma Gandhi, particularly as he had said in his first letter:—

> "You can send for me or send some one who knows your mind and can carry conviction. There are many other ways if you have the will."

It is clear, therefore, that before the correspondence ended in this crisis, it was possible for the Viceroy to make a genuine effort to convince Mahatma Gandhi that the reports that had been published in the newspapers were genuine and were not an attempt on the part of the Government to make out a strong case against their political opponents. Even though Lord Linlithgow might have failed to convince Mahatma Gandhi, nothing would have been lost if the course suggested by Mahatma Gandhi had been adopted. The second suggestion of Mahatma Gandhi is far more important even than this. The Viceroy had written to him in his first letter that if he had any suggestion to make, his Excellency would give it his best consideration. Mahatma Gandhi, taking this to mean that it was expected of him that he should put forward new suggestions which might make it possible for Government to arrive at a settlement with the Indian leaders, suggested the only way in which he could put forward new suggestions. He asked that he should be put into touch with the members of the Congress Working Committee. This was no extravagant request to make. Indeed, it seems to me to be an eminently reasonable one. No harm would have resulted had this

suggestion been accepted and had he been brought into contact with the members of the Working Committee so that they might thrash out afresh the problems with which we are all concerned. Yet, Sir, to our great disappointment, the only reply that was given by Lord Linlithgow to this suggestion was:—

> "If, therefore, you are anxious to inform me that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of August 8, and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me appropriate assurances as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further."

It is rather surprising that the Head of a Government, which instead of entangling itself for ever in the past should think about the future, should return an answer which made negotiation impossible. Whatever the responsibility in official eyes of Mahatma Gandhi for the disturbances that took place in August last might be, yet the Government could afford to show a magnanimous spirit and take this opportunity of ending the deadlock and opening a new and happier chapter in the history of Indo-British relations. The appeal of Mahatma Gandhi to the Viceroy to end the impasse is, I think, the deadliest charge that could be brought by any Indian against the British Government. While I can understand the Viceroy's concern for the maintenance of law and order, one cannot humanly expect that when men like Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy differ about certain fundamental matters, it would be possible for either party to come forward in sackcloth and ashes to express repentance for the past. That is not the way, Sir, in which an amicable settlement can be arrived at, and that is not the way that the British Government themselves have followed in the past. In the case of Ireland, Sir, which was much worse than that of India, his Majesty's Government adopted a different and far more statesmanlike course and the policy which they had the wisdom to follow led to the happiest results. Now, whatever the views of the officials regarding Mahatma Gandhi's responsibility for the August disturbances might be, the charge of violence cannot be brought against him in the same way as it could be brought against the leaders of the Irish Party. All of them had taken part in the campaign of murder and terrorism which the British Government had in vain used its utmost power to crush. And yet, while the British Government negotiated with the Irish leaders, it refuses to allow Mahatma Gandhi to put forward new suggestions unless he withdraws from the position that he took up in August last and humbly confesses to his Excellency the Viceroy that he was entirely in the wrong.

Sir, if Government still desire that a new atmosphere should prevail in the country, I feel certain that on the basis of the suggestions contained in Mahatma Gandhi's second letter to which I have already drawn the attention of the House, they can still give the country a new opportunity of considering all those problems that are at issue between it and the Government. The slightest chance of arriving at a friendly settlement should not be ignored by the authorities.

Apart from this, the authorities were willing to release Mahatma Gandhi for the purpose and duration of the fast. I would ask the House to consider why Government made this offer. I think they made it because they did not want to incur the odium of having been responsible for the death of Mahatma Gandhi. If that is their feeling, then I think, they ought at the present time when his health is deteriorating be prepared to release him unconditionally. Whether he dies now or he is released when his recovery is impossible they will have to incur the very odium which they wanted to escape from. I think, therefore, that it is desirable both in their own interests and

in that of the country that the Viceroy instead of asking Mahatma Gandhi to confess his sins and to repent of them, should in a statesmanlike way set him at liberty and tell him that if he follows the path of peace and puts forward suggestions, which while giving the country the constitutional freedom that it ardently desires and, indeed, insists on, will at the same time ensure the fullest prosecution of the war, those suggestions would receive not merely the earnest but the favourable consideration of his Majesty's Government.

MR P. N. SAPRU

Mr President, never before in its history has, I believe, this House had to consider a more solemn motion than the one which it is considering this afternoon. The news that Gandhiji has undertaken a fast of three weeks according to capacity has spread consternation throughout the entire country. The Mahatma is 73. He suffers from high blood pressure and a three weeks' fast is no joke in the case of a man of 73, even though that man has been accustomed to fasting all his life. It is true he is used to fasting. But it must be remembered that he is not young, and though he is a man of strong will, one cannot be sure of what the effect of this fast will be on his life and health. It may be that some of us have not always been able to agree with everything that Gandhiji has said or done. Perfection is not given to man. We are liable to errors of judgment. Not one of us is divine. "To err is human; to forgive is divine." But there is no denying the fact that Gandihji is one of the greatest men that this country has produced probably since the days of Buddha and Sankaracharya. We are too near him to pass an accurate verdict on his worth, on his work, on his achievements, on his contributions. I do not wish to anticipate the verdict of the future historian who will write with fuller knowledge and with much greater detachment than we with our little prejudices can claim to possess, than we with our selfish interests can claim to have. Certain it is that he is one of the creative forces of mankind. He is one of those men who change the course of a nation's history. To have supplied his countrymen with the vision of a new freedom, to have given to them a new philosophy and a new technique based upon the principles of Ahimsa, to have experimented with it in the life of a people, to have emancipated women, to have roused the Hindu conscience to the injustices of the Hindu social system, to the injustices of the system of untouchability, to have raised the Indian issue to the status of an international issue; these are great achievements for any living man. And what man is there who can claim to be greater than Gandhiji? His countrymen prize his life; they prize it more than they prize any other life in this country. Gandhiji embodies in his unique personality the highest aspirations, the highest yearnings of the Hindu race and, therefore, whatever our differences with Gandhiji might be, we cannot even for a moment contemplate with equanimity anything that may occur should Gandhiji's life be lost by the obstinacy of Government. Remember the repercussions of any attitude of "We cannot do anything, we are not responsible, let him die" will be terrible so far as Hindu India is concerned. I do not want the breach between India and Britain to be final. I want Britain and India to come together and I would like to say this, that the consequences of anything which happens to Mahatma Gandhi will be terrible, terrible, terrible beyond words. You have machine-guns, you have armies, you have navies, you have air fields; but there also the life of the spirit, and the spirit of the Indian will revolt against you if you should, because of considerations of prestige, allow Gandhiji to die. Do not, therefore, look upon it as a mere administrative problem. Look upon it as a problem of statesman-

ship, approach it in the spirit of men who wish to usher in a new era of goodwill and co-operation in this time of disaster in this country. I would make this appeal to my Muhammadan friends also. I was very glad to read this morning that a respected leader of the Muslim League like Sir Nazimuddin in Bengal supported the motion for the unconditional release of the Mahatma. I am glad, Sir, to find that the Muslim community has on the whole taken a reasonable view. Don't forget that little sentence in Gandhiji's letter to the Viceroy, "You did not allow Rajaji to see me." That shows that Gandhiji has no desire to impose his own will upon the Muslim League. He has no desire to impose his own solution upon the Muslim League.

Then, Sir, I shall say a few words about the correspondence between the Viceroy and Gandhiji. That correspondence reveals that Gandhiji is completely wedded to non-violence and that he has not the slightest sympathy with violence in any shape or form whatever. How can he, whose greatest contribution to human history has been this doctrine of non-violence, sympathize with or connive at the activities of saboteurs, murderers and dacoits and terrorists? How can he sympathize with them? The Viceroy has not merely accused him of an error of judgment. He does not say you did not foresee these acts of sabotage or violence; he wants to accuse him of direct responsibility for these acts. He says you connived at these things; you knew these things; these acts were done with your knowledge, with your connivance. This is the argument—there is a lady who is a member of the Working Committee and we know her to be a terrorist. Now there is a Mr Leopold Amery and there is a Mr John Amery and Mr John Amery broadcasts from the German radio and I have heard him broadcast from the German radio. As a Hindu I would say Mr Amery had committed past sins and he was reaping the fruits of those sins inasmuch as he had produced a disgraceful son. He asks the British people to make friends with Germany. Would you hold Mr Leopold Amery, Secretary of State for India, responsible for what Mr John Amery says? Well, I think the husband cannot be responsible in a society constituted like ours for what the wife says or does and I do not know, Sir, that those allegations against the wife, whoever she may be, are true. That is the sort of evidence upon which the Government relies for tracing a connection between the Congress movement and violence. We have our own explanation of those disorders. That explanation will not suit you. I do not say that there has been no disorder. I very strongly condemn these acts of terrorism but it is your evacuation policy, the general feeling of frustration that you have created in this country, the speeches of Mr Churchill and the speech of Mr Amery, in which he gave to the public the supposed programme of the Congress as that of sabotage and acts of violence after which disturbances took place that are partly responsible for them. Now, Sir, these speeches too have to be taken into consideration in apportioning responsibility. Let us not go too closely into the question of responsibility. Your argument is that you cannot yield to coercion. Well, you yield to coercion every day. You have yielded to coercion on so many occasions in the history of your Empire. My honourable friend, Dr Kunzru, instanced the case of De Valera. You negotiated with Cosgrave; De Valera was also present there. You negotiated with Griffiths and you thought it was all right. You negotiated with General Smuts after you had fought the war and defeated him and you did not say, "General Smuts, you must tell us before we negotiate with you. General Botha, before we negotiate with you, you must tell us that you were absolutely in the wrong in fighting against us; otherwise we won't negotiate with you." In that way you will never get peace in this country and you

want peace in this country because you say you want a New Order. We want and I am sure I am hopeful of a New Order, because whatsoever I might think of Mr Churchill—and I may tell you that I look upon him as a great tragedy—whatever we may think of Mr Churchill, we know that the Associated Powers and nations with such clean records as China, the United States, which did not get anything out of the last war, and the Soviet Union. With the ideals of the Soviet people some of us sympathize. Well, therefore, let us not talk of responsibility. Many things have been done in the name of the Christian religion. Would you hold the founder of Christianity, one of the greatest figures in the history of human race, responsible for these things?

The President: I would advise you not to bring in religion.

Mr P. N. Sapru: I would be the last person to say anything against the founder of Christianity or the founder of Islam, two of the greatest figures that human history has known or produced; almost divine, almost perfect. I would be the last person to say one word against them. I am only saying that you cannot hold them responsible for what their followers have done. Sir, let us not, therefore, go into this question of responsibility too much. Let us concentrate on the immediate present, and I cannot help feeling that the fast was in a way forced upon the Mahatma by the correspondence and by the letters of Lord Linlithgow. The Mahatma made a suggestion, "If you want me to make any concrete suggestions then put me at all events into touch with the members of the Working Committee."

The President: Your time is up.

Mr P. N. Sapru: He said, "Put me into touch with members of the Working Committee," but the Viceroy did not even care to reply to that part of the letter and then he refers to this act of fast as a sort of political blackmail. What other thing can a man do except say that "Since you say this I shall appeal to the highest tribunal where I shall get the justice which you have denied to me"? On these grounds I do hope most strongly that the House will recognize the solemnity of this occasion, will recognize that there is a responsibility for the vote which we cast this day and that it will ask for an unconditional release of the greatest Indian of this generation.

HAJI SYED MUHAMMAD HUSAIN

Sir, I am supporting this Motion for various reasons. I must say that I am not very much enamoured of fastings of this kind. But this is the way of Mr Gandhi. It is not for me then to criticize his methods, or to approve of them. I have had the opportunity of working with Mr Gandhi for a couple of years. Then came a time when I revolted against the Congress, for good reasons. And the Congress knows, headed as it is by Mr Gandhi, that I am one of the strongest opponents of the Congress policy.

But today I am supporting the motion for the unconditional release of Mr Gandhi for the reason that it will be beneficial, not only to this country but to other countries as well, because I believe that very likely his release may solve the deadlock, for which everyone feels anxious. As has been said by the Mover himself and the members of his party, that although they do not agree with the policy sometimes enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi, they will support his release at the present juncture without entering into controversy as to responsibility between Mr Gandhi and the Government. I say the same thing and that the question of analysing and putting the responsibility on the shoulders of one or the other is absolutely inopportune for the purpose of supporting this motion. I appeal to the members on the other side of the House that they should show their individuality, the courage, and that they can be independent, by voting for this motion. There may be

some one who may have it in his mind, but I would like to see any one openly saying that he does not wish to remove the political deadlock in the country. I have been hearing from everywhere, from England, from America, and from all parts of India, that everyone is anxious to remove the deadlock. I do not know whether they mean it or not. But today's voting will certainly show whether the Government is keen on, or indifferent to, the removal of the political deadlock.

The Secretary of State, in a speech supporting and approving the refusal of permission to Mr Rajagopalachari to see Mahatma Gandhi, also said that it is for the Indians to make up their differences, and that once they did it, the British would be willing to part with power. Now, Sir, how is it possible for Indians to make up their differences, how is it possible for Indians even to sit down to talk about their differences, when one party is in jail and the other party has no access to that party? The mere fact that the release of Mahatma Gandhi at least gives us a good chance of bringing about a settlement and thereby removing the deadlock, is one of the strongest possible grounds for any one who professes to be anxious to see the deadlock ended to support the motion.

I am quite certain that the Government also, owing to this deadlock, are not in a comfortable position even in the prosecution of the war, in spite of the fact that they have at their disposal the resources, both in men and in materials, of this country. Think of the day and the time when a united India stands behind the war effort and wholeheartedly supports every phase of it. The position then will not be what it is today; the whole of India will be at the back of the Allies, and it will be much easier to walk into Germany then than it is today. It is for this reason, in their own interests, that I ask honourable members on the other side to support this motion, if for nothing else.

It may be said, "Oh, we cannot support the unconditional release of a person against whom there is the allegation of connection with sabotage and other subversive activities." The words of the allegation are very vague. The connection may be far-fetched; it may be indirect, or it may be direct: we do not know. They refuse to place the evidence before the public. The connection may be, as some people believe, the same as between a human being and a monkey: there may be no direct connection at all. Therefore, that will not be a ground for not voting for the release of Mr Gandhi. One thing is certain. If you want any condition, that condition is already fulfilled by his unequivocal denouncement of violence and his reiteration of non-violence being his article of faith. What else is wanted now? What more can he say? If it is expected that he would say, "Oh, yes: I advocated violence, sabotage, murders, arson. But now I repent." I am afraid that would mean that the deadlock is deliberately maintained. Therefore, I request Government, if not for any other reason, at least for this reason, to release the man even if they believe him to have been responsible for all this misery arising out of the August disturbances, if that very man can come forward and give you relief, courage, support and everything that you now need. Statesmanship demands that opportunity should be allowed to him to do this. The peace will be restored in the country and your position in the war will be much safer than it is today.

SIR A. P. PATRO

Sir, there is no doubt that it is the earnest desire of every Indian that the present *impasse* should be put an end to as early as possible and peace should be restored in the country, especially at a time when we are facing the danger of war and when there is the threat to India herself from a treacherous enemy. But then the question is: How is this to be ended? Would the unconditional release of Mr Gandhi

contribute towards this end?

I should be indeed very glad and happy personally, if Mr Gandhi is released. But the real difficulty seems to me to be about the security to the people, the agriculturists, the cultivators, the labourers, knowing as we do what has been done during the few months from July till now. An account of all the atrocities that took place was given by the honourable Home Member in the Assembly in reply to a question. Therefore how could we prevent these acts in the future? It would appear that it is not reasonable, politically expedient, that there should be unconditional release. It may be coercion or forcing the hands of the Government. Government may surrender. This Government may change, changes may take place, but the people remain there. The safety of the people should be considered first and therefore whether there should be unconditional release is a matter that one should consider from larger issues. It is not only Mr Gandhi but the whole lot of the Congressmen that should be released. What is the use of releasing one individual, however great he may be? You have to release all the Congressmen and all those that have been kept in detention and all those that have been convicted of crimes. Therefore it is very great problem, very large indeed. We cannot very easily say that unconditional release would be very helpful. It *may be an unconditional surrender of the Government*. I do not care whether the Government surrender or not. But if it is reasonable and politically expedient and secure and safe in future, it might be done taking the risk.

MR HOSSAIN IMAM

No one can deny that the question of Mr Gandhi's life is one in which millions, hundreds of millions, of Indians are deeply interested. It will not be possible for any Government, be it English or Indian, to come to a decision about his life with a light heart. But we have to look at it from a detached point of view. There is no doubt some weight in the charge, which Pandit Kunzru brought forward against the Government. He gave you two options, either convince him or place him in his Working Committee. There is no defence put up by the Government against these charges and I would like the Home Department or the Leader of the House to reply to this charge of Pandit Kunzru. It is a very pertinent charge which he has made.

If the Government is not willing to be blackmailed, as he calls it himself, then the one demand which can be met by them is that they should not blackmail others. It is only when Government deals with the question of the Congress that the League and other parties are dangled as the people who count, whose consent is necessary for denying power to the Congress. But when the question of devolution of powers comes then there is nobody in the eye of the Government but the Congress. Whenever there is any prospect of making a Hindu-Muslim settlement even the highest in the land has not the decency to keep out, and not to queer the pitch as he did in December last year. He dangled before us the geographically-one formula of India as if it was a new theory or a new discovery that has been made and as if even a schoolboy did not know that geographically not only India is one but Asia is one and the whole world is one. Man for man Hitler and Roosevelt are one.

Now the question at the present time is: Is it wise for Government to take on itself the odium of the eventuality that might happen? I sincerely feel, Sir, that my Hindu friends should not only confine their attention to the British Government but should approach their Mahatma as well. Gandhiji should be persuaded, as he was persuaded when he took the fast on the Harijan issue. At that time, too, the direct tussle was between the Government and the Congress. Mr

Gandhi did not like the Communal Award; he wanted it to be amended. The Secretary of State did not amend it but the people of India did go over to him and brought about a sort of settlement. I think it is possible to persuade Mr Gandhi even now, because it is a fast to capacity; it is not a death fast, so it is not so hopeless as it appears.

We, I mean as Leaguers, do not come into the picture. We are neither responsible for his being sent to the jail, nor are we responsible for keeping him in the jail. It is a quarrel between the Government consisting of a majority of Hindu members and Mr Gandhi and they should settle it between themselves. The Viceroy and Gandhiji are friends. It is a friendly quarrel, or it might be a deadly quarrel. No one knows, but the issue is weighty and I can assure my friends that the Government is too wise to embark on an issue, the result of which it knows would be odium throughout India.

SIR MAHOMED USMAN

Mr President, Sir, I have not much to say on the motion moved by my honourable friend because the Press *communiqué* has answered all the questions raised in the debate today. The Government were very anxious when they heard that Mr Gandhi had resolved to fast and therefore I think they adopted a very reasonable solution when they told him that they were prepared to release him for the purpose and for the duration of the fast. We thought, Sir, that this was a very fair offer: otherwise our administration could be brought to a standstill by anybody who could say that he was going to fast simply because he disagreed with the Government. They felt that the highest standards of administration should be maintained. But Mr Gandhi was not willing to accept our offer. The offer stands even today. The next best thing we could do was to permit him to have his own medical advisers and friends. Our object in all this was that his friends should go and induce Mr Gandhi to give up his fast. Coming to the question of unconditional release, I should like to say that unconditional release will not be the right thing to do, as it will plunge the whole country into trouble again. We know that Mr Gandhi will not fast when he is released unconditionally. But he is not going to be quiet. He will certainly start once again his revolutionary activities, to which he stands committed, for capturing the Government of the country for the Congress. This is not going to bring communal harmony; on the other hand, it will increase communal bitterness, because Mr Gandhi is not at all just and fair to those parties that do not acknowledge him as their leader.

Mr Gandhi is the leader of only one party, the Congress Party. Government have to consider the claims of all other parties as well—the Muslim League, the Justice Party, the Scheduled Castes, the European interests, the Indian Princes and so on. Therefore we cannot act as if the Government exists only for Mr Gandhi and the Congress. If Mr Gandhi succeeds in making the Congress Party dominate over others, there is bound to be anarchy in India, which will greatly facilitate the Japanese invasion of this country. (*Interruption.*) Mr Shankar Rao Deo, a member of the Congress Working Committee, who has been arrested and is now detained, speaking at Marol and Ghatkopar in the Bombay Suburban District on the 26th and 29th of July, said that he thought the entry of Japan into the war should be an encouragement to Indians, who should, and did, derive pleasure from the successes of the Germans. He went on to suggest that the mass civil disobedience movement would take the form of a general strike in all factories, mills, and transport undertakings, which would cripple the war machinery. This is clearly the object of the movement started on the 9th of August.

While the Government of India deplore the use of the weapon of

fasting to achieve political ends—which Mr Gandhi and the Congress themselves have condemned before as containing an element of coercion—they do not want that anything should happen to the life of Mr Gandhi. They have therefore allowed his friends to visit him. His friends, I am sure, can persuade him to give up his fast as it is a fast not unto death but to capacity.

It is now three and a half years since the war began. I should like to ask what the Congress has done to encourage the war effort. The responsibility for all the troubles in India today is theirs. As soon as the war broke out they raised the political issue. They thought more of their own party than the safety of the country. The only positive thing they did was to make speeches at the end of 1940 and the beginning of 1941 to discourage the war effort, for which they went to jail. It is this attitude and activity of the Congress that encouraged Japan to attack this country. Coming out of jail, they again thought of how best to capture the Government for their party. Finding that the British Government would not yield to them and were for justice and fair play to all, the Congress started the slogans "Quit India" and "Do or die." I should like to ask: Are these the people that are going to assist the British Government and their Allies in the prosecution of the war if they succeed in acquiring the supreme control of the Government of India?

Sir, as I have said, the solution is in Mr Gandhi's hands. If he wants it he can certainly end his fast. It will give us great pleasure.

SIR K. RAMUNNI MENON

However deplorable the fast may be, there can be no doubt that the action which was commenced a few days ago and has since been proceeding on its distressful course has created considerable alarm and anxiety among all sections of the Indian public. But I think it will be a mistake to consider the situation that has arisen as being a very simple situation, capable of a simple and direct solution. We all know—those who have been in touch with public affairs in this country during the last six months cannot but know—that the present political situation in the country is extremely complicated; and it must be a source of the greatest embarrassment to the Government as well as others to deal with that situation in the midst of a world war. Therefore, let us not make the mistake of assuming that it is a very easy matter to extricate a very important personage from a difficulty into which he has got of his own deliberate accord and against the earnest advice of some of his best well-wishers. Anybody who reads the correspondence between the Viceroy and Mr Gandhi dispassionately and with a full and a fair understanding of the facts of the situation cannot but come to the conclusion that the Government of India have shown the utmost toleration and the most conciliatory spirit in dealing with a personality who is noted for his dogged determination and individuality. If, after all their efforts, the person concerned decides to act of his own accord, of his own deliberate choice, what can anybody else do? You must leave him to take the action that he chooses to take and to face the consequences of his action. The Government of India have shown that they were prepared to make every provision for his undergoing the fast in the most comfortable and congenial surroundings. Their offer, however, was refused. Now, it is suggested that he should be released unconditionally. What are the implications of that suggestion? Mr Gandhi is under detention for reasons which are well known to the world. The Government of India have taken action along certain lines and that action has been approved and strongly supported by all sections in this country other than the Congress. What will a sudden reversal of that policy—and it is a sudden reversal which this unconditional release

will amount to—mean? It will mean that the Government are prepared to throw overboard all those elements in the country which have stood by the Government, which have given them their full support not only in regard to this action but in regard to the entire war effort. It will mean something more. It will mean that we are prepared to bring about a political solution without any reference to the elements other than the Congress in this country—a solution which the Government have solemnly declared on several occasions, can only be achieved and will only be permitted to be achieved on certain definite conditions. I consider that when all these very important considerations are borne in mind, a suggestion that Mr Gandhi should be released unconditionally is devoid of all practical significance. I therefore think that the action taken by the Government of India deserves the fullest support from all thinking sections of the public.

MR R. H. PARKER

Honourable members have, quite rightly and naturally, drawn attention to the very serious risk that Mr Gandhi is running. It has also been said that he is running that risk himself. With both these points of view I am in agreement. But I would also ask honourable members —and when I do so I ask the Government also—to take into consideration not only the risk that Mr Gandhi is running but the risk that might be run by thousands of others were a certain decision taken. We have had experience in the last six months which has taught us a lesson. During that time we have had a Government who have conducted our affairs for us very, very soundly. I am not going to ask them to do this or to do that. But I would ask them to bear in mind those thousands who have suffered and those thousands who might suffer again if certain things were done.

MR N. K. DAS

It is very clear from the correspondence that Mahatma Gandhi was no less anxious than the Viceroy himself to end the impasse, and to give a new lead to the Satyagraha movement that he contemplated. But unfortunately the Viceroy understood him otherwise and the Viceroy said in the last sentence of the second paragraph of his second letter:

> "And if in the meanwhile you yourself, by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, the judgment will go against you by default."

That is what the Viceroy said and Mahatma Gandhi took very strong exception to these words. To my mind this was too much for a man of great truth and of great character and a man of very great sacrifice. I should think that the Government of India are very ill advised if they are not taking him at his word. When he has come out himself without any communication from the Viceroy or from anybody, when he has come out himself voluntarily and said that he is ready to reform his movement or at least to amend it, it is very uncharitable to say, as the honourable the Leader of the House has said, that as soon as Mahatma Gandhi is released the whole country would be plunged into chaos and confusion. I ask him, Sir, supposing, God forbid, Mahatma Gandhi dies because of his fast, are the Government of India prepared to withstand all that would come after him? I do not agree with the Government nor with the Leader's views that Mahatma Gandhi or the Congress is responsible for all that has happened since August 9. It is idle to place all the blame at the doors of the Congress. I believe, Sir, that the murder, sabotage, etc., that took place are due to many factors, and one of the factors is that the Government of India thoughtlessly put all the Congress leaders into prison, all those who outside the prison would have been able to restore tranquillity and peace in the country much more quickly than the Govern-

ment of India can do. I think that the Viceroy would be well advised to release Mahatma Gandhi unconditionally, for he is the only accredited leader and mass leader in this country who would be able to restore peace and good order and stop all sabotage and disorder; and he will be able to solve the political deadlock that exists today; otherwise I am afraid it will never be solved.

MR M. N. DALAL

Mr President, this House will be failing in its duty if it does not come forward to express its own sense of anxiety and appeal to the authorities to take a wise and humane course in the best interests of the country. I do not desire to go into the question whether Mr Gandhi is right in undertaking the fast. I have my own views on the subject but I am convinced that when it is possible for Government to save the situation and prevent any serious risk to Mr Gandhi's life they should not hesitate to do so.

There is every reason to think that if Mr Gandhi is released unconditionally he will set himself against violence in every form and use his great influence to carry public opinion against civil disturbances. We are all tired of the political deadlock which has resulted in harm to both the Government and the public. Instead of following the present barren course and looking at the question from the policeman's point of view, I am sure Government will show statesmanship at this juncture. I do not see why the release of Mr Gandhi should not be the first step to bring about new political conditions in the country, for it may help to bring all parties together and make one last effort to reach an agreement. I venture to suggest that Government stand to gain a good deal if they can lay aside considerations of prestige and release Mr Gandhi as a gesture of goodwill to the people. Such goodwill will not only have great effect on world opinion but is bound to be reciprocated in this country itself.

KUMAR NRIPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA

I appeal to the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi unconditionally. Mahatmaji is undoubtedly the greatest son of India and his release will be widely appreciated by the people in this country, rich and poor alike. I think after his release Mahatma Gandhi will try his level best to solve the political deadlock and also to stop the civil commotion movement in the country. I earnestly request the Government to give Mahatmaji an opportunity—

The President: Order, order. The debate has been talked out and automatically now terminates.

CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

GOVERNMENT'S POLICY CONDEMNED

Mahatma Gandhi's fast was the subject of an adjournment motion by Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra in the Central Legislative Assembly on February 15, 1943. He said:—

This adjournment motion arises out of the fast undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi in jail since the 10th February last. My main object in moving this motion for adjournment is to draw the pointed attention of the Government to the situation that is developing from day to day as a result of the step taken by Mahatma Gandhi. Sir, from the correspondence that passed between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and his Excellency the Viceroy on the other, it appears that Mahatma Gandhi wanted some redress in respect of certain grievances at the hands of the administrative head of the country, but, failing that, he took to what he himself characterized as an ordeal, a limited fast for a period of 21 days.

Sir, I am not here to enter into the politics of the Mahatma. This is at least not the time to do that. I am not also concerned to enter upon a vindication of the policy of the Mahatma, but I do assert that on an impartial perusal of the correspondence that has been released it will appear that Mahatma Gandhi at least cannot by any honest man be accused of personal complicity in the orgies of violence that swept over the country after August 9. Mahatma Gandhi made it a grievance that the whole situation would perhaps have been avoided if prior to his arrest he had been granted an interview by his Excellency the Viceroy to talk over matters. Sir, I will quote one or two sentences in this connection from the correspondence released. Mahatma Gandhi said:—

> "I am certain that nothing but good could have resulted if you had stayed your hand and granted me the interview, which I had announced, on the night of August 8, I was to seek. But that was not to be."

After that Mahatma Gandhi made it clear in his letter that he himself never stood for violence of any kind. He said:—

> "Of course I deplore the happenings which have taken place since August 9 last. I can say from the house-top that I am as confirmed a believer in non-violence as I have ever been. You may not know that any violence on the part of Congress workers, I have condemned openly and unequivocally. I have even done public penance more than once."

The country knows very well that on several occasions in the past Mahatma Gandhi undertook to face ordeals of this nature for self-purification also as measures of vicarious atonement for the faults of omission and commission of those who accept his lead. But, as I said earlier, I am not here to discuss his politics. It is well known and it does not require any statement from me here today on the floor of this House that, with all his faults and failings, Mahatma Gandhi is the one man in India today who is respected and admired all the world over. His name and fame are not confined to the geographical boundaries of this country; they have travelled far and wide. He has dedicated his whole life to the service of suffering humanity through penance and sacrifice.

This fast has been characterized as a form of political blackmail; it has been denounced as a spiritual subterfuge; it has been described as a manoeuvring for position; it has been criticized as the last desperate gamble to regain lost power. Nobody can stop people or interested parties from criticizing it in that way, but after all is said and done you have to realize that Mahatma is a type by himself. He has set for himself a code of conduct, a standard of life, which is pursued by

us. You may mock and jeer at it; you may taunt and twit, and he will continue to remain the Mahatma all the same. Today I myself can appreciate the agonies, the torments of such a soul when it finds from behind the prison bars, millions of his own people suffering from untold privations all over this country. The food scarcity, the famine conditions prevailing from one end of the country to the other are too much for that soft and luminous soul to bear. If he could have had an interview with the Viceroy he would have disburdened himself of what had been ranking in his breast, explained his position and, if necessary, would have reviewed the situation *de novo*. If there had been any errors in his methods, if he had been held in any way responsible for the misdeeds committed in recent months he would have made adequate and honourable amends. But such an opportunity was denied him. Therefore, he had to take recourse to this fast. I want every Indian Member in this House to realize this position. I am making to them an appeal. Let them not be carried away by the politics of Mahatma Gandhi. They may have their differences, but I do ask every honourable Indian Member in this House, whether elected or otherwise this simple question: Does he want to see this Mahatma, the greatest man amongst us, one of the leading figures of the world today, die by inches behind the prison bars?

A Member: Why not Europeans?

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: My friend asks "Why not Europeans?" Yes, I do appeal to the Europeans as well to consider the situation. I do appeal to the followers of Jesus Christ to bear in mind that today it has begun with the crucifixion of the flesh behind the prison walls. Who can say that it will not end in the crucifixion of the spirit? In that case do you realize the consequences? The whole Christian community in this country will stand self-condemned. Mahatma's fast is an outcome of the gospel of despair. I take it as a vivid testimony of the sense of sheer frustration. It is born of a sense of utter helplessness. I cannot but take it in that light. To the Government I shall make an appeal. Sir, it has fallen to my lot today to plead before them for the release of Mahatma Gandhi. They should feel ashamed that Mahatma Gandhi—the greatest man in the world—should be condemned by them to the humiliation of prison life in his own country. I do not think there can be worse condemnation of the British than that a man like Mahatma Gandhi cannot have any place except in the British prison. Today we find civilization crashing around us and the noblest institutions of mankind going to shambles. Truth, Love and Charity which mankind had so dearly cherished seem now to depart this world. Mahatma Gandhi, in the midst of this carnage and destruction, has been preaching and practising them throughout his life. Mahatma Gandhi with his lofty ideal of Truth and Love stands out as a beacon light in this tempest-tossed world. Will it be creditable for this Government to compel this noble Soul to perish in prison? Will they not try to win the goodwill of all by releasing him? Do they realize that some day after this war, despite all our differences now, we may have to sit together and settle up our accounts peacefully and amicably? Sir, I cannot but warn the Government that if Mahatma Gandhi is made to languish in jail, a situation will be created in India which will be absolutely beyond control of the most powerful Government. I cannot visualize the things of the future. I am deeply apprehensive that Mahatma may not survive. For in his last letter Mahatma Gandhi says, "If I cannot survive the ordeal I shall go to the Judgment Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence." I ask my friends to ponder over this ominous sentence. Now, the Indian Members in the Viceroy's Executive Council—today they have been put on their trial. The eyes of India are set on them. If they cannot assert themselves on this critical occasion and tell the British

Government that not one of them would like to see Mahatma Gandhi killed in jail, then I am afraid that day will not be very far off when they will have to repent their action. The day of reckoning will come. I am pleading in all sincerity and in all seriousness with all sections of this House to do the right thing before it is too late. Let us try to be humane. Let the British Government be humane on this occasion at least, and if they fail they will be to blame for what may happen hereafter. Mahatma Gandhi is looked upon as a national asset. We Indians will not allow that asset to be liquidated by the wrong and vindictive measures of the British Government. This is not the time to stand on false sense of prestige. Mahatma Gandhi is the greatest man in this country who has served his country for well over quarter of a century. I, therefore, appeal to all the Members present here to be united in their demand that Mahatma Gandhi should be immediately and unconditionally released. And I appeal to the Government to release him forthwith. If they remain adamant, Sir, I do not know what will happen to them, to their war effort and to this country.

MR N. M. JOSHI

The situation which has been created by the fast of Mahatma Gandhi is a very grave one. One of two results in opposite directions are bound to follow. If the situation is wrongly handled, if the Government of India does not show any sympathy with the people of India, if they do not show an understanding of the feelings and sentiments not of Mahatma Gandhi but of the Indian people, the present political situation is bound to be worsened. Mahatma Gandhi's life may not be of great concern to the British people and to the Government of India, but we regard Mahatma Gandhi, as my honourable friend, Mr Maitra, has said, as a great national asset. He is a great Indian and I have no doubt in my mind that if the Government of India does not show any goodwill towards Indian people the results will be disastrous. The political situation in the country at the present time is a bad one, but I have no doubt that if Mahatma Gandhi is allowed to die as a result of this fast, it will be greatly worsened. Not only that, but I feel, Mr President, that if unfortunately Mahatma Gandhi dies as a result of this fast the relations between the British people—not only the British Government and the Indian people—but between the British people and the Indian people will be permanently embittered. If Mahatma Gandhi dies as a result of this fast during this crisis I have no doubt in my mind, that the Indian people will not forget this fact, but will never forgive the British people. Sir, it may be said that Mahatma Gandhi is accustomed to fasting and he may survive and even if he survives—as we all hope he will survive —the political situation will not fail to worsen. People will not forget the fact that the British people and the Indian Government did not show any concern, sympathy or understanding to the feelings of the Indian people. Sir, is the Government of India justified in taking the steps which they have taken and they propose to take? Do the Government feel sure that they are right in this step? I feel nobody can feel so sure of being right in a matter of this kind that the risk involved to Mahatma Gandhi's life, the risk involved in worsening the present political situation and the risk involved in permanently embittering the feelings between the British people and the Indian people should be taken. I, therefore, hope that the Government of India will rectify the mistake which they have made.

My own view is, that the Government of India should have released Mahatma Gandhi long ago. He should not have been even imprisoned before he had an opportunity of seeing the Viceroy and discussing with him the Resolution which the Congress has passed on

August 8. The Government of India made a mistake on that occasion. The Government of India have now made a mistake in permitting Mahatma Gandhi to go on a fast. I hope, Sir, they will have the wisdom to rectify the mistake before it is too late. Sir, if the Government of India deals with this question, in the right spirit, shows understanding of the problem, shows at least sympathy, then I have no doubt, Sir, that the results that will follow will be all to the good of this country and to the people of India and beneficial to the relations between the British people and the Indian people. Mahatma Gandhi, if he is released unconditionally, I have no doubt in my mind, he has said so in so many words in his letters, will reconsider the present political situation. He has stated in his letters that if he is released, he will consider the situation *de novo*. I have no doubt in my mind that Mahatma Gandhi, if he reconsiders the situation will come to the conclusion that it is not in the interest of the country that the present violence and sabotage should continue. He had reaffirmed his faith in non-violence. That was the object of Mahatma Gandhi in going on the fast. Some may say that he is seeking release by his fast. That is so. But certainly not because he is afraid of remaining in detention. He wants his release because he wants, I have no doubt in my mind, to reconsider the situation. He wants to help the country out of the present situation. It may be said, why should not Mahatma Gandhi condemn violence from the jail. Mahatma Gandhi has stated very clearly and I sympathise with his view that he cannot condemn acts of violence taking them for granted without going into the evidence whether they had happened or they had not happened. (Laughter.) Well, Sir, it may be a matter of laughter to some of these people. I know the feelings of people in jail when they are asked to express opinions on current events. Only last year, I had an occasion to discuss this question in this very Assembly, the feeling of people in the jails. It was the case of Communist detenus in jails. The Government of India had agreed to ask them certain questions regarding their attitude towards war. I had read in this very House a letter of one of the most prominent Communists that he feels that it is not to his dignity to state from the jail that he had changed his view. It is not because people are afraid of some other people saying that they changed their views in order to secure their release. I feel that it is against the dignity of human beings that while they are in detention, while they are under duress, they should express opinions changing their views or judging current political events. Sir, the Government of India may not understand this feeling, but I do. I, therefore, feel that the Government of India may consider this question from the point of view of dignity of human freedom. It is only free people who can express their views and not persons in detention.

Sir, if we judge Mahatma Gandhi from his past, from the firm faith he has in non-violence, from the courage he has shown on several occasions in admitting his own mistakes and the mistakes of his own followers, I have no doubt in my mind and the Government of India should have no doubt in their minds in coming to the conclusion that if Mahatma Gandhi is unconditionally released, his release will improve the present political situation and all the risks which are involved in this fast will disappear. Sir, I feel it was wrong for the Government of India it was unworthy of the Government of India to impute the motive to Mahatma Gandhi that he was undertaking the fast in order to find a way out of the difficulty. The Government of India intended to say that Mahatma Gandhi will some day be brought before a Tribunal and Mahatma Gandhi was afraid of facing the Tribunal. Is there any Indian here who feels that Mahatma Gandhi is a coward, that he will be afraid of facing a Tribunal? Sir, is it right for the Government of India to talk of facing a Tribunal? It is only

a few days ago that the horourable the Home Member told us that the Government of India cannot make an enquiry into the doings of the Government. There was an amendment to the effect that all the events in that situation should be examined. Did the Government of India accept that amendment and the resolution? If the Government of India had shown courage to face a Tribunal, then they could have talked of Mahatma Gandhi's inability to face a Tribunal. But the Government of India themselves had shown that they were unable to face a Tribunal, a Judicial Tribunal, for examining their own actions, and even if I may say, the actions of the Congressmen. Sir, to talk of Mahatma Gandhi as trying to blackmail is still more unworthy. I would say it is disgraceful to attribute such a motive to Mahatma Gandhi. What was Mahatma Gandhi to gain by securing his release? Is he not accustomed to stay in jails? What did he want to get? If he wanted to get, by his release through his fast, to have a reconsideration of the situation, is it blackmail? Do the Government of India not want it? I feel, Sir, that the Government of India allowed themselves to use language which perhaps in their sober moments they would not use and they would not consider right. Sir, the Government of India consider a fast as a blackmail and they translate it by calling it himsa. Sir, I feel that by our standards perhaps the fast may be *himsa*, but we cannot judge Mahatma Gandhi by our standards....

SARDAR SANT SINGH

In our college days a text-book was prescribed and its title was "Help's Essays." In one of the essays it was written that "a falsehood often repeated assumes the aspect of truth, and the man who started that falsehood comes to believe in it at one stage." That seems to be the position of the Home Department in the Government of India. They have started with certain pre-conceived ideas about the administration and the methods of Government. They started on the theory of exploitation and hypocrisy against the people of this country, and after a rule of two hundred years they have come to believe that that is the honest way and the moral way of governing this country. I have nothing but pity for this mentality.

The Government of India, since the outbreak of the war, has been committing indiscretion, if not something more grave and more serious. From the beginning of the war it has been clear to them that the constitutional question of this country should be solved, but they lack the vision with the result that today we are faced with another crisis in the history of this country. To a man in the street it was quite clear that if the Government of India and, as a matter of fact, his Majesty's Government in Great Britain were earnest in solving this political deadlock in this country there were occasions when they could have easily done so. But they persisted in their wrong attitude with the result that the Indian National Congress went on stiffening in their attitude towards the war and so the Government of India and His Majesty's Government stiffened in reprisals towards the Congress till the 8th of August was reached and that Resolution was passed by the All-India Congress Committee. Before that if they had cared to visualize they would have found in some of the expressions of Mahatma Gandhi how his mind was working and to which side he was going. When he took up this slogan of "Quit India," he is reported to have said that "if you cannot leave India to God, leave it to chaos and anarchy." Without going into the merits of this question, may I ask the members of the Government of India if such an expression was not an expression of a soul that was suffering the bitterest agony against the present administration and the system of administration in this country. I do not go into the question of righteousness or otherwise of this demand, but I

ask in all seriousness and all earnestness from those who still have their faith in the religious teachings of their own religions whether this expression did not indicate the bitterest agony that was going into the soul of Mahatma Gandhi when he uttered these words. Was it not the climax of frustration which India today is feeling for want of a genuine National Government at the Centre? Well, they did not realize then.

We have come now to the question whether this crisis produces another effect, a different effect, upon the mind of the Government, or it does not affect them at all. From the correspondence one thing stands very clear and that is that the Government offered a conditional release to Mahatma Gandhi during the period of the fast. From this I infer that the Government of India did feel that the coming crisis will be too much for them. But they have a feeling of the maintenance of law and order. May I remind them of a fact from the history of Christians --it is from the Bible—that Jesus Christ was crucified in the name of law, but does humanity believe in that law today? Similarly, all prophets—the Great Prophet of the Muslims—had to fight the battles against the then administration in order to preach the truth that he believed in for the time being. Similar is the history teaching of the Sikhs. Our several Gurus were crucified in the name of law, but today that law does not exist, although these great men are respected, followed and claim millions of disciples in all the countries of the world. Is it not the time when religion and spiritualism should find some place in your politics? Mere temporal power that we know you are possessing—we know you possess machine-guns and torpedoes and you can crush and destroy the people of India at any time you like—will not do. I appeal to you, to your sense of duty and in the name of spiritualism, I ask you: Are you not touched by this present crisis and will you not release Mahatma Gandhi and allow him to review the situation in the country and come to your assistance in solving the greatest problems that we are faced with today? Do you think that the winning of this war would be worth anything without the preparations for the future order in the world, and can you believe for a minute that the future order in the world will be maintained by mere brutal force which you can claim today? Certainly I am of a different opinion. Mahatma Gandhi is a personality who has got a place in the heart of every Indian, if not every decent man in the world today. The whole country looks up to him for something nobler, for something higher. For such a noble spirit who appears once in generations on this earth you have got no place but a jail, a detention camp, or a concentration camp.

May I still, Sir, appeal to the Government and to the Honourable Members, the Indian Members of the Executive Council, that they should not rely upon the rules and regulations on which they want to take their stand? The crisis has come and they should rise to the occasion. India demands, and rightly demands, that its soul should be freed from all restrictions: and who is the best expression of India's soul, if not Mahatma Gandhi? Mahatma Gandhi's death in jail will be just like the birth of Krishna in jail. Krishna was born in jail, and when he came out of it, the whole empire trembled and he revolutionized the whole country during his life-time. Similar will be your fate if you do not listen to this advice at this time. We may not be able to carry the resolution by vote and censure you, but our censure does not carry much weight. It is the censure of humanity that will trouble you in your sleep and will appear to you as a phantom when you have retired from life, if you do not rise to the occasion now and do justice to India by unconditionally releasing Mahatma Gandhi. We are avoiding, as far as possible, his politics and his policy. We have avoided deliberately entering into the controversial questions for obvious reasons. But one thing stands out

and dominates the situation, and that is that Mahatma Gandhi's fast must not be allowed to be continued in a detention camp. Against that our soul is revolting today and we would wish the Government of India to take a realistic view of the situation, and not merely the materialistic view. In that hope, I wish we get a good response, a favourable response from the Treasury Benches. They are there to see to the welfare of the country, and the welfare of the country lies in listening to the demand, the unanimous demand, of the public in this respect. I hope, Sir, that our appeal, humble though it is, will carry some conviction to the minds of those who are at this time in charge of the government of the country.

DR P. N. BANERJEA

Mahatma Gandhi's fast is a matter of grave concern to the people and the Government alike. The people all over India have been greatly perturbed by the news of the commencement of this fast is evident from the statements to the Press and the resolutions adopted by important public bodies and commercial organizations.

It may be said that Mahatmaji is a past master in the art of fasting and that there need not be any anxiety for his life. But should we forget that Mahatmaji is now 75 years of age, and that his health is far from good? The bulletin which was issued yesterday by the Government of Bombay said that his health was not as satisfactory as it had been the day before. What does that mean? That certainly means that there has been some deterioration in his health. It is true that Gandhiji says that he hopes to survive the ordeal, but his hope may not be realized in the present state of health. And if the worst comes to the worst, if his fast in detention leads to his death, what will happen? Will not that embitter the feelings of large masses of people in this country? There are considerable differences of opinion between the policy and programme of Gandhiji and those of other parties; I and my Party have our own differences with him. But it cannot be denied that Gandhiji is a great and outstanding figure, not only in India but in the world. The consequence of his death in detention will, therefore, be a permanent estrangement between India and Britain. This we ought, by all means, to avoid. We should also consider what will be the effect of his death on world opinion. Gandhiji is a great world figure and it is quite clear that the reaction of world opinion is not likely to be favourable to the Government of India.

On the other hand, let us consider the probable effect of an unconditional release of Gandhiji. To me it seems unthinkable—unimaginable—that if he is unconditionally released, Gandhiji will utilise his freedom for spreading lawlessness in the country. If the Government think that there is that possibility, they may put him into detention again. But that is not likely. It seems to me more probable that this will give Gandhiji an opportunity for examining the situation afresh and in a new light. Nothing but good will come out of this.

It is not the purpose of this adjournment motion to discuss controversial matters. It is not the purpose of this motion to lay the blame for the genesis and the continuance of the present state of things at the door of this party or that party. It is the purpose of the present motion to save a precious life. Let, therefore, all discord be hushed into silence and let us all be united in pressing the demand on the Government for preserving the life of a man of Gandhiji's capacity and character for service to India and to the world.

Sir, in the name of humanity, in the name of communal harmony, and in the name of goodwill between the Government and the people, I appeal to all sections of this House, including the Treasury Benches, to accept this motion.

MR T. T. KRISHNAMACHARI

My only regret is that I am not capable of translating the feelings of millions of my countrymen today, the hopes and fears that throb in their hearts; and nobody in this House can deny that those feelings will grow in intensity as the hours pass and as long as the great soul lies imprisoned in Poona—without food or sustenance. We have been told by previous speakers, who rightly pleaded for goodwill on all sides, that political controversies had better be eschewed in a discussion like the one now before the House. I bow to their decision, but it is impossible for anybody with any feeling of patriotism or love of his country to pass without challenge the provocative sentiments that the Government have chosen to express by means of their letters to Gandhiji. As has been stated by the previous speakers, Gandhiji's fast has been characterized as a piece of blackmail. Very unwise, that word chosen by whoever it may be. Whoever advised the head of the Government to choose that word has not done either the British Government or the British Indian Government any service. Whatever might be the result of the present impasse, that particular word will go down in history and will be remembered as having been flung against the greatest Indian of the last five hundred years and more. Is it a piece of blackmail for a person to say, "You are casting undue and uncharitable aspersions on me; you wrongly characterize me as the origin of all the evil which you impute to the Congress organization. I have no means of justifying myself as I am in prison, excepting by the only method that the law of Satyagraha affords to me"? If this is blackmail, I do not know what all could not be construed as blackmail.

It is surprising that the Government should not have chosen to utilize this particular opportunity, the opportunity that has been furnished to them, of settling the present impasse. Surely the people who man the Government today, with all their inherited and accumulated experience, should have realized that nothing would have happened if Gandhiji had been released: possibly they might still continue in power not merely for six months, not merely for twelve months but perhaps for years, without their being ousted from their privileged positions. What did the Government want? Government wanted an admission of guilt on the part of Gandhiji, he had to admit that he was wrong, that he was the cause of all the evil that was imputed to the Congress and to him; it was only on that condition that further negotiations would be allowed. But if they really wanted a positive contribution from him, the obvious thing was to place him amidst his colleagues which he wanted. History will record that a glorious opportunity has been lost, a glorious opportunity to rid this country of the sufferings and the travail that it has gone through during the last seven or eight months. But it is not my place today to criticize the Government for having missed opportunities. The British Government in India have missed several opportunities to make India her friend; but what really concerns me most today is the sequel to this fast of twenty-one days. We hope that Mahatma Gandhi will survive the ordeal; but it seems scarcely possible. Are we to sit here with folded hands and await the result, a result which will certainly stir the depths of the hearts of the people of this country, and will make ordinary government impossible for a long time to come? Are we to have the incidents of August and September and October repeated with ten times greater severity and sit here with folded hands to see the British Indian Government achieve that undesirable result? May I ask, as honourable Members have asked before whether the Indian Members of the Executive Council have come unanimously to this decision along with their non-Indian colleagues? Unanimity was said

to be the characteristic feature of the decision taken by this Government in August last. Unanimity was stressed not merely in India but in England, in the House of Parliament—that Indian Members and European Members were unanimous in deciding the course that was adopted by the Government of India in August last. May I ask whether that unanimity existed in taking the decision not to release Gandhiji when he decided to go on a fast? May I ask how many Indian Members really did stand up and say, "This shall not happen. The greatest man of India for ages past and for ages to come perhaps shall not die in prison as an ordinary felon"? May I ask if Indian Members, men of my own colour, will stand up and say, "Well, we tried our best but we could not succeed"? I do not ask for your resignation but I would like to be assured that unanimity did not exist in this particular instance, that unanimity did not exist where a possible, shall I say, murder is likely to be the result. That, I think, Indians are entitled to ask of their fellow countrymen in the Executive Council. That, I think, I am entitled to ask in this forum that has been furnished to me through the kindness of my own compatriots.

It might be that the Government, armed as it is with a large amount of power behind it, with the military behind its back—the Government may feel that nothing will happen. But, Sir, as my honourable friend, Mr Maitra, has said, I shudder to think of the results of Government's continued intransigeance in a moment like this, particularly as we know that the name of Mahatma Gandhi is known to every man, woman and child in every nook and corner of this land, people who revere him as great as, or even greater than, God.... (Laughter.) It might evoke laughter, but those who do worship images do entertain feelings of that sort, though my Muslim friends are unable to capture the idea even with the help of their imagination.

I want to make my final appeal to my own countrymen. As I said before, I want them to act. I do not want them to wait until things get worse. Many people seem to think that if Mahatma Gandhi's position gets worse he will be released. It might happen. It might not happen. Perhaps as things are, I feel that it might not happen for the reason that here is an opportunity provided for the Government to get rid of an incubus. But they would not act. They find that they are secure, and as they are secure today they do not want any change in that condition. If that is the motivating force of the Government in refusing the appeal of Mahatma Gandhi for co-operation in the task of reconciliation, obviously they may not relent if his physical condition grows worse. It is no good laying much store on the possibility that the Government might release him if his condition is likely to get worse. If he gets worse, the condition of this country would be something that it would be impossible for them to handle, and Indian Members of the Executive Council specially must realize that their position in this country as Indians would become almost intolerable. I have no doubt that this adjournment motion would not have been moved in vain if the appeals made by several members of this House to the Europeans and Indians alike do not fall on deaf ears.

NAWABZADA MUHAMMAD LIAQUAT ALI KHAN

I have listened to the speeches that have been made by the Honourable Members of this House with great care, sympathy and due consideration. I fully sympathise with the sentimental concern which my Hindu colleagues of this House feel over the self-inflicted ordeal which their leader is undergoing. I join in the hope which has been expressed that Mr Gandhi will survive this ordeal. But I am afraid not being a spiritualist, I do not either approve or believe in spiritualized politics. I believe in honest, clean and practical politics, and that is the only way if this country is to make any advance forward the goal which

it has set for itself, namely, freedom for every nationality inhabiting this sub-continent.

Mr President, all this and all that has happened during the last seven months has been the direct result of that tragic, that unwise decision which was taken by the Congress on the 8th of August, 1942. For the first time, after having repeated for the last 20 years or more their belief that Hindu-Muslim unity was the condition precedent to any freedom for this country, the Congress in Bombay overthrew this main plank of their policy and adopted as the new policy that unless the British quit India there was no possibility of Hindu-Muslim unity.

We, Muslims, believe that there is no future for this country unless there is a Hindu-Muslim settlement, that there is no freedom for this country unless every nationality is made to feel free in India. Mr President, from the correspondence that has been published it does not appear that there is any likelihood of any effort being made in that direction for the time being. Sir, I would request those honourable Members who have been appealing to us to convince us—and I will not undergo a fast if they do not succeed in convincing me—that if Mr Gandhi is released, there is a probability of a Hindu-Muslim settlement. On the contrary, what do I see today? The resolutions that are passed by all the Hindu organizations, the propaganda that is being done by the Hindu Press is against the Muslim League and against the Mussalmans.

Sir, another revelation has been made through this correspondence. The Viceroy has stated in so many words that Mr Gandhi and his friends and the Congress knew as to what would be the result of their decisions of August last. Not only that, but he has stated that they were ready and willing to condone that. Not only that, but that the organization as such has been responsible for what has happened in the country; and all this chaos and anarchy was created at a time when India was threatened by a foreign power. Now, Sir, in short, on the evidence which is before his Excellency the Viceroy, he believes the Congress to be the enemy of the country and yet we are asked that unless the Congress agree to some proposal, the British are not prepared to transfer power to the other Indians who are left outside the Congress. We are asked that, unless we come to terms with a Party which on their own admission is the enemy of the country, nothing can be done by the British for this unfortunate land of ours. This shows, Mr President, that the British also cannot do away with the responsibility which lies on their shoulders in this respect.

An appeal has been made not only on the floor of this House but outside that we should put up a united demand for the release of Mr Gandhi. Sir, the Muslim League has not got the power and authority. We can neither support the release nor the detention of Mr Gandhi in jail and the reason is obvious. It is the duty of the Government to maintain law and order and peace in the country and it is their responsibility to decide for themselves whether this can be done better by the release of Mr Gandhi or by his detention in jail. That, Sir, is our position. If the Muslim League had been in power today, if it had been in a position to control the situation that might have arisen if either of these two actions was taken, then it would have been for us to decide. We certainly do not propose to take the responsibility upon our shoulders when we have not got the means to control the situation that might be created in the country.

SIR HENRY RICHARDSON

Unfortunately, it appears that the challenge which the Congress Party issued to authority last August has once again been put forward in a different form. Then it was "comply with our wishes or we will declare civil disobedience." Now it is "comply with our wishes or our

Leader and Dictator will endanger his own life." I wish to say nothing which may induce more bitterness, but I can point to no difference in the main intention. The pistol is once again placed on the head of authority and the Government can no more submit to the threat than they could last August. It may be self-immolation but it is none the less coercion and no Government worth the name can submit to it and retain any authority. We, therefore, fully approve of the attitude which the Government has taken up.

To charge Government—whatever their shortcomings—with responsibility for planned sabotage of communications surely cannot be accepted seriously. You may goad people into a sudden riot as an exhibition of rage or frustration, but you cannot goad them into cold and calculated planning of large-scale sabotage to take place at a time when the danger of invasion is at its peak. "Do or die" was the slogan which Mr Gandhi left to his followers; did this merely refer to non-violent activities? Mr Gandhi in his correspondence hints that civil disobedience might have been avoided if Congress leaders had not been placed in detention, does that mean that the threat was merely bluff? Does it mean that although the pistol was primed and ready, the trigger would not have been pressed in any circumstances? If so, let it be remembered that it is the primary duty of any Government to prevent any grave menace to peace and tranquillity, a responsibility which will equally rest on any purely Indian Government of the future. If the threat was real, then was not abdication the sole alternative, and the abandonment of all those elements which disagreed with the Congress plan for transfer of power. Surely there was nothing else.

And now we are faced with a similar threat albeit employing different tactics. Under Nazi rule, there is no easier road to sudden death than political opposition. In a Nazi concentration camp there would be no need for Mr Gandhi to endanger his health or his life; both would be in sufficient danger. The strength of the latest threat lies in the fact that authority here desires that no one shall suffer extreme penalties for his political views even though he rebels openly against that authority. But should a person insist on inflicting upon himself the same danger that extreme penalties would carry, authority is powerless to prevent him doing so.

Putting aside political views, we fully understand and appreciate the great respect and reverence which the person of Mr Gandhi commands and we fully sympathise with the horror which a fatal result to his fast would evoke. To those who have, we understand, asked him to desist from this course, we add our own earnest request and support. On the other hand, we view with no less horror the deaths of all those innocent victims who died violently as a result of the declaration of civil disobedience. The fast is no less a threat to authority without which there would come a chaos which we dare not contemplate.

SIR REGINALD MAXWELL

I must thank the honourable the Mover and other honourable Members who have spoken in this debate for the serious and moderate tone of the speeches that have been delivered. I shall try to reply in the same spirit. But I must not shrink from presenting in full the case of Government.

The correspondence that led to this fast—and no one can deny the patience with which it was conducted—is there for anyone to interpret as he chooses. It can perhaps be read in the light of the following facts. When the Congress Party passed their resolution of August 8, Japanese attack on this country was thought to be likely. By demanding the withdrawal of British power from India and by plac-

ing Congress in open opposition to it the Congress Party might be thought to have hoped for some advantage to themselves if the Japanese attack succeeded. Or at least such a movement at the time of enemy attack would have been more likely to be successful in attaining its object. Today, six months after, the Japanese danger has, at any rate for the time being, receded and there is little immediate hope from that quarter. The movement initiated by the Congress has been decisively defeated. Now, therefore, it is the object of the Congress Party to rehabilitate themselves and regain if they can the credit that they have lost. Thus they are now concerned to disclaim responsibility for the consequences that followed their decision. The point is taken up by Mr Gandhi in his correspondence with the Viceroy. The awkward facts are now disowned as "unproved and in my opinion unprovable charges hurled against the Congress and me." On this assertion Mr Gandhi takes up his stand: "Surely I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence." To whom are they to justify themselves?

Sardar Sant Singh: Before an impartial inquiry committee?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Elsewhere in his letters Mr Gandhi makes this clear. He says: "Convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends." In the alternative he asks "if you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress, you should put me among the Working Committee Members." So far as can be seen, these were the demands when he conceived his fast. There is no other solid demand made. But now, fresh light emerges. Government without granting any of his demands informed Mr Gandhi that they would release him for the purpose and for the duration of the fast in order to make it clear that they disclaimed responsibility for the consequences. On that Mr Gandhi replied that if he were released, he would at once abandon the fast, and that he had conceived the fast only as a prisoner. Thus, if he were released, the objects for which he declared his fast although still unfulfilled, would recede into the background. As a free man, he would neither demand these objects nor fast. Interpreted in this way, his fast would seem to amount to little more than a demand for release.

If that were the issue, I could quote several resolutions of the Congress Working Committee against him. I could quote a resolution of the Congress Working Committee dated February 3, 1938, or their resolution of August 12, 1939. But it is more significant that Mr Gandhi himself took up the subject in the *Harijan*, dated August 19, 1939. There, he says:

> "Hunger strike has positively become a plague."

He goes on to say:

> "It is well, therefore, that the Congress Working Committee has condemned the practice in unequivocal terms so far at least as hunger-strike for discharge from imprisonment is concerned."

On the ethics of hunger-striking, Mr Gandhi had something to say in the *Harijan* of May 20, 1939, after his Rajkot fast:

> "I now see that it was tainted by 'himsa' "

Further on he remarks:

> "This was not the way of 'ahimsa' or conversion. It was the way of 'himsa' or coercion."

After owning that the results of the fast had turned against him, he adds:

> "This method, I admit, is wholly inconsistent with 'ahimsa.' "

Well, Sir, I must confess that speaking for myself it is certainly repugnant to western ideas of decency to exploit against an opponent his feelings of humanity, chivalry or mercy or to trifle with such a

sacred trust as one's own life in order to play on the feelings of the public for the sake of some purely mundane object. But that is a matter for each man to settle with his own conscience. It is not, therefore, for me to judge any man. All I am concerned with is what the Government ought to do when this method is employed to put pressure on them.

Now, let us examine Mr Gandhi's position. What he says in effect is this. You say, Government is right and the Congress is wrong. I say the Congress is right and the Government is wrong. I choose to put the burden of proof on you. I am the only person to be convinced. You must either admit you are wrong or submit your reasons to me and make me the sole arbiter in the matter: unless you do so, I fast. But, it appears later, if I am released, I do not propose to fast for any of these things, even though they remain unfulfilled. It seems to me that Mr Gandhi's demand is rather like asking the United Nations to appoint Hitler to adjudge the responsibility for the present war. It is not usual in this country to put the accused person on the Bench to judge his own case.

Mr Gandhi is the leader of an open rebellion in which he denies the authority of the existing Government and seeks to overthrow it. Before that, he was entitled to be heard by Government like any other subject and was heard. But by declaring civil war, a method that repudiates the method of discussion, he forfeits that right so long as he remains an open rebel. He cannot claim to function except through the success of his own method. He cannot take part in public life under the protection of the law that he denies. He cannot be a citizen and yet not a subject. This was the position resulting from the Congress resolution of August 8. It was passed in unequivocal terms demanding the withdrawal of British power from India and the declaration of India's independence. For the enforcement of that demand, the All-India Congress Committee resolved to sanction the starting of a mass struggle on the widest possible scale. "Such a struggle," they said, "must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken."

In some of the published correspondence, Mr Gandhi has made much of his intention to seek an interview with the Viceroy. But the Congress resolution still stood, together with Mr Gandhi's own words, 'Do or die." The Government *communiqué* on the subject of this fast has already reminded the public of Mr Gandhi's statement made on July 14 that there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation; there was no question of one more chance. I may again quote Mr Gandhi's own words from the full text of his speech delivered in Hindi on the evening of August 8 after the All-India Congress Committee had passed the "Quit India" resolution sanctioning mass civil disobedience. These are extracts from his speech:

> "Every one of you should, frow this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism."

Now, listen to this:

> "You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for Ministries or the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. We shall do or die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt."

This is open rebellion.

Now, Sir, I would remind the House that it is not the method of peaceful persuasion to go to the person whom you wish to convince armed with a resolution declaring mass rebellion. The essence of negotiation is that both parties should be uncommitted and that neither should exert the pressure of force on the other. That is true in

any circumstances. But as between a subject and the State which rules him, the position is still more emphatic. It is not for the subject to deal with the State on equal terms, still less to approach it with an open threat.

But apart from the position in which Mr Gandhi has voluntarily put himself, has the State, as the custodian of all the country's interests, nothing to say about all that has occurred? I forbear to utter reproaches. But I repeat that Government does hold Mr Gandhi responsible for the recent happenings that have so disturbed the peace of India, caused so much loss of life and property of innocent persons and brought the country to the brink of a terrible danger. I do not say that he had any personal complicity in acts of violence, as Mr Joshi wished to make clear, but it was he that put the match to the train carefully laid beforehead by himself and his colleagues. That he was forced to do so prematurely was not his fault but our fortune. This was the method by which they hoped to gain their ends. They may seek to repudiate it, now that it has proved unsuccessful, but the responsibility is theirs none the less. Indeed, if it is not, why does Mr Joshi say, release Mr Gandhi and he will declare himself against violence, as though it depended upon him to call off this movement? The deeds that have been done cannot now be undone. If Mr Gandhi wished to dissociate himself from them, he could have spoken for himself without consulting the Congress Working Committee. Can he then without cancelling the Congress rebellion, without reparation, without even assurances for the future, claim at any moment to step back as though nothing had happened into the public life of the country and be received by Government and society as a good citizen?

Sardar Sant Singh: Leave the society alone.

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Surely he and his colleagues, the Congress leaders, have much to live down first.

When, therefore, the Government found that the fast could only be prevented by unconditional release—which if justifiable in Mr Gandhi's case would be equally justifiable in the case of all the Congress leaders—they had no choice but to adhere to the policy already declared. That policy was either right or wrong in itself. Its rightness or wrongness could not depend on the quantity of food consumed by Mr Gandhi six months later. If the Government conscientiously believed that it was right a fast could make no difference to it. The Government could not surrender their judgment under threat of a fast. To do so, indeed, would not be in accordance with Mr Gandhi's own principles.

The situation is that the fast is claimed as a method of non-violence. Government have met it non-violently by stating that they were ready and are ready to set Mr Gandhi at liberty for the purpose and duration of his fast. But apparently he desires his object only as a prisoner. "If, therefore," he says, "I am released there will be no fast in terms of my correspondence above mentioned." He wants to fast only in custody. But Government have made it clear that the custody is his own choice, so far as that is concerned, Government are not responsible at all. But they have, so far as it is possible, allowed him as much privilege during his fast as he would have enjoyed as a free man. He has stated that this is a fast according to capacity and that he does not desire to take his own life. Government can only hope that at this late hour he may realize the peril, the folly, and, I might even say the unworthiness of attempting to do what may be beyond his power.

MR JAMNADAS M. MEHTA

My Party has made it absolutely clear that in sponsoring this motion we are entering into no political issues, that the policy of the

Congress or the Mahatma or the policy of the Government are not the issues which will be included in the discussion of this motion. In pursuance of that decision of my Party I shall not enter into the discussion of the political issues but shall ask Government to look at the situation from their own point of view. The speech of Sir Reginald itself ought to be a reason for releasing Gandhiji. What does he want? He wants that the Mahatma should revert to citizenship instead of being a rebel. What proof does he want? The Mahatma has given ample proof in the correspondence that he is hoping to return to citizenship. The very fact that the Mahatma has promised to examine the situation *de novo* is most significant. It can only mean—unless the Government want to humiliate him further—it can only mean that he is honestly willing to return to lawful ways. He may come to any conclusion, but he is prepared to re-examine the situation. What more do you want? I, therefore, urge that Government should not stand on the technical position whether the Mahatma recants in so many words the resolution of August 8 last. That would be a pure attempt to humiliate him and not to take advantage of a very favourable situation which has arisen. I can tell Sir Reginald that this is the most favourable situation for releasing him. Don't examine the logical ways of the Mahatma. He is a Mahatma. Logic is not his strong point. You must not examine too minutely whether one day he was more right than on the other, because he has declared about a year ago: "Don't tell me what I said yesterday. Follow what I am saying today."

I ask the Government that the Mahatma has gone, as far as he can go, in demonstrating that he is prepared to negotiate further and on that basis I will request the Government to release him, if it is likely to open the door to political conciliation, the Government should not be too strict on technical aspects, whether the Mahatma has openly withdrawn his resolution of August 8 or not.

There are two or three more points which I wish to emphasize. One is, I wish to assure the Indian Members of the Executive Council that we are seeking no censure on them. We are not considering them as blood-thirsty, unpatriotic people who are in league with the foreign Government. They must not fear that in moving this motion we have withdrawn our co-operation with them. Their position is pathetic, they cannot defend themselves, and, therefore, I want to assure them that there is no intention to brand them as blood-thirsty, unpatriotic, selfish people who are sticking to office for the sake of personal gain—all that is not at the back of our mind.

Mr P. J. Griffiths: Is it at the front?

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: Not even at the front. I assure you, I am saying it openly: Why are you so uncharitable? We have given them our congratulations when appointed. We shall not withdraw our co-operation from them. The only thing I wish of them is that they should place my point of view before the Executive Council that this is the most favourable opportunity for political conciliation—and make that representation to his Excellency the Viceroy.

The other point is this: My honourable friend, Nawab Sahib, was quite wrong in his estimate of the Mahatma. Mahatma may be born a Hindu, but he is not a Hindu today.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: But he is greater than God.

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: You must excuse a younger man during times of excitement.

All I want to say is that the Nawab Sahib is entirely wrong. There is no better pro-Muslim in this country than Mahatma Gandhi. The resolution of August 8, is quite clear. There is no greater pro-Muslim in this country than Mahatma Gandhi and it is because he is so

partial that there is a Hindu Mahasabha in this country. But so far as Mahatma Gandhi is concerned, you can solely trust him to do you not merely justice but generosity. He has done, he is doing it and on August resolution—read the resolution—he was even willing to give the whole of the Government to Mr Jinnah without any reservations. The Congress and the Mahatma are over-generous to the Muslims."

Sir, with these views and submissions I support this motion. There is no sense in the phrase unconditional or conditional release. Every body here is free only conditionally. Everybody is free on the condition that he obeys the law. The honourable the Home Member himself is free only on the condition that he obeys the law. Therefore, let the Mahatma be free; he may be free only on the condition that he obeys the law. If he does not, the law will take care of itself. Sir, I support.

SIR COWASJEE JEHANGIR

Sir, there are many friends of Mr Gandhi and many of his opponents who declare that Mr Gandhi's mentality is a puzzle. On some days Mr Gandhi has really proved himself to be a saint. On other days Mr Gandhi has given his friends and his opponents the impression of being a clever, astute and experienced politician. The correspondence that has been placed before us is as puzzling as was to be expected from any correspondence with Mr Gandhi. But what we are discussing here today is a vote of censure. The form in which the discussion has taken place is an adjournment motion.

Dr P. N. Banerjea: I made it clear in my speech that it was not a vote of censure.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: "You cannot move an adjournment motion which is not a vote of censure. It is a rule of the House. We have to know for what purpose the censure is moved. Is it because the members of the Congress Committee were arrested at the time they were, or is it a censure motion on Government for not having released Mr Gandhi as soon as he declared his intention of having a fast? Those are the only two reasons for an adjournment motion that I can think of.

Now, Sir, on the first point, I would like to refer to the speech made in this Honourable House by Mr Jamnadas Mehta in very eloquent terms the other day. I did not see it reported in the Press, Indian or English. So I will take the liberty of repeating it. What Mr Mehta said was that it was a mistake not to have arrested the Working Committee when they passed their Working Committee's resolution, and to have waited for them to endorse it at the meeting of the A.-I.C.C. Now, Sir, it is contended that the arrest should have taken place after the interview sought by Mr Gandhi with the Viceroy. Well, if that is so, they certainly would have had more time to organize and perfect their plan of "Do or Die." Mr Jamnadas Mehta was representing a point of view when he said it was a mistake to have allowed them the time they had. It naturally follows that it would have been a greater mistake to have given them further time after they had passed the resolution at the A.-I.C.C.

Now let us come to the other point of censure, *viz.*, that Mr Gandhi should have been released as soon as he declared that he was going in for a fast. No man in this House or outside, whether he be a Congressman, a Mahasabha, or a Muslim Leaguer, or Liberal wants to see Mr Gandhi imprisoned. He would rather have Mr Gandhi a free man, and I would certainly prefer to see him a free man, advocating his views as a free man and freely. But this correspondence has taken my breath away. It has surprised me. I never expected for one minute that Mr Gandhi would have expressed such opinions as he

has done. He has declared from the housetop that he has just as great faith in non-violence as he ever had before. Well, if that is so, I do not think it can be said that since August 8, we have had no violence in India. We have had murders, bombs, dislocation of traffic which has caused the loss of lives of men, women and children. Even today we are having bombs daily in different parts of India, and they are nothing but cases of attempted murder. But Mr Gandhi is a faithful follower of his own creed of non-violence. It does not matter who caused that violence, who instigated it, or what were the reasons for which the violence takes place. He ought to be prepared to condemn it for the sake of the principle of non-violence and not wait to examine the reason for that violence. I would have expected to see in this correspondence some unequivocal expression of opinion that violence, from wherever it comes, and for whatever reason, is repugnant to the saint Gandhi. But to my surprise and horror, I find here a few words which have been a shock to me. I will just read these few words. Government have stated, I do not know with what correctness, that there is a woman, the wife of a member of the Working Committee, who is today underground, and whom they accuse of instigating, or having instigated or being one of the organizers of these bomb outrages. They have put down that accusation in writing and this is Gandhi's reply:—

> "If the wife of a member of the Working Committee is actively engaged in planning bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism, she should be tried before a court of law and punished if found guilty. The lady you refer to could only have done the things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests of the 9th August last, which I have dared to describe as leonine violence."

Because this woman does these things in her anger at the arrests, he tries to find an excuse for her. I should have thought that Mr Gandhi would have said that if this woman is guilty (I agree that he should use the word "if") of what Government say, he wholeheartedly condemns her. Instead of that, he practically asks Government to remember that she had done this after Government had arrested him. That is what he means, which to me was a surprise, a pain and a great disappointment.

I would appeal to Mr Gandhi to make an unequivocal statement, even now, that he is against violence, that he repudiates what has taken place, and that he condemns an act of violence for whatever reason it has been committed, whether instigated by Government or himself. If he makes an unequivocal statement to that effect and promises to do so when he comes out of jail as a free man, Mr Gandhi ought to be released, and I would appeal to Mr Gandhi—if anybody will convey that message to him—to go a step further, much further than he has done and reiterate his faith in non-violence regardless of consequences to his Party.

The motion having been talked out, the Assembly adjourned.

COUNCIL MEMBERS RESIGN

CERTAIN DIFFERENCES WITH GOVERNMENT

NEW DELHI, February 17, 1943.

The resignation of three Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Sir Homy Mody, Supply Member, Mr N. R. Sarker, Member for Commerce and Food, and Mr M. S. Aney, Member for Indians Overseas, was announced today, the eighth day of Mahatma Gandhi's Fast, with the following colourless *communiqué* issued from the Viceroy's House:—

"The Hon. Sir Homi Mody, K.B.E., the Hon. Mr N. R. Sarker and the Hon. Mr M. S. Aney, having tendered their resignations of the office of the Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, H.E. the Governor-General has accepted their resignations."

Although the official *communiqué* made no reference to the cause of the resignation, the following joint statement of the three Members made the position plain:—

"Our resignations from H. E. the Governor-General's Council have been announced, and all that we desire to do is to say by way of explanation that certain differences arose on what we regarded as a fundamental issue (the issue of the action to be taken on Mahatma Gandhi's Fast) and we felt we could no longer retain our offices.

"We wish to place on record our warm appreciation of the courtesy and consideration H.E. the Viceroy extended to us throughout the period during which we had the privilege of being associated with him in the government of the country."

IN THE COMMONS

LONDON, February 18, 1943.

The Secretary of State for India, Mr Amery, was asked in the Commons today, if as a possible contribution towards the ending of the present deadlock in India, he would now allow influential non-party men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr Rajagopalachari to confer with Mahatma Gandhi, and he replied:—

"I am content to leave the question of interviews with Mr Gandhi to the discretion of the Government of India."

Labourite Sorensen asked: "Does not Mr Amery realize that a new situation has been created by the resignation of the three Members of the Viceroy's Council, and in view of that fact, could he not make some suggestion to the Viceroy that these contacts as suggested should be allowed?"

Mr Amery: "No, Sir."

ALL-INDIA NEWSPAPER EDITORS' CONFERENCE

NEW DELHI, February 17, 1943.

The Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors Conference met in the *Hindustan Times* Office today with Mr K. Srinivasan (the *Hindu*), President, in the chair and passed the following resolution:—

"Having regard to the unique position of Mahatma Gandhi in the public life of the country, and his labours in the cause of world peace and the progress of India on a basis of international goodwill and co-operation, and in view of apprehension that in the event of anything untoward happening to Gandhiji while in detention the breach between an overwhelming section of the people and the Government would become irreparable, and considering the bearing of the whole situation on the Press in India, the Standing Committee of the A.-I.N.E.C. urges the Government

of India to release him unconditionally and immediately to enable him as a free man to help in the restoration of peaceful conditions."

Among those present were the following: Mr Tushar Kanti Ghosh (*Amrita Bazar Patrika*), Mr Ian Stephens (*Statesman*), Mr Ramnath Goenka (*Indian Express*), Dr Syed Mohammed (*Orient Press of India*) Mr Amritlal D. Seth (*Janmabhoomi*), Mr K. Srinivasan (*Free Press Journal*), Mr Devadas Gandhi (*Hindustan Times*), Mr B. Shiva Rao (*Hindu*), Mr A. D. Mani (*Hitavada*), Mr K. Punniah (*Sind Observer*), Mr J. N. Sahni (*National Call*), Mr H. R. Moharay (*Samyukta Karnatak*), Mr S. N. Bhatnagar (*Watan*), Mr Dharampal Gupta (*Tej*), and Mr B. Sen Gupta (*United Press of India*).

From the resolution Mr Ian Stephens dissented.

Explaining his dissent, Mr Ian Stephens emphasized that he held strong personal views on the propriety of fasting over political issues. He added that his dissent should not be regarded as necessarily reflecting the view of other British-owned newspapers in India.

ALL-INDIA LEADERS' CONFERENCE AT DELHI

UNANIMOUS DEMAND FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

At the time of the release of the Viceroy-Gandhi correspondence there were a number of prominent leaders present in Delhi. On the second day of the fast they sent messages to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr C. Rajagopalachari appealing to them to give a lead to the country in that distressing condition. Mr K. M. Munshi proposed a conference of leaders and both approved of the idea. Immediately an informal meeting was held at the residence of Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, a member of the Council of State, when it was decided to call the conference immediately. A list of over 150 leaders representing various communities, creeds and interests was prepared and urgent telegraphic invitations were sent to them in the following terms:

"In pursuance to general desire to consider situation arising Gandhiji's Fast earnestly request you join conference here on nineteenth Friday afternoon. Kunzru, Ghaznavi, Srinivasan, Joshi, Kazmi, Banerjea, Choudhury, Santsingh and selves convening. Reply Birla House.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI, K. M. MUNSHI, G. L. MEHTA.

The response was overwhelming. Telegrams and letters began to arrive from all parts of the country whole-heartedly supporting the proposal of the conveners. Those who could not come to Delhi for unavoidable reasons sent messages wishing complete success to the Conference and endorsing the demand for the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi.

Only two days prior to the Conference it was officially announced that three important Indian Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Sir H. P. Mody, Mr N. R. Sarker and Mr M. S. Aney, had resigned.

It was in a tense atmosphere that the Conference of the Leaders met on Friday, February 19, 1943, at 3-30 p.m. at 28, Feroz Shah Road, New Delhi. Such health bulletins as were available from Poona showed that Mahatma Gandhi's condition was rapidly approaching a crisis—no one could tell how it would end.

Over 200 persons representing practically every section in the country were present at the Conference—Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, Sikhs, Christians, Europeans. There were political leaders, prominent business men, big industrialists, prominent members of the Central and Provincial Legislatures and many others. The gathering was largely, if not entirely, composed of people who, at one time or other in their lives, were among the ablest and most ardent supporters of the British Government. Many of them indeed were still closely associated with Government in different capacities and represented what has been regarded as the moderate section of public men in India. The importance of the positions they occupy and their authority to advise Government may be judged by a reference to their designations given along with the signatures to the cable addressed to Mr Winston Churchill, appearing a few pages ahead.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the President-elect of the Conference, could not arrive on the first day and Mr C. Rajagopalachari presided in his absence. Sir Tej Bahadur presided on the second day.

MR C. RAJAGAPALACHARI'S OPENING SPEECH

The following is the opening speech of Mr C. Rajagopalachari at the first day (February 19) of the conference:—

This gathering is a source of great consideration, if not strength, on the present grave occasion. The struggle now is between positive force—I will not call it brute force, it is too stale—and the force of public opinion.

Every heart would be gladdened if by any means Mahatmaji could be released now and his fast could terminate. I don't think there can be any difference of opinion on that point, though there may be difference of opinion as to the policies and programmes from time to time pursued by Mahatmaji or other people. In the whole of this country there is nobody who would stand against his release but everybody would want it and be gladdened by it. What is it that prevents such a thing happening? It is positive force as I have called it. If nothing else can prove and expose the present situation, this can, that Mahatmaji is kept in prison though everybody in India wants him to be released. The character of the present Government needs no further evidence to be thoroughly understood.

What then have we met for? We have met as far as I understand in the spirit of the scripture to which Mahatmaji is attached, that we should do whatever we can do, not minding the results or caring for the fruition of our labours. If fruition comes, let us welcome it. If it does not come, let us have the feeling that we have done our utmost. We have met, therefore, to try to give expression to this universal feeling in this country that Mahatmaji should be enabled to end his fast. We have not met to exploit the situation for any particular view or any political or economic or other ends.

No party can achieve its ends better without him than with him. I was going to say that nobody could achieve his ends without him, but I have put it at its lowest. We all want him and nobody will be hurt by his release. The vast majority of the people of India feel we have no hope for the country for a good long time if he should be allowed to extinguish himself on this occasion.

Mahatmaji has undertaken what he called a fast to capacity. He has judged his capacity. He is a strange man, a unique man, a strange leader of all of us. He goes in some matters by the minimum and in other matters by the maximum. He has judged his capacity and taken the pledge to undergo a fast for 21 days. I have known him for some time. A large number of you know him also. His physical capacity today to bear the fast is not what it was before. A 21 days' fast is a terribly over-estimated limit he has placed over himself, but having placed it he is not in a position to revise it. He has spoken of death and about going to the Seat of Judgment. As far as I can see it would be folly to imagine he has any alternative, such as Lord Linlithgow has, of changing his plan.

What is it that the Government apprehends? The Government apprehends that releasing him will create difficulties. I have said and I say now that the moment he is released the work of the Government will be eased and will not be made difficult. But people have a knack of following the difficult path when the easy path is open to them. The Government wants to face the difficulties of not releasing him rather than take advantage of the situation by releasing him. That is the traditional way of prestige and authority.

The documents published present a number of legalistic arguments. We can meet them all, but I am not going to tire you by refutation of arguments. But I wish to disabuse people's minds of one particular illusion.

The Indian people love Mahatmaji so much that they are incapable of argument in the matter. But foreigners of whom there is now a large number in this country may be prejudiced by the legalistic

arguments and the illusion created by the correspondence. The fallacy runs throughout the correspondence that Mahatmaji may be taken to have been convicted of an offence and he must go through his punishment. This is an absolute untruth. Remember he has been arrested and detained without trial and he has applied for his *habeas corpus* to the Judgment Seat above, because no one below will receive his application. And he would have a rightful claim before a court of law, had not bad laws been passed. Laws can be passed to make any writ lawful here and that is why he has applied for a different kind of writ for the same *habeas corpus*.

What is it that Gandhiji wants? He asks that he should have the opportunity to review his position and give his advice to the country. He has not been convicted and imprisoned. He has the right to speak to his people. The only thing he asks is, he should have the right to review the position as a free man. That is what is denied to him. As a student of British jurisprudence, I can understand the refusal of such a right if he had been convicted but he has not been. He has asked for one of the two things: Make me a free man, or try me and put me in prison after trial, or come and convince me that I should continue in prison in spite of all that I have said. Neither of these things is done. He is simply kept behind the bars. Judgment is passed against him that he is responsible for a situation which he cannot control and is not allowed to control.

There is therefore need for disabusing ourselves of any illusion arising out of the case presented by the Government papers.

Can any member of Government say: Mahatmaji when out will stand for violence, secrecy or sabotage? It would be a falsehood. What is the nature of the difficulty you apprehend? Yau want to govern easily, without political agitation and carry on without arguments about rights and wrongs. And I think it is disgraceful to do so.

Sir Mohamed Usman might say that Mahatmaji would create political trouble. He might give the trouble of agitating for freedom. But that trouble was the minimum that Government should have. It should meet that trouble and answer it. The trouble which might be expected when he was out was lawful trouble, healthy trouble. Sir Mohamed Usman like the parrot in the fable said: "There is no doubt about it." One day, however, if the Viceroy asks Sir Mohamed Usman: "Was it not a mistake that I committed in asking for your advice?" he may say: "There is no doubt about it." And finally some day later on if the Government should ask the parrot: "Were we not fools in buying you?" the parrot would very truly say: "There is no doubt about it." Advisers who flatter were a danger to those whom they advised. Better to depend upon one who said "Don't do it," when the man he was advising was about to do wrong. Better to depend upon one like Mr Aney. I am not enthusiastic because Mr Aney has dissociated himself from the Government. I would have liked him to remain in the Government and give all the good advice he could. But he found that impossible and he came away. It is a normal consequence of the prevailing system.

I welcome you all again. We have fixed two days for the Conference. We will give the first day to those who have not been able to attend the Conference, but who have been kind to send their messages. My friend Mr Munshi will read them out to you. Tomorrow Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru will preside over the Conference and we will have the opportunity of hearing those who have honoured the Conference with their presence.

Messages blessing the efforts of the conveners of the Conference from Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Metropolitan of India, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri and various other prominent individuals and organizations all over the country were then read. A manifesto signed by over 17,000 Delhi citizens was also handed over to the Conference. It read thus:—

"As citizens of Delhi we consider it our duty to urge for the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi, whose present state of health is causing the deepest concern and anxiety to every man and woman.

"We are convinced that without his guidance there can be no solution of the present deadlock and that his immediate release will be in the interest of public peace and security."

The signatures included that of Khwaja Hasan Nizami, a prominent Muslim of Delhi commanding a large following of his co-religionists.

The Conference appointed a Committee to draft a resolution urging the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi. The Committee met the same day and drafted the resolution. An advance copy of the resolution was immediately forwarded to the Private Secretary to his Excellency the Viceroy in view of the grave nature of reports received about Mahatma Gandhi's health.

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

The conference assembled on the second day (February 20) at 11.30 a.m. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, presiding, said:—

I am overwhelmed by the gravity of the occasion and I feel sure that all of you are equally overwhelmed by it. I think I am can say that I have joined you all on this occasion in demanding the unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi with a clear conscience. No one knows better than Mahatma Gandhi that, by conviction, I have always been opposed to civil disobedience. In fact, in a letter which he wrote to me shortly before his arrest, he referred to this fact, and I have no hesitation in saying that I very much regretted the resolution which was passed in Bombay. I may as well say that no one has followed the course of events since the 9th of August with greater regret than I. I have no hesitation in expressing my candid, frank and unambiguous opinion that it is to be a matter of the deepest regret that acts of sabotage had taken place in this country. It is, however, impossible for me at the present moment, when facts have not been sifted by an independent Judicial Tribunal, to accept the verdict of the Executive Government, as if it was a Judicial Body. Who were the men who took part in this movement? What authority they had from Mr Gandhi to take part in the movement, whether some of them exploited the discontent that was already there, whether some men availed themselves of the occasion to take this line of action on the 9th August—these are questions which can be discussed at a Tribunal. I think, a Tribunal would form its own conclusions. But, in the meanwhile, we are told that we must accept the verdict of the Government. Speaking for myself, I am unwilling to place the Government in the place of the judges of the land. I have no sympathy with the rebels. None of you would have any sympathy with the rebels. But to punish the rebels and to ask them to take the consequences of their conduct is one thing and to condemn the Congress entirely as a body of rebels and to treat Mahatma Gandhi as an arch rebel is another thing. I have, however, no doubt that while those gathered in the Conference dissociate themselves from acts of rebellion, while we make an appeal to Mahatma Gandhi himself and to all those who have been interested in political movements to do everything they can to restore an atmosphere of calm and peace,

we also expect that if Mahatma Gandhi is released unconditionally, it will be the first preliminary step towards reconciliation which is the immediate need of this country. I have been reading the speeches delivered by distinguished Members of the Government in the Legislature. They talked of Mahatma Gandhi as being a rebel. I wonder whether they forgot their English history. I believe there is a rebel now called Field-Marshal Smuts—happily still alive—who is rendering the greatest possible service to the Empire at this juncture. I believe there is another rebel called Mr de Valera whom the British Government has always been anxious to retain in the British Empire. I have been a close student of English history and there are many parts of English history which I admire very sincerely. But I believe that one lesson which is reinforced by English history is that the British Government have always settled with rebels rather than with loyalists. Therefore I am not very much down-hearted when Mahatma Gandhi is put down by the Home Member and Sir Mohamed Usman as a rebel. I still live in the hope that there will be a settlement with these rebels and that when the settlement will take place, men like you and like me will be ignored. That has been the consistent course of English history. On logical grounds and on petty legal grounds, it is possible for every one of you to hold, and you do not want the genius of the Home Member to say, that Mahatma Gandhi is a rebel and therefore has lost all the rights of citizenship. I regret, however, that the whole approach to the Indian problem, since the failure of the Cripps Mission, for which no one was more to blame than Cripps himself, has not been in the spirit of statesmanship but of petty-fogging policemen. I have no hesitation in saying that there has been complete absence of statesmanship in India on the part of those who hold the reins of power. Moved by these considerations, I do not think it is necessary for me to make a long speech. But one thought occurred to me yesterday as I was intending to come over to Delhi. My mind went back to the English history of 1920-21, when the Irish Treaty was settled, and I wondered what attitude Mr Churchill adopted at that time. I then took out from my library a book which, I have no doubt, many of you have read, *World Crisis and Aftermath*, by Winston Churchill. Mr Churchill said then that in Ireland he had supported the linking of a tremendous onslaught with the fairest offer. I know that the onslaught in the case of India has come, but the fairest offer is yet to come. Frankly, I do think that the time has come when these petty arguments about rebellion should come to an end, when Governors should cease to remind the Hindus, day in and day out, that they are rebels. I always wonder to myself what the Government have done for the Muslims if the Hindus have been a body of rebels. I should have felt differently if, on an occasion like this, the British Government had said to the Muslims: "The Hindus have deserted us, now you come and take charge of the Government." Have they done this? No I should pity the Muslim who thought that the Government was favouring his community, merely because some judgeships of High Courts or other jobs are thrown in their way. This is not statesmanship. This is manœuvring for position. I think the time has come when this spirit of manœuvring should come to an end. The time has come when the British Government, remembering their history and traditions and remembering also the change in the situation and the irrepressible urge for freedom in this country should win over the rebels. There is far greater need in this country for statesmanship than mere law-and-order form of the Government, and I feel and hope my voice would go outside this *pandal*, that those of us who have assembled here are actuated by one and one motive, and one and one purpose, and that is, that we must see to it that the Mahatma's life is saved. I cannot understand those who say that Gandhiji's life is 'the biggest thing' and then they put an extinguisher on his life. I am not a believer in fasts. My views on

this question are such that many pious and orthodox Hindus would be shocked to learn them. I may differ from the Mahatma on the question of fast, but I take facts as they have developed. Here is a man, whose appeal to the imagination of the country is beyond doubt, who is going to end his life. It is open to you to criticize it, but you cannot alter the fact. If this event should materialize, that is to say, if unfortunately he should die within the next 24 or 48 hours, I tell you, the task of reconciliation between the British nation and the Hindus, I should like to say Indian nation, will become extremely difficult. I do not wish to raise any controversial issue, but the task of reconciliation not only between Hindus and Muslims but amongst all the different sections of the country would become next to impossible. I have read the correspondence which has been issued, and the only interpretation I can place is that so far as Mahatma Gandhi is concerned, his adherence to the doctrine of non-violence is as great as it ever was. What exactly is the responsibility which can be fixed on the Congress for the rebellion is not a question which you or I can discuss at this Conference. It should be settled by a tribunal. At the same time, I realize that the feeling in the country is growing every day, that there are also men—I am not talking of the rebels—who occupied very high positions until the other day and who were praised to the skies by some Governors and who are now being kept in detention without any independent judicial finding. The Mahatma has not been convicted; he has been detained. He has every right to ask for a trial. If it is descreditable to the Congress that the present situation should have arisen, it is not less discreditable to the Government. I was here almost a year ago when Sir Stafford Cripps came, and after the failure of the Cripps Mission, for which Sir Stafford Cripps was far more responsible than any other person, then came the Allahabad meeting of the Congress. It was abundantly clear that the situation was rapidly deteriorating. Then came the proceedings of the 14th July, to which a reference is made in the correspondence which has been issued. What was the constructive step the British Government took to prevent such mischief, barring the fact that they added more Indian Members to the Executive Council, some of whom have had, under the pressure of the situation, to resign? They took no other step. Could not Gandhiji have been invited to discuss matters with the Government? This is not governing the country in the spirit of statesmanship, this is governing the country in the spirit of policeman. I, therefore, say that if the Congress and if Mahatma Gandhi are to be held responsible for the situation, no less are Government to be held responsible. I am not going to develop this point any further. I do not wish any further to deviate from the main issue, and that issue before you is that we shall do the best that we can, under the circumstances to save the Mahatma's life in the hope and belief—in my case, it is more than belief—that if he is released, the task of reconciliation will be taken in hand by him, and if it becomes necessary, I hope and trust all of us will rise above petty considerations and, in the interests of the country, subordinate them to our chief end which we have been striving to achieve for so many years. I do not wish our hope should be delayed and frustrated. I do ask in your name and on your behalf—and I believe I can speak on behalf of the country—that Mahatma Gandhi should be forthwith released before it is too late. We make on this occasion an appeal to the civilized conscience of Great Britain and of the United Nations, and we do say that if it is intended that this country should settle down to constructive work, then it is absolutely necessary that Mahatma Gandhi should be released. But if you will ask me if I have any hope, frankly, I am not in a very hopeful frame of mind, because if the Government intended to release him, then they would not have accepted the resignations of the three Members. Nevertheless, we have got to do our duty. We have got to show

that we are anxious for a general reconciliation for the settling down of the country to constructive work, and because these are hopes and aspirations, we are insistent that Mahatma Gandhi should be released at once. I will say no more.

I have read in the *Hindustan Times* the proceedings of the Conference which took place yesterday and learnt that they appointed a Committee. The Resolution has been drafted, and I have just read it, and I find myself in complete agreement with it. I am glad that that Resolution is going to be moved by my friend, Dr Jayakar, who, it so happens, has always been working with me in matters of this character. It should not be understood that this Resolution represents adequately our feelings in the matter. I shall now call upon Dr Jayakar to move the Resolution.

DR M. R. JAYAKAR

I have been asked to move the Resolution which reads as follows:—

"This Conference, representing different creeds, communities and interests in India, gives expression to the universal desire of the people of this country that, in the interest of the future of India and of international goodwill, Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally. This Conference views with the gravest concern the serious situation that will arise if the Government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. This Conference therefore urges the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi forthwith."

I understand that copies of this resolution, which was adopted by a Committee of the Conference yesterday, were supplied to the Press, but, under the rigorous censorship prevailing in New Delhi now, the publication of the full text has been withheld and only its substance has been released to the Press. I shall not be surprised if a similar fate overtakes the speech which I propose to deliver today.

The Resolution puts forward the grounds on which we demand the release of the Mahatma. They are: (1) The interests of the future of India; (2) of international goodwill and (3) the serious situation that will arise if the Government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. The grounds do not, in my opinion, exhaust the pleas on which the Mahatma's release can be justly demanded. When I was asked this morning to move this Resolution, I made it clear that I was not inclined to base the plea upon the mere mercy of the Viceroy, for I thought that such an appeal would be both misplaced and ineffective. I was also doubtful whether it would be in keeping with the dignity and selfrespect of the Mahatma and his colleagues who are in jail today. I propose to urge certain other grounds in the course of my speech, which will necessarily be detailed, in the light of the circumstances which have given rise to the present demand. My plea is mainly based upon fairness and justice, for reasons which I shall make clear to you. But, before I do so, may I at once state that the Mahatma's fast has nothing to do with the plea which I am going to urge? I personally have no faith in fasts for political purpose, whatever their value may be as religious ministrations, or medical cures. I have no doubt that you have your own views about fasts, but may I ask you to leave them aside for the moment and judge the situation in the light of what I propose to say?

Your views about the efficiency or otherwise of fasts should not colour your decision on the matter at issue. The right view of the Mahatma's fast will depend on your estimate of the present condi-

tions prevailing in India. You will, I am sure, have no difficulty in agreeing that his fast is not for the purpose of obtaining his release, as the view in some quarters in New Delhi is. The true explanation of the fast is that it is a protest against the present frustration from which India is suffering. It typifies such frustration and, according to the views which the Mahatma has espoused all his life, it is the one remedy, sovereign in his eyes, of drawing attention to the present frustration in India. The circumstances which have led to the sense of frustration have their beginning in the events surrounding the failure of the Cripps Mission. You know the reasons why it failed and among them must be included Sir Stafford Cripps's own inability to correctly estimate and deal with the circumstances, as they stood at the time of his visit a year ago. After the failure of his mission, it appears that the Government firmly resolved not to relieve the deadlock, which was caused by the failure, but to take advantage of the prevailing disappointment to strengthen their hold upon India and, under the plea of war conditions, to usurp more power to represent to the world that such usurpation was necessary for the purpose of successfully carrying on the war. This reached a climax last summer, when the Mahatma started a demand for self-rule in the form of "Quit India". It was a result of his conviction that the British Government had reached the end of its usefulness and was not capable of any further good. Its might and force was typified by the actions of the present Prime Minister, Secretary of State and the Viceroy, and, in a mood of great dejection and frustration, the Mahatma used his *mantram* "Quit India". The utterances of British statesmen helped to deepen the gloom, for instance, Mr Churchill's speech warning India that there were now a larger number of white forces in India than ever before. One fails to understand the significance of this utterance unless it was intended to convey to the Indian mind the familiar truth that people may have brains and wisdom on their side, but the gun-powder was in the hands of England. It reminds one of the famous visit of Lord Bryce some years ago, a great authority on Constitutional Law and History. He was led about in India by the British officials. At the time of his leaving the shores of India, he quietly whispered to the official who was attending on him, "I smelt gun-powder everywhere." This was many years ago. But apparently the British Prime Minister's mind has made no progress since then towards the adoption of a more civilized view of Indian affairs.

To go back to the narrative, Indians all understand what the cry "Quit India" meant, *viz.*, that it was a plea, put in brief and telling language, for obtaining complete power from the hands of England, in other words, a cry for full freedom. The Indian mind has always delighted in expressing great truths in the form of short aphorisms and this was an instance of this national habit. Its import was well understood amongst us in and outside the Congress ranks. Unfortunately, the Congress Working Committee coupled this demand for freedom with the threat of civil disobedience or direct action. I never had a belief in the efficacy of civil disobedience from the very commencement; in fact, it was the one feature of Congress doctrines which led me, many years ago, to resign my membership of the Congress. I never had any doubt that, situated in India as we are, civil disobedience is often a call for public disorder, the bounds of which cannot be easily foreseen and the extent of which cannot be easily restrained. In my opinion therefore the threat of civil disobedience was a mistake and, in that sense, it may be said, in fairness and justice, that it was possible for the Mahatma and his colleagues, having regard to their past experience, to anticipate what its effects

would be in the conditions through which India was then passing. If therefore the charge of the Government of India against the Congress rested only upon such anticipation and was based upon the well-known legal principle that a person must be taken to intend the natural consequences of his act which he could have anticipated with ordinary care and prudence, the Congress might be said to be responsible for the effects of their action. But, as I shall show later, in the course of my speech, the charges of the Government against the Mahatma and the Congress extend a great deal beyond this view. I was one of those who wrote to the Press at that time, pointing out the great danger of this form of outburst and appealing both to the Viceroy and the Mahatma to meet and come to a settlement before it was too late. But neither side paid heed to this counsel. One feature, however, of the threat of civil disobedience, be it noted, was that the Congress surrounded it with three limitations which might be regarded as safeguards or precautions: (1) That the Mahatma would do nothing in the matter before exhausting every possible means, that he was prepared, as now appears clearly from his letter of 14th August, to see the Viceroy and appeal to him for an independent examination of the Congress case; (2) that the "omissions" in the Congress case, to use the Mahatma's own expression, were filled in, for instance, by his statement that the war effort was not to be impeded and that the British and American troops would remain in India to prosecute the war actively; (3) that no big constitutional changes were demanded during wartime, but that the Congress would be content with an unequivocal declaration of India's independence, accompanied by an immediate transfer of power into Indian hands, which would apparently lead to an augmentation and regulation of India's war effort. Again, some of us wrote to the Press, urging the Viceroy to send for the Mahatma and have a talk. I have no doubt that it was a mistake, as subsequent events have proved, that the Viceroy omitted to take such action in the matter. What prevented him from doing so, except a sense of prestige? He knew the Mahatma well. They called each other friends. A former Viceroy had done this on previous occasions and with very good results. I was concerned with two of them and you know that on both the occasions Lord Irwin successfully brought the negotiations to an end. The Mahatma and the Viceroy of those times dealt with each other on a footing of mutual confidence and esteem, the controversy was carried on at a very high level of trust and confidence. In the light of these talks to which I was a witness, it does seem very unfortunate that the present Viceroy should have thought it right to suggest that the Mahatma had undertaken the fast to find an "easy way" out of the difficulty. It was a suggestion unworthy of the Viceroy and certainly unworthy of the Mahatma and we do not require a prophet to tell us how the antagonism grew in consequence of this unfortunate expression. Controversies between high-placed persons ought not to descend to the level of those carried on by meaner men. Was it such a sin to desire the independence of India that the Mahatma became an untouchable, unworthy of an invitation from the Viceroy? It will be said that such a visit would have led to no results. That depended upon the tact and courtesy of the Viceroy. A previous Viceroy had won under similar circumstances, and there was no reason why the present one should not have succeeded. In any event, that opportunity was lost and the Mahatma was clapped in jail and several thousands of our countrymen are now prisoners of the British Government detained without trial. This was done under the Defence of India Act, but that is no justification, for that Act has been put to unjustifiable uses and has been found extremely convenient by the executive to perpetrate injustices when the ordinary law would not have permitted. Is there anything for which the Defence of India Act

has not been used? Yes—perhaps private marriages, though marriage processions have been banned under its terms. During the times which ensued, the Government assumed very wide powers, which were quite capable of being exercised excessively by overzealous officials in whose hands they were placed. The Mahatma's contention is that the Government practised "leonine violence" which has contributed to the present disturbances and sabotage. The Government retort and say: "No; this was the direct result of your teaching and your Resolutions." Millions of people in this country, however, believe that the officials of the Government used the power to strike terror in the hearts of the Indian people, and this has led to reprisals on the part of the people. There are the two sides of the controversy. Mutual allegations and recriminations are on foot and any person accustomed to weigh evidence and take a calm view will only remark that the matter is eminently such that it should be carefully sifted by an independent tribunal and the truth found out. One thing is clear, however, that while the Mahatma and the Congressmen—the accused in the case, if I may say so—were in jail, the accuser went on making the gravest allegations against the Congress. I can only say that the gravity of the accusations is such that if the allegations against the Congress are proved to be true, many of us will have no difficulty in believing that the Congress is public enemy No. 1 and deserves to be suppressed.

May I ask you to consider the character of the allegations in some details as they have emerged in the correspondence? The Government case is: (1) That the violence was the result of a concerted plan known to the All-India Congress Committee; (2) that secret instructions were circulated in the name of the All-India Congress Committee for practising violence; (3) that well-known Congressmen have organized the present violence, and, further, they have taken part in it, including the use of bombs, etc.; (4) this perhaps is the worst, that an underground organization exists even now, managed by Congressmen, for the purpose of perpetrating sabotage and acts of violence. You will agree with me when I say that, apart from Mahatma and the Congress, the public are deeply interested in finding out the truth in this matter. It concerns all of us not to permit an organization to exist or to thrive which is proved to be guilty of any of these crimes. The accusations, therefore, are of the greatest character and as they have been held *ex parte* while the accused are behind prison bars and unable to defend themselves, public justice requires that they should be proved to the satisfaction of the public before a tribunal whose capacity, impartiality and independence are above doubt. It does seem extraordinary that, while those against whom these allegations are being made are in detention and unable to defend themselves, the Government have gone on heaping one accusation on another and exhibit no intention to give the perpetrators any chance of convincing themselves of their error and making amends, or any opportunity of disproving these allegations before an independent tribunal.

The correspondence which has passed between the Viceroy and the Mahatma makes it clear that the latter's chief complaint is that these accusations are untrue and have been made *ex parte* and behind the back of the accused. He therefore pleads that the Viceroy should give him an opportunity to be convinced of his error and, if this is done, he would make ample amends. He suggests that this might be done either by the Viceroy sending for him or sending someone to place the evidence before him or in some other way which will give the Mahatma the opportunity to find out his error. The Viceroy's reply is that official records prove this and so he is satisfied. Mahatma Gandhi replies: "That may be so, but official records are admittedly censored and in past transactions such records were admitted to be

untrue and exaggerated." Apparently the Mahatma was referring to previous negotiations with Lord Irwin to which I was witness and the Mahatma's statement about the accuracy of official records cannot be said to be inaccurate. The Viceroy replies: "I am convinced that these records are true." The Mahatma rejoins: "That may be so. What has convinced you, as the head of the administration, on the evidence of the official records, may not convince me, who will examine them very critically." That leads the Viceroy to retort, "You have not an open mind," to which Gandhiji replies, "An open mind is perfectly consistent with disbelief in the official records," and so the controversy goes on in the bandying of words. The public are not much interested in wordy warfare at this critical time, but it does seem that the Viceroy was relying on a very narrow technical defence, ignoring the larger aspects of the question and the chances of a political settlement. It is pertinent to remember in this connection a few things which the correspondence has shown: (1) that the Mahatma's faith in non-violence is still intact; (2) he deplores violence. He says in his letter of the 19th of January that he is prepared to proclaim his belief in non-violence from house-tops. He further says, "I have condemned violence on the part of the Congress on previous occasions and have done so by doing penance," suggesting thereby that the Mahatma would do so again if convinced of the Congress error. The Mahatma further says: "If you want me to admit my own errors, convince me of them by satisfactory evidence. If, however, you want me to admit the error on behalf of the Congress, place me in the midst of my colleagues of the Working Committee. But, in either case, if the evidence satisfies me, I shall make amends. I cannot, while in jail, express my opinion of events which I cannot influence or control. I shall do it as a free man." Lastly he adds: "I do plead with you to end the deadlock." I am here quoting from my memory, not the exact words, but the purport of the letters. I should have thought that these assertions on the Mahatma's part opened a clear way to the pursuit of peaceful negotiations without the loss of government prestige. This is the ground on which I base the demand for Gandhiji's freedom and it will explain why I call it a plea for fairness and justice.

The Congress is the most important political organization in the country. It has been accused of most serious crimes. If true, they mark it as an enemy of the country. These accusations, however, have been denied by no less a person than the leader of the movement, whose reputation for truth, honesty and integrity is very high in the world. He wants an opportunity to be convinced by evidence being placed before him. The Government have locked him in jail without trial. Six months have passed, giving enough time to the Government to collect evidence and prepare their case. During these six months, the accused has had no opportunity of knowing what evidence is in the possession of the Government, who have gone on hurling one accusation upon another until the pile is high. The Mahatma wants this to be ended, things brought to justice and the deadlock to terminate. We say, therefore, release the Mahatma and give him a chance of looking into the evidence which, the Government say, they have in their possession. There is no risk in doing so, for the Mahatma has reiterated his belief in non-violence, and it is unthinkable that he will use his freedom for reviving civil disobedience. If he does so he will be immediately out of court before the world and the Government can send him to jail again. In any event, it is a clear case for giving the Mahatma the freedom he desires for examining the proof. I will go further and suggest, let the whole question be determined by an independent tribunal of impar-

tial men either of Indian or international reputation. But it is no answer to the Mahatma's case to say, "You must believe what I believe. You must believe the evidence which has satisfied me. On such evidence you must admit your guilt while you are in detention. If you do not do so, we will keep you in further detention until you show signs of repentance." This is virtually the attitude of the Government and it is such that no Indian with any sense of justice will approve. It is but just and fair that Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee should be given an opportunity of considering the evidence. The surprising thing is that the Government were willing to release Gandhiji conditionally, but this is of no avail to him, if he desires his freedom for the purpose of considering the evidence and making counter-charges against the Government if necessary. It is therefore inevitable that his freedom should be unconditional. Freedom on parole or under conditions will not serve the purpose he has in view. The Viceroy suggests in his correspondence that sooner or later the Government case would be placed before the public. To that the Mahatma replies: "This is no consolation to me, for, by the time you decide to do so, men might die and evidence might disappear." This is perfectly true and, I shall say with all the responsibility of my words that, if the Government to suit their own convenience, do not desire to bring the Congress to justice for some time, that would furnish no justification for continuing to keep thousands of men in jail without trial. There is a limit of time which the Law sometimes provides for permitting speedy action, though unjustified. Six months is an adequate limit of time and should be enough for enabling the Government to make up their mind whether they will bring the offenders to justice or release them. It is said, "these are not ordinary times, there is a war going on," but that is no justification, for I am quite sure that you will agree that the risk of keeping the Mahatma in jail and the possibility of his death is, for the purpose of the war, far greater than the risk, if any, of releasing him for the purpose which he has in view. There is no doubt, as his correspondence proves, that he is asking for the ending of the deadlock, clearly suggesting that he wishes to use his freedom, when obtained, for this purpose. This will explain to you why I placed my plea on grounds of justice and equity and not on mercy alone.

But, says the Home Member, "we cannot treat with a rebel such as the Mahatma. As a rebel, he has forfeited all rights of citizenship; he is an outcast from society and can only enter it again on confessing his guilt." The Home Member, about whom the less we say the better, forgets that even a rebel has his rights. Even an outlaw has his rights. What "society" does the Home Member have in view when he says that the Mahatma is an outcast from it? Did he mean the "society" of the I.C.S. officials in India or of the Gymkhana Club which they frequently visit? If he meant this "society," the answer is that the Mahatma never coveted any entrance into this "society." He was well out of this. If, on the other hand, the Home Member intended to refer to Indian "society," the society of the Mahatma's countrymen, may I say, with all respect to the Home Member, that the Mahatma never forfeited his place in it and is still a valued member of it and will find no difficulty in entering it the moment he is free? But it is needless to waste more words on the utterances of the Home Member. From past experience, one has not learnt to associate with the Home Member any wisdom or statesmanship. He reminds me of an old Sanskrit saying:

प्रासादशिखरस्थोपि काको न गरुडायते।

"A crow may rise to the pinnacle of a royal palace, he will still remain a crow, and can never be an eagle."

DR SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

After the speech delivered by the President and the very elaborate, lucid, passionate, and true in every word, speech delivered by the mover of this Resolution, it is not necessary for the speakers that will follow to make long speeches. I associate myself with the Resolution which is moved. Indeed, where can be that Indian, where can be that free Britisher or any foreigner, who would not associate himself with the Resolution which is moved? But the point is: "Is the voice of India reaching those people, the British people?" Dr Jayakar said: "Do they realize the feelings which have been roused from one end of the country to the other?" This conference is of a representative character. We have here persons belonging to different communities, creeds and interests, who have not seen eye to eye in respect of many a matter, but we feel convinced that it will be the highest catastrophe that one can imagine, if Mahatma's life is not saved. We are not thinking of him as a leader of any political organization. His voice has been the voice of the oppressed community and of oppressed humanity. I have no desire to discuss the details of the correspondence, but there is one amazing feature in the letter to him by the Viceroy and the Home Secretary to which I feel bound to make a reference. The Government of India is prepared to set him free, provided he undertakes the fast outside, where he can die also. On this condition, the Government is prepared to release him. I have no desire to refer to the charges and countercharges which have been brought forward in the correspondence. I know a little too much of the oppression, the deliberate oppression that is being carried out in my Province—Bengal. The only thing that the Government can do is to have an Indian tribunal. That may come later, but this must come quickly—today. Dr Jayakar has referred to the Defence of India Rules. The resolution was not allowed to be published in the paper by the powers that be. That speech will not see the light of day, nor any other speeches. But at the same time, as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has said, we must do our duty. Every moment is precious. The last thing I would say is: Let us put forward our demand free of controversy and concentrate on taking immediate steps, so that the life of the greatest man in the world can be saved. But there must be public sanction behind it. It is an open secret, it is nothing short of that. It is not an attack on Mahatmaji alone, it is really a symbol of an attempt to do away with any form of agitation in this country. There must be sanction behind our demand. If Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr Jayakar at this late hour, are prepared to lead the public on a united front, even then the voice of India may reach the English and other nations. We are told that Mr Phillips has come here to understand the Indian situation. If Mr Phillips is here really to establish good relations between India and his own country, this is the time when he can act. If the catastrophe happens, if the dead body of Mahatma Gandhi lies between India and England, if he is to die before his time, India will never forget this. I hope the united voice of the people of this conference will reach the Viceroy and will enable him to act before it is too late.

RAJA SIR MAHARAJ SINGH

We have met on a very solemn and, indeed, sad occasion. Who knows, as I ventured to say yesterday, the sands of time, which are slowly passing out, may pass out within the next 24 or 48 hours, though God forbid. One aspect of the Conference is its representative character. There are ladies and gentlemen belonging to different creeds and communities, Hindus, Muslims, Indian Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and persons who may be of specified belief. We have also Britishers here. I am glad to see Mr Arthur Moore. I also see

the American allies. We are not concerned with the ethics of fasting and politics. I am here to represent, as far as one man can represent, a population of eight millions. I urge that, so far as it is humanly possible, the valuable life of Gandhiji should be saved. We may be told that we have been guided by sentiments and emotions. But sentiments and emotions are part and parcel of human nature. When a tragedy is impending in our domestic circles, are we not guided by sentiments and emotions, and when a very great tragedy is about to befall us, have we not a clear duty to be sentimental and emotional? But reasons have been given, and adequate reasons, by previous speakers in support of this Resolution. I would only like to refer to two sentences in Mahatma Gandhi's correspondence with the Viceroy. He writes in one of his letters that he has unequivocally and publicly condemned violence on the part of Congressmen in the past and that he has also done public penance more than once, but that was when he was a free man. I have not the slightest doubt that, if Mahatma Gandhi had been released, he would have unequivocally condemned violence. He would not have favoured the sabotage and other disturbances that have occurred, and surely from the Government point of view, that would have been an enormous attempt. People say that his passing away will lead to sabotage. I cannot say, I do not know, but one thing I know, along with the previous speakers with whom I fully associate myself, and that is that there will be increased embitterment between the Government and the people. The death of Mahatma Gandhi under detention would leave a trail of racial bitterness which it would be difficult to remove.

SIR SULEIMAN CASSUM MITTHA

I strongly support the resolution so ably moved by Dr Jayakar. Mahatma Gandhi is revered by millions in India and I very much hope that he will be released immediately and unconditionally.

MASTER TARA SINGH

After the speeches so ably delivered by eminent persons before me, there is not much left for me to say, but I must associate myself and my community with this demand of unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi. I know there is not a single Sikh who does not associate himself with this demand. I am sorry, very sorry, to learn that the Government and their officials suspect him of violence. I went out of the Congress a few years back, because I believed in violence. Today he is said to be violent and I am non-violent. The Government think he is a hypocrite. Then certainly I can say that every Indian is a hypocrite. If there is one person who is above suspicion, he is Mahatma Gandhi. I, therefore, request Lord Linlithgow to be considerate. I say so because I have no power except to protest. There is no other way left open to me. I am with you in any step that the Conference may take, but the step must be decided. It is said that Mahatma Gandhi's release will cause trouble to the Government. I do not believe this, and even if it does, would his death cause less trouble to humanity? I am in favour of his release, but it is not on any political grounds. He is the man who has, at this critical juncture, kept virtue above everything else.

DR JOHN MACKENZIE

My friend, Dr Hodge, occupies an unusual position in this Conference. We come in a sense representing nobody, but we are Christian Missionaries who are in close touch with a very large number of Indian people throughout India. We are completely outside the sphere of political controversies and I shall be understood and excused if in relation to the present situation I make no charge against anybody. Our concern is of a different kind and let me

say quite briefly what that concern is. Firstly, we are concerned for the preservation of Mahatma Gandhi's life. This is the first concern, and on this we are all agreed. Secondly, we are concerned for the restoration of goodwill in this country. We are concerned as Christians that goodwill should be restored; and, thirdly, arising out of this, we are concerned that this Conference should not disperse here by merely passing a resolution and go home. We do hope that out of this there may come a movement that will bring together all classes and all parties in a united endeavour to help India to the high position we all seek for her. This is very deep in our minds. Mr Chairman yesterday received a letter from me in which I explained that everything should be done to save Mr Gandhi's life, and that simultaneously an appeal should be made to Mr Gandhi to abandon his fast. The letter also urged the Conference to condemn acts of violence done in the name of the Congress and in violation of Mr Gandhi's principles. I suggest that another conference should be convened, to which people, of all castes and creeds should come with open minds, not committed to any principles and policies, but with the sole intention of reaching an agreement on India's problems.

SHRIMATI SARALA DEVI CHAUDHURANI

I was rather amazed at my name being called by the President to support the Resolution. I very heartily support it, in the name of the womanhood of India, and hope that the Government would release Mahatma Gandhi immediately and unconditionally.

MR ALLAH BAKHSH

I am supporting this Resolution not on any humanitarian grounds, nor on any sentimental grounds, nor do I consider that it would be right because a person is able to stake his life. These things are far from my notion, but what I feel is this. I feel, as pointed out by Dr Jayakar, that justice demands Mahatma Gandhi should be released unconditionally. I am not moved by any sentiments or emotions. The question whether the fast is the proper remedy or not, I need not go into at this juncture, but there is no doubt that justice at present has been denied to the Mahatma. Are we here just to pass a resolution and disperse, or should we chalk out a programme? The Government would find some excuses. They have removed a person who had control over all these acts of sabotage. Also other persons have been removed and then the Government accuse that these acts are being done by the Congress. The greatest insult is that the Government say that there was secret correspondence, secret organization, etc. This is a white lie and I fully associate myself with the Resolution which has been so ably moved by Dr Jayakar, that Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally.

MAHARAJKUMAR OF VIZIANAGRAM

Lord Linlithgow has very little respect for resolutions and I am glad that this Conference is not agreeing to wait in deputation. We should cut out this Resolution and march first to the American Embassy to see Mr Phillips and tell him that there will be no goodwill between America and India if he does not interfere, as he is not here merely as a spectator. After that, we should march, on foot, to the Viceroy's House and force Lord Linlithgow to come out and receive us, and, in answer to the nation's demand, we must have Mahatma Gandhi released.

SIR ABDUL HALEEM GHUZNAVI

This Conference is demonstrative of the tempest of agony that is raging in the minds of the vast millions of people in this country.

The anxiety and concern felt over Mahatma Gandhi's life increases day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. India shudders to think of the consequences of the Mahatma's inability to stand this fast. The Resolution before the Conference states that it views with the gravest concern the serious situation that will arise if the Government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. To any man who knows and can feel what the Mahatma means to the people of India, this is self-evident.

This Conference makes bold to say that the desire for the release of Mahatma Gandhi is universal among the people of India. There are people who disagree with Mahatma Gandhi in his practical politics. But not one soul in India wants him to die—and worst of all, die behind prison bars. He is an illustrious son of this soil, a unique leader, who, by sheer sufferings and sacrifices, is enshrined in the hearts of millions of people inhabiting this land. He is not an asset to India alone. I am not exaggerating when I say that he is an asset to the world—a world of blood and feud, war and turmoil, darkness and fear, in the midst of which he stands as a beacon light leading to a non-violent, truthful and peaceful world.

It is implicit in the letters of Mahatma Gandhi to his Excellency the Viceroy, which found publication after he undertook this fast, that there has been not even an iota of change in his faith in non-violence. For that reason, I believe it is that he has ever stated that he would, in the event of his release, review the situation *de novo*. I have no doubt in my mind that if he is released he would not hesitate for one moment to strive to bring about the end of the orgy of violence and disorder that is going on in the country now in the name of freedom movement. If that is so, in my opinion, there is no better contribution to the war effort of this country than the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi. That the Mahatma is an anti-Fascist and a confirmed anti-Fascist long before the Allies entered the war is clear to anyone who would only care to peruse his writings and speeches. Let me make myself clear. I urge the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma purely on humanitarian grounds. A heart which is devoid of humane feelings is no human heart—it is a stone heart. What sort of a heart is it that will not feel and be moved by the tragedy that faces the country on the unfortunate consequences of the Mahatma's inability to stand this fast?

If the Government of India have the slightest respect for democracy in the name of which they call upon Indians to lay their lives fighting the dictators, they should now recognize that Indian public opinion with one voice demands the release of Mahatma Gandhi forthwith. This is no time to stand on false prestige.

On behalf of myself and as President of the Central National Mahomedan Association of India, I pledge my complete and whole-hearted support to any decision that this Conference may come to in order to secure the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi—before it is too late. I hope and pray that it will never be too late to save his life.

MR N. M. JOSHI

I support this Resolution in the name of the working classes and the Trade Union Congress. No single man has done so much for the poorer classes of this country than Mahatma Gandhi. I strongly protest against the use by the Government, of the word "political blackmail."

MAULANA AHMED SAID

There is nothing left for me to say, in further support of the Resolution, after the two veterans of law, namely, Sir Tej Bahadur

Sapru and Dr M. R. Jayakar, have spoken. They have left absolutely no room for addition of any further words—their speeches are so very compact and finely grained. However, I shall say a word or two. Mahatma Gandhi is the most harmless person and the Government should not apprehend any danger or trouble by releasing him. He is the one man who is the most non-violent and able to have control over things that cause trouble to the Government. He should be released at once and without any conditions.

MR ABDUL QAIYUM

I rise to support this Resolution, and in doing so, I think I am voicing the sentiments and feelings of three millions of Pathans who reside in the North-West Frontier of India. Not only this, but I stand here as a representative—an elected representative—of the Khudai Khidmatgars. Gandhiji has the greatest influence in my province and I shudder to think of the results which are likely to take place if anything unfortunate happens to Gandhiji's life. I tell you this because you may not be knowing what is happening outside owing to censorship. Three or four thousand Mussalmans are rotting in prisons. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, in a meeting, was hit at and his leg was fractured. Now he is rotting in the jail. I am here to make another suggestion. We should be prepared for all eventualities. I am one of those who believe that mere resolutions and mere making of speeches will not do. We may have to face a situation that will be critical if the worst happens. I call upon this Conference, representative as it is of the various parties, creeds and interests in India, to devise ways and means for chalking out some programme. Mahatma Gandhi's life is very much valuable, indeed, at this juncture. Imperialism is playing its own role of "Divide and Rule." But this policy of the Government must not succeed; we must sink our differences and establish goodwill and good relations.

MR ZAHIRUDDIN

I agree with every word of Dr Jayakar. No harm can come out by the release of Mahatma Gandhi, but only good will be the result. If Mahatma Gandhi dies at this time, not only India but the whole world will suffer for it. Therefore the best thing for the Government to do is to release him unconditionally. I again concur with every word and point of the Resolution.

MR RANADIVE

No Government in the world would have resisted such a universal demand for the release of Mahatma Gandhi. As Rajaji says, no wise Government would have resisted such a demand and I entirely agree with him. The Government is really afraid of releasing Mahatma Gandhi, so that he may not unite the Hindus and Mohammedans together. It might lead to a united movement for the demand of transfer of power into the hands of Indians. I believe that the release of Gandhiji would release forces for unity for national demand.

MR HUMAYUN KABIR

I do not wish to take more than a minute or two and would only say that the Bengal Assembly has expressed the demand by passing a resolution almost unanimously. Mahatma Gandhi is the one man to achieve ends without violence. I whole-heartedly support the Resolution on behalf of the six crores of people in Bengal.

MR G. L. MEHTA

Although what we say here in this Conference seems to appear hollow and ineffective compared to the supreme sacrifice being made at the Aga Khan Palace by Gandhiji, I think we have, as previous speakers have said, to do our duty and I whole-heartedly associate

myself with the Resolution not only on my behalf but on behalf of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry which I have the honour to represent. If I may say so the entire commercial community is with us in the demand for the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi. Since Gandhiji's fast, the Federation Office and this Conference have been flooded with telegrams and letters every day from all over the country demanding such release. This spontaneous and widespread manifestation of public feeling shows the deep reverence and affection in which Gandhiji is held by the vast millions of this land. In season and out we have been told that we have to suffer a foreign Government as we cannot unite. But it is absolutely clear that, without a dissentious voice today, the whole of India as represented in this Conference demands the freedom of its beloved leader. The British Prime Minister said some time ago that the Indian commercial community is behind the Congress. We do not feel called upon to be apologetic if we are an integral part of the national movement in India. If Mr Churchill can boast that he has not become the King's First Minister in order to liquidate the British Empire, can we not say, powerless and helpless as we are, that we too shall make our humble contribution to the freedom of our own country? We are proud to be a part of the national movement. Our interest is on the side of law and order. And it is because we are convinced that Gandhiji is a force for social justice and social harmony that some of the biggest commercial magnates in the country are present in this Conference today. This Conference is of a most representative character, Mr N. M. Joshi representing Labour and the representatives of the Communist Party are today at one with the representatives of Capital and employers in demanding the release of Gandhiji. In conclusion I whole-heartedly associate myself with this Resolution.

PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU

The people who have assembled here today do not represent any one party or community, but all creeds, communities and interests, as the resolution says. Now, why has this great gathering assembled here today? Surely, not to support violence. It has assembled here only in recognition of the fact that this is the saddest occasion in the memory of the oldest person present here. The presence of so many distinguished gentlemen and ladies here from all parts of India is also due to the fact that they recognize that Mahatma Gandhi is our greatest national asset. He is something more than that. He is something the like of whom one does not see for centuries. To save his life is to serve the interest of international goodwill. Ladies and gentlemen, I have already said that Mahatma Gandhi is our greatest national asset. I am sure that no one here will deny that Mahatma Gandhi is the embodiment of all that is best. The British Government is under the disillusionment that they have the strength, notwithstanding the fact that India is stirred to her very depth. There is no one amongst us who is not thinking every moment what might be happening at Poona and in memory of the ordeal that the Mahatma has gone through, will not be prepared to devote his life. Mahatma Gandhi has been asked by the Viceroy to clear himself of the charges that would be soon brought out before the world against him. If the Viceroy wants to do that, surely he must observe the elementary principles of justice by releasing him so that he might be in a position to defend himself. And, secondly, if the British Government abhor violence, then they ought to be prepared to allow us to publish the evidence that we have against the officials for having done excesses in the name of law and order. We shall then see who emerges stronger from the trial. The fact is that even if the Government does succeed in proving that some members of the Congress

have done certain acts of violence, they themselves will have to be convicted of having done violence on more than one occasion. The position is one which calls for statesmanship and is not a matter of charges and counter-charges. The British Government could bring charges against the Irish Government also. If they attach any value to their history, they should take a leaf out of the history of Anglo-Irish negotiations in the year 1920. Ladies and gentlemen, I do not want to detain you any more. But perhaps you will allow me one word with regard to the independence and patriotism of those members of the Viceroy's Executive Council who have resigned their posts rather than be a party to the policy, the vindictive and unwise policy, which the British Government is pursuing at present. Nobody can charge them with not being alive to the importance of law and order. They showed that they were not against the British Government or those who represented any extreme party. But, when they found that the plea of law and order was being misused, that it was being resorted to unfairly and to the detriment of the ultimate and highest interest of this country, they had the courage to withdraw from the Government. I am sure that their patriotism has the appreciation of you all. They felt that Mahatma Gandhi emerged better from the wordy contest between the Viceroy and himself and that in view of the position taken by Mahatma Gandhi, it was their duty as Indians and men holding the most responsible positions, to press for his unconditional release. They kept their positions of membership of the Government as patriotic Indians but the Government by declining to accept either of the alternatives placed before them by Mahatma Gandhi and keeping him in detention, showed how difficult it is for anybody to ask for even his elementary civil rights. I give my highest support to the resolution which is before us. We hope that the Government will have the wisdom, in view of the strong and universal public feelings exhibited through this Conference, to release Mahatma Gandhi, but should they fail to do so, they must realize that they will be responsible if the gulf between India and Britain yawns for ever.

MR K. M. MUNSHI

I have participated in the proceedings of this Conference with a sense of shame and humiliation. Here we are—representative men of all parties of the country—men who represent the united voice of the country, engaged in appealing to the foreign representative of an alien government to release the greatest man of the times, one who—had India been free—would not only have been the peer of Stalin and Roosevelt but at their head. But the duty has to be done; we have to voice the feeling which moves the country at the moment.

I confess I cannot speak on this occasion with equanimity. Gandhiji, it appears to me, is not only a father; not only the architect and instrument of modern Indian nationalism; but the torch-bearer of the Moral Order in a world filled with savagery. In order to find a parallel to the tragedy which is now being unfolded at the Aga Khan Palace at Poona, we must go back 1942 years. A similar tragedy was enacted on the Calvary.

The Amerys and Linlithgows of the world have always found it necessary to provide crucifixion for men whom the world worships. Gandhiji has been charged with instigating or conniving at violence. He is a bold man indeed who can level such a base charge against him. I know, as you do, that Gandhiji is above harbouring thoughts of violence, leave aside contemplating any act involving it. I remember an occasion in my life when I so much as protested in private correspondence against the ban that he had publicly laid on the use

of violence against the Muslims in Hindu-Muslim riots and against the Axis Powers in a war of self-defence. That little protest of mine met with disapproval. And he preferred to put me out of the Congress rather than permit me to remain in it and be disloyal to the creed of non-violence. Is the non-violence of such a man to be judged by Mr Churchill or Mr Amery or Lord Linlithgow, who could not be found guilty of non-violence in thought, word, or deed?

There is one aspect of the question which has not been placed before you, and which, even at this late hour, I would venture to present. Asia is a submerged continent. For centuries Europe has dominated it by depriving it of free development. Gandhiji is the voice of Asia, the voice of a free Asia struggling, by non-violent means to be true to its soul and assert its freedom and dignity. The conflict between Europe and Asia can be solved peacefully only by the non-violent technique which he has evolved. In this sense Gandhiji is the leader of all Asia, and, if his life is extinguished, the only Messiah of goodwill between Europe and Asia would have been allowed to die without fulfilling his mission. A gulf of unmitigated bitterness will then spring up between the two continents; a bitterness which will not be allayed by soft words or empty promises, or even by the iron heel of repression. It is in the interest therefore of international goodwill that we seek—not as a matter of favour but as one of right—the release of Gandhiji.

The Resolution was to put to the vote and passed unanimously.

GOVERNMENT REJECTS CONFERENCE'S DEMAND

TEXT OF CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was exchanged between the leaders of the Conference and Government:—

28, Ferozshah Road,
NEW DELHI, February 19, 1943.

DEAR SIR GILBERT,

The Conference of Leaders invited to consider the situation arising out of the fast declared by Mahatma Gandhi met this afternoon and they appointed a Committee to draft a Resolution to be adopted by the Conference. The Committee consisted of the following persons:—

The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru; Dr M. R. Jayakar; Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee; Sri C. Rajagopalachari; Mr Allah Bakhsh; Mr G. L. Mehta; Mr K. M. Munshi; Sir Jagdish Prasad; Mr N. M. Joshi; Mr Bhulabhai Desai; Sir Maharaj Singh; Master Tara Singh; Sir Ardeshir Dalal; Pandit H. N. Kunzru; Sir A. H. Ghuznavi; Mr Kasturbhai Lalbhai; Mr K. C. Neogy; Raja Maheshwar Dayal; Dr Bannerji; Mr H. A. Lalljee; Mr N. C. Chatterji; Mr Ranadive; Dr Moonje; Mr Kiron Shankar Roy; Khwaja Hasan Nizami; Mr Zahiruddin; Mrs Sarala Devi Chaudhurani; Dr Shaukat Ansari; Mr M. A. Kazmi; Mr Zafar Hossain; Mrs K. Sayani; Mr Abdul Halim Siddiqi and Mrs Hannah Sen.

They have unanimously adopted the enclosed Resolution for being placed before the Conference tomorrow morning. But, in view of the alarming reports received about the condition of Mahatma Gandhi, the Committee resolved to send the Resolution to his Excellency, in advance, for immediate action. I, accordingly, do so, with the request that you may kindly place it before his Excellency.

Yours sincerely,
C. RAJAGOPALACHARI.

Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

The Viceroy's House,
NEW DELHI, February 20, 1943.

DEAR MR RAJAGOPALACHARI,

I write to acknowledge with thanks the advance copy which you have been kind enough to send me of the Resolution proposed to be considered by your Conference today, which I have duly laid before his Excellency, who asks me to thank you for your courtesy in communicating it to him in advance. You will no doubt inform me in the event of its adoption.

Yours sincerely,
J. G. LAITHWAITE.

C. Rajagopalachari, Esq.,

28, Ferozshah Road,
NEW DELHI, February 20, 1943.

DEAR SIR GILBERT,

I send you herewith a copy of a Resolution unanimously adopted by the Conference at its today's session. I also send herewith a list of persons who moved and supported the Resolution. I further send herewith a list of a few prominent persons who either attended the Conference or have associated themselves with it. I shall thank you to place

the letter and the enclosures before his Excellency the Viceroy.

Yours sincerely,

TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU.

Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi.

List of persons who moved and supported the resolution:—

1. Dr M. R. Jayakar.
2. Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee (Hindu Mahasabha).
3. Raja Sir Maharaj Singh, C.I.E., M.L.A. (Indian Christians).
4. Sir Suleiman Cassum Haji Mittha, C.I.E. (Muslims).
5. Master Tara Singh (Sikhs).
6. Dr John Mackenzie (British Christian Missionaries).
7. Shrimati Sarala Devi Chaudhurani (Women's League).
8. Mr Allah Bakhsh (Azad Muslims).
9. Sir Vijaya of Vizianagram (Zamindars).
10. Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, M.L.A. (Central), (Muslims).
11. Maulana Ahmed Sayeed Saheb (Jamiat-ul-Ulema).
12. Mr N. M. Joshi, M.L.A. (Central), (Labour).
13. Mr Abdul Qaiyum, M.L.A. (Central), (Khudai Khidmatgars).
14. Mr Gaganvihari L. Mehta, (President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry).
15. Mr Zahiruddin (All-India Momins).
16. Mr Humayun Kabir (Students' Federation).
17. The Hon'ble Pandit H. N. Kunzru (Servants of India Society).
18. Mr K. M. Munshi.
19. Sardar Sant Singh, M.L.A. (Central), (Sikhs).
20. Mr Ranadive (Communists).

NEW DELHI, February 20, 1943.

DEAR SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU,

His Excellency asks me to say that he has received and considered the Resolution adopted by the Conference under your chairmanship, of which you were good enough to send him a copy today. The attitude of the Government of India in the matter of Mr Gandhi's fast is set out clearly and in detail in the *communiqué* which they issued on February 10, a copy of which I enclose for convenience of reference. No new factor has emerged since that date, and as the Government of India's *communiqué* brings out clearly, responsibility in connection with his fast rests solely with Mr Gandhi, with whom, and not with Government, the decision to bring it to an end must rest.

Yours sincerely,

J. G. LAITHWAITE.

28, Ferozshah Road,

NEW DELHI, February 21, 1943.

DEAR SIR GILBERT,

I am desired by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, President of the Leaders' Conference, to enclose a copy of a telegram decided upon by the Committee of the Conference and cabled by Sir Tej Bahadur, under the Committee's instructions, to:

1. The Prime Minister, London;
2. Mr Arthur Greenwood, Leader of the Opposition; and
3. Sir Percy Harris, Leader of the Liberal Party.

I shall thank you to place the enclosure before the Viceroy for his information.

I may further add that Sir Tej Bahadur will be leaving Delhi this evening.

Yours sincerely,
K. M. MUNSHI.

Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy,
New Delhi

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi, 22nd February, 1943.

DEAR MR MUNSHI,

His Excellency the Viceroy desires me to acknowledge with many thanks your courtesy in sending him a copy of the telegram which the Committee of the Leaders' Conference have decided to cable to London.

Yours sincerely,
W. H. J. CHRISTIE.

K. M. Munshi, Esq.

CABLE TO MR CHURCHILL

NEW DELHI, February 21, 1943.

The following is the text of the cable addressed by leading members of the Conference on February 21 to the British Prime Minister, Mr Arthur Greenwood, Leader of the Opposition, and Sir Percy Harris, Leader of the Liberal Party:—

Three hundred public men from different parts of India, representing various communities, creeds and interests, including Commerce and Industry, Landed Interests, Workers, Communists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and British Missionaries, met yesterday at New Delhi and unanimously passed a resolution urging immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi whose condition is fast approaching a crisis. We fear that unless immediately released he will pass away. We wish to explain to British public opinion that the Mahatma is fasting only to be able to review the situation as a free man and to advise the people accordingly and not on the issue of independence. We are convinced that the terms of his letter of September 23 recently published by the Government amount to an unequivocal disapproval on behalf of himself and the Congress of all acts of violence. The Chairman of the Conference, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, submitted the Resolution to the Viceroy yesterday afternoon and immediately afterwards he received a reply from the Viceroy declining to interfere as no new factor had arisen to alter the previous decision and enclosing the official communication of February 10. We deeply deplore that the advice of so many representative and responsible men should have been summarily turned down by the Viceroy.

We firmly believe that if the Mahatma's life is spared a way will be opened to the promotion of peace and goodwill as surely as his death as a British prisoner will intensify public embitterment. The charges brought by the Government against the Mahatma do not rest upon an examination by any impartial Tribunal or independent body of men. We firmly believe that much of the trouble which has arisen was preventible by timely action on the part of Government last summer and that the Mahatma should have been allowed to see the Viceroy to find a solution as he desired.

Millions of our countrymen feel that the responsibility for saving the Mahatma's life now rests only with the Government. We therefore urge that the Mahatma should be forthwith released. As under the existing constitution the ultimate responsibility is of the British Parliament for the peace and tranquillity of India we request that this cable may be brought to its notice in order that it may do justice in the matter. We are convinced that wise and liberal states-

manship will solve the Indo-British problem more speedily and effectively than stern repression.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU, Ex-Law Member, Government of India;

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI, Ex-Prime Minister, Madras;

ALLAH BAKHSH, Ex-Premier, Sind, President, Azad Muslim Conference;

N. C. CHATTERJEE, Working President, Bengal Hindu Mahasabha;

SIR ABDUL HALIM GHUZNAVI, Member, Central Legislative Assembly, President, Central National Mahomedan Association of India;

MRS SARALA DEVI CHAUDHURANI, President, Women's Hindu-Muslim Unity Committee, and General Secretary, Indian Women's Association;

DR ASHRAF, Socialist;

DR SHAUKATULLAH ANSARI, General Secretary, All-India Independent Muslim Parties' Federation;

B. T. RANADIVE, Central Committee, Communist Party of India;

S. P. MOOKERJEE, Working President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha, and Ex-Finance Minister, Bengal;

RAJA MAHESHWAR DAYAL SETH, Ex-Minister, United Provinces;

BHULABHAI J. DESAI, Leader of the Opposition, Central Legislative Assembly;

P. N. BANERJEA, Leader, Nationalist Party, Central Legislative Assembly;

H. N. KUNZRU, Deputy Leader, Progressive Party, Member, Council of State, and President, Servants of India Society;

MRS HANNAH SEN, Vice-President, All-India Women's Conference;

P. SUBBAROYAN, Member, All-India Congress Committee, and Ex-Minister for Law, Madras;

J. R. D. TATA, Chairman, Tata and Sons;

N. M. JOSHI, Member, Central Legislative Assembly, and General Secretary, All-India Trade Union Congress;

SIR ARDESHIR R. DALAL, Managing Director, Tata Iron and Steel Co.;

SACHCHIDANANDA SINHA, Vice-Chancellor, Patna University;

G. L. MEHTA, President, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry;

KIRAN SHANKAR ROY, Member, Bengal Legislative Assembly;

MOHAMMAD AHMAD KAZMI, Member, Central Legislative Assembly;

SEWA SINGH GILL, Zamindar;

HUMAYUN KABIR, Vice-President, Krishak Praja Parliamentary Party, and Secretary, Hindu-Muslim Unity Association;

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DR M. R. JAYAKAR, Ex-Judge, Judicial Committee, Privy Council;

K. M. MUNSHI, Ex-Home Minister, Bombay; and

SIR JAGDISH PRASAD, Ex-Member, Viceroy's Executive Council.

The Committee of the Conference met on February 21 and authorized the President to carry on further correspondence with the Viceroy if necessary and to call a meeting of the Committee when an occasion arose. It also explained "that the Conference is left with no alternative but to appeal to the highest tribunal of the Empire, *viz.* Parliament and Britain's national leaders."

MR CHURCHILL'S REPLY

To the Leaders' Conference Committee's cable urging Mahatma

Gandhi's immediate release, Mr Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister, replied as follows:—

LONDON, February 22, 1943.

The Government of India decided last August that Mr Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress must be detained for reasons which have been fully explained and are well understood. The reasons for that decision have not ceased to exist and his Majesty's Government endorse the determination of the Government of India not to be deflected from their duty towards the peoples of India and of the United Nations by Mr Gandhi's attempt to secure his unconditional release by fasting.

The first duty of the Government of India and of his Majesty's Government is to defend the soil of India from invasion by which it is still menaced, and to enable India to play her part in the general cause of the United Nations. There can be no justification for discriminating between Mr Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The responsibility therefore rests entirely with Mr Gandhi himself.

"BE PREPARED FOR THE WORST"

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU'S MESSAGE TO COUNTRYMEN

NEW DELHI, February 21, 1943.

The following is a report of the Press conference at New Delhi addressed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr C. Rajagopalachari, after the rejection by the Viceroy of the demand of the Leaders' Conference for the release of Mahatma Gandhi on February 21:—

At the request of Mr Rajagopalachari, the Press conference commenced with prayers for one minute for Mahatma Gandhi's health, all Pressmen, Indian and foreign, standing.

"Whosoever else may have been surprised, and I never shared the optimism of my revered friend Rajaji, I at least had fully anticipated that the reply of the Government to our Resolution passed yesterday at the Leaders' Conference would be what it is," said Sir Tej. "But I do not consider the attitude of the Government as evidence of strength but of weakness," he added.

After referring to the unity of the demand they had made for the immediate release of Mahatma Gandhi, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru declared that as he did not credit the Government with much wisdom or imagination, he did not anticipate any change in the situation which would lead to the Mahatma's release.

"Speaking for myself, I think we should be prepared for the worst, namely, the passing away of Gandhiji, unless a miracle happens. It is not difficult to see how this news will be received by the country. It will evoke the profoundest grief in Indian homes. But I sincerely hope that the country will receive the news with dignified calm and composure and I should very strongly deprecate any demonstrations leading to disturbances of the peace. Those who have during the last few months indulged in these demonstrations have played the game of our enemies and those who are prepared to do that again will be playing still further into the hands of the enemies of Indian freedom. I advise the country, therefore, to take the news with calm and leave the development of our constitutional ideas and demands for freedom to events of a different character."

Sir Tej Bahadur said in reply to a question about the disturbances: "The conclusion I have formed by reading newspapers and examining such evidence as has been allowed to appear in the newspapers is this: That there were certain Congressmen who took part in the disturbances I have no doubt. I am not prepared to draw the inference from this that the Congress as a body either inspired this active rebellion or could be legally responsible for it. These are facts which require to be investigated by an independent tribunal. I am not prepared to accept the verdict of the Government any more than the contention of any Congressman that no Congressmen took part in it."

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru quoted passages from the correspondence that had passed between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy and specially from the letters of Mahatma Gandhi dated September 23 and August 14, to show that not only Mahatma Gandhi but also the Congress were committed to the policy of non-violence. In this correspondence, according to Sir Tej, Mahatma Gandhi had stated in plain and unreserved language that in determining its action he or the Congress did not contemplate any violence, least of all did they want to condone it. Even on August 14 Mahatma Gandhi had referred to them as 'sad happenings.' If the issue were raised before a court of law, he said, or before an independent tribunal, whether Mahatma Gandhi had repudiated acts of violence or not, the verdict

most undoubtedly would go against the Government "who are fighting shy of placing their case before an independent tribunal." It was obvious from these letters that Mahatma Gandhi's faith in non-violence was as strong as ever before, and if these letters had been published or if their contents had been placed in the hands of men like Rajaji, their hands would have been greatly strengthened in telling the public that those who indulged in the disturbances and sabotage were offending against the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mr Rajagopalachari disclosed in the course of the conference that when he met his Excellency the Viceroy in November he was not told that any such letters had been received by his Excellency.

Sir Tej condemned the tendency of encroachment on the powers of courts and said that it was a very dangerous sign of the situation that matters which could be decided by a court of law were being decided by the executive, and people were expected to accept the judgment of the executive as a proper judgment. He further said: "I maintain that if the matter had been placed before a court of law it would have to take into account all the antecedent facts, the circumstances in which Mahatma Gandhi held the A.-I.C.C. meeting at Bombay and the subsequent acts of sabotage, not confining itself to acts of sabotage alone, but also asking as to what led to the deterioration of the situation. If that question were to be put to me I would certainly say that the contributory cause was the failure of the Government to understand the situation and to apply the proper remedy at the proper time." He for one would have no objection to the punishment of those found guilty of sabotage. He had no sympathy, he said, for such men.

MR RATHINDRANATH TAGORE

(In-charge of Shantiniketan and Sriniketan and son of the late Rabindranath Tagore)

CALCUTTA, February 21, 1943.

"If my father were alive today, his powerful voice would have reverberated all over the world in a mighty appeal to move the conscience of mankind. For the last few days we have all been waiting in suspense hoping that the Government will at last find it possible to release Mahatmaji unconditionally. In the meantime, all of us who love and revere Gandhiji must hope and pray that he may come out successful from the penance of the fast to lead us in the path of Truth and Non-violence. May we not appeal to our masters to temper their political expediency with higher human considerations?"

At a largely attended meeting on February 13, with Professor Tan Yun Shan in the chair, inmates of Shantiniketan unanimously adopted a resolution expressing concern at the fast undertaken by Mahatma Gandhi. In the evening a brief service was conducted by Pandit Kshiti Mohan Sen. Among those present were Mr Horace Alexander and Mr Nandalal Bose.

IMPERIAL SECRETARIAT STAFF

NEW DELHI, February 22, 1943.

At a meeting of the members of the subordinate staff of the Government of India and its attached and subordinate offices held this evening in front of the Viceregal Lodge a resolution was passed requesting the Viceroy to release Mahatma Gandhi immediately and unconditionally. A three-minute silence was observed, all standing, praying for the safety and long life of Mahatma Gandhi.

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (INDIA) STAFF

NEW DELHI, February 22, 1943.

The clerks of the G.H.Q. have sent a telegram to the Viceroy

demanding the unconditional and immediate release of Gandhiji.

RT. HON. V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

(Former Agent-General of India in South Africa and former President of the Servants of India Society)

KUMBAKONAM, February 23, 1943.

The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri presiding over the Silver Jubilee of the Kumbakonam College Old Boys' Association referred to the condition of Mahatma Gandhi at Poona and said:—

"Your hearts are all there and you are earnestly praying for the happy end of his great endeavour for the benefit of our country. That his attempt should end happily and he be spared to serve for long his mother country—and which he knows how to serve more than all others—is the inmost wish present in our hearts at the moment."

ONE LAST VAIN EFFORT

NEW DELHI, February 23, 1943.

Mr C. Rajagopalachari along with Mr Bhulabhai Desai and Mr K. M. Munshi made one more effort to bring Mahatma Gandhi's fast immediately to an end.

"It was our plan," explained Mr Rajagopalachari in a statement, "that Government should send to Mahatma Gandhi a responsible official with the evidence on which they based their charge of Congress complicity in acts of violence and sabotage, and that if after such examination, Mahatma Gandhi felt that he should meet the Congress Working Committee Members, Government should afford facilities to that end." If Government agreed to this procedure, Mr Rajagopalachari believed, Mahatma Gandhi might be persuaded immediately to break his fast, so as to be able to examine the evidence and consult his colleagues. This would be consistent with the Mahatma's demands, the refusal of which led to the fast, and would at the same time not prejudice the Government's position."

"I consider this a very fair proposal, which would provide for Government's prestige as well as save Gandhiji's life," declared Mr Rajagopalachari. "I consulted my best legal friends and came to this conclusion. We have failed to persuade the Viceroy. The only hope now is that Mahatmaji may survive the 21 days' ordeal. Let the country pray for it. If we deserve, 'we may find a response.'"

SIR CHHOTU RAM

(Revenue Minister, Punjab)

LAHORE, February 23, 1943.

A reference to Mahatma Gandhi's fast was made by Sir Chhotu Ram, Revenue Minister, Punjab, addressing a meeting of the Jat Kumar Sabha. He said: "Whatever differences we might have with the methods employed by Mahatma Gandhi, there can be no difference on the ultimate object with which he has undertaken his fast. At this moment when he is faced with a life-and-death struggle it is the duty of all Indians to pray for his safety."

At the instance of Sir Chhotu Ram, the entire gathering stood up for two minutes and offered prayers for the safety of Mahatma Gandhi.

LUCKNOW MUSLIMS

LUCKNOW, February 25, 1943.

At a meeting of Muslims held under the presidentship of Dr Alim, a resolution expressing deep concern about Mahatma Gandhi's health and demanding his immediate and unconditional release was passed. The resolution also pointed out that if Gandhiji should die,

a serious hindrance would be caused in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity and the country's safety. The meeting appealed to all Muslim organizations to be of one voice in demanding Gandhiji's release.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON, February 25, 1943.

The Secretary of State for India, Mr Amery, answering questions in the Commons today said that the British Government entirely agreed with the decision of the Government of India not to yield to Mr Gandhi's efforts to enforce his unconditional release.

Mr Amery said: "The circumstances in which the Government of India found it necessary to detain the Congress leaders are well known. The correspondence between Mr Gandhi and the Viceroy preceding Mr Gandhi's fast has been published. It contains no indication that Mr Gandhi sees cause for regret in the outbreaks of murder, violence and sabotage which followed the authorization in August last by the Congress Party of a mass struggle. By rejecting the offer of the Government of India to release him for the period of his fast and declaring that his fast would be unnecessary if he were released, Mr Gandhi has also made it clear that the object of the fast is simply to enforce his unconditional release.

"The Government of India, composed, when the decision was taken, of nine Indian and four European Members, including the Viceroy, decided that they would not yield to this threat. (Cheers.) His Majesty's Government are in entire agreement with their decision. India has a vital part to play in the general cause of the United Nations. She is still herself menaced by invasion. There can be no justification for the release of men who deliberately planned to paralyse India's defence at a most critical moment (cheers), and who have shown no sign of abandoning their criminal purpose, nor is there any reason in this respect for discrimination between Mr Gandhi and other Congress leaders. Subject to their general decision, the Government of India have wished to show Mr Gandhi every consideration. He has at the Aga Khan Palace his own medical attendants as well as those provided by the Government and is allowed, subject to their advice and to Government's permission, to receive visitors."

There were protests and some interruption when Mr Sorensen (Labour) asked for an early debate "in view of the very real concern in some parts of the Commons and the country." Mr Amery replied that that was a question for the Leader of the House to deal with.

Replying to a suggestion that the situation might be eased if Mahatma Gandhi were placed among the interned leaders of the Congress Working Committee, Mr Amery amid cheers, said: "I leave that to the judgment of the Government of India."

Mr Shinwell requested Mr Amery to produce evidence supporting the implication in his statement that Mahatma Gandhi was responsible for the outbreak of violence.

Mr Amery: 'A good deal has been produced, but fuller matter is *en route* from India and will be published on arrival.

There were cries of "No" when Labourite Kirkwood suggested that Mahatma Gandhi's unconditional release would be a sign of strength, not weakness.

Mr Mander (Liberal) asked if Indian leaders had appealed to Mahatma Gandhi to abandon his fast in public interest.

Mr Nicholson (Conservative) said that the Government of India was earning universal respect by recognition of its primary duty—maintenance of conditions under which the masses of Indians could lead orderly, normal lives.

Mr Amery made no reply to these further points.

Mr Sorensen questioned Mr Amery regarding the letter stated to have been sent by Mahatma Gandhi to the Secretary of State. Mr Amery replied: "The whole correspondence which passed between Mr Gandhi and the Viceroy and the Government of India has been given to the Press. No letter was addressed to me by Mr Gandhi. The Government of India's statement on Congress responsibility for the disturbances will likewise be given full publicity as soon as it is received here."

Mr Sorensen said that Mahatma Gandhi had referred to such a letter, and asked Mr Amery to inquire why he never received it.

Mr Amery: I have no doubt if a letter had been addressed to me by Mr Gandhi and sent to the Government of India it would have reached me.

Later the Leader of the House, Mr Eden, rejected a request by the Labour Leader, Mr Greenwood, for an early debate on India. Mr Eden said: "The Government's view is that in the present state of affairs respecting Mr Gandhi's fast a debate would serve no useful purpose; indeed rather the reverse. But of course we will review the situation as it develops."

Independent Labourite Maxton asked if it would not be better to debate the situation before any tragedy happened rather than afterwards.

Mr Eden: I did carefully consider the reply I have given. It is the Government's considered view that no useful purpose would be served by a debate at present.

BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK

LONDON, February 25, 1943.

Prayers for all who really hold responsibility at this time here and in India, including the Prime Minister, Mr Churchill, the Secretary of State, Mr Amery, the High Commissioner for India, Sir Azizul Haque, the Parliament and "for all those devoted to the service of India," and especially for Mr Mohandas Gandhi, were offered by the Lord Bishop of Southwark, Rev. Simpson, at the well-known church at Martin-in-Fields here today.

The minister of the church, Rev. Harborough, said: "We are met today in this time of great perplexity that by prayer we may co-operate with God in the working out of His great purposes of good for the peoples of India and Britain—peoples who have been strangely joined in partnership." Others who took part in the prayers for intercession were Rev. J. S. Whale, Rev. W. E. S. Holland and Rev. William Paton.

Rev. Paton said: "Let us think of the whole people of India, and seek God's blessing for the guidance of India at this time."

Lady Cripps, Mr P. K. Dutt, representing the High Commissioner for India, and Mr Carl Heath were among those who attended the prayer service held at the Church.

MR CORDELL HULL'S COMMENT

WASHINGTON, February 25, 1943.

Mr Cordell Hull, United States Secretary of State, stated on February 22 that he had not heard during the week from President Roosevelt's Personal Envoy to India, Mr William Phillips.* Mr Hull added that he did not know exactly what significance there was in the statement of Mr Phillips that "phases of the situation in India were being handled by the high officials of the United States and Britain." This statement was made by Mr Hull following a conference on February 20 between Mr Hull and Lord Halifax, British Ambassador in U.S.A., when Mr Hull expressed concern over the situation created by Mr Gandhi's fast.

* See page 210.

The State Department said on February 25 that Mr Cordell Hull's comment on Mr William Phillips in India had not been correctly reported. Mr Hull is reported as having said at the White House conference on Monday that he did not know the exact significance of Mr Phillips's statement that "phases of the situation in India requiring discussion are being handled by high Government officials of the United States and Great Britain."

What Mr Hull actually said was that he did not know exactly what the statement signified more than what appeared on the face of it.

MR DEWITT MACKENZIE

(War Correspondent of the "Associated Press of America")

NEW YORK, February 25, 1943.

Mr Dewitt Mackenzie, who has recently returned from India, writing in the Sun points out the consequences should Mahatma Gandhi die as a prisoner and urges his release. He says that he is convinced that negotiations could then be resumed and a satisfactory compromise reached.

Mr Mackenzie thinks that in his opinion it is up to the Government to take the first step.

MANCHESTER INDIANS

MANCHESTER, February 28, 1943.

After prayers were offered at a meeting of Manchester Indians in the Koh-i-Noor Restaurant today, the following telegram was sent to Mr Gandhi:—

> "Manchester Indians of all religions at a special meeting today prayed for your life. Wish you success in your brave struggle for Indian independence. Our hearts are with you."

DR A. D. LINDSAY

(Former Master of Balliol College, Oxford)

LONDON, March 2, 1943.

The *Times* today prints a letter from a former Master of Balliol College, Oxford, Dr A. D. Lindsay, asking for Mr Gandhi's release. He says: "We are surely not afraid of consequences which might follow Mr Gandhi's release. We are jibbing only at 'yielding to political blackmail'. 'Standing only on our dignity' is notoriously foolish. Is not standing stiffly on being in the right sometimes as bad?"

CEYLON INDIA CONGRESS

COLOMBO, March 2, 1943.

Mahatma Gandhi's unconditional release was demanded at mass meetings held under the auspices of the Ceylon India Congress at Kandy and Gampola. Ceylonese and Indians participated at the meetings, among them being many State and Municipal Councillors.

The Gampola meeting passed a resolution to the effect that the meeting regarded the release of Mahatma Gandhi as the acid test of the sincerity of the British Government's desire to end the deadlock and to form a National Government, and affirmed its belief that, for the sake of world peace, the life of Mahatmaji should be saved at all costs. The text of the resolution was cabled to the British Premier, the Secretary of State for India, Mr Arthur Greenwood, Sir Archibald Sinclair, the Viceroy of India, and Mr William Phillips.

The Kandy meeting passed the following resolution: "This meeting is deeply concerned at Mahatma Gandhi being allowed to continue his fast in spite of alarming medical opinion and demands in the name of justice and humanity his unconditional release which is the only way to end the Indian deadlock and the opportunity to enhance British prestige."

THE FAST AT POONA

DAY-TO-DAY RECORD OF EVENTS

Mahatma Gandhi commenced his memorable three week's Fast at noon on Wednesday, February 10, 1943, in detention in the Aga Khan's Palace which had been turned into a prison for him and his party. This was his thirteenth fast and the fifth major one. This was also his fifth fast in Poona. But none of them caused greater anxiety and alarm to his doctors or greater stirring of feelings in the country than this Fast in which, as Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy said, "he was very near death."

On the first day of the Fast he was reported to be quite cheerful till he retired to bed.

Lt.-Col. Bhandari, I.M.S., Inspector-General of Prisons, Bombay, and Lt.-Col. B. Z. Shah, I.M.S., Superintendent, Yeravada Mental Hospital, examined him on the second day of the Fast. Dr M. D. D. Gilder, Health Minister in the Congress Ministry in Bombay during 1937-39 and a close associate of Gandhiji, and who was himself in detention, was transferred on February 11 to the Aga Khan's Palace prison. Gandhiji was served also by his fellow-detenus, Mrs Kasturba Gandhi, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, a member of the Congress Working Committee, Mira Ben (Miss Slade, the daughter a British Admiral, who has adopted India as her home), Mr Pyarelal, Gandhiji's private secretary, and Dr Sushila Nayar, Mr Pyarelal's sister.

On the third day of the Fast Mahatma Gandhi discontinued his daily morning walk as also his daily evening visit to the spot where the late Mr Mahadev Desai was cremated, which is now marked with a low mud wall enclosing a tomb under which his ashes are buried. No single event in his life had perhaps brought so much sorrow to Gandhiji as the death from heart failure under his very eyes and within a week of his arrest of his internationally reputed private secretary and companion and then fellow-detenu, Mahadev Desai. This calamity filled the background of the Fast no less than the reasons enumerated in Gandhiji's correspondence with the Government.

Maj.-Gen. R. H. Candy, Surgeon-General with the Government of Bombay, joined Lt.-Colonels Bhandari and Shah in examining Gandhiji on the morning of February 15. That afternoon Dr G. S. Mandlik, an ear-nose-throat specialist, was also called in. On the same day Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, one of the leading physicians of the country, now Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, a former member of the Congress Working Committee and a personal friend of Mahatma Gandhi, who had attended on Gandhiji during the previous fasts, arrived in Poona and remained in attendance on Gandhiji till after the end of the Fast.

The Government of India's obdurate policy regarding the Fast caused grave concern all over the country, and invited strong criticism from many quarters outside India. The Press in India was stirred and gave organized expression to its sympathy with Mahatma Gandhi. Important political leaders, industrial magnates, merchant princes, leaders of communities, all joined together in a powerful appeal to Government to release Mahatma Gandhi unconditionally. A meeting of representative men and women sponsored by Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Mr K. M. Munshi and Mr G. L. Mehta was called to be held at Delhi to present a united demand towards that end. Telegraphic appeals began to pour in on the Viceroy's desk for Mahatma Gandhi's immediate release.

But the Fast ran its inexorable course and the medical reports with which Government kept the anxious public posted became

increasingly disquieting. The day to day bulletins, published elsewhere in this book, furnish a graphic history which no amount of elaboration could better.

On February 16 six doctors announced that his condition had "further deteriorated." Dr K. T. Gajjar, specialist in Pathology from Bombay, was called in. But each succeeding medical bulletin gave cause for greater and greater alarm. Though Mahatma Gandhi was quite cheerful and talked with his doctors, his voice had become feeble and the heart condition caused anxiety. Dr B. C. Roy, in an interview to the Press on arrival at Poona, had said: "Mahatma Gandhi is much older today than he was in 1939 when he undertook his previous fast. Naturally the case on the present occasion is more difficult and there is cause for anxiety." To a question later as to how long he thought Gandhiji could pull on if the Fast continued, he replied: "Gandhiji sometimes baffles science."

The weather in Poona being warm, the patient's bed used to be wheeled out to the verandah during the day. Dr Gilder and Dr Sushila Nayar were by the bedside of Gandhiji practically all the time. The only activity in which Mahatma Gandhi had been participating was the prayer at dawn and dusk with his fellow-detenus. The nature-cure specialist, Dr Dinsha Mehta of Poona, gave Mahatma Gandhi a daily massage which was continued for some days after the Fast.

In the meantime the gloom in the country was deepening, public opinion was increasingly clamouring for the release of Mahatma Gandhi, while at the same time it was only too painfully aware of the callous attitude of the Government towards its demand. The executive became completely isolated from the people, and the latter's resentment knew no bounds. It was at this stage that the news of the resignations of three leading Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council was announced to the world on February 17. This, however, tended to confirm the people in their fear that the British Government would remain obstinate. This found pointed expression in a statement by Mr Savarkar, published elsewhere in this book, who expressed the hope that, if the British Government failed to save Gandhiji by timely action which it was in their power to take, the country should urge Gandhiji to terminate his Fast if his capacity should prove unequal to the strain. But that course, as all knew, was unthinkable to Gandhiji.

A cryptic official *communiqué* issued on the occasion of the resignations read thus: "The hon'ble Sir H. P. Mody, K.B.E., the hon'ble Mr N. R. Sarker and the hon'ble Mr M. S. Aney, having tendered their resignation of Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, his Excellency the Governor-General has accepted their resignations."

On the 18th the doctors who emerged from the Aga Khan's Palace prison after an exhaustive examination of Mahatma Gandhi looked worried. Gandhiji did not show any inclination to talk since that morning nor did he show the same interest in his visitors as earlier. Anxiety deepened.

In accordance with the decision of Government to permit Gandhiji to receive visits from friends and relatives during the Fast, the first outsiders to be admitted inside the precincts of the Aga Khan's Palace prison were Mrs Mahadev Desai, her son, Narain, and Gandhiji's great grand nephew, Mr Kanu Gandhi. They remained inside the Palace prison until a few days after the Fast. Others later admitted were Mahatma Gandhi's two sons, Mr Ramdas Gandhi and Mr Devadas Gandhi, his elder sister, Shrimati Goki Ben, his nephews, Mr Samaldas Gandhi and Mr Mathuradas Tricumjee, and a host of other relatives

and friends. In all a total of nearly 300 visitors—men, women and children—were permitted to visit Mahatma Gandhi and these included Mr and Mrs Shantikumar Morarji, Mr A. V. Thakkar, Shrimati Amtul Salam, Lady Thakersey, Shrimati Krishna Hutheesingh, Mr and Mrs Munshi, Shrimati Gosiben Captain, Mr Vaikunth L. Mehta, Shrimati Jankidevi Bajaj and Mr Kamalnayan Bajaj, Mr S. A. Brelvi, Madame Sophia Wadia, Mr B. F. Bharucha, Mr Shankerlal Banker, Shrimati Anasuya Ben, Mr G. D. Birla, Mr R. D. Birla, Swami Anand, Shrimati Hansa Mehta, Shrimati Jaishri Raiji, Mr K. Srinivasan of the *Hindu*, Mr G. L. Mehta, Dr and Mrs Subbaroyan, Mr Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Mr Bhulabhai Desai, Shrimati Urmila Devi, Mr Walchand Hirachand, Mr M. S. Aney, Mr Rathindranath Tagore and family, Mr Horace Alexander, Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Mr Anand Hingorani, Shrimati Asha Devi, Shrimati Saraladevi Chaudhurani, Shrimati Ambujammal, Shrimati Janammal, Mrs Gladys Owen, Father Lash and Professor and Mrs Tan Yun Shan.

While visits from friends and relatives were a natural tonic to Gandhiji as well as his fellow-detenus, the effect of the strain on Gandhiji's health was extremely serious and at a later stage both Drs Gilder and Sushila Nayar had to be very strict and reduce the interviews to one minute each, permitting little more than an exchange of greetings.

On February 20 Mahatma Gandhi spent most of his time in bed in silence listening to the reading of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The medical report that evening described his condition as very grave.

On the 21st a crisis developed and the doctors in their bulletin that day said that the uraemic condition had deepened and that if the Fast was not ended without delay it might be too late to save his life. At this stage it appeared to the doctors that the few drops of sour lime juice which Gandhiji had been taking in his drinking water had not only not agreed with him but was probably doing harm. It was noticed also that it took him at times a quarter of an hour to gulp two or three ounces of water. They therefore prevailed upon him to substitute orange juice for lemon juice, in terms of his declared intention of drinking water during the Fast mixed with the juice of citrus fruit. Mahatma Gandhi had been reluctant to take the juice of any other fruit than lemon. The change to orange juice brought the nausea under some control and permitted a larger quantity of water to be taken. The uraemic condition, however, remained more or less the same and continued to cause anxiety.

A controversy subsequently arose as a result of the malicious zeal of certain British Press correspondents over the question of orange juice. Orange juice was also described as lime juice and some people described it as sweet lime juice to distinguish it from the sour juice of lemon which had been taken earlier. The medical bulletin also referred to it as sweet lime juice. This led to the misrepresentation that Gandhiji had taken lime juice sweetened with honey or sugar, whereas nothing whatever was or could possibly be mixed with the orange juice, which he had permitted himself to take in a very diluted form.

The Leaders' Conference, which had succeeded in collecting the largest possible representative gathering in Delhi, barring those in jail, had made a strongly-worded demand for Mahatma Gandhi's immediate release. This was turned down by the Viceroy on February 21 after a show of politeness and promptitude in an exchange of communications between the Private Secretary to the Viceroy and the representatives of the Conference. These are on record in an earlier chapter in this book. The spirit of this promptitude in communicating Government's decision not to budge was also apparent

in the subsequent reply which the British Prime Minister himself gave at once to a direct cable to him from the leaders.

Feeling in the country remained inflamed and thousands of radio-listeners kept night-long vigils eagerly following the brief authorized accounts which the Government radio put out of the progress of Gandhiji's health. There were clear signs to indicate that Government were fully prepared to see the Fast end fatally. In Delhi at least elaborate police and military precautions had been taken and there were innumerable stories of the nature of preparations made to cope with disorders.

When the situation became very acute, curiosity and anxiety manifested themselves all over the country as to the attitude which the United States Representative in India was likely to adopt. The following enigmatic statement was handed out to Press correspondents by Mr William Phillips, Personal Representative to President Roosevelt on the 21st: "Phases of the situation in India are being handled by high officials of the Government of the United States and Great Britain."

The 22nd was Mahatma Gandhi's weekly silence day. Though he did not speak, he showed a little more interest in his surroundings than on the previous day. That day all the doctors remained in the closest touch with every development. The health bulletin in the evening was hopeful in that it said that though the heart was weaker Mahatma Gandhi appeared comfortable and more cheerful.

On the 23rd, Mahatma Gandhi's mind seemed clearer and he recognized without difficulty even those relatives whom he had not met for a long time. The doctors kept the strictest control over visitors.

An English friend of Mahatma Gandhi, Mr Horace Alexander, who was in India at the time on behalf of the Friends' Ambulance Unit, made an effort to bring about a settlement. His mediation, however, was promptly rejected by Government.

The following account of his efforts is taken from the *Manchester Guardian*:—

"New Delhi, February 23.—An attempt to end Mr Gandhi's fast by a compromise failed today. The scheme was worked out by a group of Englishmen and Indians. Mr Horace Alexander, who is in India as a representative of the Quaker relief workers, first conferred with Mr Gandhi in Poona. Then he told Mr Rajagopalachari (the former Premier of Madras) that under certain conditions Mr Gandhi might end his fast. The Indians were told by Mr Alexander that the conditions, which had not yet been put to Mr Gandhi, were:—

1. The Viceroy should send to Poona an accredited representative bringing proof of the Viceroy's contention that Mr Gandhi and Congress were responsible for the violence which broke out after the adoption of civil disobedience and Mr Gandhi's arrest.

2. That Mr Gandhi be permitted to see the detained members of the Congress Working Committee. It was agreed that all should remain in detention during the meeting.

This proposal was placed before Lord Linlithgow by Mr Alexander. Early today the latter informed the Indian leaders that the Viceroy had rejected the proposal."—*Associated Press of America and Reuter.*

It may be pertinent to note here that after the Fast had started the Government of India issued a pamphlet seeking to place the blame of the disturbances of 1942 on Mahatma Gandhi and to defend their policy. A number of copies of this pamphlet were subsequently flown to America for wide distribution.

The doctors who examined him both in the morning and in the evening on the 24th came out with a more confident look on their faces. The following report which appeared in newspapers summed up the

position that day: "With the beginning of the third week today the prospect of Gandhiji successfully terminating the Fast appears to be brighter, though daily increasing weakness with its corresponding risk can by no means be ignored."

Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Mr Bhulabhai Desai and Mr K. M. Munshi visited Poona immediately after the Leaders' Conference and saw Gandhiji on the 26th. Mr Rajagopalachari on emerging from the Palace prison told Pressmen that he found Gandhiji quite cheerful and confident of pulling through the Fast.

Mr Rathindranath Tagore, son of the late Rabindranath Tagore, arrived in Poona with his family to be near Mahatma Gandhi during the Fast. He said in an interview: "Although I know that in the present condition it would not be wise or proper to seek an interview with Mahatma Gandhi, my wife and myself could not keep ourselves so far away from him at this critical time. We felt we should come to pay our silent homage of love and reverence to him; for he is as dear to us as a father. We cannot also forget the strong ties of love and friendship which bound my father to Mahatmaji. Nor can we be unmindful of the deep debt of gratitude which the Visva-Bharati owes him."

Mr M. S. Aney, one of the Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council who had resigned, saw Gandhiji on February 27 and was with him for nearly half an hour.

During the last few days of the Fast, Gandhiji's *entourage* and the doctors put up a strenuous fight to avoid any kind of strain on the patient, for that was all that they could do as their contribution to saving his life.

On February 28, with two more days to break his Fast, Mahatma Gandhi was more cheerful and less apathetic than the day before. Nausea was absent and he was able to take in more water without difficulty.

Despite growing exhaustion, he was mentally alert on March 1. The gates of the Palace prison were opened to the visitors for the last time on March 2, the final day of the Fast.

On March 3 at 9-34 a.m., after completing another epic fast for 21 days, Mahatma Gandhi sipped orange juice. The fast-breaking ceremony, though brief, was impressive and performed in an atmosphere of solemnity and devotion. Gandhiji was in a meditative mood and lay on his cot in the verandah.

Among those who were in Poona at the time great expectations were entertained that the Government would permit a reasonable number of persons to be present during the breaking of the Fast on that morning. The Government, however, were prepared to permit only close relatives of Mahatma Gandhi to be present. Under the circumstances no outsiders were present to participate in the function of the breaking of the Fast.

Requests made by Indian and Foreign Press correspondents to grant them permission to see Gandhiji on the last day of the Fast, or to be present when Gandhiji broke his Fast, were rejected by Government. A joint memorandum signed by all American correspondents present in Poona was sent to the Governor of Bombay telegraphically on February 27. The Governor replied by wire on March 2 that the Government regretted their inability to accede to their request.

The earliest to arrive at the Aga Khan's Palace prison that day was Dr B. C. Roy. At 9 a.m. Major-General Candy, Lt.-Colonels Bhandari and Shah drove in. The gathering at the ceremony of the breaking of the Fast consisted of Gandhiji and his fellow-detenus, Dr B. C. Roy, Maj.-Gen. Candy, Lt.-Colonels Bhandari and Shah and Khan Saheb Kateli, the Superintendent of the detention camp.

The inmates of the Palace prison sang Mahatma Gandhi's favourite hymn, *Vaishnava Janato* and two stanzas from Tagore's *Gitanjali* and *Lead Kindly Light*. Portions from the Gita and the Koran were also recited. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu then recited Tagore's poem, "This my prayer to meet my Lord." After prayers, the group went into silent meditation for five minutes.

Shrimati Kasturba then handed Mahatma Gandhi a glass containing six ounces of orange juice diluted with water. Before breaking the Fast he thanked the doctors for the great care and attention which they had bestowed on him. It was reported that he took twenty minutes to sip the juice.

"He must now be looked after like a child," said Dr B. C. Roy to a large number of Indian and foreign journalists who wanted to know from him all about the ceremony. Dr Roy was beaming with smiles, and so were the usually sphinx-like guards at the Aga Khan's Palace prison.

Poona wore a festive appearance that day and the Thanks-giving prayer meeting was attended by Mr M. S. Aney, Mr Horace Alexander who read a passage from the Bible, Professor Tan Yun Shan, who recited Buddhist prayers, and a large number of friends and relatives of Gandhiji.

Mrs Mahadev Desai and her son and three close relatives of Gandhiji were permitted to see him for a few days after the Fast.

It was learnt that Gandhiji expressed a desire that Dr B. C. Roy should pay him a final medical visit at the end of the month and the latter had agreed. When, however, Dr Roy was actually ready to proceed to Poona he was refused the necessary permission by Government.

A portion of the ashes of the late Mr Mahadev Desai, so long kept in one of the living rooms of the Palace prison, was immersed in the Indriyani river the same morning as the breaking of the Fast. Swami Anand, a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and a fast friend of the late Mr Mahadev Desai, took the ashes from the Palace prison. Three police officers accompanied Swami Anand to Alandi, a sacred place of pilgrimage some 12 miles from Poona, where the ashes were dropped into the river with due rights. Swami Anand performed *sankalpa* and *tarpana*, and *dakshina* was given to Brahmins. Two Harijans were also invited to participate in the ceremony.

Among rumours current at the time of Gandhiji's critical condition, which persisted even after the end of the Fast and which even a historical account can hardly afford to omit from reference was one that a sufficient quantity of sandalwood was stored by Government for the cremation. Another related to a secret decision of Government to declare a day of national mourning and to fly flags at half-mast. The first rumour is believed to have emanated from foreign correspondents who had a meeting with a high official of the Government of India, from which Indians were excluded, when Gandhiji's condition was reported to be most critical. It was then stated that the official concerned had mentioned sandalwood as a final indication to the foreign Press of Government's determination not to depart from their announced decision. But while this narrative cannot vouch for the absolute truth of these rumours, there would appear to be sufficient justification for recording them here as the outstanding "rumours" of the event.

But Mahatma Gandhi survived the ordeal. While this gave great relief to the multitudes of India, it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that certain European elements in India did not conceal their disappointment. How widespread this was it is impossible to say, but authentic instances of disappointed comments were not lacking. This

again is worth recording here as evidence of the bitterness of the time.

On the other hand, Indian opinion stood solid like a rock entirely in favour of Mahatma Gandhi, the feeling among Indian Government servants being even more acute than among many non-officials.

HEALTH BULLETINS

From the fourth day of the Fast, the Government of Bombay issued daily *communiqués* on Mahatma Gandhi's health which are reproduced:—

February 13.

Although Mr Gandhi has had some trouble with nausea and in consequence disturbed sleep, his general condition is as satisfactory as can be expected on the fourth day of his Fast.

February 14.

Mr Gandhi continues to be troubled with nausea and broken sleep and his condition is not so satisfactory as yesterday.

February 15.

Mr Gandhi has found some difficulty in taking water and had a rather restless day yesterday (Sunday). His condition has shown some deterioration.

February 16.

During the past 24 hours, Mr Gandhi's condition has further deteriorated.

February 17.

Mr Gandhi had a better day on the whole on Tuesday, but his general condition continues to cause anxiety.

[From February 18 onwards, the *communiqués* were signed by Dr B. C. Roy, Dr M. D. D. Gilder, Major-General R. H. Candy, Lt.-Col. M. G. Bhandari, Dr Sushila Nayar and Lt.-Col. B. Z. Shah.]

February 18.

Although Mr Gandhi had a total of nine hours' sleep, he is not refreshed nor mentally alert. There is other evidence of uraemia which is progressive. The heart action is feeble. Anxiety as to his condition deepens.

February 19.

Mr Gandhi's sleep was broken, as he was troubled by excessive salivation. Nevertheless, he is a little more interested in his surroundings today. There is little change in the general condition except increasing weakness.

Dr B. C. Roy, Dr M. D. D. Gilder, and Dr (Miss) S. Nayar have requested the Government to publish the following:

"Mahatmaji's condition continues weak and causes anxiety. We would request those interested in his welfare not to tax his strength further by seeking interviews at present, which must naturally be restricted as much as possible."

The Government doctors is attendance concur in the above advice.

February 20.

Mr Gandhi's condition has changed considerably for the worse. His condition is very grave.

February 21.

Mr Gandhi had a bad day yesterday and only four and a half hours' sleep at night. During the day he is apathetic and at times drowsy. Heart sounds are weak and volume of the pulse small. He is extremely weak so that even the swallowing of water exhausts him. He drank forty ounces of water mixed with two ounces of sour lime juice as usual. He is too weak to be weighed, but had lost fourteen pounds up to the 19th instant.

The uraemic condition deepens and, if the fast is not ended with-

out delay, it may be too late to save his life.

February 22.

After a restless day, on February 21, Mr Gandhi entered a crisis at 4 p.m. He was seized with severe nausea and almost fainted, and the pulse became nearly imperceptible. Later, he was able to take water with sweet lime juice. He rallied from the crisis and slept for about five and a half hours during the night.

Today is his day of silence. He appears to be comfortable and is more cheerful. The heart is weaker.

February 23.

Mr Gandhi had only broken sleep during the night, but has dozed off and on during the day. He appears comfortable. There is no appreciable change to record.

February 24.

Mr Gandhi's general condition shows a slight improvement. The uraemic symptoms are less prominent. He is cheerful and his strength shows no further deterioration.

February 25.

Mr Gandhi has made no further progress. There is no appreciable change in his condition.

Following the crisis on Sunday the 21st nausea compelled him to drink sweet lime juice and water. This was continued on Monday and Tuesday and good results were manifested. Yesterday he reduced the quantity considerably as he wishes to take the minimum quantity, enabling him to drink water.

February 26.

Mr Gandhi's condition shows no appreciable change. He is cheerful.

February 27.

There is very little change in Mr Gandhi's condition. He is somewhat apathetic and not quite so cheerful.

February 28.

Mr Gandhi's general condition shows improvement. He is alert and in good spirits.

March 1.

Today is Mr Gandhi's day of silence. His strength is maintained and he is in good spirits. He is easily tired by visitors.

March 2.

There is no change in Mr Gandhi's condition. He is in good spirits.

March 3.

After prayers Mr Gandhi broke his fast at 9-30 this morning with orange juice slightly diluted with water. He showed signs of strain. He is weak, but cheerful.

[Daily medical bulletins were continued for three more days after the Fast under the signatures of Dr M. D. D. Gilder, Lt.- Col. M. G. Bhandari, Dr Sushila Nayar and Lt.-Col. B. Z. Shah.]

March 4.

After breaking his Fast, Mr Gandhi took orange juice, honey and water during the day. He slept well and is cheerful.

March 5.

Mr Gandhi's condition is satisfactory. He is cheerful.

March 6.

Yesterday Mr Gandhi took diluted goat's milk and fruit juices and some fruit pulp. His progress is satisfactory.

The Bombay Government *communiqué* issued on this day added: "Accepting the view of these doctors, no further bulletin will be published unless it is considered necessary."

THE LEGENDS

MR DEVADAS GANDHI ON MISREPRESENTATIONS

BOMBAY, March 7, 1943.

The following statement was issued by Mr Devadas Gandhi after his final meeting with Mahatma Gandhi on March 7:—

My brother and I paid our good-bye visit to Gandhiji on Saturday the 6th. We had been spending about an hour and a half by his bedside each day since the end of the Fast. The widely published report that I spent a few hours with Gandhiji on Friday is totally incorrect. I wish it had been possible to visit him for a few more days during his convalescence, more particularly because the visits were a great comfort to my mother, whose growing infirmity of mind and body has become painful and alarming to watch. I think Gandhiji is now well on the way to recovery. He is expected to take another fortnight to be able to get out of bed. But one is thankful now to be able to look back with relief upon these four weeks of history. I do not wish to attempt a public assessment of the results of the fast. I am content, along with the rest, to let the future unfold itself. But there are a good few legends. I shall here refer to two of them. It has been reported in the Press that Gandhiji had a heavy mail-bag during the Fast. Actually no mail-bag, heavy or light, made its appearance at the Aga Khan Palace. They will only reach him in due course, if at all, as he is still a prisoner. Then there is the sweet lime juice story. I do not exactly know the fruit called 'sweet lime.' But a foreign correspondent very naturally asked me whether he would be right in drawing the inference that something sweet like honey or glucose had been added to the juice. To my knowledge the plain word 'orange' is used in English to mean both *mosambi* and *santra*. And it was *mosambi* juice, miscalled sweet lime juice, that was added in minute quantities to the water with no admixture of anything else. The change from lemon juice to orange juice was made, in accordance with the terms of the Fast, when for two days it had become impossible for Gandhiji to drink water and it took him five minutes to gulp one ounce of water. I believe he took an average of less than six ounces of juice mixed in 60 ounces of water per day during the Fast.

DR B. C. ROY REVIEWS THE FAST

POONA, March 2, 1943.

Dr B. C. Roy on the eve of the breaking of the Fast told Pressmen that he would be present on the occasion but he was not sure whether he would be allowed to say anything about the event excepting what could be said from the medical point of view.

He said that Gandhiji had been taking on an average four to five ounces of juice of sweet or sour lime per day along with forty to sixty ounces of water. He was of opinion that in spite of this quantity of lime juice the Fast was in progress. He explained that a resting person requires normally 2,000 calories every day just to keep body and soul together. One ounce of lime juice meant 20 calories. On some days, he said, Gandhiji took four ounces of juice and on some days, when he was able to drink water freely, none at all. Gandhiji had taken 20 ounces of lime juice on Monday (February 22), the day after the crisis in his condition on February 21. He had made it clear that he did not want to die and that he would try to survive the ordeal. Hence he took twenty ounces of lime juice along with water on the doctors' pressure. Twenty ounces of juice which meant four hundred calories are not enough to replace the destroyed tissues. Hence in spite of twenty ounces of lime juice mixed with water taken on February 22, Gandhiji was fasting.

Fifty to sixty ounces of water per day is essential, Dr Roy said, for the human system. To enable him to take this quantity of water, Gandhiji was mixing lime juice with water to get over nausea. Citrus fruit contained alkaline salts which check nausea. Gandhiji regulated the quantity of lime juice according to his daily condition.

Dr Roy said that he could not make any forecast as to whether any permanent injury to Gandhiji's health would result from the Fast. He would like to ask for another complete blood test and report after the Fast ends. He admitted that Gandhiji's kidneys and liver were affected. He added that Gandhiji was too weak to be weighed.

Dr Roy totally repudiated the suggestion that Gandhiji was given glucose, as alleged by a Bombay doctor. With Gandhiji no such monkeying could be practised even secretly without his knowledge. Gandhiji defied all medical service. The doctors at the Aga Khan Palace were of opinion that at one stage Gandhiji could not continue the Fast without danger to his life, but he defied medical science by sheer will-power and turned the corner.

THE "MIRACLE" HAS HAPPENED

POONA, March 3, 1943.

"The miracle has happened. Gandhiji lives in spite of the Fast, the doctors and their fears, in spite of his age and the defective organs," said Dr B. C. Roy just after returning from the ceremony of breaking of the Fast.

"Full control of the mind over the body and strong determination to live for which he fought every inch of the ground—this is how Gandhiji could tide over the crisis that threatened his life at one stage of the fast," said Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, in an interview to the Press.

Dr Roy said: "Gandhiji helped his doctors so far as elimination was concerned. He tried to take as much water as possible—plain water and water mixed with salts or with sweet lime juice, which also contained salt. The quantity was varied by him. He only took just the minimum quantity necessary to make water palatable. That the amount of juice did not alter the state of the fast was a definitely proved fact. Gandhiji's urine and blood examinations continued to show presence of waste products which in normal persons might cause uraemia ending in coma and death. In the world of today physical organs of the body get more and more under control of the mind. Many of the physical functionns like hunger and thirst, different types of secretions and excretions are being brought more and more under the control of higher centres. That is why the modern man is so complex as compared to the village man of olden days."

"In the case of Mahatma Gandhi," Dr Roy added, "partly as a result of forces operating in all of us and partly as a result of self-discipline by which he has deliberately brought physical functions under the control of his mind, the functions of different organs of his body are being more and more directed by the central nervous system. Therefore, our forecasts proved to be erroneous. We could only depend upon the law of averages and could only give our opinion on the basis of what could happen to an average man under similar conditions."

THE 'YAGNA'

CALCUTTA, March 7, 1943.

"I do not know why Providence has saved me on this occasion. Possibly it is because he has some more mission for me to fulfil." This was what Mahatma Gandhi said after the Fast was over, revealed Dr B. C. Roy at a thanks-giving meeting of the staff and students of the Calcutta University for the successful termination of Mahatma Gandhi's Fast.

After offering his heartfelt prayers to the Almighty for having saved Gandhiji's life, Dr Roy gave his impressions of the *"tapasya*

(penance) of a great devotee," which he had witnessed. "The whole Fast," he said, "was in the nature of a religious ceremony. He started by informing the Government that under certain conditions he was prepared to undertake a Fast, which he called a 'capacity fast.' I think the expression has not been properly understood by the people. The expression 'capacity fast' was used in contradistinction to another expression which he used in 1932, namely, 'fast unto death.' In this instance he mentioned definitely that it was not his desire to die, but that he would fast for 21 days because that was in his opinion the period which he had to lay before himself as a period of *tapasya.*"

Dr Roy explained that Gandhiji took citrus juice with water only to give his system sufficient facility for expelling all the waste that must have been generated in his body in large quantity due to the Fast.

Continuing Dr Roy said: "Mahatmaji started his Fast with prayers and he ended his Fast with prayers, and throughout the period he had kept himself in tune with Infinity. Day in and day out, while he was being nursed by doctors and nurses, he was always in a state of communion with the Higher Power. I can assure you, and through you, all in the country, that the whole period of his Fast, the way he fought death, the manner in which, from hour to hour, he waited patiently for the successful termination of the Fast, were something of a privilege to witness. It was like watching a *yagna*, like watching a devotee at his prayers and, after these prayers were over, I saw him shut his eyes leaning against the doors, I dare say, to feel the presence of the Almighty nearer his heart and then he broke his Fast."

Concluding Dr Roy said: "Mahatma Gandhi has been saved for us. What were the forces that operated, none of us knew. We had issued a statement on one day that if the Fast was not ended, it might be difficult to save him. That is what we felt, that is what we were apprehensive of. Every minute during that fateful evening, night and the next morning was important. But the tide turned and the Almighty willed so, and we pray to God that he might live with us for many more years."

"There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of by many of us," he said later. Mahatma Gandhi had told the doctors attending on him, continued Dr Roy, that in case he should become unconscious, he should not be given nourishment of any kind, and the doctors fulfilled this duty of carrying out his wishes. If he could not take the water he needed, owing to nausea, he was prepared however to mix it with substances that would make it more palatable, such as potassium citrate, sodium citrate, or sweet lime. As soon as he was able to take the water he needed, Mahatma Gandhi dropped the quantity of sweet lime juice that was mixed with it.

WHAT THE PUBLIC FELT

STATEMENTS BY REPRESENTATIVE INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The following are a few of the numerous public statements made by individuals and institutions indicating the general reactions to the fast and to the attitude of the Government. They also include statements made in foreign countries and opinions expressed by the Indian and foreign Press. Most of the foreign messages are derived from *Reuter's* News Agency and have been culled from Indian newspapers. In certain cases the articles have been taken directly from foreign newspapers such as the *Manchester Guardian* and the *New Statesman and Nation.* It must be noted that newspapers in India could only publish what was passed for publication by the British censors and it is therefore highly likely that a great deal of material which appeared in the foreign Press at the time never reached India.

Indian Press comments are excluded from this collection for the obvious reason that with a few exceptions of little importance and barring the handful of British-owned newspapers, the entire Indian Press solidly supported Mahatma Gandhi's stand, and joined in a vigorous demand for his unconditional release:—

THE WHITEHALL VIEW

LONDON, February 12, 1943.

In all of today's London newspapers, the news and correspondence relating to Mahatma Gandhi's fast takes up little more than one column, writes *Reuter's* political correspondent. As newspapers see it the fast is overshadowed by the general picture of the war which Mr Churchill presented to Parliament yesterday. That being so almost the only comment has come from Whitehall where the opinion is that the Government of India has been patient with Mr Gandhi and that his unconditional release would have been interpreted by non-Congress India as a surrender to the Congress and might have had grave consequences to India's defence. People are so much concerned with the larger issues of the war that such matters as official figures for arrests during the Autumn disturbances have passed practically unnoticed.

THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

I

MANCHESTER, February 13, 1943.

The danger of Mr Gandhi's latest fast is that to a greater part of India he embodies protest against an alien rule whether or not he is right in the long disputation which he has held with the Viceroy. In that controversy there is no hope of an agreement. Mr Gandhi holds that the Viceroy should have seen him after the Congress had passed the civil disobedience resolution of August 8. He contends that—as is true—he himself has always been and is sincerely opposed to violence in any form. He refuses to accept the view that disorders which followed the arrests of Congress leaders were due to Congress policy and not to the arrests themselves. Government on the other hand believe—and most people will agree with it—that violence was certain to follow the Congress call to civil disobedience. But all this gets us nowhere now. From the time of the arrests the Government have been entirely rigid in refusing to take or allow any action which might possibly have led to a relaxation of the tension. It refused to allow Mr Rajagopalachari to see Mr Gandhi and the Congress leaders in

prison and it took no notice when on January 19 Mr Gandhi wrote: 'If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress, you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members.' But nothing was or is done. And now Mr Gandhi embarks on a fast for which, however much the India Government may disclaim responsibility, may move India to its depths.

II

February 19, 1943.

Mr Gandhi is weaker and three Indian Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council have resigned. The events are connected. The three Members are understood to disapprove of the Government's refusal to release Mr Gandhi; they do not want to bear any part of the responsibility should "anything untoward"—to adopt the euphemism of the Indian Newspapers' Conference—happen to Mr Gandhi. It is yet another sign of the irreparable injury that will be dealt to relations between us and the Indian peoples should Mr Gandhi die. His death, for a large part of them, would wipe out the rights and wrongs of particular disputes; they will only remember that he died for India. There is nothing to be gained by saying, as the Indian Government does, that he is practising "political blackmail." In a country where the Parliamentary organs cannot get rid of the Government, does not all extra-Parliamentary "coercion" become "blackmail"? If, for instance, a section of the Muslims not obscurely threatens civil war, is not that "political blackmail" at least as clearly as a Gandhi fast? Such phrases get us nowhere. The question is what can be done. Why cannot the Viceroy as a fine gesture of his and our desire to reconcile ourselves with India go now to see Mr Gandhi in order to discuss with him the questions raised, but never settled, in their recent correspondence? Mr Gandhi might well respond to such proof of our goodwill. Even the Muslim League should not resent this, which could not result in the surrender of anything they value, and who can say that such a visit might not be made a starting-point to better things?

III

February 20, 1943.

Too little is being heard in this country, whether in the Press or in Parliament, about what is happening in India. The war and the efforts to make our own society more tolerable after the war divert public attention from the truth that Mr Gandhi's fast may destroy the chances of reconciliation between us and a large part of India. The Indian Government treats the whole business as just another political difficulty of the kind it is used to. Mr Gandhi, it says, has not admitted that the violent disorders of last autumn were the direct result of Congress policy; he has not expressed repentance for them; he has given no assurances for the future. Therefore he must stop in prison together with his Congress colleagues; he must not see them, nor must any representative leader from outside come in to talk to any of them. Mr Gandhi and the Viceroy, as was to be expected, reached no agreement on the question of who is to blame. Then, on January 18, Mr Gandhi wrote:—

> "If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of Congress you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members. I do plead with you to make up your mind to end the impasse."

Nothing was done. On January 29 Mr Gandhi told the Viceroy that Congress had been "willing and prepared" that the Government should invite Mr Jinnah to form a National Government. This brought no response. On February 5 the Viceroy told Mr Gandhi that if he started his fast the responsibility "for it and for its consequences must rest on you alone." This is only partly true. The decision is Mr Gandhi's but no Indian Government can divest itself of some

responsibility for the action or for its consequences to India and to Britain.

The Westerner must try to understand what this fast means to Mr Gandhi and to the Hindus of India, otherwise we shall get nowhere. When he could come to no terms with the Viceroy Mr Gandhi said that now he had only one remedy: "In a sentence it is crucify the flesh by fasting." By the spectacle of his own suffering he hopes to bring about a "change of heart" in those whom he desires to influence. After all, those trained in Christianity should be able to understand the doctrine, whatever they may think of the particular application. General Smuts, whom one might summon as a dispassionate judge on such a question, discussed the method of persuasion by fasting on Mr Gandhi's seventieth birthday. The person fasting, he said, "tries to rouse the community to face the situation by the thought and the spectacle of his own suffering. The technique is based on the principle of suffering and the purifying effects of vicarious suffering on the emotions of others."

And, at a time when the average Westerner is apt to be impatient with a method that has so little in common with his "practical" political methods, one might remember also what General Smuts has said of Mr Gandhi as man and prophet:—

> "However often we may differ from him, we are conscious all the time of his sincerity, of his unselfishness, and above all of his fundamental and universal humanity. He always acts as a great human, with deep sympathy for men of all classes and all races and especially for the under-dog."

Does the public of this country realise that between August 8 and December 1 of last year 60,229 Indians were arrested, that on 1st of December 39,498 were still under arrest, that the police opened fire on 470 occasions and the troops on sixty-eight? Whosesoever the original responsibility, these terrible figures certainly increase ours now. Must we not do everything possible to prevent Mr Gandhi's fast from destroying the faint hope of peace in India, as it will do if he dies?

In India Mr Gandhi's fast is understood, and whether we understand it or not it sways the minds of men. We shall ignore that at our peril. We cannot indefinitely keep tens of thousands of Hindus in prison; some day we shall have to make our peace with them if peace there is to be. There is nothing now to prevent the Viceroy from himself seeing Mr Gandhi except the idea of a lofty prestige which seems so far to have been singularly barren of results. It is quite possible that if the Viceroy accepted Mr Gandhi's proposal that he should be put among the Working Committee of Congress, and if thereafter representative Indian leaders like Mr Rajagopalachari were allowed to visit them in prison, a way out might be found. In any event no harm could result. The Government would be committed to nothing that any Muslims could justly resent. Even if the discussions led to yet another failure, the Government would have a positive effort to its credit, instead of a spell of determined negation, which will inevitably be abandoned, like its predecessors, in the course of time. The truth is that, whether the Indian Government and any of the rest of us like it or not, Mr Gandhi has opened a new phase, and the Government has to decide whether to go on washing its hands of results, which may easily be disastrous, or to find in Mr Gandhi's fast an opportunity, which is there, for good. It would be better to release Mr Gandhi unconditionally than to let him die. To take the steps which might restart discussions before it is too late would be much better still.

IV

February 22, 1943.

The meeting of Indian leaders at New Delhi has asked for the

release of Mr Gandhi. The Viceroy has replied, through a Secretary, that the Indian Government set out the facts fully in its communication of February 10, a "copy of which," says the reply with a touch of the cold, unimaginative official mind which should go down to history, "I enclose for convenience of reference." The Viceroy declares that since February 10 "no new factor has emerged" and therefore there is nothing to be done; Mr Gandhi chose to fast, Mr Gandhi can choose to stop, and what has that to do with the Government of India? But it is untrue that "no new factor has emerged." The "new factor" is the fast itself, the prospect of Mr Gandhi's death and the stirring of deep Indian waters which even that prospect visibly produces. It is true that there is no fresh evidence about last year's disorders, no fresh light on Congress policy, but a wise Government watches also the changes that are taking place in the minds of men, those whom it rules. What the Indian Government, and our own Government, have to consider is not merely the now barren question of who was responsible for the disorders of last autumn but the question of what sort of India, with what new and harder problems to solve, will face us if Mr Gandhi dies. For his fast, as Mr Jayakar truly says, expresses the "general sense of frustration of the country," nor is that to be removed by a copy of an official memorandum enclosed for convenience of reference.

Mr Gandhi, as the leader of the whole Congress Party (and representing more than that), is fasting in the hope that by "crucifying the flesh" he may induce a change of mind in his opponents. On Saturday the B.B.C. thought fit to read out passages in which the Congress Working Committee and Mr Gandhi himself have condemned hunger-strikes by political prisoners as though it thereby disposed of Mr Gandhi's action and motives. Had the B.B.C. studied the documents just published it would have been aware that Mr Gandhi himself, on December 31, told the Viceroy that while the law of conscience now imposed fasting on him, "that same law forbids its use except as a last resort." Instead of making debating points in this tragic situation we should consider whether anything will be lost, whether, indeed, much will not now be gained, if Mr Gandhi is released. The Government would prejudice nothing with regard to future political decisions. It could not with any justice be accused by the Muslim League of yielding a single inch of what it has guaranteed the Muslims. It should rise in prestige—that dreary maid-of-all-work in the household of obstruction—just as Lord Halifax (then Lord Irwin) gained in reputation both with India and with her, and our, true friends when he met Mr Gandhi as an equal. The time is short. The latest medical bulletin says that "if the fast is not ended without delay it may be too late to save Mr Gandhi's life." Let the Indian Government at this late hour set the past behind it and resolve that the future shall not be lost, whatever Mr Gandhi's responsibility may or may not have been or be, by either action or inaction of its own. If Mr Gandhi should die the consequences may be irreparable. Should he be released and live, the difficulties will be no greater and they can be fought with the faith to overcome.

V

February 25, 1942.

"There can be no justification," says Mr Churchill, "for discriminating between Mr Gandhi and other Congress leaders." Is there then, any other Indian leader for whom representatives of almost all sections would unite and much the greatest part of India be powerfully moved? Mr Gandhi is not like any other leader, for more than any other he is India to most of his fellow-countrymen and to much of the world outside. It is true that there have been and are immense difficulties in dealing with him and his followers, but the British

people is not for the first time encountering the difficulties caused by a people determined to be free—witness the American Colonies, the Boers, Ireland—nor is it ignorant that this problem is never to be solved by a cold logic which knows nothing either of imagination or of the human heart. The Governments at their New Delhi and Whitehall desks have made up their minds that they will not release Mr Gandhi whatever happens. It is a victory for logic but not for statesmanship, a possible temporary success (if Congress, with 40,000 of its followers in prison, can be held down) but a certain disaster for relations between this country and India. Mr Gandhi should not be allowed to die, and his fast should be made the occasion for permitting the independent leaders—Sapru, Rajagopalachari and the others—to renew contact with him and Congress. Had that been done before we should be better off.

THE LONDON "TIMES"

LONDON, February 11, 1943.

The Times, in an editorial says: "No one will suggest that Mr Gandhi devised or desired the outrages that followed his campaign of civil disobedience or carefully planned attack on the communications of forces defending Eastern India against the Japanese, but they resulted from his policy as inevitably as night follows day and Government was driven back on the negative but inescapable policy of arrests and resistance." "No one," the paper adds, "can be satisfied with the condition of Indian affairs but those who are the least satisfied will most deplore Mr Gandhi's decision. As an assertion of personal authority it is to say the least of it superfluous. Mr Gandhi has rendered unique service to his country as a promoter of national consciousness. He has failed wholly, however, to win the confidence of millions who do not accept his political leadership and to make his contribution to a fundamental agreement without which no free constitution can exist and which no power can impose on India from without. His present move promises less than nothing towards that end. Its only fruit can be deeper dissension and possibly fresh disorder. Nor can the error of British policy in the past be a stumbling block now. Even while the shadow of war lies across India the way of discussion is wide open. The British pledge of all aid to the attainment of unconditional freedom stands and will be honoured. It has the guarantee of national ratification."

II

February 24, 1943.

All morning newspapers, commenting on Mr Gandhi's fast—some supporting Government's attitude and others asking for Mr Gandhi's release—have one wish, namely, to see the fast ended.

The London *Times* in an editorial, after remarking that the British Government is already pledged to self-government for India, adds that Mr Gandhi's fast with the tension it creates can only impede this. The paper, pleading that it is for Mr Gandhi's friends to persuade him to terminate the fast, says: "No good cause can suffer by its termination if that, as all must hope, be still physically possible."

THE "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION"

LONDON, February 19, 1943.

After explaining sympathetically the idea behind Mahatma Gandhi's fast and the Indian nationalist viewpoint in the present impasse, the *New Statesman* and *Nation* urged the reopening of discussion. The paper interprets one passage in Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy as giving statesmanship opportunity for reconciliation with that vast body of Hindus to whom the spiritual and practical significance of his fast is quite intelligible and on whom its effects, whatever its immediate outcome, will be immense and incalculable.

II

February 27, 1943.

Together with a great part of mankind in China and the United States as well as in India we have had to read the daily reports of Mr Gandhi's condition with a deepening sense of impending tragedy. It is our conviction that his death as the result of this fast would dig a gulf between us and the Indian people which might for a generation defy all our efforts to bridge it. What alarms us is not so much the outbreak of anger and the acts of repression that would follow this leader's death; far worse would be the cold, irreconcilable sense of alienation that would for long years divide us. At the best of times neither people finds it easy to understand the other. But if we let Mr Gandhi die, in the eyes of Indians a martyr, the deduction throughout the Asiatic world would be that no understanding can ever be possible.

By a cool reckoning of loss and gain, we would urge that the final alienation of the Indian people, to say nothing of the effect in other countries, would be incomparably more disastrous than any hypothetical loss of prestige. What we may lose by yielding is commonly exaggerated. We have encountered no one like this saintly rebel during all the generations we have ruled over India. Other nationalist leaders have been respected and admired, but this man is idolised. In this strange land, flooded as it still is and always was by its ever-present gods, the Mahatma is for most Hindus and even for some Muslims something more than a saint; they feel that God is in him. If we give way, they will not think that we have yielded to "moral blackmail" or political pressure. They will think that the hand of God was in it and that new opportunity of reconciliation is offered to both countries. To yield to him is not in their eyes weakness; it is piety.

The Western readers must forgive us if we write in this Oriental dialect. We are, let us assure him, in our own persons as Western-minded as he is himself. But it happens that we know Mr Gandhi fairly well and have taken some pains to grasp, without accepting his view of the universe. There, it may be, we have an advantage over most of "the men on the spot." For a generation now, a cleavage so deep has separated the Bureaucracy from the more decidedly nationalist Indians, that they never meet, or if they do occasionally meet, it is only in frigid ceremonial intercourse. The argument of Sir Reginald Maxwell, the Home Member, that Mr Gandhi is fasting in order to secure his unconditional release, reveals this total lack of comprehension. His fast is an appeal, as he conceives it, to the divine government of the world. He believes that if, with a pure mind, he offers himself as a sacrifice, God will be pleased to soften the hearts of India's rulers. This is not merely our guess, Mr Rajagopalachari, who knows him as relative, friend and colleague without sharing his peculiar outlook, has said the same thing in precisely these words.

Here we are obviously in a world beyond logic. We like and approve these other-worldly tactics as little as most Englishmen do. This fast is not an appeal to reason, and most of us try, with indifferent success, to live by its light. But does the Government of India rely on rational persuasion? Its arrest and detention of Mr Gandhi without trial were assuredly not an appeal to reason. As a result of this preventive measure, it has had to go on using what he describes as "leonine violence" against angry mobs of his admirers. Up to the end of last December, 60,000 persons had been arrested; 538 times the police and troops have fired, while the killed number 940 Indians and injured 1,630. The number punished by the unforgivable humiliation of whipping was given by Mr Amery as 958. These

are not the effects of logic.

So far from fearing that the peace of India would suffer by Mr Gandhi's release, we think it probable, as his own letters to the Viceroy suggested, that if he could look around him and convince himself that his own followers did resort to serious violence, he might use all his influence to end disobedience, as he did in like circumstances in 1922. If that happened, a way to agreement with the Muslims might be opened up. He has not himself asked for release. That he contemplates reconciliation is in our view clear from his suggestion that he might find a way out of the impasse if he were put among his colleagues of the Working Committee of the Congress. But whatever the outcome of a renewed effort at conciliation, the one certainty is that his death would have consequences incomparably graver and more lasting than anything that could result from his release. It is not sentiment, but a sober, utilitarian calculation that calls for his liberation.

THE "NEWS CHRONICLE"

LONDON, February 23, 1943.

Here is a truly tragic situation: tragic because it epitomises the as yet unsolved problem of India's future; tragic because should Mahatma Gandhi's physique prove unequal to his self-imposed ordeal, the consequences might well wreck all hopes of a settlement.... Mahatma Gandhi believes that political action must conform to certain inflexible principles of conduct. He and those who think with him are not prepared to consider India's immediate future in terms of political or military expediency. But the Government is bound to do so to some extent. To yield to the demands of the Congress would have made the difficult situation worse....In the face of the failure of the Cripps's mission and the intransigent attitude of the Congress, the Government cannot afford to take steps which might endanger the security of India. But it ought before now have tried once more to end the present deadlock.

A fresh attempt must be made at once to explore possibilities of a settlement. If a fresh approach is made now to the various Indian leaders—including Mahatma Gandhi—a situation fraught with disastrous possibilities might conceivably be eased.

THE "CIVIL LIBERTY"

LONDON, February 23, 1943.

The *Civil Liberty*, the organ of the National Council of Civil Liberties, appeals to the Government to "take the initiative by opening immediate negotiations in India to ensure the full co-operation of the people in the cause of the United Nations." It adds that without awaiting the completion of such negotiations the British Government should guarantee at least the same degree of civil liberties in British India as are enjoyed in England, within the limits of war-time necessity.

THE NEW YORK "TIMES"

NEW YORK, February 23, 1943.

"The fast culminates a life spent in the cause of Indian freedom. Last week Mahatma Gandhi's condition created a major crisis when three Indian Members of the Viceroy's Council resigned. Although the Viceroy has remained adamant in his refusal to grant Mahatma Gandhi's freedom, all parties are agreed that matters would be complicated for the British if he should die.

Some authorities predict outbreaks of increased violence, while others say that the people would be too stunned with sorrow to do anything.

THE "CHICAGO SUN"

CHICAGO, February 23, 1943.

The newspaper *Chicago Sun* in an editorial today says: "The

prospect that Mr Gandhi may die a prisoner threatens to poison Anglo-Indian relations still more deep. Is there a way out? We believe there is. From the beginning of the conflict in India, we have emphasized two beliefs; that it is impossible for Britain during the war to inaugurate complete Indian independence demanded by Mr Gandhi. But there should be during the war maximum effort towards independence that is compatible with the efficient waging of war and that India should be given full assurance of self-government at a stated period after the war. That course of compromise has not been followed today in our opinion. Mr Gandhi should be released unconditionally. The fact remains that, if he died a martyred prisoner, the bad situation would become incalculably worse. There is little time to lose."

THE "BALTIMORE SUN"

NEW YORK, February 24, 1943.

Reflecting the widely felt American concern at the Indian crisis, the *Baltimore Sun* says: "The tragic implications of the gap between Western logic and Eastern mysticism are painfully apparent in India today. The impasse over Mr Gandhi's imprisonment has produced a situation trembling on the verge of unpredictable trouble. To the Western mind the stand of the British authorities is understandable. Unfortunately it does the Government little good to point out the logical correctness of its position and the unreason of Mr Gandhi's procedure—what is of supreme importance right now is not what the Indian people ought to believe but what they do believe. Certainly no mere American can attempt to charter a clear course through the difficult shoals of the current Indian crisis, but one can observe the arguments addressed to those bred in the Western tradition not to persuade the Indian millions who regard Mr Gandhi with mystical devotion."

THE "CEYLON DAILY NEWS"

COLOMBO, February 24, 1943.

The *Ceylon Daily News* in an editorial advocates the immediate release of Mahatma Gandhi. "No one can be happy" says the paper, "at the fact that when the Japanese enemy is at the gates, there should be 60,000 persons arrested in India or that the nation should be deprived of leaders in whom it has trust. The release of the Congress leaders and the reopening of negotiations for which there exists so favourable a basis, will begin a new chapter in Indo-British relations and will prove a turning point of the war in the Far East."

LORD HAILEY

WASHINGTON, February 17, 1943.

Lord Hailey, who is at present in America, in the course of an interview said that many people in England believe new forces are arising in India which would eventually break down the barriers now preventing co-operation between various religions and social factors in India.

He was of opinion that Mahatma Gandhi's fast was regrettable firstly because he doubted whether it would have long-term beneficial effect on India's problems and secondly because of the injurious effect it was likely to have on India's war effort. Although the fast attracted negligible notice in the United States, Lord Hailey said that it would contribute to unrest in India which had arisen from food shortages resulting from stoppage of rice supplies from Burma. He said and believed that Mahatma Gandhi's influence was greater outside India and the Congress than in it.

He said: "I doubt whether England would ever again devote as much time on the Indian question as she did in 1935. Most people in England feel that we have arrived at a stage where we want India to run her own administration. However, to do this, Indians must compose their differences and unite on a programme."

LONDON MEETING

LONDON, February 18, 1943.

Lord Strabolgi, addressing a meeting in London called by the India League, said that he dreaded the results of the future relations of the British with the Hindus if Mr Gandhi's fast had fatal results. "The Government here and in India should make a new approach without delay to seek a settlement."

The meeting carried a resolution expressing profound concern at the grave crisis in India. The resolution deplored the Government's policy and called upon the Government to release Gandhiji immediately and unconditionally before it was too late and to open negotiations with Indian leaders with the object of ending the deadlock as desired by an overwhelming majority of the Indian people.

M.P.S' MESSAGE

LONDON, February 18, 1943.

The following cable signed by Messrs David Kirkwood, James Maxton, Fred Messer, John McGovern, Fenner Brockway and A. Bose has been sent to Mahatma Gandhi: "Friendly greetings. Demanding your unconditional release and independence for India."

INDIA CONCILIATION GROUP

LONDON, February 19, 1943.

A statement by the India Conciliation Group today, referring to Gandhiji's letter to the Viceroy in which he said, "If you want me to make any proposals, you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members," and declares: "We would plead earnestly that the Governments in India and London should respond to this declaration by making such a meeting possible and at the same time should give every facility to representative persons who are endeavouring to promote an agreed policy."

LABOUR M.P.S' DEMAND

LONDON, February 19, 1943.

Eight Labour Members of the Commons have issued a statement urging the Government "to order Mr Gandhi's release immediately and to take the first and in our opinion decisive step to end the deadlock in India which would be an achievement of first-rate importance." The signatories are Messrs Reginald Sorensen, Alexander Sloan, John Parker, Rhys Davies, Cecil Poole, Stephen Davies, Cecil Wilson and one more.

MEETING IN MANCHESTER

MANCHESTER, February 20, 1943.

A resolution demanding the immediate unconditional release of Mr Gandhi was passed by an I.L.P. meeting on India here. Mr Fenner Brockway, Political Secretary of the I.L.P., said that if Mr Gandhi died any hope of reconciliation between India and this country would be destroyed for a generation. The pressure of the British people on the Government would be the determining factor.

To whatever extent they might disagree with Mr Gandhi, Mr Brockway said, there was no doubt he was one of the great philosophers and teachers in history, and one of those rare beings who did not merely have a philosophy, but who lived it. Probably more than any man or woman in public life his every word and deed, perhaps his every thought, was an expression of the principles he held. "It will be an eternal stain on the history of this country should he die in prison."

India today, he continued, was as much an occupying country as any in Europe. You could count on the fingers of one hand the English people living there regarding it as their country.

Mr A. Nath Bose, Secretary of the Indian Congressmen in Great Britain, said that if Mahatma Gandhi died the East would be aflame, and the consequences would be disastrous for the world. He believed that Congress would be prepared to accept a plebiscite under international supervision to test whether they represented the Indian people.

The Chairman, Mr F. Barron, said the I.L.P. demanded the freedom of India not so that India could co-operate in the war but because it was morally right.

BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY

LONDON, February 22, 1943.

Mr Harry Pollitt, on behalf of the Communist Party of Great Britain has today sent the following message to the Viceroy of India. "Progressive opinion here is deeply concerned over the increasing gravity of the Indian crisis. We strongly urge the release of Mahatma Gandhi and Congress leaders and to open negotiations to end the political impasse with a view to a united settlement in the interests of the United Nations." A similar telegram has been sent to the Secretary for India, Mr Amery. In a cable to the Indian Communist Party, Mr Pollitt expressed "warmest solidarity and support" for the Indian Communist Party's campaign for release of Mahatma Gandhi and the establishment of national unity and a National Government.

BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION

LONDON, February 23, 1943.

In the committee-room at the House of Commons today there was a gathering of Members of Parliament and others invited by them to discuss the position in India. Mr Reginald Sorensen, M.P., presided.

After hearing statements from Miss Agatha Harrison and Mr V. K. Krishna Menon the meeting unanimously agreed that those present and others who could be approached should take, individually and collectively, every possible step to urge on the Government the imperative necessity of releasing Mahatma Gandhi immediately and unconditionally. Each hour, they said, added to the gravity of the situation. The release of Mr Gandhi, demanded by the overwhelming majority of opinion in India, was an appeal to the conscience of Britain and the world which should evoke immediate response.

Among those who spoke were Canon Holland (chaplain to the Lord Mayor), the Rev. Hockman-Johnston (Methodist missionary), the Rev. Gordon Livingston (Scottish Nonconformist minister), Miss Vera Brittain, Miss Clare Sheridan, Mrs Lucy Middleton, Mr Edward Thompson, the Rev. Henry Carter, and a number of M.P.s.

The following are extracts from messages sent to the meeting:—

Sir Willian Rothenstein: All possible pressure, while there is yet time, must be brought to bear on the Viceroy for a gesture of reconciliation, of more urgent importance than that of political and legal rectitude.

Dame Sybil Thorndike: It seems so very tragic that in an age when saints are much needed so many people should fail to recognize the unique greatness and saintliness of Mr Gandhi and his deep wisdom.

The Bishop of Birmingham: I would gladly be associated with any request to the Government for the immediate unconditional release of Mr Gandhi.

Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell: I support every possible step that can be taken to secure the immediate and unconditional release of Mr Gandhi.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

LONDON, February 23, 1943.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter to the *Times* today said: "Among the pressing pre-occupations of this time, there is some danger that we may forget the seriousness and urgency of the situation in India. It is clear that political deadlock is an expression of spiritual alienation. An ordinary Christian has his task here as well as a statesman. Let us at this time be constant in our prayers that God will direct and rule the hearts of both British and Indians so that they may know and do His will."

TAGORE SOCIETY

LONDON, February 23, 1943.

The Tagore Society has sent the following telegram to the Archbishop of Canterbury:—

"We appeal to you to do your utmost to secure the unconditional release of Christ-like Gandhi and prevent his death. His death will mean the end of non-violence and permanent estrangement of relations between Britain and India."

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE

MANCHESTER, February 23, 1943.

The officers of the Manchester branch of the Women's International League in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* say: We identify ourselves with all those who are demanding the unconditional release of Mr Gandhi. The seriousness of the situation as it now stands not only reveals the dreadful impasse which has been allowed to develop between the British Government and the Congress leaders, but stresses the need for an eleventh-hour attempt to find a constructive solution of the Indian problem.

Mr Gandhi's method of forcing the issue may appear debatable to some sections of the community, but it does not alter the fact that the issue is there, awaiting solution, and Mr Gandhi's death would complicate matters, may be irrevocably. As long as we claim to be living in a democracy, we each have our share of responsibility for the present situation.

BRITISH FRIENDS OF INDIAN FREEDOM

COVENTRY, February 23, 1943.

In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian,* Miss Alice Underhill, Honorary Secretary, Friends of Indian Freedom Association, writes: May I correct what I believe may be a wrong impression given by the reference of your Delhi correspondent to the remarks of the Home Member? "The Home Member," he wrote, "suggested that the Congress began civil disobedience in August in the hope that it might synchronize with a Japanese attack on India."

The Indian National Congress did not start a campaign of civil disobedience. After the passing of the resoultion on August 8 a week was to elapse during which Congress hoped that negotiations would take place and civil disobedience be averted. But the Congress leaders were arrested the day after they had passed the resolution and before they had completed the plans which were to be put into action if negotiations failed.

As to the "hope that it might synchronise with a Japanese attack" the August resolution says: "Let us have a declaration of Indian independence forthwith and we on our part shall immediately enter into a treaty of alliance with the United Nations for the sole purpose of fighting and winning the war" (Dr Azad, August 7). Surely this does not betray any desire on the part of Congress to help the Japanese.

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS

MELBOURNE, February 23, 1943.

The executive of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, representing almost all Australian union members, cabled to Mr Churchill urging the release of Mr Gandhi "in the interests of the Indian people."

CHINESE PRESS COMMENTS

CHUNGKING, February 23, 1943.

The official *Central Daily News* in an editorial on Mahatma Gandhi's condition hopes for his immediate release. The Press in China have been flooded for the past fortnight with news items regarding Mahatma Gandhi.

The *Daily News* says: "England is famous for her democratic spirit and rationalism in politics. It is hoped the problem would be solved satisfactorily for the good of England as well as that of the United Nations as a whole."

CEYLON STATE COUNCIL

COLOMBO, February 23, 1943.

The Ceylon State Council passed today by 37 votes to 4 Mr S. Samarakkody's motion expressing concern at Mahatma Gandhi's fast, and requesting the British Government to release him immediately. On the conclusion of the day's official business, Mr Samarakkody, who had intended to move the resolution on February 24, obtained permission of the House to move the same a day earlier.

Mr Samarakkody's motion stated that "this House expresses its sympathy with the Indian people in their struggle for freedom, and, as the news of Mahatma Gandhi's fast is a matter of deepest concern to millions throughout the world, demands of the British Government the immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi."

Mr Samarakkody declared that Gandhiji was the leader not only of India but of the whole of the Asiatic continent.

Mr H. R. Freeman moved an amendment seeking the substitution of the word "request" instead of "demand." The amendment was agreed to and the resolution, as amended, passed by 37 votes to 4.

IMPRESSIONS AFTER THE FAST

WORLD-WIDE DEMAND FOR SOLUTION OF THE DEADLOCK

That Mr Churchill had a blind spot with regard to India became more and more apparent as he turned a deaf ear to the numerous appeals made to him by prominent persons and organizations in America, Britain, China, and India, to solve the Indian deadlock after the successful termination of Gandhiji's fast. Below are reproduced some of the statements.

SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA

(Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council)

NEW DELHI, March 3, 1943.

Today controversial politics is silenced by the universally welcomed news that Mahatma Gandhi has survived his penance. The fast which convulsed the country for three weeks is over. Let us all join in a thanksgiving prayer to the Almighty for having spared the life of this great *tapasvi*. Let us pray too for the unity of India—a task to which Mahatma Gandhi has dedicated himself—and hope that the purifying influence of his fast will lead to the resolving of the unfortunate political deadlock and that all parties will now shed their mutual jealousies, fears and suspicions and unite in working together for the welfare of the Indian people.

MR K. M. MUNSHI

POONA, March 3, 1943.

"Gandhiji has been saved to India and to his mission; and the world has heaved a sigh of relief," says Mr K. M. Munshi in a Press statement.

"One thing which most of us who met him could find was that he unequivocally reiterated his unshaken faith in non-violence. This is nothing new; for he had made it clear even in his letter to the Viceroy dated September 23, 1942....Gandhiji's fast, however, has created a new situation. The Indian question has received fresh attention. With Gandhiji's views on the violent aspects of the movement now known to several leading men in the country, it is hoped that the movement in so far as it involves violence will automatically stop."

MAULVI SIR RAFFIUDDIN AHMED

(Former Minister of Education, Bombay, and one of the founders of the Muslim League)

POONA, March 3, 1943.

Congratulating Mahatma Gandhi on the successful termination of his twenty-one days' fast, he recalls how twenty-five years ago, the Mahatma, accompanied by Mr Chotani and himself went to the first meeting of the Khilafat and enthusiastically supported the Muslim cause when some of the Muslim leaders themselves looked askance at the Khilafat movement.

MR C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

POONA, March 3, 1943.

"I can say nothing definitely, for while I see some light and have caught some hope from Mahatma Gandhi's bedside, I cannot say I have got anything clear in my mind as yet," declared Mr C. Rajagopalachari, interviewed by the Press.

Mr Rajagopalachari, who has been here for the last four days, saw Mahatma Gandhi daily and had talks with him.

Mr Rajagopalachari said: "There is much cause for anger and bitterness, but we should check these feelings and devise ways and means to overcome difficulties. It was all dark when I arrived in Poona. I have seen Mahatma Gandhi and talked with him both seriously and lightly, sitting by his bedside these four days. It was a privilege by itself. My distress is much less as I go back from here, and I seem gradually to be recovering hope. It is necessary that those who met at Delhi recently should meet again and think furiously."

Mr C. Rajagopalachari said that he could say nothing definitely with regard to his plans, for, while he saw some light and had caught some hope from Mahatma Gandhi's bedside, he could not say he had got anything clear in his mind as yet. "I must meet friends and think out some plan," he said. "If the fast has seemingly not solved the obduracy of the Government, the fast should chasten our own souls and bring people together closer to one another than they were before and make people turn their critical faculty towards themselves before focussing it on others."

Mr Rajagopalachari declined to be drawn into any conversation with regard to his talks with Mahatma Gandhi and said: "I should like to stop at this and not be questioned about further plans at this stage."

REV. NORMAN GOODALL

LONDON, March 3, 1943.

Rev. Norman Goodall of the London Missionary Society, who wrote "The Indian Deadlock" has published another booklet entitled "Can Indians Unite?" He says the assumption that the British are doing everything to promote among Indians the urge towards unity scarcly survive careful reflection and asks: "What will an historian make, for example, of the speeches, articles and news summaries and official apologies at this period? Will he detect an approach which is likely to quicken the better resolve in India rather than harden the antagonism?" Rev. Goodall refers to the tragic mistrust of Britain as one of the saddest and most serious factors in the whole situation and declares that the need for some new word or act expressing and evoking trust is desperately urgent. Finally, he urges moves making possible those personal contacts between Congress leaders and others thus enabling the task of communal reconciliation and unity to be pursued.

LORD STRABOLGI

LONDON, March 3, 1943.

Lord Strabolgi, speaking tonight at a meeting of the India League in London, said that with the end of Mr Gandhi's fast fresh negotiations with the leaders of the Congress and other communities in India should be opened up immediately and the release of Mr Gandhi might be the first step. The future course of the war in the East would depend on the action Britain was now prepared to take, he added.

MR WALTER PHELPS HALL

(Professor in Princeton University, U.S.A.)

NEW YORK, March 3, 1943.

In the course of an article entitled "What Next in India" in *Current History*, Prof. Walter Phelps Hall writes:—

Although the cause of the United Nations shows signs of improvement, in most parts of the world at the present moment, the reverse seems to be the case in India....Indians no matter how much they may disagree among themselves, almost daily become more anti-British. This does not mean that they are pro-Japanese. But it does mean that they dislike Britain and are losing such little confidence as they antecedently had in that country's good faith.

This article makes no attempt to justify that loss of faith. Quite to the contrary, the writer has faith that Britain will keep her word. But that is not the point; the sole question of paramount importance at this moment is how to win the war, and none can doubt that a hostile or even a lukewarm India hinders the war effort.

Caution is necessary in analysing the situation, for we must ever have in mind that suspicion is mutual, and that if the Indians do not trust the British, the latter do not trust the Indians. It does not help, for instance, to impugn the good faith of Gandhi by the assumption that he is disposed to accept Japanese advances, as does a recent cartoon in *Punch* in which a tall Indian soldier, presumably a Muslim, has discovered a member of the Congress Party wearing a Gandhi cap treacherously betraying India to the foe without. Nor is it desirable, on the other hand, to argue from very inconclusive premises that Sir Stafford Cripps made promises to Indian leaders only to go back on his word.

To dismiss this accusation is not to uphold Britain's hand in India. An analysis, however, of the undesirable character of such reasoning is worth while if the situation is to be viewed impartially. Nothing is easier than to throw suspicion on the good faith of men like Cripps and Gandhi and nothing much is to be gained thereby. What is necessary is to focus all light possible on the major source of disaffection and, if it is not possible to remove that source altogether, then to consider what steps are feasible under the existing circumstances whereby friction may be lessened.

After referring to the failure of the Cripps mission the article proceeds: What next in India? Prime Minister Churchill says he will make no more concessions, Leopold Amery, British Secretary of State for India, says there will be no further negotiations.

That the British would now find it difficult to reopen negotiations goes without saying. Such an act not only would hurt their pride, but it is conceivable that it might injure the war effort. On the other hand in both war and peace he who refuses to take a chance is lost. India very likely is lost to the British Empire after the war, no matter what course that conflict takes. Too much water has gone under the bridge for that to happen.

But the role that India will play in this war is not yet determined; she may help or she may hinder the United Nations among whom she is so cavalierly enrolled as a charter member.

Despite what Churchill and Amery have said, one does not feel all negotiations are for ever impossible. Churchill has a blind spot in regard to India and so, too, has Amery. Both of them are imperialists by long training and conviction. Churchill has all his life been opposed to Indian devolution; but is it too late for him to modify that stand? After all it is in the blood of British Tories to yield when they must: otherwise how could they have continued top dog so long?

Amery's speech on October 8, 1942, is very similar in tone to speeches delivered in the House of Commons during 1774, 1775, 1776—no further negotiations. One does not want to over-emphasize the parallel, but one does wish that both Churchill and Amery would read over quietly Edmund Burke on 'Conciliation with America.' Win, draw or lose, we are in this war with Britain to the end, and I make no further reference to conciliating America either now or in the future—the reference is to India alone. The appeal of representative American citizens in the New York *Times* is not as tactful as it might be; it leaves out much that might justly be included; it leaves out much that justifies Britain's angry attitude towards the Indian National Congress. But despite all that, it does point out one salient truth; it is Britain that now refuses to negotiate, not the Indian Congress.

As for the Indian nationalists they too would do well if they would read not Burke and Gladstone but a bare factual account of Sino-Japanese relations throughout the last ten years. If they ponder well the significance of what the Japanese have done in Shanghai and Nanking, they cannot well avoid certain conclusions as to their own inability to defend themselves, since they are less numerous and less military than their Chinese neighbours. If the British go, the Japanese enter; if Indians hinder the British-American effort the Japanese may still enter; and the more they hinder that effort, the more harm and injury they inevitably do their Chinese neighbour. Asia for the Asiatics, by all means, but not under the magnanimous role of Tokyo.

Objection may be taken that this article has not made plain how extraordinarily difficult it is for the British to find any common denominator to satisfy Muslims, the Congress Party, the Indian Princes, the depressed classes, and other groups pulling first this way and then that; how Britain already has gone far in establishing responsible government in the Indian provinces; how India is already autonomous in many important ways; how Dominion home rule is explicitly promised after the war with the explicit understanding that the new Indian Dominion will have the free right to withdraw from the British Commonwealth altogether.

And on the other hand the objection may be raised that I have shown little appreciation for the long continued striving of Indian nationalists to escape from the intricate, dubious and dilatory network of legal artifice in which they have found themselves enmeshed these many years. The British have a way of making generous gestures towards freedom and then qualifying them by what they call "safeguards." That is a lawyer's trick and perhaps might well be considered the West European and American counterpart of Indian mysticism equally difficulty for the West to understand.

Granted all that—the time is short, the situation desperate and not Americans alone but Belgians, French, Hollanders, Norwegians, Poles, Czechs, Chinese, Filipinos, Greeks, Russians, Serbs, and many other nationalities, all have a stake in what takes place in India. In their name, is it too much to ask that Britain should

1. Recall her Viceroy.

2. Re-enter into negotiations with the Congress Party.

3. Request the aid of a mediation board on which there are American and Chinese members, to represent those United Nations most immediately concerned.

4. Permit the guarantee of India's post-war freedom to be not simply a British guarantee but one in the name of all the United Nations; and to ask that India should:

a. Rescind her campaign of non-co-operation.

b. Agree to accept the findings, for the duration of the war of the afore-mentioned United Nations mediation board.

c. Co-operate in every way, both civil and military, in the effort to drive the Japanese out of Burma and China?

SOME AMERICAN PRESS COMMENTS

NEW YORK, March 5, 1943.

While editorial comment is so far lacking it is obvious that Mahatma Gandhi's survival has caused great relief. Correspondents' dispatches generally express the belief that the fast was a political failure because it neither caused the British to release the Mahatma nor presented in the world's eye a vindication of the British charges that Mahatma Gandhi was the instigator of last year's riots.

A slightly different view is voiced by the *Herald-Tribune's* corres-

pondent: "While to Western eyes Gandhi's fast has achieved nothing, many Indians think that by his survival the nationalist leader has proved that he was innocent of the violence committed last summer."

On the termination of Mahatma Gandhi's fast, Representative Bloom, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he thought it best to remain silent on the Indian affairs leaving them to the British and the Indians.

The Liberal weekly *Nation* writes: "Mahatma Gandhi's survival dramatizes like nothing else the continued bitterness of the Indian nationalists, and would be used by a wise Government as an occasion for reopening negotiation. If a compromise is to be reached Mahatma Gandhi's approval is indispensable. A high sense of mission may convince him that he was allowed to live so that he might reach a settlement, consistent with India's aspirations."

The *Time* magazine says: "To the Indian people a great tragedy has been averted and to their minds the fast has, firstly, revived India as United Nation's problem affecting the entire political future in the East, secondly, it has again enshrined Gandhi as a saint, and, thirdly, brought rival political and religious groups together."

The *New York Times* says: "We believe many people in Britain will ask themselves whether it is not possible now to take advantage of the opportunity that has come after precarious months of waiting whether the initiative cannot be safely taken by Great Britain now because it has demonstrated it invulnerable to a threat of force; whether negotiations could not start afresh as on the day before Cripps arrived in India last summer with proposals which proved abortive."

THE "DAILY WORKER"

LONDON, March 5, 1943.

The *Daily Worker*, communist daily, commenting editorially on the termination of Mahatma Gandhi's fast, says: "The Indian situation has been spared the embitterment that was bound to follow his death while under detention by Government authorities. But the issue remains as urgent as ever—the taking of the step towards reconciliation."

BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM

LONDON, March 14, 1943.

A remarkable tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, as exemplifying in himself the spirit of Christianity better than any European, was paid by the Bishop of Birmingham at the special service prayer for India held at the Birmingham Cathedral yesterday. In the course of his address, the Bishop said:—

"We are met today to pray for the welfare of India and the closer union of mind and spirit between the British and Indian peoples. The need is to replace enmity by friendliness and unhappy memories by the spirit of co-operation, suspicion and jealousy by confidence and trust on both sides.

"The time seems to me ripe for a new attempt at mutual understanding. The whole situation has changed since the days of the mutiny. India now takes a place among the countries of the world as a group of peoples with a distinctive civilization spreading through a vast population. By sheer weight of numbers, combined with the intellectual ability of her leaders, India must inevitably in future play an important part in shaping the destiny of the world. What many in England desire is to see India freely choosing to be a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, forgetting in the exultation of its freedom the present emotional antagonism. When England and India meet on equal terms, with friendly respect on both sides, a new era can begin. Let us pray that God will hasten the

time of its beginning.

"Let us also remember that our Christian missionaries have, during the last two generations, steadily worked for a new understanding, many showing strong sympathy with nationalism. In that movement, an outstanding figure was Charles Andrews, a leader of men bred in our city. Towards the end of his life, he was spiritually as much an Indian as an Englishman. In him the gulf that separates the two peoples was bridged.

"Unfortunately, as regards all but a few, it remains true that 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet.' For this reason, there has been in England profound misunderstanding of Mr Gandhi's fast. That he has survived his fast, leaves us thankful. We feel that, in God's goodness, we have been spared the outcome that might have evoked great bitterness. I myself cannot believe that the fast was of the nature of blackmail. Many among us do not understand Mr Gandhi's religious outlook. Though the Doctrine of Atonement lies deeply imbedded in Christianity, though we express belief in the efficacy of prayer and fasting and in the spiritual power of suffering, our trust in force is so complete and our outlook is so materialistic that Christian essentials, so profoundly real to Mr Gandhi, mean little to some among us. A Christian theologian may stress 'the redemptive power of innocent suffering,' but when our politicians see it used with simple trust, they cannot understand it. They suspect madness or profound duplicity.

"We need remember that Christianity came from the East and, instinctively, Mr Gandhi appreciates certain of its fundamentals better than any European. Let us never forget that while we can show India the Nordic virtues inherent in Christianity, India can, in return, give us deeper understanding of the mystical content of our faith.

"We pray, then, today for an enlarged sympathy, a new unity and a turning back from repeated mistakes to a true fellowship in the future. We must link India to our Empire not by might, nor by power, but by the spirit of the Christ."

COMMON WEALTH PARTY

LONDON, March 16, 1943.

"If Winston Churchill went to India and saw it as it is now, he would be a very good man to solve the problem," said Mr Lionel Fielden, former Controller of Broadcasting in India, tonight at a crowded mass meeting in London organized by the Common Wealth Party. The audience, consisting mainly of middle class people, warmly cheered speaker after speaker, who urged the need for a settlement in India.

Sir Richard Acland said the dangers and difficulties inherent in the communal problem "pale into insignificance compared with the dangers and difficulties which we must meet if we do not give independence."

Dr James Parkes said that the British attitude was represented by a taxi-driver's remark to the late Mr K. T. Paul (Indian Christian leader) at the time of the Round Table Conference: "Well, sir, I don't know what you wants, but I hopes you get it."

Mr Tom Wintringham, pleading for an alliance with India, said: "We shall never get anywhere in India unless we release the Congress leaders and deal with them."

THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

MANCHESTER, March 17, 1943.

The Indian Government is apparently contented so long as it has Mr Gandhi and the other Congress leaders under lock and key.

"There they are and there they stop." But when Mr Gandhi, writing to the Viceroy about the demand for independence, said: "The living burial of the author of the demand has not resolved the deadlock; it has aggravated it," he was nearer to the truth. A situation does not stand still when 40,000 political rebels are held in prison, especially when many thousands have been held there before. It changes, and the change is likely to be for the worse.

The Indian Government has taken a rigid stand, but then in recent years it has always preserved a dignified rigidity until it has suddenly bent. It says that the Congress must condemn the terrible excesses which followed the resolution of last August and the consequent arrests, and that it must then repudiate civil disobedience as a policy. Mr Gandhi contends that if the Government had negotiated with him in August there would have been no disorders (which must be regarded as extremely doubtful), that non-violence always has been and is the Congress policy, and that if there is evidence that Congressmen prepared to violate this policy they should have been put on trial. The two sides show few signs of coming together, but those who are not determined always to argue that the situation is not changed may note that Mr Gandhi himself has not remained stationary. He has "deplored" the destruction done in August; he has said that Congress "was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause" (a victory for Nehru); he has said that if the Government desire to make proposals on behalf of the Congress, the Viceroy "should put me among the Congress Working Committee members." It is reported also that Mr Gandhi may now be disposed to concede so much of Mr Jinnah's demand for the self-determination of the great Muslim communities that an agreement would be at least conceivable. But no one knows because no one is allowed to know. Mr Gandhi is secluded—"living buriel," as he calls it—and neither Congress nor any other leaders are allowed to visit him in order to discover what is in his mind.

The Government, with the security of India to think of, no doubt feels safer at the moment with tens of thousands of Congress leaders and followers in prison. But the public conscience must eventually rebel against the idea of this policy becoming permanent without our making any attempt to find a better way; were any other country than our own involved we should certainly regard the result with much suspicion. Let it be granted that last autumn we had to take prompt and drastic measures lest disaster befell. That does not justify us in settling down to a system of indefinite repression without finding out whether there is any means of bringing it to an end. Some time or other the means has to be found, for it is monstrous to suppose that we can go on month after month and year after year on the present basis. Only imperialists of the worst kind can contemplate an indefinite continuance both of the present deadlock and of our present refusal to allow discussions with and among the prisoners. We are not called on to allow others to find something out—to discover whether there are any prospects of bringing together on the one hand the Muslim League, Congress and other parties and on the other hand the Congress, League, the other parties, and the British Government. Nothing more is asked of us in the first place than to let the independent Indian leaders to talk to Mr Gandhi and to put Mr Gandhi among the Congress Working Committee. Is there any reason, in principle or expediency, in dignity or prestige, why that much should not be done?

WHITE PAPER AGAINST THE CONGRESS

LONDON, March 25, 1943.

A White Paper on India issued here yesterday a 50,000 word document in which the Government of India set out their case against

Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress; the document at the same time says it does not purport to disclose all information in the possession of the Government. The White Paper follows the lines of the Government of India's pamphlet entitled, *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances,* published in February.

Mr Frederick Holsinger, a former editor of the *Indian Daily Mail* of Bombay, said regarding the White Paper: "It does not contain a scrap of evidence to show that Mr Gandhi had anything to do with the crimes committed." He added that it should be up to India herself to decide whether she would come into the war.

The *Manchester Guardian* says: "The Indian Government's White Paper is a speech for the prosecution. The White Paper does not touch the problem which, when all is said and done, confronts us in India. We find a large part of the country in sympathy with this 'open rebellion' campaign and we have thousands of malcontents in prison. We cannot satisfy the nationalist demand by an indefinite repressive policy, however serious the offences that are punished. Some day we shall have to talk, negotiate, and construct a political settlement."

THE "NEWS CHRONICLE"

LONDON, April 2, 1943.

The *News-Chronicle* declares that the first step towards ending the Indian deadlock is to substitute for Mr Amery "some Secretary of India who has a more sympathetic understanding of the mind of India." Contending that it is idle for Mr Amery to argue that the fault lies exclusively with Mr Gandhi and the Congress the paper says: "Those who think as he does have perfectly cast-iron arguments; but unfortunately they convince nobody but themselves. And it is we, and not Mr Gandhi, who are responsible for India's welfare. The irrefragable conclusion is that however satisfied we may be with our own arguments, we have got to think again. The problem is not to demolish Mr Gandhi on paper but to provide for India's future."

BRITISH MISSIONARIES

LONDON, April 3, 1943.

An appeal to make a public declaration on the Indian situation is made in an open letter from prominent Churchmen and others to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Metropolitan of India, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and the President of the Free Church Council. The signatories, the letter states, were moved "by the tragic succession of events that have occurred in India since the outbreak of war and by the conviction that the increasingly dangerous situation can yet be retrieved. We feel the situation which has been allowed to develop is the result of what now appears to many in this country as well as in India as a policy of procrastination."

"An overwhelming majority of the British people," the letter adds, have long looked for a more constructive policy and co-operative spirit in our relations with India and want to see a broader and more realistic basis established on which it will be possible to build a happier and more prosperous future. We believe that a new beginning can and must be made not with renewed promises, but with soundly established foundations for genuine cooperation before enmity and mistrust have become hardened and widespread."

Appealing for a public declaration of the moral and spiritual issues involved, the letter expresses the opinion that very real harm was being done to the cause of the Allied nations. Under these circumstances it would surely be a lasting shame upon our religion and race to keep silent. Christian opinion in this country, in India and in the world at large was anxiously awaiting leadership in this matter.

The signatories include the Bishop of Bradford, formerly India Secretary, Baptist Missionary Society, Calcutta; Rev. Herbert Anderson, Baptist Missionary Society; Rev. George Howells, General Director, Industrial Christian Fellowship; P. T. R. Kirk, Congregational Church Mission; Rev. D. Gordon Livingstone; Miss Maude Royden; Rev. Michael Scott, formerly of the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment; and Mr Edward Thompson.

LORD FARINGDON

LONDON, April 6, 1943.

In a debate in the House of Lords, Lord Faringdon (Labour) said that there was basis for agreement with the Congress leaders, many of whose aims were the same as the British Government's. "The White Paper gives no evidence of its source or on what the Government based their belief in its authenticity. Denial of its authenticity is not perhaps conclusive, but it is at least evidence that the Congress do not wish the policy outlined in it to be attributed to them."

Lord Faringdon denied that Mr Gandhi is a dictator or the Congress a totalitarian body. He said he was at a loss to understand why access to Mr Gandhi had been refused to Indian leaders and urged that if negotiations could be opened with any prospect of success, every facility should be given to persons able to bring about conditions in which negotiations could be opened. He also suggested that Indian leaders of all parties should be invited to a conference in London, and that if possible the co-operation of the Allied Governments should be obtained. The present unhelpfulness of Government spokesmen could not fail to have a bad effect on Anglo-Indian relations.

MR ARCHIBALD STEELE

CHICAGO, April 7, 1943.

"The great complex political issues which provoked Mahatma Gandhi's fast are no nearer a solution than ever. . . . If anything, the fast showed the bleakness of prospects during the war for any kind of political solution so as to bring the people of India wholeheartedly into the United Nations' war effort." Thus writes Mr Archibald Steele, who has just returned to the United States after a long stay in India, in the *Chicago Daily News*.

He says, ". . . . The great mass of materials which the British have published shows no evidence of connection between the Congress Party leaders and the Japanese." He adds that he is convinced that a majority of Congress leaders were sympathetic to the Allied cause. "The distrust of British promises, dissatisfaction at the Cripps plan and the belief that the Crisis was the best opportunity prompted the leaders to demand immediate freedom."

He concludes: "It is now quite clear that the British do not intend to transfer full power to Indians while the war is on, and moreover no formula acceptable to all important Indian parties yet exists."

MADAME CHIANG URGES NEHRU'S RELEASE

NEW YORK, April 7, 1943.

The question of India's freedom was the current world problem of when and to what extent, said Madame Chiang Kai-shek today. She asserted that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should be freed to throw India's released political weight into the United Nations' cause because he was a man with a world vision.

She thought that Mr Gandhi was somewhat cloudy in his thinking and had not a world vision, because he was overcome by his restricted obsession for India's freedom regardless of world conditions. She suggested that the four great nations—United States, Great Britain, Russia and China—should take the lead in forming a post-war World Council which should exercise disinterested control of countries that eventually should have absolute freedom.

PART III

- LEADERS MEET AT BOMBAY
- RECONCILIATION MOVE FAILS
- Mr. PHILLIPS NOT ALLOWED TO SEE GANDHIJI
- DEMAND FOR IMPARTIAL TRIBUNAL
- GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO Mr. JINNAH WITHHELD
- REVISION OF BRITISH POLICY URGED
- NON-PARTY LEADERS' CONFERENCE
- LORD WAVELL ON HIS TASK IN INDIA
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LEADERS MEET AT BOMBAY

PROPOSED DEPUTATION TO THE VICEROY

A statement signed by 35 prominent persons including Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr M. R. Jayakar, Mr Bhulabhai Desai, Mr C. Rajagopalachari and Sir Jagdish Prasad, was issued following a meeting of leaders in Bombay on March 9 and 10, 1943, urging the release of Mahatma Gandhi and reconsideration of their respective policies both by the Government and the Congress. The statement was explained by some of the participants as an honest attempt to reverse the gear and normalize the political life of the country.

BOMBAY, March 10, 1943.

The following statement has been issued by the Leaders' Conference which concluded its meeting in Bombay today:—

"We are of opinion that the deplorable events of the last few months require a reconsideration of their policy both by the Government and the Congress. The recent talks which some of us have had with Gandhiji lead us to believe that a move for reconciliation at the present juncture will bear fruit. It is our conviction that if Gandhiji is set at liberty he will do his best to give guidance and assistance in the solution of the internal deadlock and that there need be no fear that there would be any danger to the successful prosecution of the war. The Viceroy may be approached on our behalf to permit a few representatives to meet Gandhiji to authoritatively ascertain his reaction to the recent events and to explore with him avenues for reconciliation."

The following leaders were present at today's meeting held at Mr Jayakar's residence: Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr M. R. Jayakar, Mr C Rajagopalachari, Mr G. D. Birla, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Mr Bhulabhai J. Desai, Mr K. M. Munshi, Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Mr J. R. D. Tata, Mr S. A. Brelvi, Mr Walchand Hirachand, Sir Chunilal Bhaichand Mehta, Sir Homi Mody, Master Tara Singh, Mr S. Ramanathan, Mr G. L. Mehta, Mr Allah Bakhsh, Sir Jagdish Prasad, Mr Kasturbhai Lalbhai and Dr John Mackenzie.

Mr V. D. Savarkar, who was unable to be present at the meeting, has signified his assent to the statement issued. Besides, the following leaders who could not be present in Bombay are also stated to be in agreement with the statement and copies of the statement are being posted to them to obtain their signatures: Mr K. Srinivasan, Mr C. R. Srinivasan, Mr N. R. Sarker, Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Mr Amritlal V. Thakkar, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Dr P. Subbaroyan, Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, Mr N. M. Joshi, Sardar Sant Singh and Mr M. S. Aney.

Mr V. D. Savarkar in a statement next day said: "I read in this morning's papers a report that I had signified my assent to the statement issued following the conference of leaders last evening. The report is incorrect. I could not be party to it as I did not attend the conference on the second day, and I attended on the first day in my individual capacity and not as the President of the Hindu Mahasabha and due to the pressure of some friends."

MR C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

MADRAS, March 14, 1943.

Asked what were the chances of any favourable response to the Bombay Conference, Mr C. Rajagopalachari said in an interview to the Press:—

It is not in the hope, great or small, but implied by a sense of

religious duty that we are knocking at the door. Events of the last six months have caused substantial damage to the spell of non-violence, the weaving of which has been Mahatma Gandhi's mission. The strong hand of the Government has suppressed the 'rebellion' by which name the Government of India call the recent events, but repression adds to the damage to the belief in non-violence. There is a forlorn hope still, namely, international arbitration.

"Colonial policy may be Great Britain's family affair, but India is not in the family. In the case of India the position is unique in every respect and distinct from that of any British colony."

RECONCILIATION MOVE FAILS

VICEROY REFUSES PERMISSION TO MEET MAHATMA GANDHI

NEW DELHI, March 31, 1943.

The proposed Sapru Conference deputation to the Viceroy on April 1 was abandoned as the procedure insisted upon by the Viceroy precluded personal discussion of the points which the deputation wished to raise. Those points were set out in a memorandum which had already been sent to the Viceroy, and it was proposed by the Viceroy that the deputation should read their memorandum and hear his reply thereto, and the proceedings should at that stage terminate. As this did not commend itself to the leaders who were to have met the Viceroy, the idea of the deputation was dropped.

PRESS 'COMMUNIQUE'

NEW DELHI, April 1, 1943.

The text of the memorandum submitted to His Excellency the Viceroy by the deputation from the Leaders Conference, consisting of Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Pandit H. N. Kunzru, Mr N. M. Joshi and Mr K. M. Munshi, together with the text of His Excellency's reply, is released for information.

The deputation asked His Excellency to accept their statement, with certain additions which they had incorporated in it, as officially presented to him with a view to its publication with the Viceroy's reply, and to dispense with their personal attendance. His Excellency readily agreed to this request. The deputation did not eventually see the Viceroy.

The following is the text of the memorandum:—

We are submitting this memorandum in accordance with His Excellency's desire that he should have a written statement precisely explaining what we wish to say to which His Excellency proposes to give a written reply. While we do so, we hope that the helpful spirit in which we approach this matter also animates His Excellency and that it is with a completely open mind that he will receive the deputation.

2. We are glad that His Excellency has found the resolution of the Bombay Conference of March 9 and 10 perfectly clear. We have therein expressed a desire that His Excellency should permit a few of us to meet Gandhiji, who is under detention, to ascertain authoritatively his reactions to the events which have happened since his arrest and to explore with him avenues for reconciliation. If his Excellency has no objection to this, we shall avail ourselves of the opportunity and discuss matters with Gandhiji. We will then go to His Excellency again and place our proposals before him. In case his Excellency has any objections to following this course, we should like to be informed of the objections so that we may try to answer them, and for this purpose we desire an interview with His Excellency.

3. We have carefully read the correspondence which has passed between His Excellency and Gandhiji and which has been published. We feel that Gandhiji has already expressed his disapproval of violence and sabotage, and we have no doubt that he will cast his influence on the side of internal harmony and reconciliation.

4. The correspondence and statements published in connection with the fast have themselves discouraged the disturbances and the contemplated meeting with Gandhiji will, in our view, further the same object.

5. We feel that though order might have been restored on the surface, every day that passes without a solution of the Indian problem intensifies the hostility between Britain and India, and renders any future solution more and more difficult to attain, until we apprehend it may become even impossible.

We are convinced that Gandhiji's assistance is essential for the restoration of goodwill and for a solution of the problem even for the interim period, including an adjustment of Hindu-Muslim claims. On the other hand, unpleasant as it is, we cannot help feeling that refusing to permit us to have any contact with Gandhiji now would be equivalent to a determination on the part of Great Britain that there should be no attempt at a settlement of the problem and no reconciliation between Nationalist India and Britain. Whatever may be the immediate administrative convenience thereof, we hope that his Excellency will not take up this attitude.

We feel that though there is no present danger of Axis aggression in India, the strained relation between Government and the people is fraught with grave evil and all that is possible should be done to replace it by a better feeling.

As the war is getting long-drawn out, measures to solve the economic problems arising out of it as well as plans for increasing production of food and other essential articles and improving transport and distribution as well as measures of control have to be evolved. Such measures can be organized and regulated only by a national administration or a government that can reasonably claim to approach that character and is in a position to justify policies adopted from time to time although they may involve considerable hardships on all sections of the people.

The situation is growing more and more serious every day and we feel that a government commanding the loyal and affectionate cooperation of all the people can be constituted for the period of the war only if we are permitted to talk with Gandhiji, consult him and obtain his support.

The request that we make is intended to achieve this object. It cannot hurt the Government or the war effort in the least and in our view is likely to lead to constructive results.

THE VICEROY'S REPLY

I am greatly obliged to you for the expression of your views which you have been kind enough to let me have, and for giving me the opportunity of considering it in advance. The matter is one of great importance, and I am anxious that there should be no misunderstanding in relation to it. I made clear in my correspondence with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru my readiness that your deputation should in their statement amplify or emphasize any particular points in the Bombay Resolution to which they attached importance and indicate the arguments on which they based their suggestions. I am indebted to you for the memorandum you have let me have, though it is with regret that I do not find in it any fresh argument in support of the suggestions which the Leaders' Conference has put forward; and that I do not find that unequivocal condemnation of the Congress campaign of violence which the public, and I, are entitled to expect from you as representing that Conference.

Let me before I proceed to your specific proposals mention, though in no spirit of criticism, that I observe from the list of signatories that the great Muslim community was practically unrepresented at the Conference of Leaders, and that that body contained no representative of the Scheduled Castes and no one in a position to speak for the Indian States. I observe also that the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha dissociated himself from the resolution passed by the Conference, while organized parties such as the Muslim League were not represented at its deliberations. I am, however, I need not say, at all times glad to hear the views of persons prominent in the public life of this country on the political issues of the day, and to give all attention to any

representations that they may make to me.

The specific proposal that you ask me to consider is that permission should be given for certain persons to meet Mr Gandhi in detention to ascertain authoritatively his reaction to the events that have happened since his arrest, and to explore with him avenues for reconciliation. You feel, you tell me, that Mr Gandhi has already expressed in the correspondence that has passed between him and me his disapproval of violence and sabotage, and you add that you have no doubt that he will cast his influence on the side of internal harmony and reconciliation. And you urge that if the permission for which you have asked is not given to you the action of Government will unquestionably be interpreted as meaning that they do not wish to see reconciliation.

Let me remind you first of the salient facts in the position. Mr Gandhi and the leaders of the Congress Party, after a long preliminary campaign of incitement, were finally placed under restraint last August. At the time when they were placed under restraint Mr Gandhi had urged open rebellion, had adjured his followers to "do or die;" had made it clear that there was "no room left for withdrawal or negotiation"; and had both directly and indirectly by his speeches and writing contributed actively to foment that sad and disastrous series of events that disfigured the face of India during the autumn and winter of last year. He and the Congress Party had been given every opportunity to reconsider their position. My Government and I had exposed ourselves to the charge that we ought to have taken action against them much earlier, and that we ought not to have allowed this campaign of violence and sabotage to develop. But our forbearance met with no reward, and we were left with no option in the interests of the security of India, and her defence against Japan and against the other Axis Powers, but to take the action that was taken last August.

Unhappily the arrest of the leaders did not prevent a shocking campaign of organized violence and crime for which preparations had been made before those arrests took place. The paper published by the Government of India clearly indicates the full responsibility of the Congress and of Mr Gandhi for that campaign. The encouragement which it gave while it lasted to the Axis Powers needs no emphasis. Its effect on the war effort was severe. It resulted in most material damage to communications and to public and private properties, and in the murder of many innocent persons who had no concern with, or interest in, the political issues involved.

Despite the fact that Mr Gandhi and the Working Committee have had full access to reliable accounts in the Press since August last, there has never been any condemnation of those activities by them. They have not dissociated themselves from the Resolution of last August from which so many of these evils flowed. Mr Gandhi's advice to "do or die" still stands on record: and while order has been restored, and the rebellion put down, no one can suggest that the country did not pass through a period of grave danger; and that while the Congress creed remains what it is, we would again be exposed to that danger if the Congress and its leaders are again given full liberty of action.

You mention that you have seen the correspondence that has passed between me and Mr Gandhi. I would draw your attention to one most important point. I put it to Mr Gandhi in terms (for I thought that must be his intention) that if I was right in thinking that he wished to go back on the Resolution of last August, to condemn what had taken place and to give suitable assurances for the future, I would be very ready to consider the matter further. His reply made it quite clear that I had misunderstood him and that that was not his wish, and matters stand at that point.

Thereafter during the time of Mr Gandhi's fast there was the fullest opportunity for certain of his trusted friends to make contact with him and many indeed of those who were present at the Conference in Bombay had the opportunity of seeing him. Mr Gandhi, had he so wished, could then, as he could have during the time preceding his fast, or today, have repudiated the violence for which the Congress was responsible, could have indicated his readiness to resile from the Congress Resolution of August last, and could have given assurances for the future. But nothing whatever positive has emerged as a result of those contacts any more than from the correspondence that passed between Mr Gandhi and myself, and I have no reason to believe that Mr Gandhi is any more ready now than he was at an earlier stage to repudiate the policy as the result of which the Congress leaders are at present under detention.

Now, Gentlemen, I have done my very best in the time that I have been in this country to try to improve relations and to try to get the parties together; and I do not think it can be suggested that I have been unsympathetic, or that I have not throughout been genuinely anxious to give all the help I can to the improvement of good relations and to the solution of India's political problems. If, therefore, in the present instance I am unable to accept your proposals, it is not from any lack of anxiety to see the atmosphere improved. But on me there rests a very definite and specific obligation, and the same obligation rests on my Government. It is the duty of both of us to ensure peace and good order in this country; to see that India is defended against Japanese and other Axis aggression; and to make certain that nothing is allowed to happen that would further the interests of the enemy, interfere with the war effort of the United Nations, or create internal strife and tumult. So long as that is our obligation, so long as the Congress policy remains what it is, there can be no question of any alteration in our attitude towards the Congress. I have already pointed out that neither from Mr Gandhi nor from the Congress is there, or has there been, any suggestion of a change of mind or heart. They had the opportunity and have the opportunity still to abandon that policy.

With every respect for your good intentions and your anxiety to see a happy solution, I cannot agree to give special facilities such as you ask for contact with Mr Gandhi and the Congress leaders while conditions remain as I have described them.

If on the other hand Mr Gandhi is prepared to repudiate in full the Congress Resolution of last August, to condemn equally those incitements to violence which are represented by his references to "open rebellion," his advice to Congress followers to "do or die," the statement that with the removal of the leaders the rank and file must judge for themselves, and the like; if in addition he and the Congress Party are prepared to give assurances acceptable to Government for the future, then the matter can be considered further.

But till then, and while the Congress attitude remains unchanged, Government's first duty is to the people of India, and that duty it intends to discharge. It is not to be deflected from that duty by suggestions, ill-founded as I believe them to be, that by doing its duty it will add to bitterness and ill-feeling. I do not believe that to be the case. But even if it were, that is the price that Government must pay for discharging its responsibilities to the people of India, and I feel certain myself that the people of India appreciate fully the dangerous and sinister character of the Congress campaign of last year—from which such great sections of them stood wholly aloof—and the threat which that campaign represented and would represent again if it were revived, to the safety and tranquillity of this country.

I would add only one word more. You speak of the importance of a National Government. I quite agree with you, and my endeavour during the time that I have been here have been devoted to forming at the Centre a Government as representative and as broadly based as can be found in the present circumstances in India. But the fact that you suggest that it is only if you are permitted to consult Mr Gandhi that a genuine National Government can be formed shows that so far from realizing the true character of a National Government you contemplate that that Government should be nominated with the approval of a single political leader acting independently of other parties and other leaders in this country. Not on these lines is progress to be made. No National Government can properly be so described unless, as in the United Kingdom, it is fully representative of all parties and sections of the people, based on their ready co-operation with Government and with one another, united in the prosecution of the war for the objectives of the United Nations, of such a character that its establishment soothes instead of aggravating controversy. The essential preliminary to that is that agreement between parties, communities and interests which I have been so anxious to foster, but to which the excessive claims and the totalitarian ambitions of the Congress and its leaders have been so consistent an obstacle in the past.

MR C. RAJAGOPALACHARI ON VICEROY'S REPLY

NEW DELHI, April 1, 1943.

Mr C. Rajagopalachari at a Press conference at New Delhi on April 1 characterized the Viceroy's reply to the Leaders' memorandum as "revealing a Versailles spirit, wishing to humiliate the Congress and others, and influenced by passion and prejudice." He added: "We stated in the memorandum that a refusal to permit us to have any contact with Gandhiji now would be equivalent to a determination on England's part that there should be no attempt at a settlement of the Indian problem and no reconciliation between nationalist India and Britain. After reading his Excellency's reply, I still feel that I have no reason to alter that opinion. I must infer from the reply that the Government do not desire reconciliation however proper their reasons may be from their point of view. Not only do they not desire a reconciliation but they wish to humiliate the Congress and even all those who love to hear the name of the Congress. However much I try, I cannot resist that conclusion."

"Speaking personally, I feel sorry we made this request because I think the reply will make the people in India more angry with Britain and I did not want that result."

Mr Rajagopalachari went on to declare that every one of the duties defined by the Viceroy as his and his Government's would have been better accomplished if the deputation's request had been granted.

Contending that the Viceroy was arguing in a circle, Mr Rajagopalachari referred to the Viceroy's observations about the absence of the Scheduled Classes, Muslim League and Indian States' representatives, and said these references were commonplaces in India; but surely for contacting Gandhiji in order to work for a reconciliation it should not be necessary previously to get the signatures of all those who were differing from one another. "It is precisely because we want the Scheduled Classes, the Muslim League and the Congress to come to an an understanding that we have to go to each one of them separately and plead for harmony and reconciliation, and it should not be said that before I go to Gandhiji in prison I must get the previous consent of the others. It would be something like a Chinese puzzle."

"His Excellency says some of us, 'trusted friends,' had an opportunity to see him on the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th days of the fast. What conversations we had then raised in us hopes which induced us

to make this request. If on the 18th day of a fast it was expected by his Excellency that the Congress policy should be changed by word of mouth of Gandhiji, I can only say it is extraordinary."

Commenting on the last paragraph of the Viceroy's reply, Mr Rajagopalachari observed: "Surely the attempt to get Gandhiji's support for the formation of a Government commanding the co-operation of all the people could not be interpreted as an attempt to secure a Government nominated with the approval of a single political leader acting independently of other parties and leaders. It was a 'strange and altogether erroneous' interpretation of a simple request."

Answering the question "what next," he remarked: "I have already confessed that, firstly, the reply makes me too angry for any serious work at the moment, and, secondly, it leads to this tragic conclusion that they don't want a reconciliation. These two causes make it difficult for me to attempt to build the next stage. I am in a frame of mind in which I want to know how the public feel and what they expect me to do."

"Till the last minute," he said, "we attempted to secure some opportunity for following up the written statement and the reply with relevant personal exchange of views. This, however, was not acceded to. It was insisted that after I finished reading the written statement of our case, his Excellency would read his reply and the meeting must then terminate. I pleaded at least for an advance intimation of his Excellency's reaction to the arguments in the memorandum so that we could add any replies that we desired to incorporate. Even this was refused.

"We, therefore, saw no point in being personally present at the reading of the reply. We intimated that, if his Excellency thought that we should be present, we were prepared to go through the ceremony, but he readily agreed to dispense with the formality.

"It is a pity that in a matter of this kind, discussion was excluded and the proceedings were limited to a single written statement on either side.

COUNTRY DISAPPOINTED

BOMBAY, April 5, 1943.

Mr C. Rajagopalachari has issued the following statement regarding the Viceroy's reply to the memorandum of the delegation of the Leaders' Conference:—

His Excellency the Viceroy's reply to our memorandum in rejecting our request for permission to see Gandhiji must cause profound disappointment throughout the country. Since we were denied the opportunity of a personal discussion with his Excellency and it was not possible to anticipate the points urged in his Excellency's reply, it becomes necessary to issue this statement.

We approached the Viceroy on behalf of the Leaders' Conference that met in Bombay on March 10 which deplored the events of the last few months and expressed the desire that the Viceroy should be requested to allow some of us to meet Gandhiji for exploring avenues for reconciliation. The Conference hoped that this would lead to a solution of the Indian problem.

His Excellency's reply points with regret to the absence in the memorandum of an "unequivocal condemnation of the Congress campaign of violence." We trust that his Excellency has no doubts regarding our own attitude or that of the signatories to the Bombay resolution towards violence. But if this observation is meant to demand that we should accept, merely on the authority of Government's *ex parte* findings, the view that the Congress Working Committee was responsible for the acts of violence of the last few months, as a condition precedent

for complying with the simple request of the delegation, we have to state that it is a most unfair demand. What is essential and beyond controversy is that the campaign of violence referred to and the psychology that led to it should end as early as possible. Gandhiji has already expressed his disapproval of violence and sabotage and the publication of the correspondence between his Excellency and Gandhiji has had a wholesome effect on the general situation. This has not been denied in his Excellency's reply.

His Excellency has referred to the lack of support for our request from representatives of the Muslim League and the Scheduled Castes and—"persons in a position to speak for the Indian States." The Muslim League kept aloof from our Conference, but this was due entirely to its political policy, and not because it does not desire reconciliation. It is difficult to understand the demand that the rulers of Indian States should join in order that we may be given facilities to meet Gandhiji at this juncture.

It cannot be seriously contended by anyone in touch with Indian affairs that the Conference held in Delhi on February 20 and 21 and the Conference which met on March 10 at Bombay were, apart from the peculiar position of the Muslim League which made it stand aloof, not representative in character. There could be no greater volume of public support than that which backed our proposal spontaneously from all parts of India during the last six weeks.

The names of the 50 signatories to the Bombay resolution are before the public. They are persons of undoubted importance, including well-known representatives of commerce, industry and labour. The communal composition of the list is a matter of no relevance, having regard to the particular nature of the request under discussion. But, the Viceroy having raised this point, it may be pointed out that there were 13 non-Hindus among the 50 signatories, including Muslims and very important members of the Parsee, Indian Christian and Sikh communities. British missionaries and the Bishop of Dornakal joined in it. It is in order to explore avenues for meeting the demands of various non-Congress parties as far as possible that we sought to approach the most important leader of the Congress. The support of the parties and interests mentioned by his Excellency should be necessary not at the preliminary stage of seeking permission to meet Gandhiji but later when concrete proposals have been evolved after consulting him.

It is utterly wrong to suggest, as has been done in his Excellency's reply, that we contemplated the formation of a National Government upon nomination by a "single political leader acting independently of other parties and other leaders in the country." We accepted the Viceroy's statement that such a government should be fully representative of all parties and sections, and that it should be of such a character that its establishment soothes instead of aggravating controversy. But this conception cannot materialize by the complete exclusion of admittedly the most important political organization in this country by the indefinite detention of its leaders in prison and a refusal of the facilities that we have demanded for exchange of views with Gandhiji.

It is illogical to speak of discharging the responsibility of defending India against Japan by increasing the gulf between the Government and the people. Increased bitterness and ill-feeling is not "the price paid" for the discharge of defence responsibility but the direct contradiction of a sound defence policy.

We claim that it was in the public interest and as representing the most influential and patriotic non-party men in India earnestly desiring a settlement and a thoroughly sound defence organization broadbased on the satisfaction of the entire population that we want-

ed facilities to meet Gandhiji. It was not any concession for him as a prisoner that we desired to secure. Neither the British Government nor the Muslim League has expressed the view that differences can be settled or problems solved without contact with Gandhiji.

That is why we said, and it reflected a widespread feeling, that the Viceroy's action in refusing permission to us to meet Gandhiji for the purpose in view would be equivalent to a determination that there should be no attempt at a settlement of Muslim claims and no reconciliation between nationalist India and Britain.

His Excellency's refusal to alter his attitude towards the Congress and the policy of seeking to humiliate nationalist India are bound to drive hostility underground and into undesirable channels. But apart from that it is most unfortunate that his Excellency, while admitting the necessity for a National Government, insists on a policy which means in effect that throughout the period of the war with the economic conditions created thereby there can be no such government in India, and that we must be content with an administration, like the present, with no backing except that of force.

MR K. M. MUNSHI

BOMBAY, April 5, 1943.

"The Viceroy's refusal to let us see Gandhiji was anticipated. The discourtesy of ruling out any personal discussion and the 'Versailles spirit' of the reply—as Rajaji aptly put it—were not anticipated, but were not surprising," says Mr K. M. Munshi, in a statement to the Press.

He adds: "The reply comes to this that Government do not desire a settlement. They will not talk to representative national opinion, though it may be represented by men of the highest standing and service in the country. Privy Councillors, men who have been elected on a representative franchise, men representing the minority in the Congress which stood out of the 'Quit India' movement, Liberal Federation, Hindu Mahasabha, Azad Muslims, Federation of Chambers, Trade Union Congress, the Communist Party, British Missionaries—unless, of course, it is supported by the opinion of those Indians who are the determined enemies of the nation. Having put Gandhiji in prison, having denied him an impartial tribunal, having constituted themselves prosecutor, judge and jailor, they will not give us a chance even to get his reactions unless he categorically withdraws what the Government of India say he did. The Congress leaders now in prison must admit mistake, express regret, guarantee good conduct before they can be free men.

"The reply has shut the door to reconciliation. But it is not going to break the nation. If the conditions are viewed with realism, it is clear that neither Gandhiji nor the Congress leaders will capitulate; nor will they be displaced from the hearts of Indians, nationalist or otherwise. Government will continue to suppress the 'rebellion.'

"In this situation the burden lies very heavily on those in the country who believe in the nation and who have stood out of the last movement, not to let things drift. It is natural to be sullen and bitter. It is easy to strike a heroic attitude and do nothing, expecting failure. It is easy to quarrel with conditions or hope to see them changed by miracles. That way, however, leads us nowhere. The main task is to relate the national outlook to the realities of the situation as it is today, to conserve energy, to save constructive activities, to rally nationalists to an objective which is realizable in the immediate future and under present day conditions.

"The great leaders of the nation for the last 60 years in the days of depression built with faith for the day when an upsurge was possible. Those who claim their heritage cannot discard their technique. To the task of rallying nationalist India to the needs of a realistic approach

to the difficulties of the moment, we must bend our energy. This is a difficult job; a job which is unpleasant. But it is a job which must be done."

Later, on April 10, Mr Munshi referring to Mr Amery's reply to Mr Graham White in the House of Commons on the Viceroy's refusal, said: "It is not true that at any time prior to March 30, 1943, the Viceroy's reply had made it clear to us that at the proposed interview after the written memorandum and the Viceroy's reply had been read, exchange of views would be ruled out. On March 30—two days before the date of interview—for the first time we were informed on behalf of the Viceroy that, after Mr Rajagopalachari had concluded reading the statement and the Viceroy had read his reply, the meeting would terminate. The object of waiting upon the Viceroy was not to indulge in the empty formality of mutually reading out written memorandum, but to exchange views on points raised. But when this condition was sought to be imposed on the interview, as a self-respecting deputation, we could not but refuse to take part in a farce of formalities."

THE "YORKSHIRE OBSERVER"

LONDON, April 5, 1943.

Under the headline "Deplorable Mistake" the *Yorkshire Observer*, in an editorial on the Viceroy's refusal to allow Mr Rajagopalachari to see Mr Gandhi in order to discuss the political situation with him, says: "The Indian situation has deteriorated as a result of the Viceroy's refusal," and adds: "What is so depressing and exasperating to an impartial observer is that there seems no adequate reason for this unfortunate result."

The paper does not believe that a mere meeting in prison between Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues would threaten peace and order and also disagrees with the Viceroy's conditions that Congress leaders should repudiate fully their own resolution and previous attitude before being allowed to meet in prison. After fulfilling the Viceroy's conditions the Congress leaders are expected to meet to discuss things which they have already repudiated under the Viceroy's conditions for meeting. The paper thinks that the Viceroy has gravely weakened his own case and materially strengthened the Congress case.

Pointing out that it never admitted the Congress claim to speak for the whole of India, the paper says: "It is just as inadmissible to suggest that any real solution of the Indo-British problem can be reached without some sort of agreement with the largest organized Indian party."

MR PHILLIPS NOT ALLOWED TO SEE GANDHIJI

GOVERNMENT TURN DOWN U.S. ENVOY'S REQUEST

NEW DELHI, April 25, 1943.

Mr Phillips, President Roosevelt's Personal Representative in India, in a farewell chat with Press correspondents this evening on the eve of his departure for America, made an important disclosure.

In reply to a question whether he had made an effort to meet Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, he said:—

"I should like to have met and talked with Mr Gandhi. I requested the appropriate authorities for permission to do so and was informed that they were unable to grant the necessary facilities."

Before answering the question, which was the only one addressed to him, Mr Phillips in a statement said:—

"I wanted to have this opportunity, just prior to my departure for the United States on a brief visit, to meet informally and to thank representatives of the Indian Press for their courtesy and co-operation during this initial stage of my mission here. With relatively rare exceptions, the Press has viewed my mission with understanding and my relations with individual journalists have been uniformly friendly and helpful. This makes a great difference to a new-comer bent upon learning as much as possible of a country and its problems, and you may be sure that I am most appreciative. If on occasions some sections of the Press have, in varying terms, expressed regret and sometimes annoyance at my reticence, they have at the same time seemed generally to appreciate my inability to report to anyone except to my own Government.

"As you all know, since my arrival here on January 8, I have travelled extensively and had the opportunity of meeting hundreds of people from all walks of life and representing all types of opinion, occupation and profession, and everyone has been universally hospitable and helpful.

"In the short time at my disposal, I have been unable to visit several important sections of the country, such as Bengal, and I shall take the earliest possible opportunity to remedy this unavoidable omission after my return from the United States.

"I look forward to seeing you all upon my return to India. And again, many thanks for your courtesy and co-operation."

When some one remarked that India's cause is a lost cause, he replied: "Oh, no, that is not a right estimate."

AMERY'S OBJECTIVE ATTITUDE

WASHINGTON, April 26, 1943.

Although the State Department declined to comment on Mr Phillips's statement that he was refused permission to meet Mahatma Gandhi, responsible circles here understand that his purpose in seeking appointments with Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru was part of his programme to obtain all possible information from all sides and factions on the Indian problem. Authorities here pointed out that months ago Americans in India were urged to keep absolutely an objective attitude towards the controversy in India. When Mr Phillips went to India, it was reliably indicated in official circles here that one reason for his appointment was to keep as close a contact as possible with all currents of opinion. He was chosen particularly because of his ability and experience in maintaining tactful relations with public leaders and special gift in reporting delicate matters.

Informed circles here understand that as the British in India have

not allowed any one to interview Mahatma Gandhi recently, their (British) unwillingness to allow Mr Phillips to see Gandhiji apparently did not involve discrimination against Mr Phillips, or against the United States. On the contrary, had the British allowed such interview, it is understood it would have been exceptional which might have aroused unjustified hopes in Indian circles of U.S. intervention in the Indian controversy. Since there is not the slightest indication that the United States intends any activity in the Indian problem beyond mere gathering of information, it is assured the British thought it best not to permit any misapprehension among Indians. Informed circles assume that Mr Phillips was entirely aware of the British attitude before he requested the authorities, but doubtless he asked for facilities as a demonstration of his impartiality to all groups and his desire to receive their viewpoint.

"RATHER UNFORTUNATE"

WASHINGTON, April 27, 1943.

President Roosevelt's Special Envoy to India, Mr William Phillips, would have been remiss in his duty had he failed to make an effort to see Mr Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, said the *Washington Post* today, and it is unfortunate that the permission to visit and talk to these imprisoned nationalist leaders was not granted by the Indian Government. The paper added: "Yet under existing circumstances the British can hardly be blamed for taking the stand they did. A visit by Mr Phillips to Mr Gandhi and Pandit Nehru would probably have been interpreted throughout the length and breadth of India as an indication that the United States was ready to intervene in the Indian situation. It might therefore have revived the bitter controversy that led the Indian Government to jail the nationalist leaders that year and provoked a revival of disturbances harmful to the war effort. Evidently the British are content to let sleeping dogs lie. Whether or not such a policy is wise in the long run, there can be little doubt that the Indian situation is less disturbed today than it was a year ago."

The evening *Star* writes: "It is extremely difficult to understand the reasoning behind the refusal of the British authorities in India to grant the request of Mr Phillips for an interview with Mr Mohandas Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, imprisoned nationalist leaders. Mr Phillips, an experienced and able diplomat, was sent to India to make a survey of conditions there for the information of this Government. Upon his return to the United States he will report his findings to the President. Because of the attitude of the Government of India, however, he will have to rely on secondary sources in reporting the viewpoints of Mr Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, key figures in the controversy between the British and nationalist leaders. The Government, although it has a direct and vital interest in the Indian situation, has been careful to refrain from anything which might tend to complicate matters for our British ally. Our official attitude, despite insistent demands from influential groups in this country for intercession on Mr Gandhi's behalf, has been to keep hands off. Because of this, the refusal to permit Mr Phillips to see the imprisoned leaders becomes all the more inexplicable."

DEMAND FOR IMPARTIAL TRIBUNAL

NON-PARTY LEADERS' JOINT STATEMENT

NEW DELHI, May 24, 1943.

The following statement has been issued under the joint signatures of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr M. R. Jayakar, Dr Sachchidananda Sinha, Sir Chunilal B. Mehta, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, and Kunwar Sir Jagdish Prasad.

His Excellency the Viceroy's recent refusal to permit any non-Congress leaders to interview Mahatma Gandhi and the speeches of Mr Amery in the House of Commons can be reasonably interpreted as indicating that the British Government are resolved to keep Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other prominent leaders of the Congress in detention without trial for the duration of the war. Even more significant is the denial to Mr Phillips, the Personal Representative of President Roosevelt, of an opportunity to see Mahatma Gandhi. We ourselves have regretted that the Congress should have passed the resolution which it did pass on August 8, 1942, at Bombay. We have also condemned the acts of violence and sabotage which took place a few months ago in this country. We wish to place beyond all doubt that we seek for no concessions for Mahatma Gandhi and his chief associates. We are not petitioners on their behalf for clemency or tenderness. Our demand is for justice, and no more and no less. Grave charges have been publicly made against Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues, and it has been suggested both in England and in India that the Congress leaders were pro-Japanese. To the best of our knowledge and belief there is no truth in this allegation. Mahatma Gandhi's pacifism, known all over the world, should not, in our opinion, be interpreted as amounting to his sympathy with Japan or with any of the Axis Powers. The charges brought against Mahatma Gandhi are to be found in the published correspondence between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi in Government *communiqués* and pamphlets and in the pronouncements of the Secretary of State for India. It is somewhat remarkable that these charges have been made at a time when those who could meet them had no opportunity of rebutting them. It has been said that nothing was easier for Mahatma Gandhi than to repudiate acts of violence or acts of sabotage and to withdraw civil disobedience.

We feel that he has already repudiated the acts of violence, and it is our conviction that, so far as he is concerned, his adherence to the doctrine of non-violence is as strong today as it ever was. For ourselves we do not believe in civil disobedience either in principle or as a matter of expediency, but we are constrained to observe that matters were allowed to drift after the failure of the Cripps Mission and no attempt was made to avert a crisis by the exercise of imagination and constructive statesmanship. Taking the situation as it is, we urge that the *ipse dixit* of the executive Government should not be regarded as sufficient to justify the prolonged detention of imprisoned leaders without impartial investigation. Let those *ex parte* accusations be investigated by a tribunal of unchallengeable status and impartiality, a tribunal so constituted as to satisfy all reasonable men that it will carry on its investigation without fear or favour, and its decisions will in no way be influenced by the published views of the executive Government. We consider that the setting up of such a tribunal is in the highest interests of the Government itself. Madame Chiang Kai-shek has recently stated in a public speech in America that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should be set at liberty, and that speech was made after the charges against him had been broadcast to the world. Can

his continued detention be justified before world opinion if he is denied every opportunity of defending himself? If the objection to our demand is that such an investigation into the charges against Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers is not feasible during the war, we should like to point out that in his letter to Mahatma Gandhi dated February 5, 1943, his Excellency the Viceroy said: "If we do not act on all this information or make it publicly known, it is because the time is not yet ripe; but you may rest assured that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world if you can." To this Mahatma Gandhi replied in his letter dated February 7, 1943: "You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal? Or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable?" It is clear, therefore, that so far back as February 5, 1943, the possibility of these leaders having to clear themselves before the world was considered and maintained by his Excellency the Viceroy himself. We cannot see, therefore, any valid reason why that possibility should not be translated into a fact at this stage. To the objection that the setting up of a tribunal will lead to public excitement our reply is that the continued detention of these leaders had already caused and is causing grave dissatisfaction and a keen sense of injustice in the public mind.

If Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues are not allowed to meet the charges aganst them until after the war and are to be kept in prison till then, the plain implication of this is that some of the most prominent Indian leaders will be kept in jail without trial for, may be five years, and some of them may even die during this long interval. Mr Amery's tauntingly provocative description of such detention as "innocuous isolation"' has only increased public resentment. Government may think that they are strong enough to ignore all such feelings and that they are the sole judges as to when and whom to arrest and detain without trial for an unlimited period. Whatever may be said of such action on the part of a Government of the people, the same cannot apply to a Government carried on by an irremovable executive, irresponsible to the people of this country or to its legislature and in which the key positions are still in British hands. Whatever the legal position, the Government of India must in the circumstances seek a moral basis for its actions, and it is with that object in view that we suggest an investigation by an impartial tribunal.

We should in conclusion like to point out that the Rule under the Defence of India Act under which Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues were arrested was pronounced last month by the Federal Court in an authoritative decision to be invalid. Instead of availing themselves of the opportunity to restore those men to freedom under the sanction of a decision by the highest judicial authority in India, we regret that the Government of India have tried to legalize their action by a validating Ordinance. No well-wisher of the country can contemplate without grave concern a continuance of the present state of things which forbodes ill for the mutual relations between India and Britain. The sense of frustration is now deeper, if less vociferous. We sincerely hope that our suggestion that the imprisoned leaders may be given a chance of clearing themselves may be accepted. If Government for any reason are not prepared to set up an impartial tribunal, then justice, no less than expediency, demands that Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues should be set at liberty so that they may apply themselves as free men, as we expect that they will, to a review of the situation and to the solution of the present deadlock in consultation and co-operation with other important parties.

SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY URGES RELEASE

POONA, June 14, 1943.

A resolution urging Government to release all Congressmen was passed by the Council of the Servants of India Society which met here today. Condemning the Government's refusal to afford facilities for non-party leaders to interview Mahatma Gandhi, the resolution said that this would not only intensify the discontent in the country and prevent the formation of a National Government but also seriously impede the war effort.

By another resolution, the Council pleaded for general elections in the provinces where attempts are being made to end Section 93 rule.

The following are the resolutions:—

"The Council of the Servants of India Society view with grave concern the situation created by Government's refusal to permit Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Mr C. Rajagopalachari and the deputation of the Delhi Leaders' Conference to interview Mahatma Gandhi in prison with a view to securing a solution of the present political stalemate. The Secretary of State for India soon after the arrest of Congress leaders promised the House of Commons to change Government's policy if the Congress recalled its resolution of August 8, 1942. The promise necessarily implies the grant of facilities to the incarcerated Congress leaders to meet for the purpose of taking counsel with each other and of consulting men belonging to other political parties, but the refusal of such facilities renders it impossible for the Congress to revise its policy collectively even though most members of that organization may be so inclined. The Council cannot too strongly condemn the obstructionist policy of Government which will not only intensify the discontent in the country and prevent the formation of a National Government but also seriously impede the war effort. Indeed the situation in respect of law and order has so greatly improved that the Council feels that Congress leaders can be set at liberty without any serious risk to the public peace. It, therefore, urges, that they should be released immediately and unconditionally.

"The Council of the Servants of India Society condemns the attempts that are being made in certain provinces governed under Section 93 of the Government of India Act to set up Ministries without parliamentary majorities. Such Ministries can be set up only with the help of Governors and can function only in the absence of Congressmen in jail. The Ministers in such cabinets will be non-official advisers in disguise, as they will owe their positions not to any parliamentary majorty but to the support of the Government. The formation of such Ministries will mislead international opinion and make it appear that genuine democratic government is functioning in the Provinces. The proper way of ending Section 93 rule is to hold general elections in the provinces concerned and to set up Ministries in accordance with the result of those elections."

GANDHIJI WRITES TO MR JINNAH

LETTER WITHHELD BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The attempt that Mahatma Gandhi made to get into touch with Mr Jinnah was scotched by the Government of India in May 1943. This evoked country-wide condemnation. Mr Jinnah's *volte face* in this connection was also condemned. It was obviously in response to the Muslim League President's expressed wish that Mahatma Gandhi attempted to write to him.

NEW DELHI, May 26, 1943.

A Government Press *communiqué* issued today says:—

"The Government of India have received a request from Mr Gandhi to forward a short letter from himself to Mr Jinnah expressing a wish to meet him. In accordance with their known policy in regard to correspondence or interviews with Mr Gandhi, the Government of India have decided that this letter cannot be forwarded and have so informed Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah. They are not prepared to give facilities for political correspondence or contact to a person detained for promoting an illegal mass movement which he has not disavowed and thus gravely embarrassing India's war effort at a critical time. It rests with Mr Gandhi to satisfy the Government of India that he can safely be allowed once more to participate in the public affairs of the country, and until he does so the disabilities from which he suffers are of his own choice."

In this connection, the following passage which occurred in Mr Jinnah's presidential address to the annual session of the Muslim League at Delhi in April was also circulated by the "Associated Press of India" along with the Government 'communiqué':—

"Nobody would welcome it more than myself if Mr Gandhi is even now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan. Let me tell you that it will be the greatest day both for the Hindus and Muslims. If he has made up his mind, what is there to prevent Mr Gandhi from writing direct to me? He is writing letters to the Viceroy. Why does he not write to me direct? Who is there that can prevent him from doing so? What is the use of going to the Viceroy and leading deputations and carrying on correspondence? Who is to prevent Mr Gandhi today? I cannot believe for a single moment—strong as this Government may be in this country—you may say anything you like against this Government—I cannot believe that they will have the daring to stop such a letter if it is sent to me. It will be a very serious thing indeed if such a thing is done by the Government. But I do not see evidence of any kind of change of policy on the part of Mr Gandhi or Congress or the Hindu leadership."

MR JINNAH'S SURPRISE ATTACK ON GANDHIJI

BOMBAY, May 28, 1943.

"This letter of Mr Gandhi can only be construed as a move on his part to embroil the Muslim League to come into clash with the British Government solely for the purpose of helping his release, so that he would be free to do what he pleases thereafter, says Mr M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in a statement commenting on the Delhi *communiqué*.

Mr Jinnah adds: "There is really no change of policy on the part of Mr Gandhi and no genuine desire to meet the suggestion that I made in my speech during the session of the All-India Muslim League at Delhi. Although I have always been ready and willing to meet

Mr Gandhi or any other Hindu leader and shall be still glad to meet him, yet merely expressing his desire to meet me is not the kind of ephemeral letter that I suggested in my speech that Mr Gandhi should write, and which has been now stopped by the Government. I have received a communication from the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, dated May 24, that Mr Gandhi's letter merely expresses a wish to meet me and this letter Government have decided cannot be forwarded to me.

"My speech was directed to meet the appeals that were made to me and are now being made by Hindu leaders, that the Muslim League should do something towards the solution of the deadlock, and my suggestions about the kind of letter that Mr Gandhi should write, were in response to those appeals, when I said that I myself saw no change of heart. There was no evidence of any change of policy on the part of Mr Gandhi or Hindu leadership and I referred to the recent correspondence that had passed between Mr Gandhi and the Viceroy, which on the contrary showed that Mr Gandhi fully maintained his stand of August 8, 1942.

"But, nevertheless, some of the responsible Hindu leaders pressed upon me that Mr Gandhi had now realized that he had made a mistake and that he would be prepared to reconsider and retrace his step if he were given an opportunity to do so and that he had changed his attitude towards Pakistan and would be willing to come to a settlement on the basis of Pakistan, but the British Government were preventing the Hindu-Muslim settlement by refusing people of position and standing to establish contact with him for this purpose. I, therefore, suggested that if Mr Gandhi were to write to me a letter indicating that he was prepared to retrace his steps and abandon his policy and programme culminating in the resolution of the A.-I.C.C. of August 8, and was even now willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan, we were willing to bury the past and forget it. I still believe that the Government will not dare to stop such a letter if it came from Mr Gandhi.

"I regret that the Congress Press, as usual, is indulging in cheap gibes and slogans based on the publication of isolated passages from my speech and even those are mutilated and important words are eliminated from them. This may serve as misleading and inimical propaganda but is not calculated to create a friendly atmosphere, which is essential. In my opinion the Press and those who are indulging in various thoughtless statements are doing great disservice."

LEAGUE PREMIER READY TO RESIGN

NEW DELHI, May 28, 1943.

There is a reliable report current in Delhi, writes the special correspondent of the *Hindu*, at New Delhi, that the Muslim League Premier who visited the capital recently was moved to declare that all League Premiers should submit resignations of their offices to Mr Jinnah, who should forward them to the respective Governors, as a protest against the Government's refusal to pass on Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr Jinnah.

BRITISH INTENTIONS LAID BARE

MADRAS, May 28, 1943.

Mr C. Rajagopalachari, in a statement says:—

The Government of India have refused to forward Gandhiji's letter inviting Mr Jinnah to meet him. The Government *communiqué* has not given to the public the full text of the letter. The declared policy of the Government would apply to any letter from Gandhiji. Paradoxical as it may seem, I welcome this latest unambiguous expression of British policy in India, for I believe that in the situation created by it, there

is potentiality for a deliverance from the present impasse. British policy has been consistently following a line, the real intention of which has never been laid so bare as in the latest expression of it. There is a point at which by its persistence beyond bearing capacity, error overreaches itself, and thereby may come our deliverance from it.

The *communiqué* of the Government is dressed up in the language of legal justification. This attempt to court the aid of jurisprudence is ludicrous. Two eminent lawyers of international reputation, one of whom has also been a Member of the Government of India, and the other has sat in the highest court of justice in the Empire, and both of whom are his Majesty's Privy Councillors, have published their emphatic condemnation of the detentions and have challenged the Government to submit their charges and their evidence against Gandhiji to a judicial tribunal. The highest court in India acting under the guidance of a Chief Justice whom British authorities specially chose to occupy his eminent position in the first term of that court has found the detentions, including that of Gandhiji, to be illegal, even under the special powers taken. The *ex post facto* legislation by executive promulgation has been resorted to, in order to save the situation for the Government. Under these circumstances, to talk of the continued detention of Gandhiji as being "of his own choice" is ridiculous. To prevent Gandhiji from exercising his admitted power and influence for the restoration of good understanding in the country under the excuse of a detention which has been saved from being at once terminated as grossly illegal only by an *ex post facto* Ordinance just now passed, is monstrous.

Apart from the legalistic dressing, the refusal is palpably inconsistent with all the statements solemnly made from time to time that the British Government was ever willing to give effect to the agreed solutions of national leaders in India. "Is Government committing the blunder of frustrating a promising departure?" asks the London *Times*. Of course, yes, but not without knowing it. The *Yorkshire Post* seems to be in closer touch with the springs of Government strategy.

The British people should realize that it is not a question of prison regulations, but a crime against the people of India to refuse a meeting at the present juncture between Gandhiji and Mr Jinnah, when both of them have expressed anxiety to meet and discuss the terms of an agreement. It is not statesmanship. It is not international goodwill. It is not military strategy either, if an anti-Jap offensive on hand is in contemplation. It is grave folly to enforce a policy which bears all the marks of vindictiveness and for which the reasons that are given do not make any appeal to any section of the people in India. The British people should not be kept in ignorance but should know how greatly it deepens bitterness and ill-will, and surely international goodwill has not lost all the value yet. It is not right to treat the national leaders of India as implacable enemies of the Allied nations, with whom the treaty should be concluded only along with the peace treaty with the Axis Powers. Yet, this is the plain implication of the policy now followed in India.

MR RAJAGOPALACHARI CHIDES MR JINNAH

MADRAS, May 30, 1943.

Mr C. Rajagopalachari has issued the following statement to the Press:—

The prestige of the Muslim League would have been raised and its goal brought nearer if instead of trying to reply to a letter which he never got, Mr Jinnah had joined in calling a conference of all available Indian leaders to consider what should be done to overcome the hurdle which the Government have set up on the road to a national

pact. He could at that conference have made all his complaints and offered all his suggestions whatever they may be and whomsoever they may concern, and he could even then be free to choose his own line.

The terms of any agreement in the nature of a national pact must be settled simultaneously and not by either side making public statements which without binding the other side or producing any effect on the third party, only commits that side to positions not adjusted by necessary modifications and terms agreed to by the other side. In private matters an offer lapses when it is not accepted by the other side. There is no commiment resulting from the unaccepted offer. The case is different in national affairs. Hence the need for a personal meeting between leaders. This Gandhiji wanted, and this the Government seek to prevent without offering any other means to fulfil their oft-repeated pledge to further an agreement and to carry out a solution acceptable to the major parties. It is a pity that Mr Jinnah has taken up an attitude which is as suicidal of the League's own goal and prestige, as it is highly detrimental to the general cause. What he has said, however, need not prevent the course I have suggested if he feels, as I do, that it is full of potentiality for achieving our common as well as our separate aims. After his public statement I am sorry I have no course left but to make this public appeal to him. In the early days of August last year I was most anxious that Gandhiji should meet Mr Jinnah and in spite of every adverse circumstance I believe a meeting would have taken place if the Government did not precipitately arrest Gandhiji on August 8. Mr Jinnah's speech at the League meeting contained a gesture which rightly and naturally evoked the spontaneous applause of his audience, for how can they resist applauding a gesture of friendliness to those who are bone of their bones and flesh of their flesh. When this was read by Gandhiji in prison he was moved at once to write his letter inviting Mr Jinnah to meet him. The letter must have been with the local and Central Governments for a good length of time, before they issued the present *communiqué* refusing to forward it.

I have seen Gandhiji during his fast when I had talks with him on the subject of an agreement with Mr Jinnah. I feel the meeting between Mr Jinnah and Gandhiji which he has asked for would be productive of a great and abiding result which the nation as a whole, as well as the Muslim League, would welcome. We should spare no effort that is open to us to bring this about. Otherwise we shall be failing in our duty.

MR N. M. JOSHI

SIMLA, May 27, 1943.

Mr N. M. Joshi, M.L.A. (Central), says: "The Government of India's refusal to permit Mahatma Gandhi to convey to Mr Jinnah his wish to meet him makes it clear that the Government do not desire to render help in the solution of the communal problem. In my judgment, a meeting between Gandhiji and Mr Jinnah at this time would not only not embarrass war effort but would undoubtedly promote it. It seems the Government do not need enthusiastic support for their war effort by Indian people. I am afraid like the Bourbons the Government of India will never learn. I have no doubt that public opinion in India will unmistakably condemn this action of the Government. I have also no doubt in my mind that instead of Gandhiji surrendering unconditionally to the Government of India as it desires, the Government itself will have to bow before the pressure of public opinion and either release Gandhiji or appoint a judicial tribunal as suggested by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to examine the charges the Government have been making against Gandhiji and other Congress leaders."

AZAD MUSLIM CONFERENCE LEADERS

BOMBAY, May 27, 1943.

Dr Shaukatullah Ansari, Secretary, and Mr S. A. Brelvi, member of the Board of the Azad Muslim Conference, in a statement says:—

The refusal of the Government of India to forward Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr Jinnah expressing a wish to meet him cannot be too strongly condemned. It shows how Indianization of the Viceroy's Council, without real transfer of power to the representatives of the people, is a snare and a delusion. That individuals calling themselves Indians should deliberately make themselves responsible for hindering an attempt to bring about an inter-communal settlement is a measure of the demoralization which such Indianization creates. We are, however, not surprised at the decision of the Government which is fully in accord with the policy consistently followed by them of refusing to transfer power to the people and, to that end, obstructing all genuine attempts at the settlement of the communal problem.

Before their arrests, the Congress leaders, by accepting the principle of self-determination of provincial units, had taken such a step towards the settlement of the communal problem that further negotiations between them and the representatives of the League offered the basis of a provisional coalition Government for the duration of the war without prejudice to the rights and interests of any community or party in the post-war constitutional settlement.

Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr Jinnah presented the best opportunity for direct negotiations. By depriving the country of this great opportunity the Government have once again demonstrated the hollowness of their oft-advanced plea that the absence of Hindu-Muslim agreement is the only obstacle to the transfer of power to the people. Their action makes it more imperative than ever that the demand for the release of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders should be made effective. We trust Mr Jinnah and the Muslim League will join in this demand.

In his letter to the Viceroy Mahatma Gandhi had stated that if he were released, he would survey the situation *de novo*. We feel confident that the first thing that he will do after release would be to negotiate a communal settlement.

MR P. C. JOSHI

(General Secretary, Communist Party in India)

BOMBAY, May 27, 1943.

The hope that Mr M. A. Jinnah, President of the Muslim League, would make a categorical demand for the release of Mahatma Gandhi was expressed by Mr P. C. Joshi, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, in his address to the first Congress of the party today.

He added: "There is no other way to solve the deadlock, Mahatma Gandhi has taken a big step forward and he has done a big job. It is now Mr Jinnah's job to see that the League takes up the initiative to campaign for the release of Congress leaders. This will win self-determination for the Muslim nationalists. This is the only path of self-respect for the Muslim League, and for the whole country this will mean winning a National Government. The eyes of all India are turned to Mr Jinnah and he must not fail the country."

SIR N. GOPALASWAMY IYENGAR

(Former Prime Minister, Kashmir)

MADRAS, May 27, 1943.

I deplore the decision of the Government of India in refusing to forward a letter from Mahatma Gandhi to Mr Jinnah communicating a wish to meet him. No right-minded person, whether in India or in the rest of the world, will approve of this attitude. The attempt

to justify it on the ground that it is in conformity with the known policy of the Government and with precedents will carry conviction to nobody. The following of wrong precedents is not statesmanship. There may be two opinions as to whether Mahatma Gandhi was right himself in asking for this opportunity to meet Mr Jinnah especially in view of all that the Quaid-e-Azam has committed himself to recently, but the request was obviously prompted by the sincere desire to explore the possibilities of reaching an understanding with Mr Jinnah, with a view to easing the present very tense situation in the country.

That a Government which has seized every opportunity to point to the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League as practically the only thing that is standing in the way of a settlement should thwart a gesture of this kind from a leader of Mahatma Gandhi's world position is a matter of amazement, particularly to persons who have had anything to do with Government and administration. We do not know whether any individual Member of the Government of India made any attempt himself to contact Mahatma Gandhi after he was arrested and placed in detention and, if so, whether he was permitted to do so, or what the result of such conduct, if any, was. But the world is aware that requests not merely from responsible leaders in the country but also from President Roosevelt's Personal Envoy in India have been summarily turned down.

One wonders whether the Government of India could be considered to have been really serious when, in their *communiqué*, they imply that the Mahatma, even under existing conditions and with full regard to the circumstances which preceded his arrest and detention and to the restrictions under which alone an interview would necessarily be allowed, is a person who, in their opinion, could not safely be allowed to engage himself in a conversation, even a political conversation, with Mr Jinnah.

In the circumstances, the Government of India, which is predominantly Indian in composition today, will have to thank only themselves, if the public get the impression from their latest decision that they are not prepared during the period of the war to afford facilities calculated to help the bringing about of a solution of the political deadlock in the country.

SETH YUSUF ABDULLA HAROON

KARACHI, May 27, 1943.

"The refusal of the Government of India to allow the letter written by Mr Gandhi to reach Mr Jinnah will be condemned by all sections of public opinion both in and out of India," says Seth Yusuf Abdulla Haroon, M.L.A. (Central), and Joint Secretary of the Sind Provincial Muslim League.

Mr Haroon adds: "For Muslim India, it is a particular matter of great concern, especially as Quaid-e-Azam had emphatically warned the Government from taking such an unwise step. I feel that Muslim India stands today on the threshold of a momentous decision. Darkness seems to envelop the entire political firmament of India. But I see on the horizon a silver lining, for we have a leader of vision, patriotism and determination. The eyes of the Muslim nation are now turned on him. In his sagacious leadership Muslim have implicit faith."

KARACHI CORPORATION

KARACHI, May 28, 1943.

On May 28, Mr Abdulla Haroon, M.L.A. (Central), moved the adjournment of the Karachi Corporation at its meeting in order to protest against the stopping of Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr Jinnah. The resolution was adopted and the Corporation adjourned without transacting any business.

BANGALORE MUSLIM LEAGUE SECRETARY

BANGALORE, May 27, 1943.

Apropos the Government of India's decision turning down Mahatma Gandhi's request to see Mr Jinnah, the General Secretary of the Muslim League, Civil and Military Station, Bangalore, says: "The ill-advised decision of the Government in turning down Gandhiji's request to see Mr Jinnah will be received throughout the length and breadth of the country with the fiercest anger and indignation. At last the Quaid-e-Azam's call at Delhi has found a corresponding echo in the heart of Gandhiji. It is really pathetic that the Government should fail to realize that the urge for union among Hindus and Muslims was never so strong and so well pronounced as it is today. It would have augured well if the Government had celebrated the Tunisian victory by allowing our two great leaders to come into contact and solve the political deadlock."

SIR JAGDISH PRASAD ON MR JINNAH'S VANITY

NEW DELHI, June 2, 1943.

Sir Jagdish Prasad, Member of the Viceroy's Council till 1941, in a statement says:—

Mr Jinnah's statement on the Government of India's refusal to allow Mahatma Gandhi to write to him deserve more comment than the refusal itself.

Most people are, however, not so simple as to believe that it is ever worth while to attempt to bring Mr Jinnah in conflict with the British Government. However much he may bully some of his countrymen, he knows only too well that he cannot browbeat the British Government. He is shrewd enough to realize that the partition of India cannot be brought about merely by tall talk and minatory resolutions. He therefore insists that his Pakistan must receive a British guarantee. In other words, the division of India must be perpetuated in the last resort by the armed might of Great Britain. Mr Jinnah's present policy is to seek an alliance with the British Government for the permanent division of India and not to embroil himself with the authorities. If this is clearly grasped there is little difficulty in understanding why Mr Jinnah's somewhat theatrical attitudes are treated with such indulgence in high quarters in England. The folly of quarrelling with the British Government must be reserved for his opponents and the longer the quarrel lasts the less dissatisfied will Mr Jinnah be.

What is, however, surprising is that some prominent men outside Mr Jinnah's fold should look to him for succour in their distress. In their helplessness they perhaps fondly imagine that by setting up Mr Jinnah as a king or political deity and offering humble prayers they will secure salvation for their country. Have they so easily forgotten his antecedents, his present policy and his future ambitions? Their pitiful appeals will further inflame his vanity. He cannot be appeased. He has laid down his inexorable terms. Accept Pakistan and do not ask what it means. That is a secret which can only be divulged after the principles has been accepted and has received a British guarantee.

Mr Jinnah has had his day of deliverence and fortitude, and has now his day of pride and power.

DR SYED ABDUL LATIF

HYDERABAD (Deccan), June 1, 1943.

Whatever view one might take of Mr Jinnah's latest performance, one thing is clear. The League has now lost the position of vantage which it occupied since the Congress went off the scene. The position had given the League the privilege to take the initiative to end the deadlock and thereby add to its strength and influence. This privilege, Mr Jinnah has petulantly thrown away without even consulting his

Working Committee. As a result the League will now have to recede into the background and occupy itself at best with provincial intrigues till the end of the war or till the deadlock is resolved through the efforts of other agencies.

The real deadlock is between the Congress and the British Government. That between the League and the Congress has been given importance because of the major deadlock and as a handy argument against the Congress. Once the Congress and the British Government reach a settlement which they will do one day in each other's interest, the League will either have to fit into it willy-nilly or go into the wilderness. That is the fate which will stare the League in the face tomorrow if its rank and file do not in time realize whither they are drifting. Mr Jinnah had a splendid opportunity to play the role of mediator between the Congress and the British Government and bring about a reconciliation to achieve the League's object too with their mutual goodwill. But obsessed as he is with his innate and insatiate desire to humiliate his political opponents, particularly Mahatma Gandhi, he could not display qualities befitting that role. Mr Jinnah's latest behaviour has placed the League in a decidedly false position. What is Muslim politics worth if it chooses to discard its moral touch? The hour indeed calls for a serious searching of heart on the part of the League's Working Committee and Council and for a reorientation of their policy and method of work. Or else they will be leaving for the younger generation a legacy of troubles by no means easy to surmount.

MUSLIM MAJLIS

CALCUTTA, June 14, 1943.

Khan Bahadur Sheikh Mohammed Jan, M.L.C. (President, Muslim Majlis), says:—

Repeated failures on the part of Mr Jinnah for the last two years to meet the Congress leaders and discuss with them his Pakistan scheme as to what he really wants by self-determination for the Muslims of India, created doubts among his followers about his *bona fide* intentions, and his last attempt at evading the issue and demanding acceptance of his pet political theories without any discussion and unconditional surrender by the Congress, have convinced his staunch supporters that Mr Jinnah neither cares for the independence of India nor for Pakistan but for maintaining his own present untenable position even at the cost of India's freedom and the risk of losing Pakistan itself.

"BLOT ON MUSLIM LEAGUE"

CAWNPORE, June 23, 1943.

The Working Committee of the All-India Momin Conference met here on June 19, 20 and 21. It deplored the attitude and action of Mr Jinnah towards Mahatma Gandhi's letter and regarded it as a challenge to the spirit and traditions of Islamic chivalry. The Committee regarded it as a blot on the name of the Muslim League and in a way on Muslims as a whole, and felt that Mr Jinnah's attitude had prejudiced the country's effort for early settlement of her problems.

The Committee urged that with a view to accelerating the war effort and ensure complete and willing co-operation of the country the Government should release all political prisoners and focus attention on the formation of a National Government at the Centre representing all important elements in India's national life.

BRITISH SUPPORT

LONDON, May 26, 1943.

Official reaction in London about the Government of India's refusal to forward Mr Gandhi's letter to Mr Jinnah is clear, writes Reuter's political correspondent.

It is that the Government of India's decision will meet with the full support of the British Government. It is indicated authoritatively that with the security of India and successful prosecution of the war as paramount considerations, there is no intention of allowing Mr Gandhi or any other Congress Party leaders under detention to participate during the war in any political discussions or negotiations so long as they remain committed to the policy of non-co-operation and to campaign against the war effort of India, and, in the words of the *communiqué*, until they "can safely be allowed once more to participate in public affairs of the country."

It is on the basis of this policy that Mr William Phillips, President Roosevelt's Personal Representative, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others were not allowed to see Mr Gandhi. Mr Churchill's address to the United States Congress provides the broad setting into which the Government of India's action fits.

MR PERCY MACQUEEN, I.C.S. (RETD.)

OOTACAMUND, June 8, 1943.

Mr Percy Macqueen, I.C.S. (Retd.), in a statement says:—

The Government of India, in refusing to allow Mr Gandhi to meet Mr Jinnah, have put the cart before the horse. They are justified in refusing to release Mr Gandhi so long as he is the leader of "an illegal movement which he has not disavowed." But this is no reason for refusing to let him meet a man whose patriotism is above suspicion and who might succeed, where the Government have failed, in bringing about a change of attitude on the part of the Congress leaders.

What is wanted is a little less 'high hat.' To paraphrase Horace: "No man is so pigheaded that he will not respond to generosity." If the Government of India—and particularly their Indian majority, who understand the mentality of their countrymen—wish to remove the impression that they wish the present deadlock to continue, they should either tackle the problem themselves or allow others to do so. If something positive is not done soon, we may find the whole fabric clattering about ours ears.

KARACHI LEAGUE JOINT SECRETARY

KARACHI, September 7, 1943.

An appeal to the Government of Sind to release political prisoners in the province is made by Mr Muhammad Amin Khoso, M.L.A., Joint Secretary, Sind Provincial Muslim League, in a statement.

Mr Khoso says: "I have myself been in prison for eight months, and I know the views of all leading Congressmen in Sind. We used to discuss politics without let or hindrance inside the jail. Barring a few exceptions of arrested Congressmen, almost all hold definitely progressive and anti-Fascist views. It is a lie and political blackmail to call the Congress pro-Axis in any sense of the word. Under the circumstances I will urge the present Ministry to release all political prisoners.

"In case the Sind Ministry does not take the initiative in this matter, I will request all Sindhis to make a united demand for their release."

REVISION OF BRITISH POLICY URGED

STRONG VIEWS EXPRESSED IN BRITAIN AND INDIA

The "unconditional surrender" attitude of the British Government in India will not help the cause of the United Nations in any respect. The British Government must revise its policy and try to end the deadlock in India before it is too late. Mere accusations against the Congress will not find a solution. A positive lead is the need of the hour. Will not Mr Churchill's marvellous gifts of imagination and vision give such a lead? Persons of international repute and newspapers of eminence discuss below the possible solutions for ending the stalemate in India:

LONDON, March 27, 1943.

Referring to the pamphlet entitled *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances* issued by the Government of India during Mahatma Gandhi's fast the *New Statesman and Nation* writes:—

The Government of India has done a questionable thing in publishing a White Paper of 76 pages, which is from first to last a personal indictment of Mr Gandhi. It is a propaganda document primarily designed, we presume, to damage him in American eyes. For our own part, while we retain a deep respect for his personality, we think that his leadership in recent years has been almost uniformly unfortunate and even disastrous. But when we are confronted with this indictment from New Delhi, two or three reflections take precedence in our mind over all its charges. This attack is made on a man who is, after all, one of the world's greatest personalities, but who is not now in a position to reply or defend himself. Again, if the graver charges are well founded, ought not the Indian Government to have tried Mr Gandhi before a court of law, instead of holding him, silent and isolated, in internment by an administrative act?

But our chief reflection on reading this White Paper was that, if Mr Gandhi, with a policy ruinously blended of pacifism and political tactics, became, after the failure of the Cripps mission, the dominant force in the Congress Party, the responsibility for this misfortune lies primarily with Lord Linlithgow, Mr Amery and Mr Churchill. It is a mistake to suppose that Mr Gandhi can always dominate the Congress. Again and again, for years together, in his long career he had dropped out of favour, gone into retirement and given way for a time to other leaders. During the war, he and his disciple Nehru fought a duel over policy, none the less real because Nehru feels for his master a deep veneration, even when they differ completely. From the outbreak of the war down to the unlucky Spring of 1942, they alternated as the inspirers of Congress policy. Always Nehru was for collaboration with the United Nations and for wholehearted participation in a war for freedom—if only he could wring from us terms compatible with Indian self-respect. Always Gandhi took the negative line, partly on pacifist grounds; partly because he stands in this thinking poles apart from modern democracy, whether of a liberal or socialist type; partly because he was defeatist and thought the Axis would win. During the three years of war, the two alternated like the little old man and the little old woman in the primitive toy-barometer that used to amuse us in old-fashioned farm houses. Whenever by the smallest sign of comprehension we seemed to smile on India, out came the friendly fairweather face of Nehru. When we frowned and India despaired, Nehru swung back on his perch, and out came the hostile figure of Gandhi, set for storm. If the more modern and reasonable minds of Congress, Nehru, Rajagopalachari, and Dr Azad,

were finally defeated last Spring and Mr Gandhi won the power to wreck, the cause of this disaster lay in the defects of the Cripps offer. It was rigid and could not be amended, nor did it in the judgment of any Indian party amount to a real transfer of power. That left the field open for Gandhi's negations.

Whether Gandhi has taken liberties with his own doctrine of non-violence—as the White Paper argues at wearisome length—is a question chiefly of biographical interest. Lack of space forbids us to pursue it. In some places passages from his writings are unfairly quoted. The graver charges, made by innuendo, that Gandhi really contemplated sabotage and arson, or that he intended to aid a Japanese victory seem to us not merely to lack proof, but to be impossible. What Gandhi meant to do was what George Fox might have done—to go to Tokyo and preach pacifism to the Japanese. That may be a noble folly, but it is not treason to India—or to Britain. For the rest, our own deduction from the selected facts in this publication is that after the senior leaders of Congress were interned, the effective leadership passed to the younger generation of students and revolutionary socialists, who view Gandhi's ideas with impatience. The next phase in India will not be any sort of "non-violence," however imperfect. It may too easily be terrorism and a guerilla revolt under much more reckless leaders. The White Paper is the speech of a prosecuting counsel; the defence would ask whether Mr Churchill in discouraging the co-operative and more modern-minded Indian leaders ought not, when history places him in the dock with the Mahatma, to receive a more severe sentence than Mr Gandhi.

BRITISH SERVICE MEN RESENT PROPAGANDA

LONDON, April 10, 1943.

The following is a letter published in the *New Statesman and Nation* under the caption "Army Education" and signed by 'Five Members of H.M. Forces':—

Sir,—A good deal of lip-service is paid to Army education in the national Press, and the undersigned feel that the public should have some of the facts of what often happens at "educational" meetings. The meeting from which the following details are taken is fairly typical of those we have attended.

The lecture purporting to be on India took place in the evening and attendance was supposed to be voluntary. Nevertheless, men had to be detailed to attend in order to ensure that the military officer had a "full house." The address which followed was noticeable both for its inaccuracies and for its bias.

No attempt was made to put forward the view of any of the Indian groups, Hindu or Muslim, or such liberal views as those of Sir Tej Sapru or Mr Rajagopalachari and no mention was made of Dominion Status. The only view presented was that of the British Army and of British Imperialism.

We leave you to judge the accuracy of the following statements:—

1. Gandhi is the self-appointed dictator of Congress.
2. The only demand for Indian Home Rule comes from a small group of Indian "professional" men and would-be intellectuals.
3. Gandhi is the mouthpiece of the money-lending class in India.
4. Only 65 per cent of Indians are now illiterate (and this was said despite the fact that *Empire: A Monthly Record,* May 1940, gives the figures as 86 per cent. males and 98 per cent. females illiterate).

In addition to the patently misleading statements given above the whole address was accompanied by cheap sneers at Gandhi and his fast, while no attempt was made to place the present struggle in its historic setting.

Many of those who came to the meeting with empty minds on India

left with a one-sided view of the difficulty there. When the soldiers in this country are dragooned into a political meeting and there conditioned at the authority's whim we are left in no doubt as to their future sympathies, should they ever be called on to suppress "national" or independent feeling in India or elsewhere. We append our names, but, for obvious reasons, ask you to respect the address as secret.

HOLMES ON SPIRIT OF REVOLT IN ASIA

CHICAGO, June 6, 1943.

The Rev. John Haynes Holmes of "Unity," Chicago, writes:—

The world is beset by an agony of woe this day which I believe to be greater than any ever hitherto encountered by mankind. Sorokin, in his great book, *The Crisis of Our Age*, calls this "the bloodiest crisis of the bloodiest century." If, in any previous age, there has been a vaster or deeper agony, then men generally have not known it, since until our time there has been no nervous system of news communication to record and transmit it. We know and feel today the maximum of horror. How to live from hour to hour under such stress of pain is perhaps our most dreadful problem. And I know of no answer to it except in the finding and doing of some work immediately related to the woe that now besieges us. Here the men in the army and the navy and other branches of governmental service are to be regarded as fortunate. They have their job to do, their orders to obey. They are absorbed—body, mind and soul—in the big task of the moment. This task is ugly—nobody likes war any more!—but there are millions of persons, inside and outside the armed forces, who simply see no other way of ending the evils that beset us, and their spirits are content. At the opposite pole in this globular struggle are the conscientious objectors to war. They also have their work to do as prescribed by government in camp or prison, in testimony to the high faith that is within them. Voluntarily, and in the spirit of sacrifice, they are living for what they feel to be best in this great crisis, and therefore have found their place. In between these two extremes, where morale is at its peak, stand the rest of us. What are *we* doing to alleviate the world's agony, and in the end to rescue it from death? It is not enough to wash our hands of what we regard as evil. In no standing aloof and apart can any agony in our own hearts find easement. Somewhere, in this vast welter of distress, we must also find our place and take it, and there do all that in us lies to lift up and save the stricken body of mankind. What one person is doing I may not be physically or spiritually able to do. But something I must do with all my heart and soul. Sacrifice is the call of this black hour. No one has a right to live these days who cannot in one way or another show his personal offering gladly laid upon the altar of humanity. And let not one reproach another that all offerings are not the same! If true in spirit, they are the same with God.

The following news dispatches appeared in the American Press in December last:

Special courts at—and—have sentenced twenty-one persons to death as a result of disorders in August and September.

At—eleven persons were sentenced to death and thirteen others to banishment to penal camps for life after conviction on charges of murder and rioting in which a police inspector and another official were killed.

At—ten persons were sentenced to death, fifty-two to banishment for life and nine others to various prison terms for arson, looting and murder.

It would seem easy to identify these dispatches as reports of Nazi outrages, until the two spaces in the first dispatch are filled in with the names of Bangalore and Wardha respectively, the space in

the second dispatch with Bangalore, and the third dispatch with Wardha. Then it is seen that they are all stories from India—as a matter of fact, dispatches from New Delhi. They are copied here from the pages of the January issue of the *New History* magazine as disclosing what the editorial comment therein describes as "the nature of political unrest in India." The people of this occupied country in Asia are seething with the same spirit of revolt against tyranny as the people of the occupied countries in Europe. And the revolt in the one place as in the other is being met by very much the same type of repression and punishment. This is not to say that the British are practising the same indiscriminate and nameless cruelties as those of which the Nazis have been so hideously guilty. There are no Lidices in India! But the imposition of imprisonment, banishment to concentration camps, and capital penalties ("sentenced to death") is common to both situations. Conquest and empire, in other words, are everywhere much the same, and must everywhere be got rid of. The expulsion of western colonial powers from Asia and Africa is as necessary as the expulsion of the Axis powers wherever they have gone. All men everywhere must be delivered from alien rule.

BRITISH LABOUR PARTY—A STUDY

LONDON, June 28, 1943.

After a speech by Mr Reginald Sorensen, M.P., urging Government to make another offer to India or at least reopen negotiations, Mr Arthur Greenwood at the Labour Party Conference today persuaded the backers of the two resolutions to withdraw them on a pledge that the Party Executive would immediately open new discussions on the Indian policy.

Mr Sorensen, who is Secretary of the Indian League Parliamentary Committee, was moving the resolution on behalf of his own constituency, Labour Party (Leyton) and three other divisional parties urging the Government to recognize the increasing urgency of a settlement with India and take the initiative in negotiating, with the Indian national leaders on the basis of recognition of India's independence and formation of a provisional national unity under an Indian Prime Minister.

Mr Sorensen said: "Although undoubtedly communal differences do exist in India, it is my conviction that the Cripps offer did not fall primarily through any communal differences. I would urge the conference once more to press on the Government to make another offer to India or at least open negotiations with India. I express profound regret that Government has not enabled Congress leaders who, Mr Amery himself had admitted, were leaders of great and important parties to be in contact with non-Congress leaders like Mr Rajagopalachari and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.

"Why cannot we allow these Indian patriots to be in contact with other Indians?"

Describing the White Paper as "tendentious and misleading" he referred to the sixty thousand Indians in prison.

Mr Sorensen emphasized that the Labour Party's affirmation that the Indian people were entitled to self-determination and self-government did not mean necessarily that the British should determine what form of Government the Indians should choose.

"In the last resort, if independence and self-government mean anything at all, the decision as to the kind of government that shall exist in India must be made by politically conscious India itself, even though that may mean severance from ourselves. I hope it will not. I hope India will freely co-operate with this country, with China and with other Eastern peoples. But it is her choice.

"Although we may sometimes think that Indians have chosen wrongly or acted unwisely, it is only their judgment. Just as we would not dream of laying down for other democratic peoples what particular form of democracy they must implement in their legislatures, so we should recognize the same fact regarding India."

Amid protests from a number of delegates against the executive's suggestions that owing to lack of time in the closing hours of the conference, there should be no further discussion, Mr Arthur Greenwood suggested that resolutions should be withdrawn on "my definite undertaking that we shall go to the Joint Committee in the near future to discuss the matter in the light of the executive committee's report." On this plea both the resolutions were withdrawn.

The second resolution in the name of St. Pancras (London) and Kins Norton (Birmingham) divisional parties urged "immediate reopening of negotiations with bodies truly representative of the major communities of the population of India," and declared "a democratic solution of the Indian problem can be found in the formula of self-determination based on freedom from racial, religious, caste and class domination." The executive's report on India (which was among the sections of general report passed by the conference tonight *en bloc* without discussion because of pressure of time) stated that the Joint Committee on India consisting of the India Committee of Parliamentary Labour Party and the International Sub-Committee of the National Executive had continued their study of the Indian constitutional problem and of the rejection of the Cripps proposal. It quoted the declaration issued on August 12 last by the Party Executive and the Trades Union Congress General Council deprecating the civil disobedience movement and urging Government to make it clear that on the abandonment of civil disobedience it would be ready to resume discussions with a view to safeguarding and implementing the principles of Indian self-government.

BRITISH COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

LONDON, July 15, 1943.

The British Council of Churches has sent a message to the National Christian Council of India assuring the Council that "we and our countrymen regard ourselves as wholly committed" by the offer regarding a constitution for India carrying with it complete self-government made a year ago. The message further begs "that you in India will try as we shall to overcome the mistrust that separates our peoples."

The message which is sent together with a covering letter from the President of the British Council of Churches, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was unanimously adopted at a recent meeting of the Council. The message says: "We, members of the British Council of Churches, greet our fellow-Christians in India. We rejoice with you in common fellowship in Christ Jesus which has united us to one another and to all Christians throughout the world. We are deeply distressed by the long-continued political deadlock and deterioration of relations between our peoples. Among us as with you this creates a sense of frustration. We realize that beneath the political difficulties there are soreness and alienation deeply rooted in history whose ultimate causes are moral and spiritual. We admit a share in these for which in spite of the devoted services of many, the British people as a whole must accept responsibility. But, nonetheless, we are convinced that the British Government and the people are sincere in the offer made a year ago that a constitution carrying with it complete self-government shall be devised by the Indians themselves and that even if India should wish to separate herself from the British Commonwealth of Nations, no obstacles would be put in her path, much

as we should regret such an end to the long association of our peoples. We assure you that we and our countrymen regard ourselves as wholly committed by this offer. Concerned as we are to see the political deadlock ended, we have a still deeper concern. In the face of the deep-seated alienation and mistrust, the Christians have a message and a mission."

BRITISH LIBERALS FOR INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

LONDON, July 18, 1943.

The release of prisoners in India and demands for more information from the Press and the British Broadcasting Corporation about India were two points on which Liberals all over Britain ought to insist, it was stated at a London meeting of Liberals last night. The meeting had been arranged by the India League. Mr Clement Davies, M.P., urged support of Indian independence and asked the India League to approach Liberal organizations throughout the country for support.

BRITISH MISSIONARIES' APPEAL TO END DEADLOCK

BOMBAY, July 18, 1943.

An earnest appeal to all parties in India to make an entirely fresh approach to the political problem with a view to coming to a settlement is made in a statement issued over the signatures of a number of British missionaries resident in India.

The signatories to this appeal urge on the Government of India to consider the granting of a general amnesty to all political prisoners not convicted of crimes of violence. They say:—

"We, a group of British missionaries belonging to various branches of the Christian Church, have felt moved to express our minds on the political situation. We are not party politicians, and we realize that in many political questions it is possible for Christians honestly to hold opposing views. On this particular question we know that there are differences of opinion, and we wish to make it clear that in what we now say we have no authority to speak on behalf of the whole body of British missionaries, but we have reason to believe that the opinions which we hold are widely shared.

"We cannot but be disturbed by the fact that while it has been authoritatively declared that India has the right to frame her own constitution for a free India, the methods of friendly consultation and discussion with a view to the preparation of plans for the attainment of this end have broken down, and bitterness and distrust have infected the minds of great numbers of people. It is not for us to apportion blame for all that has happened in recent months, but as Christian men and women we feel it to be our duty to give whatever help we can towards the restoration of goodwill and the attainment of a settlement acceptable to all classes in India.

"We believe that such a settlement can be reached only through the co-operation of the best minds in India. We, therefore, earnestly urge that all parties should admit the necessity of making an entirely fresh approach to the whole problem, and should declare their willingness to enter into unrestricted conference with each other with a view to discovering whether their differences are irreconcilable. This seems to us to be not only the right method of procedure, but the only method that is likely to be fruitful."

"The policy of postponing even the planning of a new constitution until after the war has caused great dissatisfaction in India," the appeal says. "We are strongly of the opinion that the representative body proposed in the Cripps scheme for the planning of a new constitution should be called together now, and that the Government should give it every help and encouragement in its work. We would suggest

that in convening this body the Government should make it clear beyond all possibility of misunderstanding that every question regarding the future constitution is open and that no question may be presumed to have been settled beforehand, so that no individual or party may have any excuse for refusing to participate in its deliberations."

"It is clear," the missionaries conclude, "that no happy solution of the Indian political problem is possible while suspicion and distrust remain. On the other hand, we believe that if goodwill and mutual trust can be restored, the way lies open to the attainment of a just and lasting settlement."

METROPOLITAN URGES FREE NEGOTIATION

CALCUTTA, July 19, 1943.

Interviewed on the statement issued by a number of British missionaries in India on the Indian political problem, the Most Reverend Dr Foss Westcott, Metropolitan of India, who is one of the signatories to the statement, said:—

"Sir Stafford Cripps's statements have left no room for doubt as to the sincerity of the British Government's pledge for the grant of responsible self-government. That guarantee stands. Unquestionably the refusal to take any steps for the drafting of the constitution till after the war has embittered national feeling. At least, let the Congress be given the opportunity of frankly disavowing the policy which led to such deplorable violence and sabotage and accept the policy of free negotiation with the other political parties with a view to framing the constitution. Why wait to undertake this task, which must of necessity be the preliminary to the exercise of self-government which is thus unduly delayed? This has led to the aggravation of the spirit of ill-feeling and even of hatred. As one pledged by his office to the promotion of goodwill, I fully associate myself with the appeal, which is so reasonable."

FORGETTING "GANDHI AND CONGRESS"

LONDON, August 4, 1943.

The *Manchester Guardian* in an editorial entitled "India" writes:—

Lord Linlithgow, the outgoing Viceroy, who is about to be succeeded by Lord Wavell, has made his farewell address to the Central Legislature. He paid a just tribute to the people of India for their war service, their endurance and courage, both at home and in the field. Happy is the country which can command such allies! It should encourage us to believe that having secured so much confidence we can still by friendly effort secure that also which is denied to us by a large part of the Indian people. As a political performance the Viceroy's address was remarkable. If *Reuter's* summary is an adequate report, the Viceroy contrived to "review his term of office"—*Reuter's* phrase—without so much as mentioning that Gandhi and the Congress chiefs are in prison, that they are forbidden to receive visitors from leaders outside, that Gandhi himself is forbidden to write letters to these leaders, and that this, together with the conditions of release imposed by the Government, is the cause of the present deadlock. But this omission destroys the value of much of the speech. The general burden is, of course, that India's leaders and not the Government must find a way out. But consider the words:

> If there is to be any progress, Indian public men, without delay, should start to get together and clear the way for it. . . .
>
> Are India's leaders to be found unprepared when the day comes for those discussions (proposed in the Cripps scheme)?
>
> If the proposals which the Government have put forward . . . . are unacceptable to India as a whole, there is nothing to stop India's leaders from considering and devising an alternative, or

from trying by private negotiation with other parties in the country to secure their support for any such alternative.

Nothing, of course, except that the leaders of the Congress, the largest party in the country, are kept in prison, that the former Congressman Rajagopalachari is not allowed to visit Gandhi, that Gandhi is kept apart from the other leaders, and that he is not allowed to send a letter even to Mr Jinnah, the Muslim leader. All this may or may not be right and proper, but it seems somehow as though it ought just to have been mentioned.

It rather looks as though the Indian Government had decided that the best thing to do is to pretend that Gandhi and Congress do not exist and to hope that they will be quietly forgotten. Mr Amery on July 29 treated the question in the Commons almost as strangely as the Viceroy. Question and answer were as follows:—

Mr Amery: Letters have passed from time to time between Mr Gandhi and the Home Department of the Government of India, but I am not prepared to disclose their number or their contents.

Mr Sorensen: Could we have no idea of whether the communications were of a political nature, making any representations or any protests?

Mr Amery: No, sir. In view of the circumstances of Mr Gandhi's arrest, the Government of India decided that he should not be afforded any opportunity of expressing or conveying his views to the public, either in India or through me.

Mr Sorensen: How, then, can the public form any opinion on the views Mr Gandhi has about the present situation?

Mr Amery: It is not desired that they should.

There are here two extraordinary statements, both of constitutional importance. The first is that "the Government of India decided" that Gandhi should not give his views to the public through the Secretary of State for India. Since when has the Indian Government been entitled to decide what should or should not be said about India by the Indian Secretary, who is responsible only to the British Parliament and from whom the Indian Government takes, or should take, orders? Secondly, whose decision is it that the British people are to be prohibited from knowing Gandhi's views? Is that also "decided" by the Indian Government? Or by Mr Amery? It will interest the country, and it should interest Parliament to know.

It is a relief to turn to the "statement" recently issued by twenty-five missionaries in India. They insist that there can be no solution so long as the present "suspicion and distrust" remain. To get rid of this they suggest that political prisoners (not convicted of crimes of violence) should be released if they are "prepared to follow constitutional methods and to work on constructive lines." They urge a "friendly and informal" conference between the party leaders at once, to be followed by the calling of the representative body proposed in the Cripps scheme. They want "an entirely fresh approach" and a readiness in all parties "to enter into unrestricted conference," and they believe that their proposals would greatly help the prosecution of the war. Surely such a programme of positive action, which aims at re-establishing confidence, is much to be preferred to the present sulky silence. How long can we go on in this way? The Viceroy himself says, "The post-war phase is drawing rapidly nearer." As it comes closer, shall we still clamp down on Congress leaders, refusing to hear (or let the British people know) what they say, if they are saying anything? If so, what is the use of all the fine words of the Viceroy about getting together, private negotiation, and all the rest? May it prove that Lord Wavell, by thinking differently, can bring victory out of our present defeat.

INDIA: AN URGENT SITUATION

LONDON, August 5, 1943.

In a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, Mr Reginald Sorensen writes:—

It is deeply gratifying to note your constant concern for India and in particular your deep disquiet at Mr Amery's negations. It is astonishing that according to the Secretary of State's reply neither the content of the correspondence between Mr Gandhi and the Indian Home Department is to be divulged nor is Mr Gandhi (or presumably any other Congress leader) to be given an opportunity of making any public statement. It is also lamentable that this suffocating situation apparently meets with little articulate protest from those who love liberty and profess a desire to see a break in the present deadlock.

How long is this to continue? Surely it should not be assumed that because the major Opposition parties are partners in the present Coalition Government they must remain dumb save on certain domestic issues. The position is almost ludicrous, for while the Congress leaders are criticized and condemned they are given no opportunity of defence or initiative. Pedantic legality may justify the gag and the chain, but not our own complacent impotence. If we feel a sense of shame or even of regret at the incongruity of gag and chain, a practical sign of this is imperative, and even if the Government feels justified in continuing the detentions I submit a little imaginativeness would gladly concede one or two beneficial contributions towards an ultimate issue out of present afflictions.

Thus, I consider the following would be of value in this respect:—

1. Publication of the Gandhi correspondence with the Home Department.

2. Opportunity granted to Mr Gandhi and Congress leaders for public statements.

3. Permission granted for contact between Congress leaders and non-Congress spokesmen.

4. Suspension of the penalty of whipping.

These are relatively minor proposals, but the least that could be granted. We might remember Eire and the fact that when at long last we negotiated a settlement we did so without preliminary stipulations!

Meanwhile, apart from the subterranean bitterness that accumulates, let us not forget that famine conditions grow more menacing and suffering is acute. Political frustration and physical distress are perilous in association.

The urgency of the situation calls for spiritual courage and energetic action alike in the interest of freedom and of humanity.

BERNARD SHAW WANTS INDIANS TO BE SELF-RELIANT

LONDON, August 7, 1943.

Mr George Bernard Shaw declined an invitation to join the Council for International Recognition of Indian Independence. In a letter to the Secretary he said:—

"I cannot give any support because though I am probably at one with the signatories of the invitation as to making India a separate and self-governing Power, I am not one with those who imagine that independence, called in America 'isolation,' is possible between Powers. On the contrary, what needs rubbing in is their dependence on one another for peace, friendly co-operation and political integrations, without which they will destroy one another.

"India's future as far as one can guess will be as a federated commonwealth like the United States of America, the British Commonwealth and the U.S.S.R. among other federations not yet constituted.

But without links between them they will either starve or have to beg, borrow or steal from one another. Beggars and borrowers are not independent and stealing means war. Also the Indians' business is not my personal business; my intrusion into India's affairs would be impertinence. India's battle must be won by Indians."

MRS CLARE BOOTH LUCE

NEW YORK, August 12, 1943.

Mrs Clare Booth Luce, U.S. Senator and a critic of the American Administration, wrote a speech which was read at a meeting at the Town Hall commemorating the anniversary of jailing Pandit Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and other Indian leaders. The speech censured President Roosevelt for not championing the cause of Pandit Nehru. Mrs Luce, who had interviewed Pandit Nehru in the East, said: President Roosevelt is the world's best informed man, so they say. He must know Nehru is a man so good and great, of such lofty mind and character that he makes most of our own leaders seem almost shabby mentally, and certainly very shabby spiritually, in comparison. He must also know Nehru's only fault was his passionate love for western concepts of political freedom and democracy.

U.S. PROFESSOR ON PRESERVING UNITY IN INDIA

NEW YORK, September 18, 1943.

An important angle of India's national problem which most foreign observers overlook is stressed by Mr Charles H. Behre, Geology Professor, Columbia University, in an article in the *Foreign Affairs* quarterly in which he points out that India's division into Hindustan and Pakistan, according to Mr Jinnah's plan, "would give Hindustan command of most of India's coal and other important raw materials, while Pakistan would possess only oil reserves, and Bengal's industry would be certainly doomed to fatal shrinkage. If India is divided on a basis of religious population, Hindustan would be rich and the Muslim State conspicuously poor. Speaking generally, about ninety per cent. of India's coal and ninety-two per cent. of iron would be in Hindustan. Hindustan would have most of the ferro-alloy and subsidiary minerals." He, however, stresses that the Hindu and Muslim areas would be interdependent. "Hindustan would need some of Pakistan's resources. The latter for industrial life would desperately need greater quantities of Hindustan's resources in a closed-trade system as otherwise Bengal, a Pakistan State, would, industrially speaking, die."

"A solution of the confusion resulting in an economically 'unnatural' boundary between Bengal and Bihar might be a re-drawing of the proposed Pakistan border giving Bengal the region northward of the Ganges and a portion westward of the United Provinces and allotting to Bihar in compensation part of Bengal southward of the Ganges." Admitting that such a solution will add more marked economic differences and eventually greater cultural differences to religious contrasts, he said, it might reduce sources of conflict by allotting a dominant industrial role to one people and frankly subordinating to the other.

However, the author himself questions the desirability of such a solution: "Pressure for industrialization is pressure for unity in India as well as elsewhere." But he said that Mr Jinnah showed little and Mahatma Gandhi even less interest in India's industrial future, although, according to the author, mass production of consumer's goods is certainly among the means to raise the standard of living in India. "Given natural resources, man-power and the need for increased living standard of India's people, an increasing degree of India's industrialization would seem inevitable. India's decision regarding the terms of

her political future will determine whether advance towards industrialization is relatively easy or difficult."

He further points out: "A united India would be in a position commanding sympathy and confidence of other Governments and could ask loans under international auspices on some such terms as those which China will ask. But for an India, and yet more two Indias, using newly-won sovereignty to erect tariff walls around its national borders would be a poor economic risk. It is possible investors would demand of the gamblers a percentage. Once committed to an industrialization programme, India would rapidly find herself confronted with the problem of controlling the programme in the interest of all its people instead of a few—the familiar task which agonized the Western nations for a century and which, of course, is already a component of the Indian situation. Divided economic fragments in India would find the unavoidable issue doubly painful of solution, but in a united India the problem would seem to be urging the country to a higher degree of social consciousness which her friends within and without would wish."

Summing up, the author says that from the point of view of the mineral resources of India, Hindu and Muslim areas are intimately intergrown and also inter-dependent economically. He urges that political inter-dependence is a wise solution where economic interdependence is so intimate and essential. It implies that the Muslim section would have to lose more than the Hindu districts if separation by States on religious lines is carried out. He suggests finally that India's economy is inter-dependent with that of other parts of Asia. Chinese leaders have shown statesmanship in recognizing that it is to China's advantage that a great southern neighbour should be a strong and unified nation. It is likewise to the advantage of the Hindus and Muslims within India."

PROF. COUPLAND'S NOVEL SCHEME FOR INDIA

LONDON, October 19, 1943.

The Times publishes a review of Prof. Coupland's *Future of India*, part three of the report on the constitutional problem of India submitted to the Warden and Fellows of Nuffield College, Oxford.

Analysing the lessons learned from six years of provincial autonomy, he rejects majority government for the provinces and suggests instead adoption of the Swiss system of an executive chosen by a proportional vote of the Legislature and sharing its stable life. The Professor proposes the same solution for the Centre. Partition as demanded by Muslims is rejected by him as creating more communal problems than solving them, and instead favours regionalism as the middle way between partition and orthodox federalism. Provinces, and possibly States too, would be grouped in regions exercising such powers of Government as are inappropriate for smaller scattered units, save only the minimum Central national powers. These last would be in the hands of an "agency centre" representative of regions such as not directly under their peoples. They would, so to speak, be exercised in trust by the Centre for regional governments. The Central connection would be "more than a confederacy but less than the normal confederation." Regions would be equally represented by their spokesmen, voting, if required, as one regional bloc.

Prof. Coupland is attracted by the idea of regional division according to the main water systems in the country, giving India four regions—two Hindu and two Muslim majority regions.

INDIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS AMERICA

WASHINGTON, October 20, 1943.

The *Far Eastern Survey*, published by the American Council of

the Institute of Pacific Relations, dealing with the repeal by the United States Congress of the Chinese Exclusion Act, says: "With the blessing, which the Bill received from the Administration, it stands a good chance of success." It points out, however, that one section stipulates that of the quota of admissible Chinese, 75 per cent. must be born and resident in China, while others of the Chinese race who live elsewhere are still refused admission. "The Bill has a further weakness that it accentuates the continuing discrimination practisd by this country against its other Asiatic Allies."

The survey adds: "A prominent Indian in the United States repcrts that the popular attitude in India to the United States has changed of late when it became apparent that little help was to be expected from the United States in the movement for a higher political status. He fears that the prospective repeal of the Exclusion Act for the Chinese alone will bring into even sharper focus the anti-Indian bias of the United States Immigration Law."

MR BRAILFORD'S "SUBJECT INDIA"

NEW YORK, October 15, 1943.

In his latest book, *Subject India,* the veteran British left-wing Liberal, Mr Henry Noel Brailsford, makes ten tentative suggestions for solving the Indian problem, to be carried out in the following order: Firstly, in a Pacific Charter a joint offer of independence to be made to India by all the United Nations interested in Asia; secondly, the control of India should be transferred from the India Office to the Dominion Office; thirdly, the new Viceroy should open his reign with a political amnesty and transform his Council into a National Government; fourthly, the Congress should simultaneously call off the revolt; fifthly, the Viceroy should advise the Princes to prepare for their entry into the Indian Union by conceding full civil and political rights to their subjects; sixthly, coalition Ministries should resume self-government in the six Congress Provinces; seventhly, the Congress and the Muslim League should—possibly with the help of a mediator—negotiate for an agreement over Pakistan, conceding the right of self-determination to Provinces to separate under an arbitration tribunal acceptable to both; eighthly, the Viceroy should then call the best man available, who should probably be a Muslim, to form, from the Congress, the Muslim League and other leading groups, a National Government whose chief task would be to conduct the war effort and prepare a draft constitution for the Indian Union; ninthly, as soon as active hostilities are ended in the Indian zone, new elections should be held in the Provinces and States and the process of self-determination then to follow the lines of the Cripps offer and the agreement on Pakistan; and, tenthly, the relation of the single Indian Union (or Hindustan and Pakistan) with the British Commonwealth, after negotiations, is to be fixed by treaty. At once or after an agreed interval, decision is to be taken by the Indian Dominion (or Dominions) whether it (or they) should remain within or secede from the British Commonwealth.

Mr Brailsford concludes hopefully: "Looking around them, when the last British Viceroy quits his palace, the Indians will see opportunities where there were closed doors, difficulties to be overcome where only impossibilities confronted them, and a country to be recreated and shaped by their own effort. It may be that they exaggerate their command over their future. By faith men grow to greatness."

NEW YORK "TIMES" ON MACKENZIE'S BOOK

NEW YORK, September 7, 1943.

Reviewing Mr Dewitt Mackenzie's book, *India's Problem Can Be Solved,* the New York *Times* writes that Mr Mackenzie's conclusions

are "rather cautious." So carefully does he speak to all parties with the same sweet reasonableness that he cannot make up his mind whether it is the British Government (with ruling power in their hands), or the Congress leaders (in prison) who must take the first step towards negotiation which he believes is indispensable.

Yet in a restrained statement he has made these points clear: firstly, that Sir Stafford Cripps went to India without powers to negotiate for a settlement, but only with a unilateral 'take it or leave it' pledge of Dominion Status for India after the war; secondly, that the scheme was defective in that it gave the Indian people no power over India's defence, and that her leaders had no moral or administrative instrument for mobilizing the masses for that purpose; thirdly, that the scheme contained no guarantee in the shape of immediate transition measures; fourthly, that a joint council of administration and defence (with British military advisers, Muslim and Hindu elected representatives) would have provided a basis for such a transitional machinery and could have served to reconcile the needs of war and those of freedom; and fifthly, that the Princes and the bogey of Pakistan were being used to impede a settlement, and so long as the Government was refusing to permit Mahatma Gandhi to communicate with other leaders no compromise was possible."

Reviewing the book, The *Problem of India* by Mr Palme Dutt, a Communist, the paper says it is a "veritable arsenal of argument for India's freedom." Together with Mr Mackenzie's *India's Problem Can Be Solved* there is a watertight case for immediate effort to reopen negotiations and begin in earnest the difficult, but surely not insoluble, task of transition for India towards independence.

"NANNIE'S DAY IS OVER"

LONDON, September 9, 1943.

Mrs Pethick-Lawrence writes in the *Manchester Guardian*:—

It is a matter of endless astonishment to a looker-on like myself that our Government should deal with our fellow-citizens in India on the terms of "unconditional surrender."

India is not the enemy. On the contrary, she is potentially a very influential member of the Allied Nations. It should surely be the aim of statesmanship to make this potential situation an actual one—an aim that can only be achieved on the basis of negotiation as between equals.

I know that the Indian leaders, Mr Gandhi in particular, have been reproached for being unduly influenced by the menace of Japan when they rejected the British offer of independence after the war. But, after all, France felt obliged to put the safety of her population before her commitment to the Allies and we have not withdrawn our sympathy from France on that account.

The future of Asia depends on the whole-hearted partnership of India with the Allied Nations, in the preservation of the continent from the militarism and aggression of Japan. Statesmanship could achieve it. The marvellous gifts of imagination and vision of our Prime Minister could achieve it. But the attitude of the bewildered old "Nannie" whose nursery discipline has been upset will achieve nothing. Nannie's day is over.

INDIAN INDEPENDENCE—A WORLD ISSUE

LONDON, September 12, 1943.

The Chairman of the newly founded "Council for International Recognition of Indian Independence," Mr William Cove, Labour M.P., has issued a statement saying that the Council is now full organized and established, possessing support amongst progressive M.P.s and public men in various spheres of cultural life in Britain..

He adds: "The Council emphasizes that Indian independence is a

world issue and one upon which it is incumbent to secure the guarantee of Allied nations. The responsibility for realizing in actual fact the independence and self-determination of nations rests as much upon America as upon Britain. The Council, therefore, proposes contact of those forces in America which share its belief in Indian independence. Steps are being taken to appoint a delegation to make direct contact with American opinion."

The statement says that the Council is well aware that the Indian National Congress would resist Japanese aggression and would gladly invite and lead the Indian people in the war against Japanese militarism and for the freedom of all nations; but freedom must include the freedom of India. The Council declares that India should be mobilized on the side of the United Nations. If India becomes a free India it will respond. The statement concludes: "The United States have directly entered Indian politics. She is directly involved in the Indian economy."

TRADE UNIONISTS ON ENDING INDIAN DEADLOCK

LONDON, September 13, 1943.

A strong demand for ending the deadlock in India was made in a resolution adopted at the Trades Union Congress before it concluded its session at Southport.

The resolution recognized the acceptance by the British Government of the principle that the Indian peoples should decide their own destiny and called for the resumption of friendly relations.

The resolution was adopted after it had been amended by a call for a three-fold action to achieve its end. Firstly, the release of political prisoners; secondly, the formation of a National Government on the free vote of the Indian people; and, thirdly, the granting of full Dominion Status to the new Government of India.

Mr A. J. Heal (Transport Workers) urged that the present position could not continue. There was an urgent need for the opening of discussions and the initiative should be taken by the British Government. The new Government should be based on the free votes of the workers of India, who should themselves decide on the form of their National Government.

LONDON COMMUNISTS DEMAND RELEASE OF INDIAN LEADERS

LONDON, September 13, 1943.

A conference of the London District Communist Party passed a resolution demanding the release of all Congress leaders of India and anti-Fascist political prisoners as well as the re-opening of negotiations with a view to setting up a provisional government representative of the Indian people.

NON-PARTY LEADERS' CONFERENCE

BRITAIN URGED TO ABANDON DISPLAY OF MIGHT

NEW DELHI, July 24, 1943.

A statement was issued by the Standing Committee of the Non-Party Leaders' Conference, after two days' deliberations at Delhi on the political situation. It said:—

The Standing Committee of the Non-Party Leaders' Conference would once again draw attention to the internal situation. It was at one time hoped that steps would be taken by his Majesty's Government and the Government of India to resolve the deadlock and to find a solution for the political stalemate which has existed ever since the departure from India of Sir Stafford Cripps. The Committee regrets that no such steps were taken in time.

Mahatma Gandhi, his principal co-workers and thousands of others have now been in detention without trial for practically a whole year under the provisions of an Ordinance which has recently been declared to be invalid by the highest judicial tribunal in India. The charges urged against them are of a very serious nature and have been emphatically denied. Notwithstanding this fact, no opportunity has been given to them to meet these charges. Even Mahatma Gandhi's request that, for the purpose of examining these charges, he should be permitted to meet the members of the Working Committee, we regret, has not been conceded. It was suggested by some of us a few months ago that these persons should be either tried before an impartial tribunal or released. But the Government have not considered it expedient to put them on trial, though the possibility of such a trial was foreshadowed by his Excellency the Viceroy in his letter to Mahatma Gandhi of February 5, 1943.

After quoting from the Viceroy's letter to Mahatma Gandhi, the statement continues: "The unseemly controversy which has been provoked between the Executive and the Judiciary, the attempts of the Executive to set at nought the authoritative decision of the highest tribunal in the land do not redound to the credit of the Executive and have undermined public confidence to an extent scarcely realized by Government. The Committee thinks that for the restoration of public confidence it is essential that the supremacy of law as interpreted and laid down by the highest tribunal should be recognized and respected without delay. As the history of British people's struggle for freedom proves that such conflicts between the Judiciary and Executive, if persisted in, can only have one termination, namely, defeat of autocracy of the Executive and triumph of law and of the will of the people.

It is true that nearly two million Indians have joined the armed forces without conscription. There is, however, no lack of manpower or of resources in the country and the response to the call of service would be immeasurably greater if India could feel that in the prosecution of the war she was an equal in the councils of the United Nations. As confirmed opponents of the Axis Powers and the system for which they stand, we are anxious that political and economic discontent should be removed at as early a stage as possible so that the necessary psychological change might be brought about in the Indian attitude.

The constitutional structure of the Central Executive has essentially remained unaltered through the four years of the war, except for the addition of some Indians. In the provinces close upon two hundred million people, *i.e.*, about half the total population of India, who had previously enjoyed, in a restricted measure, parliamentary respon-

sible government, have been brought under the completely autocratic rule of the Governors. The fact that the 1939 Congress Governments abdicated their responsibility by going out of office has always been a matter of deep regret to us. But it does not in our opinion justify the perpetuation of the rule under Section 93 in the Provinces particularly in view of the improvement in the military situation and the increasing embitterment of the Indian people.

In the Centre, the mere increase in the number of Indian members is not sufficient to satisfy Indian sentiment. The increase to be effective must be coupled with an increase in the powers of the Council and the removal of the interference of the Secretary of State in the day to day administration of India by the adoption of appropriate conventions. Even now the key portfolios like Home, Finance and Transport, continue to be in non-Indian hands.

The gravity of the situation with regard to food and the absence of a well-considered plan for its distribution do not encourage the belief that the Government as at present constituted can effectively deal with the present problem. Its acuteness can be relieved only by securing the active co-operation of the representatives of the people. The situation with regard to food and also the inflation of currency, directly affecting as it does the lives of the people, has deepened the unpopularity of the Government which has tended more and more to assume the character of a police State. We sincerely hope and trust that relief from these grievances would come soon, so that the task of the new Viceroy might be rendered easier.

With India as a base of prime significance for Allied armies, it is of vital importance that there should be unity of aim and effort between the civilians at home and the armies at the front. Political discord leading to mutual distrust distracts energies which should be devoted wholeheartedly to the vigorous prosecution of the war. It is most unfortunate that at this juncture the situation should be further complicated by an arrogant display of racial superiority in South Africa and by the emphasis in the utterances of prominent British statesmen on the conception of an Empire as against a Commonwealth of free nations. If this war is being fought for the preservation and continuation of democratic freedom, it is obvious that nothing should be said or done by men in the highest place of authority, which might be regarded as inconsistent with these aims.

Holding these views we make an earnest appeal both to the Government and to Mahatma Gandhi to close this dismal chapter of strife and ill-feeling. The Government can make their contribution by releasing, without further delay, the Congress leaders, and Mahatma Gandhi can make his contribution by withdrawing the threat of mass civil disobedience. There will thus be a fresh opportunity for the leaders of the main political parties to get into touch with each other. Their deliberations may lead to the formation of governments, both at the Centre and in the Provinces, capable of securing the maximum co-operation of the people for the prosecution of the war and the creation of a home front able to stand solid against panic, unsocial activities and enemy propaganda.

We certainly hope that a policy of reconciliation has not been ruled out by the British Government for the period of the war. For, the only alternative policy can be autocratic rule, increased bitterness and the extinction of all hope of a settlement by negotiation and goodwill between Britain and India.

We are therefore definitely of the opinion that—(1) the Congress leaders, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and others, should be released and given an opportunity of reconsidering their resolution of August 8, 1942, and of making another effort to bring about

a settlement between the conflicting elements in Indian national life. Alternatively, they should be put on their trial before an impartial tribunal and given every reasonable facility to meet such charges as may be brought against them.

(2) If they are prepared, as we hope they will be, to participate as free men in the government of the Provinces, coalition ministries should be established there, pledging full support to the war effort.

(3) If they are not prepared to do so, we would make an earnest appeal to them to let others assume responsibility and that they should give them a fair chance in the existing circumstances of carrying on the administration on a stable basis.

(4) At the Centre, a National Government consisting of representatives, in whom the people have complete confidence, should be in charge of all portfolios, with due provision for defence remaining during the period of the war in the special charge of the Commander-in-Chief, Indians being associated with such aspects of defence as can be handed over without weakening the authority of the Commander-in-Chief.

(5) The principle of collective responsibility in the actual working of the Constitution should be definitely accepted, though constitutionally the Council will remain responsible to the Crown during the period of the war.

If this policy is not adopted immediately, we fear that the people of India will inevitably draw the conclusion that they are to be ruled by force and that pledges of freedom and of the value of human personality have no genuine meaning for them.

The task of government in India in these increasingly difficult days is to secure general goodwill and not to alienate it by flouting or hurting Indian opinion, to create a genuine national war front based on the willing and wholehearted co-operation of the people and not to hamper its formation by a vigorous display of might and force thinly disguised in the shape of Ordinances of questionable validity and the despotic rule of Governors over large and populous provinces. The time is overdue for his Majesty's Government to bring some imagination into play and to undo the mischief born of a policy lacking in all the essentials of statesmanship."

COMMENT BY SAPRU AND JAYAKAR

NEW DELHI, July 24, 1943.

Commenting on certain points in the statement, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru pointed out in a talk to Press correspondents that conventions could be established to the effect that the Secretary of State would not interfere in the internal administration of the country. This was done in the early days of the colonies before the Dominion Acts were passed by Parliament. He did not think it was necessary to amend any Act of Parliament. He maintained that during the period of the war, responsibility should be owed to the Crown, which meant that the Executive Government at the Centre, that he had in mind, would not be removable by an adverse vote of the Legislature.

Urging immediate action, Sir Tej Bahadur said: "The way for Lord Wavell should be cleared, so that when he comes he can apply himself to constructive work. I have no prejudice against him merely because he is a soldier. I have come across soldiers who have far greater wisdom and statemanship than the so-called Parliamentarians."

Dr Jayakar referred to the detention of Congress leaders and said it looked as if, unless public opinion asserted itself, they would be detained for perhaps the period of the war. It was monstrous, he declared, that such a state of things should be allowed to exist. Government should put them on trial or if for any reason Government were not prepared to do this, the obvious course was to release these men. This was of all the greater importance, when it was remembered that the

Viceroy foreshadowed the possibility of a trial. Indians had a right to call upon Government to put them on trial, because if the detention was prolonged indefinitely, a great deal of evidence might be destroyed and men who were in a position to give evidence might die.

Supporting Sir Tej Bahadur's appeal for urgent action, Dr Jayakar remarked that the "political debts of the previous administration ought to be liquidated before a new Government took office."

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

BENARES, August 8, 1943.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University, speaking to the students on the present political situation in the country, said: "Today our thoughts go back to the fateful ninth of August, 1942, when Gandhiji and other leaders were taken under detention. The political deadlock continues and the country is being governed by executive measures, decrees and ordinances. Bitterness and distrust have afflicted millions of men and women. This is an unnatural condition which requires to be terminated as soon as possible for the peace of the country and the good name of Britain. The Viceroy's speech last Monday is a confession of failure of statesmanship and vision. His arguments and counter-arguments, these thrusts and counter-thrusts, may not admit of any answer. But they carry no conviction. They take us nowhere. We must cut across the vicious circle and in a mood of humility, for there have been blunders on all sides, realizing the gravity of the situation and the responsibility for the future, undertake the task of establishing a single policy which will embrace men of diverse races, languages and creeds, and build a free and united India."

Continuing, Sir Radhakrishnan said: "Gandhiji is first and foremost a missionary of Truth and Non-Violence and secondarily an apostle of Indian freedom. Even in the letter which he addressed to the Viceroy he has made out that at no stage did he ever contemplate violence and if his instructions were misinterpreted, misunderstood and miscarried by those who styled themselves his followers he would be the first to make ample amends for them. It is no use winning freedom if we lose our soul."

"The war for freedom," he continued, "can be fought only with the methods of freedom. The release of Gandhiji is the first step that is essential. The present situation of apprehension and anxiety is unfortunate and deplorable and this deadlock must be terminated and free negotiations started. Time is the essence of the situation and if this golden opportunity is let slip, and if the present unhealthy and diseased tension is allowed to continue, it would be the extinction of all hopes of a friendly and permanent settlement."

Turning to the students, the Vice-Chancellor pointed out how the incidents of last year damaged the reputation and injured the interests of the University, and said: "Swaraj is not an emotional cry. It is a constructive spirit. Politics might provide the framework, but the attitudes and dispositions essential for working it are built up in colleges and universities....India wants not immature, hysterical, broken people, mental deficients and moral cripples, who are misled by every passing wind, but disciplined, decent men and women. No modern community can be run except by trained men and women. That is what this University does for India. If you lose your balance and control, you will ruin your careers, you will cause anguish to your parents, you will imperil the interests of this University. Above all, you will hurt Gandhiji, whose name is on your lips and thoughts."

INTERREGNUM

GANDHIJI SHOULD REPRESENT INDIA AT PEACE TABLE

MIRAJ, August 7, 1943.

"Mahatma Gandhi, who has been preaching non-violence in every walk of life and has devoted his life to the preaching of peace, can alone represent India at the peace table after the war." Thus observed the right hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, speaking on the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the Willingdon College, Sangli, the subject of his speech being "The Future World Order."

Mr Sastri asked: "Who is India's proper representative to be delegated to the peace table if India is to get an honourable place there? A representative must be sent. The people who have waged war are parties in the war and cannot speak of peace. It is Mahatma Gandhi's ideas, his principles and his thoughts that the world should listen to."

He regretted much that the Government would not release Mahatma Gandhi to attend the Peace Conference. Mr Sastri continued: "Those Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council cannot truly represent India. To save the world and for elimination of war, Mahatma Gandhi's presence is indispensable. India's philosophy preaches *shanti* and happiness to all. Hence India can alone speak."

SIR C. SETALVAD'S CRITICISM

BOMBAY, August 10, 1943.

In a letter to the *Times of India* criticizing Mr Munshi's defence of Gandhism and Mr Srinivasa Sastri's suggestion that Mahatma Gandhi should represent India at the Peace Conference to come, Sir Chimanlal H. Setalvad writes:—

While appreciating the efforts being made by Mr K. M. Munshi and others to relieve in some measure the political paralysis that has overtaken the country, one is astonished at Mr Munshi's statement in the issue of *Social Welfare* of July 16 that "Gandhism is never unrelated to the realities of a situation." In fact, Gandhism has always been completely divorced from realism. Why, Mr Munshi had to leave the Congress because of the want of realism in the Gandhian creed of non-violence which the Congress executive had accepted.

Mr Munshi in his letter to Mr Gandhi dated May 26, 1941, said: "I cannot pledge myself not to preach, help, organize or sympathise with organised resistance to violence in self-defence by all possible means" when the integrity of the country was threatened. Mr Gandhi in his statement shortly afterwards said that "in the course of the discussion with Mr Munshi, he discovered that while he (Mr Munshi) accepted in the abstract the principle of *ahimsa* with all its implications, he felt the greatest difficulty in acting up to it." Was it realism for Mr Gandhi to have said at the Round Table Conference that he did not want to take any part in the discussion about defence and the army because in his view India did not require any army at all? Some realism dawned upon Mr Gandhi momentarily when at the outbreak of the war he advocated that India should unconditionally support England in the war. But this was only a passing phase, and soon afterwards he went back upon it. Was it realism to forget the fact that whatever quarrels we have with Britain—and those quarrels are serious and fundamental—India is in the same boat with England as regards the war, for if the Axis won there would be no hope for Indian independence? Was it realism to make the Congress ministries in seven provinces abandon power and hand over those provinces to bureaucratic rule? Was it realism to reject the Cripps proposals which definitely promised India after the war as much freedom and independence as Canada and

Australia enjoy in the Commonwealth, including the right of secession, and gave immediate appreciable devolution of power to representative Indians in the Central Government?

The British Government that had refused even to put in the preamble of the Act of 1935 that the goal of Indian political evolution was "Dominion Status' as demanded by the Indian delegates, which rejected all the modest proposals of the Indian delegation headed by the Aga Khan and enacted the numerous safeguards for vested British interests in India that disfigure the Act of 1935, was prepared under the stress of war conditions to concede Dominion Status. To have rejected this offer was utter want of realism. Was it realism to have adopted the "Quit India" resolution of last August? How could any person with any realistic outlook imagine that the British nation, which in its darkest days after Dunkirk had stood up against overpowering German threat, was going to quit India at the bidding of unarmed crowds who by sabotage killed their own countrymen and destroyed Indian property? Was it realism to imagine that if you propagate mass civil disobedience, the movement will remain non-violent?

No one can deny that Mr Gandhi is one of the few greatest men of the present-day world. He has roused the masses to self-consciousness to a degree which no one before him had done, but having achieved this he has always failed by reason of his unpractical idealism to reap the harvest that these forces could now easily bring.

Mr Srinivasa Sastri in his address to the students of the Willingdon College, Sangli, the other day, is reported to have said: "Mahatma Gandhi, who has been preaching non-violence in every walk of life and has devoted his life to the preaching of peace, can alone represent India at the peace table after the war." One is amazed at such a statement from Mr Sastri. Mr Jinnah and the Muslim League representing a large section of Muslims would never accept Mr Gandhi as their representative. Similarly, Mr Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabha will refuse to accept him as their representative. Dr Ambedkar and his Depressed Classes will emphatically disown Mr Gandhi as their representative. The Marathas and the non-Brahmins will also refuse to be represented by Mr Gandhi. The Liberal Party will, I am sure, not agree to be represented by Mr Gandhi at the Peace Conference, Mr Sastri notwithstanding. The idea is much too fantastic.

Frantic appeals are made by some people to the British Government to solve the Indian political deadlock. The deadlock has been created by the major political parties not coming together in a spirit of accommodation and give and take, and it is for the Indians themselves primarily to solve the deadlock. It is often said that the British are encouraging divisions among Indians, but assuming that it is so, why are we so follish and short-sighted as to fall an easy prey to such tactics?

MR SASTRI'S REPLY TO SIR C. SETALVAD

BOMBAY, August 19, 1943.

The following is Mr Sastri's reply published in the "Times of India" to Sir Chimanlal H. Setalvad:—

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad has said in your correspondence column that the selection of Mahatma Gandhi as India's representative at the Peace Conference would not be approved by large sections of Indian opinion, and added that my suggestion is fantastic to a degree. I cannot but think that he fails to realize the great veneration that Gandhiji commands in the world outside India as a godly man and an apostle of peace and universal love. Among pious Christians in India and outside India he is regarded today as the man who, by complete conquest of self, devotion to truth and non-violence, comes closest to their own prophet.

It may surprise Sir Chimanlal, it would not surprise me, if at a meeting of the greatest men of the world, intent on securing the well-being and harmony of future generations, every one missed the apostle of *ahimsa* and asked why he was not there. As Indian affairs stand at the moment, he has no chance of being included in our delegation. That is why we wish a speedy termination of the impasse. Before Germany and Japan are down on their knees and sue for peace, there will be time, if we bestir ourselves and Government are helpful, to re-establish popular administrations in all the provinces and, as a natural consequence, an almost popular administration at the Centre as well. Would it be fantastic *then* to hope that the general voice would be for the man who most truly typified the spirit of the East and could speak for the coloured races of the earth? Let the sceptical and the faint-hearted remember De Valera and Lala Harikishen Lal in our own country.

We should like our delegation to stand up for justice and equal treatment for the vanquished people; we should like our delegation to demand the disarmament of *all* nations; we should like our delegation to fight for the future international authority being placed decisively above the great Powers and any combination of great Powers; and above all, we should like our delegation to insist on the recognition once for all that white and coloured races are and shall be equal.

To whom can this high task be entrusted with greater confidence than to the man who owns nothing and wants nothing, who loves all mankind as his own family, who sees the truth clearly and pursues it unflinchingly, who fears his God only, and whom no earthly potentate can buy, bully or cajole? The attainment of universal peace, universal brotherhood and universal love is peculiarly *his* work, the mission of his life, and when it is taking shape, where should he be but right in the midst of it? If the Government will depute him, well and good, and all honour to them. If they won't, he must still be on the spot. The good men will seek him out and listen to him. Difficulties will be brought to him and his wisdom and influence will be sought. Let him but see that this is the opportunity of opportunities for him. He is on such a pinnacle he need not mind a confession of failure, which to others may be a humiliation and loss of prestige. When the supreme moment has come and a world in distress calls, what shall keep him back?

SIR C. SETALVAD UNCONVINCED

BOMBAY, August 19, 1943.

In a further letter to the *Times of India,* Sir Chimanlal H. Setalvad replies to Mr Sastri:—

Mr Srinivasa Sastri in his letter which appears in your columns entirely misses the point of the criticism that I made on his statement. Mr Sastri had said that Mr Gandhi *alone* can represent India at the Peace Conference. I maintained and still maintain without fear of contradiction that the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Depressed Classes, Non-Brahmins and Marathas and the Liberal Party would never accept Mr Gandhi as their representative at the Peace Conference. Mr Sastri dare not contradict this statement. That Mr Gandhi should and will have a place at the Peace Conference representing the Congress nobody can deny. But I maintain that it is really fantastic to suggest that he *alone* can represent the whole of India or the diverse interests in the country.

As regards the various events I enumerated, I do not think Mr Sastri can suggest that Mr Gandhi displayed any realism.

NO CHANGE IN CONGRESS CREED

HYDERABAD (Dn.), August 9, 1943.

Mrs Sarojini Naidu, a member of the Congress Working Com-

mittee, who was recently released from detention on account of ill-health, in a statement to the Press on the occasion of the first anniversary of the arrest of Congress leaders observes:—

Following the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and of the Working Committee there seems to have arisen some confusion of ideas and some conflict of opinion among the Congress workers who were suddenly left without a definite mandate or any recognized leadership. I wish to clear any lingering doubts by stating that no authority was delegated either by the Working Committee or by the All-India Congress Committee to any individual or groups within the Congress to issue manifestos or evolve new policies in the name of the Congress, nor, as has been sometimes alleged, but which I am loath to believe, to further secret activities directly opposed to the accepted creed and traditions of the Congress.

Neither is it open to any member of the Congress to amend its constitution or alter its decision at this juncture. Nevertheless, in the absence of the leaders, it is equally the responsibility of all of us to continue without interruption on our own part the authentic work of the Congress in the service of the country. Spectacular programmes assuredly have their special place and purpose in the scheme of national life, but today they can have but a limited and doubtful value, confronted as we are with problems that demand a supreme and undivided dedication of all national thought for their solution.

The heart-breaking and universal misery of the people cries out to us from myriad mouths of hunger and not one of us dare be deaf to that poignant call for help. Though I am still too ill to take any active share in the beneficent work of relief, I am in daily contact with the work of the unofficial committee in Hyderabad for relief; I am for that reason increasingly conscious of the desperate agony of the poor and increasingly certain that the paramount, indeed, at present almost the sole task before us, is to try and bring some measure of succour and solace to ameliorate their desperate plight.

Also from my daily experience, I can bear testimony to the splendid manner in which instinctively and automatically sectarian interests, communal quarrels and political controversies subordinate themselves before a great human claim that transcends all lesser considerations. An enduring national unity can only be built up on the foundation of sincere co-operation in the service of the people.

The initial and ultimate word of inspiration was uttered by our own illustrious leader, Mahatma Gandhi, when, in a prophetic mood, he said as long ago as 1921 that 'before the hungry even God dare not appear except in the shape of bread.'

LORD WAVELL ON HIS TASK

FIRST SPEECH IN LONDON

LONDON, September 16, 1943.

Field-Marshal Viscount Wavell, Viceroy-designate, in the course of his speech at the Pilgrims luncheon said:—

I am sure all of you here realize that the war will not be over and there can be no military or economic security for the East, for ourselves or for the world until Japan is as thoroughly defeated as Germany. I should like to say something here of what India has already done for us in this war since I know it at first hand. Without the assistance of India, both in troops and in material, we most certainly could not have held the Middle East which has been, I think I can claim, the keystone of our present success. It was India's troops that helped us to hold not only Egypt, but also Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Persia, and for this the United Nations owe India a considerable debt which I am sure they will not forget.

During all this first period of the war, India was facing the West and sending all her troops and material, including much railway material and rivercraft, of which she is now feeling a lack severely, to help our cause in the Middle East. When Japan came into the war at the end of 1941, India had to execute a sudden about-turn which has put a very severe strain on her internal economy as sudden efforts do sometimes even to experienced athletes. Not only had her troops to be trained for an entirely different foe and warfare (I may mention that she made very considerable sacrifices by sending troops not fully trained or equipped in an endeavour to save Singapore and Burma) but the greatest possible strain was thrown on her railway system and on her resources of all kinds in an effort to prepare against a danger which had been foreseen as a possibility but against which it had not been possible to provide with the limited resources available. India is still suffering from this strain and we shall have to exercise some care in putting increased burdens on her, lest our whole base becomes unstable or collapses.

You will not expect me to say much at the present moment on the Indian policy. I can only show you some of the contents which are packed in my mental handbag for India, that small handbag in which an experienced traveller places his most needed requirements. The first article is a real love for India and sympathy for the Indian people. As a soldier, I owe much of my success to the Indian Army of which I commanded a small detachment in a Frontier expedition as a subaltern which formed the greater proportion of the corps to which I was Staff Officer in Lord Allenby's final victory and which gave me such support in the Middle East and elsewhere in this war. The memory of those debts to India and a desire to repay them are perhaps no bad equipment to take to India.

Secondly, I may perhaps claim some useful previous experience of dealing with problems in Government and administration in Eastern countries, in Syria during the last war, in Egypt after the last war and in Palestine and other countries since then. I have with me in that handbag the memory and the example of two great men whom I have served in the East. The first was Lord Allenby, whose work in Egypt has never received proper recognition from his countrymen but is fully recognized in Egypt by thinking Egyptians. The second is the present Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, who also has not yet received full recognition of his work during the seven and a half trying and momentous years he has been in India.

Having worked with him in the Executive Council for two years and having seen him frequently on all major military questions, I can testify to the wisdom and strength which made him a pillar against which one could lean in stress. Few men can ever have carried so great a burden of responsibility so long and so gallantly.

Another important article in my handbag is the knowledge that all classes and sections of opinion in this country are firmly united in the desire to give every possible assistance to India in her aspirations to full freedom. Finally, a comparatively small but, perhaps, not unimportant item in the handbag is the debt of a different kind which I owe to the Japanese, a debt of hatred for a cruel, cold and treacherous people.

The three main problems which I shall find facing me when I arrive in India are as you will realize: firstly, the need to carry the war with Japan to decisive and speedy victory, secondly, to deal with day-to-day problems of Government, economic and social, which are so vital to India. It is an alarming thought when one considers the problems of India to realize that every month at the present rate of increase of population, there are an additional 300,000 to 400,000 people to be fed, educated and cared for.

Thirdly, there is the political advancement of India which to many people appears the most important problem of all. I can say no more on this than that I fully realize the great weight of opinion both here and in India, in favour of loosening as early as possible the present deadlock and also the difficulty of doing so. I have no illusions as to the difficulties and the dangers of my tasks, but I have also a vision of the great possibilities in front of India, if she can only be induced to take the right road. Our hope is that she may become a strong, prosperous and happy land. If we can set her steps firmly on that road we shall have completed a great task.

"DEVELOPMENT" OF INDIAN SELF-GOVERNMENT

Field-Marshal Wavell's appointment as Viceroy of India does not imply any change in his Majesty's Government's pledged policy regarding the development of Indian self-government, Mr Amery announced in the House of Commons on June 24, 1943.

Mr Amery said: "I feel sure the House will share the general satisfaction (cheers) at the appointment by His Majesty of this very distinguished soldier as Viceroy and will wish him every success in discharging the responsibilities of that high office. I need not say that the new appointment does not imply any change in the settled policy to which His Majesty's Government are pledged with regard to the development of Indian self-government. Sir Archibald Wavell's wide outlook on men and affairs and the experience he has already acquired of Indian administration are on a range that he will be no unworthy successor of the statesman who has now served as Viceroy with such high distinction over a period exceptional both in its length and in its difficulties." (Cheers.)

Mr Sorensen (Labour) asked if any Indian had been considered for this position.

Mr Amery replied that he was not prepared to answer that.

BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY

Mr Harry Pollitt, on behalf of the Communist Party, in a letter addressed to Viscount Wavell, Viceroy-designate of India, appeals for a new approach to the Indian situation and for the opening of negotiations with the Indian leaders with a view to reaching a settlement.

The letter urges "the release of the Congress Working Committee and all democratic anti-Fascist leaders; the permitting of negotiations between representative leaders of all political sections with a view to

their reaching agreement on their immediate proposals; following these steps the opening of negotiations with Indian leaders; and energetic measures to meet the present food crisis by increased production, requisitioning of stocks and organization of supplies and distribution."

The letter adds: "We believe such measures would correspond to the wishes and feelings of the overwhelming majority of democratic opinion in this country as recently evidenced by the unanimous vote of the National Union of Railwaymen."

RESTART NEGOTIATIONS, SAYS MR RAJAGOPALACHARI

MADRAS, September 24, 1943.

Mr C. Rajagopalachari has issued the following statement to the Press:—

The sense of frustration and resentment in India makes it very difficult for any suggestion depending on the goodwill of the British Government to be received with any enthusiasm in India. In fact the immediate reaction to such a suggestion may be adverse. I have no doubt, however, that the royal road to a settlement of the Indian problem is to restart the negotiations from where they stopped on April 12, 1942; and that supreme effort should be made for the sake of international fellowship for continuing what Sir Stafford Cripps thought at the time to be a fruitless endeavour. I want that charges and recriminations should be buried deep and that a new chapter opened. What I have suggested should be given thoughtful consideration by all concerned in England as well as in India. I am sure all the Allies would welcome such action at this juncture,

A NEW COURSE SUGGESTED

In another statement issued on October 5, 1943, Mr C. Rajagopalachari said:—

My appeal to the intelligentsia of India to extricate themselves from slogans and to make up their minds to go back to the Cripps scheme has been commented upon in certain quarters as defeatism. Defeatism is a term invented by war-time administrations for the purpose of discouraging all opposition to their measures. To underrate one's own resources is defeatism. In a struggle wherein physical force is not employed, to insist before actual trial that the opponent will never yield to moral forces is defeatism, pure and simple. We should, no doubt, deprecate as defeatism premature submission to the enemy. But the use of such or other stock phrases should not lead us to utter folly of not seeing facts after they have happened. The battle of freedom once begun is not to be ended. But any particular policy followed in the course of that struggle should not be elevated to the rank of a creed and fanatically persisted in so as to defeat its own ultimate purpose. Everyone who has eyes to see can see what has happened and is happening in accelerated pace in the provinces which popular Ministries once administered and which are now under the dictatorship of Governors. Those provinces where popular Ministries under the Constitution of 1935 were in charge are also affected by the state of things in the rest of India, which is the larger part. The tendency is for the Ministries to become the puppets of the Government, who naturally aim at and obtain the same authority and power which their brother Governors exercise elsewhere.

The rock against which the Cripps negotiations were wrecked was the veto of the Governor-General in the interim Government. The problems of defence policy and administration of military affairs having been disposed of in principle and in the greater part of detail as well, it was wrong for the Governor-General to exaggerate the importance of his veto. The withdrawal of the British Government's mission was, in my opinion, precipitately done. Things could have

been squared up had a little more time been allowed. But it is useless now to go into the question of who was really to blame for the breakdown of negotiations. The fact remains that in 1937 it was found possible to put the Provincial Governors' veto out of the way. Of course, the conditions of 1942 differed from those of 1937 and the Central Government differs from provincial administrations. The anxieties of the war situation made a great difference in 1942, but that is practically over now, and internal problems which loom large at the present moment positively indicate the necessity for a popular Government at the Centre instead of the Governor-General's absolute and authoritarian administration.

If intelligent opinion in India accepts my suggestion, there is no difficulty in devising practical ways for expressing that acceptance and calling upon the British Government to do its part. The new Viceroy cannot well ignore such a demand. I have no doubt in my mind as to the honourableness as well as reasonableness of this proposal. It is sheer ignorance or prejudice to look upon the Cripps scheme as a 'moderate' scheme. It is based on the unconditional and fullest recognition of the status of independence for India, and thinking men should give a lead to extricate public opinion from the entanglement of prejudice. Inaction now will not be the so-called "masterly" variety, but will carry with it the most disastrous consequences.

HALIFAX ON BRITISH ACHIEVEMENTS IN INDIA

WASHINGTON, September 28, 1943.

The British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, writing an article headed: "India Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" in the October issue of the *National Geographic Magazine* warns against the "danger of creating a political vacuum by the withdrawal of one type of authority before another equally reliable, is able to replace it. The only alternative of British control is the evolution of Indian harmony, based on toleration, restraint and mutual respect of the several elements concerned."

Lord Halifax says: "British policy in India in the past has been crystallized into four main purposes: to give India security, to give her unity, to raise her social and economic level and to develop her political life. We have always believed that with the accomplishment of these purposes our work in India would be done." The article says the British Army and Navy have given India security for the past 140 years, accompanied by an unprecedented degree of internal peace and unity.

Discussing India's rejection of the Cripps Scheme because the offer did not concede Cabinet Government with power during the war, Lord Halifax writes: "On this, the British Government had always made it perfectly plain that during the war the cause of Indian defence comes first, for which reason, British control could not immediately be delegated or diminished."

INDIA LEAGUE DEMANDS NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

LONDON, October 11, 1943.

At a conference under the auspices of the India League yesterday, Mr V. K. Krishna Menon said that the grim famine situation in India called for immediate action by the British Government. The present famine was no sudden occurrence. The Indian National Congress had warned the Government of the situation nearly two years ago but no steps were taken. On the political situation Mr Menon said that the policy of the British Government weakened India and had in part caused the famine and its continuance. There was disunity between the people of India and the British Government. The Indian leaders who negotiated with Sir Stafford Cripps were not concerned with the details of the future constitution. The establishment of an Indian National Government

BENEFITS OF

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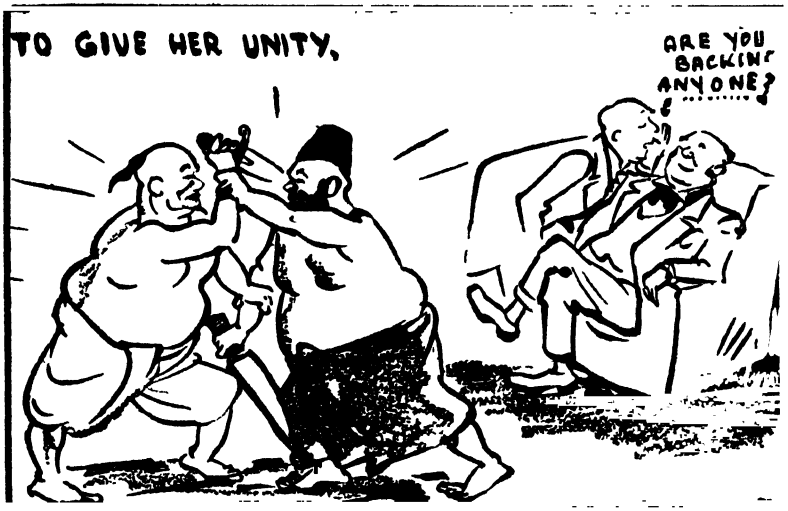
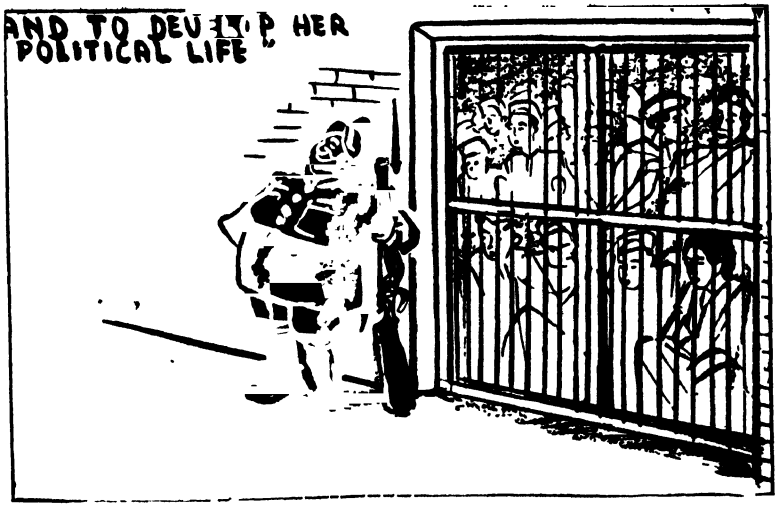
BRITISH RULE





The Hindustan Times, September 30, 1943.

on which Mr Amery had been so consistently obstinate in his refusal was the crux.

The conference passed a resolution demanding that the Government should set up a Provisional Indian Government of national unity, release political prisoners and reopen negotiations. It condemned the present policy and reminded the Government and Lord Wavell, the Viceroy-designate, of the repeated demands made by representative opinion in India and organizations of the British people to end the deadlock and agree to a National Government.

"OBSERVER" ON LORD WAVELL'S "HEROIC PART"

LONDON, October 11, 1943.

An ugly fact about the Bengal food famine is that it should never have happened, writes the *Observer* today. The paper adds: "The same cross-purposes that wrecked the Cripps Mission last year have delayed the famine measures. Now the goods are being delivered. But damage has been done, credit lost and the old story repeated—*i.e.*, Indians have been intransigent, suspicious and unreasonable, while Britons have been slow, ponderous and ineffective. Lord Wavell has a heroic part to play on the stage."

COMPREHENSIVE ALL-INDIA PLANNING

LONDON, October 12, 1943.

Miss Agatha Harrison, in a letter to the *Picture Post*, says no solution will be found to the Indian food problem "until there is comprehensive all-India planning." She refers to the need to release Congress leaders, particularly Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru and Mr Rajendra Prasad. "Lord Wavell has a staggering task ahead of him, but here lies an opportunity. Hunger recognizes no political boundaries."

A STUDY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

"HE HAS RESTORED TO INDIANS THEIR SELF-RESPECT"

The following is an abbreviated text of an article entitled "A study of Mr Gandhi" by Dr William Paton, former Secretary of the National Christian Council of India, published in The "Spectator" of July 23, 1943:—

Whatever historians may make of Mr Gandhi—and they will certainly have to make something of him, for he ranks with Sun Yat-sen, as a maker of the New Asia—it can hardly be denied that he has been at every point a challenge to the age in which he is famous. He is a champion of the spinning-wheel in an age of machines; when world order and safety lead men increasingly to look to the larger grouping of peoples he stands for independence *pur sang*; he on the whole, has prevented the Indian nationalist movement from adopting violent methods when violence was all the fashion; he has always executed a diplomacy of his own, in which the most obstinate tenacity was joined to an engaging friendliness, expressing itself in the writing of long and self-analysing letters.

Many of those who discuss Mr Gandhi, whether as friends or foes, make the mistake of over-simplifying him. He cannot be subsumed under any one category; he is not just George Fox, or George Washington, or St. Francis of Assisi, nor is he adequately described as a disloyal agitator. People who know him much better than I have had the privilege of doing might add other items to the list, but I should venture to suggest, as main ingredients in the mixture, personal goodness, keen nationalism, a deeply Hindu understanding of man and the world, dietetic faddiness, a passion for social reform and an extremely astute political sense, all combined with a fundamental distaste for the routine business of carrying on government from day to day. The younger intelligentsia perhaps find in Jawaharlal Nehru a more congenial idol (though Nehru never wavered in his loyalty and affection for Gandhi), but with the mass of people it is Gandhi first and the rest nowhere.

Of his personal goodness (I prefer to use that term rather than the overworked "saint") no one could have any doubt, even when his political actions were somewhat dubious. I think of two evidences of it. One was that, at least in my small experience of him, both women and children found him always simple, approachable and charming. The other was the quality of the young men immediately around him. They might have some odd political notions, but when contrasted with the usual run of politicians in India (or indeed in many other countries) they were remarkable for a certain moral keenness and austerity. One could not but feel that a moral force of considerable quality had shaped them. In writing this I do not forget that Mr Gandhi can be absolutely ruthless when roused, as when he smashed Subhas Chandra Bose a few years ago, although Bose had been elected President of the Indian National Congress.

His social ideas are partly conservative and partly revolutionary. On the one hand, he abhors the machine age and all its works and tries himself to live, so far as a man of such importance can live, with the utmost simplicity. On the other hand, it is impossible not to feel the reality of his challenge to the whole idea of untouchability. Dr Ambedkar may well be right in his feeling that orthodox Hinduism is irrevocably committed to untouchability, and that consequently nothing is to be hoped by the depressed classes from Hinduism. That ought not to weaken our appreciation of the passion which Mr Gandhi puts into his fight against the evil. He said to me in one talk I had with

him on the subject, "If I were convinced that untouchability was a necessary part of Hinduism, I would cease to be a Hindu tomorrow." And I doubt if anyone will really question the view that it is the work of Mr Gandhi which, allied no doubt to certain deep tendencies of our time, has put the removal of untouchability high up on the list of Indian priorities.

His nationalism and his religion I felt to be very closely allied. No one should speak of Mr Gandhi's religion who does not know him better than I had the chance to do; in such talks as I had with him on that subject he left me with the feeling that he was a profoundly reverent agnostic; that is to say, one with an intensely religious nature who yet had little content of certainty in his religious life. He seemed to find the substance of Indian life in Hinduism, and he gave one something of the impression, which was much stronger in men like Mr Birla, of regarding the old Hindu tradition as the genuine, authentic India. This comes out very strongly indeed in his almost violent apathy to what he regards as the proselytism of the missionaries. He has many friends among them, but he moved farther and farther away from the Christian position. He would carry the idea of "swadeshi" to the length, so it seemed, of almost denying that in religion truth could mean anything other than fidelity to that in which one was born. (And yet, at the end of a long talk, he said to me: "Of course, if conversion is of the heart, no one can possibly object.")

His doctrine of non-violence is undoubtedly the element in his work and teaching which will be associated with him always. That he is passionately absorbed in the practice and principles of it no one can doubt. It is not for him a negative thing, nor is it, as some have said, the chosen weapon of the weak. He conceives of it as positive and aggressive, a combination of sincerity and love. British opinion has never done justice to the astonishing degree to which Indian nationalist agitation, even when the deepest feelings were aroused, has been non-violent. That is due, in the main, to Mr Gandhi.

But it is a doctrine which almost completely prevents Mr Gandhi from comprehending the task of government or helping his beloved India to a concrete achievement of freedom. Yet, even in spite of these last months, Mr Gandhi is the greatest Indian of his time and one of the greatest of all the sons of Asia. I can put most simply (and I hope without any offence) what I feel him to have done by saying that it is he more than any other who has restored to India and to Indians their self-respect. In him they feel that they have a representative of whom the whole world is aware and whom the world respects, whatever it is able to make of him. All India (including many Muslims) rejoices and is proud of that.

MR HAROLD J. LASKI

LONDON, November 15, 1942.

The trouble with any policy of repression is that it always tends to burn down the bridges along which men can pass to understanding. It is not, I think, fair to say that no small part of the trouble between the British Government and the Congress results not so much from divergent aims as from the suspicion each has of the good faith of the other. One of the results of that suspicion is that the British Government has never been really imaginative about the Congress, and has therefore failed to deal with the issue now before it in terms of the real question it has to answer. It has felt as deeply the threat to its prestige; it has been so angry when its decisive purposes have been called into question; it has been so resentful of a Congress policy which threatens that world freedom for which its people are sacrificing so much; that it approaches the problem with which Gandhi and the Congress have presented it in terms of the old and modern emphasis

upon the urgency of law and order. It has failed to ask itself the relief question to which, in this perilous hour, it must find an answer. That question is, how can we get as quickly as possible that free India from which alone maximum co-operation can be obtained?

That the Viceroy and Mr Amery have not asked themselves that question is not really very surprising; their utterances and negotiations for the last two years have rarely suggested that they think of Indian freedom as Indians themselves think of it. But it is surprising that Mr Attlee and Mr Bevin and Sir Stafford Cripps, whose minds ought not to see the problem through the mists of Imperial ideas, should have failed to ask it, and in so doing have noted that in the discussions which led both to the Congress resolution and alas, to the arrest of its leaders, there was revealed important common ground, the exploration of which is essential.

India wants Independence; to that we have replied that, given the victory of the United Nations—the indispensable condition upon which everything rational turns—India can have self-government at the end of the war and then walk out of the British Commonwealth if it so wishes. To this Indians of every complexion, and not merely Congress Indians, reply that a promise for the future is not enough; only effective self-government at the Centre now will mobilize the full heart and mind of India for the war effort. And on this, it is important to observe that the Congress resolution, pretty obviously at Nehru's instance and under pressure of public opinion among its friends in every free nation, pledged that a free India will fight for the United Nations with all its resources. Seen in this way, the difference between us is more narrow than a policy of repression permits us to grasp. There is a difference in time; we say freedom after the war of India's own making, while Indians far beyond the Congress Party say freedom now. There is a difference in method; we say, an Indian Government under the Viceroy, which is effectively the British War Cabinet, until victory and then an Indian-made constitution by some such procedure as Sir Stafford Cripps proposed; most Indians of any importance demand a genuine Indian Government now, which would co-operate with the United Nations as, say, Australia is doing. To this the Congress Party adds that a genuine Indian Government is impossible while we stay in India. True, it wants General Wavell and the army to stay. But it does not believe in the sincerity of our intention, after victory, to surrender the reality of power. Our answer is, of course, the wholly proper answer of asking for proof that a genuine Indian Government is available.

I suggest that the constructive thing is to bring into play now all the forces which might help to achieve the unity between Indian parties which is the necessary basis of a genuine Indian Government. We have said often enough since the Churchill Government came into being that we are now anxious to see it achieved; in all honesty, we ought to admit that we have done little enough to promote it. Lord Linlithgow, of course, has had conferences; but the unstated assumption behind them all was that power would remain in our hands. Mr Amery has made innumerable speeches; no one who knows Mr Amery's mind but must suspect that he believed his efforts were doomed to failure before he started. The one bright spot in the whole record was the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps. But the Cripps mission came too late; it looked more like a counter-move against Japan than a recognition of Indian claims, at any rate to many important Indians. It was carried out far too hurriedly; frankly, it was more important for Sir Stafford Cripps to go on working for unity in India than to announce the routine of business in the House of Commons. And it had about it, if I may say so, without irreverence, something of that British habit which Mr Kingsley Martin has well described as the art

of forgiving generously those we have grievously wronged. It was psychologically disastrous for Sir Stafford to go to India in a "take it or leave it" mood, and on his return practically announce that we washed our hands of the offer. That was bound to make it look as though our real thought was less the achievement of Indian freedom than of a *coup de main* in the propagandist's art among our allies who contrasted American relations with the Philippines against British relations with India. Since the return of Sir Stafford, while Mr Amery has replayed his old chord (which impresses nobody) of putting in more Indians on the Viceroy's Executive Council, even an Indian Minister of Defence, who does not raise armies, there has been the grim deterioration in the situation of which the present Congress campaign and its repression are the outcome.

I suggest that if we mean honestly to get genuine agreement in India we can do far more. There are the Indian Members of the Viceroy's Council; why are not their energies mobilized to get unity? Why cannot Lord Linlithgow himself act with the same speed and decisiveness as he displayed in arresting the Congress leaders in an effort to make the Conference proposed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru a success? Why, indeed, cannot he be its sponsor? And why, when it meets, can he not with all the authority his position confers, point out to Mr Jinnah, whose arrogant negativism has an unhappy part in this history, that both Mr Nehru and Mr Rajagopalachari have conceded the vital point that Mahommedan territories cannot, against their will, be coerced into a Federated India, and that once this is conceded it is incumbent on the Muslim League, no less than on the Congress, to make an effort to find the terms of unity? And could we not deliberately associate with such a conference the goodwill and, if necessary, even more than the goodwill, of the United States, of the Soviet Union and of China? Is there, in fact, a better way of proving our *bona fides* than by admitting at once that the question of India is not a private problem of British Imperialism, but a public problem upon the adequate solution of which the fate of freedom itself may depend?

But it may be said that the Congress leaders are under detention; the answer is: liberate them to offer proof of our determination to make the conference succeed. If it is argued that, to hand over the powers of the Government of India now to an Indian Government is, as Sir Stafford Cripps said, to create a self-perpetuating oligarchy, is not the solution an Indian Viceroy whom all parties respect—Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, for instance—to whom by convention, the Indian Cabinet shall agree to accord the power to accept the resignation of a Minister or the Ministry itself, and to veto legislation he deems prejudicial to a minority interest? This is an obvious form an interim arrangement might take until the Constituent Assembly had, after the end of the war, completed its task. If there is objection to a Hindu Viceroy, let an eminent Mohammedan be agreed upon. In the realm of Defence, let there be no confinement of the Ministerial function to the organized paltrinesses with which, in the Cripps proposals, it was endowed, but let it bear the relation to General Wavell, the British War Cabinet and the Pacific Council, that the Government of Australia leaves to General MacArthur, and, inferentially, to President Roosevelt and the Pacific Council. Make the raising of great armies for the defence of India the business of Indians themselves. Make it the duty of an Indian Cabinet to speed war production; to organize if need be a scorched earth policy in India.

The problem is soluble if our will to solve it is unbreakable. The problem is soluble if we put Indian freedom in the first place and British prestige in the second. The problem is soluble if, differently from Burma and Malaya, we are set on mobilizing now the unfettered goodwill of Indians in a cause that thereby we made unmistakeably

their own. It involves great constitutional changes; it is impossible, said Sir Stafford Cripps, to make great constitutional changes in war-time. Mr Churchill did not think so. At a moment of dire peril, he offered union with France to its Government, the largest proposal of constitutional change in our history. It involves great risks; it lacks the perfection which long discussion and patient draftsmanship could give; it injures our dignity by sending us "scuttling out of India" when Sir Stafford Cripps had spoken our last word; the unity it builds may not last. But war is nothing if it is not an experiment in the taking of risks. Administrative crudity is a small sacrifice to make for an India really prepared to fight. A fighting India is an addition to our strength of moral as well as material importance; and in history a nation never speaks its last word except upon its deathbed.

MISS DOROTHY HOGG PLEADS FOR UNDERSTANDING

LONDON, October 12, 1943.

Miss Dorothy Hogg of Birmingham has issued a booklet called *India—a Plea For Understanding,* which is an exposition of Gandhiji's political ideas as expressed by him in his articles in *Harijan* and speeches in the months immediately before his arrest.

The author believes firmly that people do not make an effort to understand Mr Gandhi and hence dismiss him as an enigmatic personality. "Enigmatic personalities must either be understood or condemned. To understand entails exhausting mental gymnastics which do not commend themselves to everyone. Moreover, men in authority carry heavy burdens. It is quicker and simpler to condemn. So the mysteries remain unsolved and the Gandhi-Government relationship continues to be enveloped in an atmosphere of suspicion and distrust."

After an elucidation of the real Gandhian policy as stated in *Harijan* and elsewhere, Miss Hogg refers to the charges against Mr Gandhi in the White Paper and official speeches, and argues that the emphasis has "shifted from the problem of India to the defence of British justice. No longer is the chief problem the assessment of guilt but the method by which it is to be assessed. It is easy to make accusations on one side or the other, but must not defence always be heard against accusation? When justice goes, what next?"

Pointing out that British women are no longer silent, the author concludes: "People are growing tired of the Indian deadlock. Official speeches jangle the nerves with tunes as monotonous as the repertoire of the street barrel organ. Will the eternal wrangle never cease? Always the sins of the past are clouding all vision for the future and Britain herself is losing her own moral freedom as she forges stronger and stronger the fetters of sterile rationalization and hardening prejudice. The Prime Minister himself once said (though not on the subject of India): 'If we wrangle about yesterday, we have lost tomorrow.' Yet we wrangle on demanding unconditional surrender from those who have defied us while asking one of the greatest men of our age to recant, to confess, sins he does not believe he has committed before we will even negotiate with him. It is not too late to strike out on a more glorious path. But will it be soon?"

Miss Hogg visited India twice with her aunt, Miss Muriel Lester, Gandhiji's London hostess.

BRITISH POLICY REITERATED

MR AMERY'S DECLARATION ON EVE OF LORD WAVELL'S ARRIVAL

LONDON, October 17, 1943.

"On the eve of Lord Wavell's arrival in India as Viceroy in succession to Lord Linlithgow, Mr Amery, Secretary of State for India, gave me a notable interview in which he reviewed the recent difficult years in Indian affairs and took a tentative look ahead," writes the Political Correspondent of the *Sunday Times*.

Mr Amery began with a high tribute to the service of Lord Linlithgow, and stated: "There can be little doubt that if as he hoped that the constitutional scheme (All-India Federation) could have been implemented, India would not only have acquired immediately a far-reaching measure of self-government but in the ordinary course of evolution, which would have probably been hastened by the war, would have obtained by now full and effective self-government as a member of the British Commonwealth."

Mr Amery continued: "The first stage, that of setting up Provincial Governments with wide powers comparable to those of American or Australian States, was achieved in 1937 largely owing to Lord Linlithgow's tact and patience in handling leaders of the Congress Party. When it came to setting up Federation, difficulties arose.

"The Congress Party had always opposed the Federal scheme and the hesitations of the Princes were increased by its action in fomenting trouble in Indian States. Muslims, who had hitherto been favourable on the whole to the Federal plan, were in the meantime brought into vigorous opposition to it by their experience of the totalitarian methods of the Congress Party in autonomous Provinces. There the Congress Ministries were functioning under orders of the Congress Working Committee—in other words, Mr Gandhi—and not in responsibility to the legislatures in which they used their majorities to impose the policies dictated to them by the Working Committee. It was the fear that this experience might be repeated on an all-India scale that turned both the Muslim League and the Princes against the Federal scheme of the 1935 Act.

"The reactions against Congress methods led to a rapid cohesion of Muslims during the next few years under Mr Jinnah, who declared that no form of Indian federation would be acceptable to the Muslims and that as a separate nation they would insist on being an entirely independent dominion or dominions separate from the rest of India. There can be no doubt that the Congress Party's handling of the temporary advantage gained in the 1937 elections so alienated and alarmed both the Princes and the Muslims as to make a constitution of the kind provided by the Act of 1935 impossible.

"While the political position was thus deteriorating, the war broke out. The Congress Party boycotted the Assembly, which, in its absence, passed all necessary war legislaion without a division.

"With unwearying patience, Lord Linlithgow tried vainly for the next few months to bring the various Indian parties into co-operation with each other and with the Government in the prosecution of the war. His declaration in August 1940 that India would be free to frame any constitution she liked for herself at the end of the war and under that constitution enjoy free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth, so far from mollifying the intransigent attitude of the Congress Party, only increased its resentment, because it stipulated that the future constitution must be agreed between all parties.

Mr Gandhi, by his pacifism and his conviction that we are bound to be defeated, was again able to secure rejection by the Congress Party of the proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942 for self-government after the war and immediate participation by the party leaders in the present Government of India. He even convinced himself that a mass campaign of sabotage—or, as he described it himself, an open rebellion—would force the British Government, confronted by a Japanese invasion, to surrender unconditionally to his demand that it should 'quit India.' It is a tribute to Lord Linlithgow's wise handling of that situation that when the trial of strength came not only the Indian majority of his Executive Council but public opinion in India and opinion in the Services stood solidly behind the Government in its firm handling of the Congress rebellion.

"Meanwhile, the proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps have remained open and will remain open, but the necessary agreement between the various elements in India is still lacking. No doubt such an agreement is made more difficult when the leaders of the most important political party are under detention and prevented from negotiating with other parties. But Lord Linlithgow has rightly held those men who are prepared to instigate open rebellion in time of war cannot have it both ways. They cannot be free to conduct negotiations with other parties with the assent of the Government and seek also to overthrow that Government by unconstitutional means. They must disavow this course of action before they can be regarded as qualified to resume any part in the constitutional shaping of India's future."

Mr Amery concludes: "It remains to be seen whether with the progress of our arms outside India, the internal situation of India may so develop as to persuade Indian leaders of the desirability of coming together and making those mutual concessions and compromises upon which alone a stable full self-government can be based. There can be no doubt that any such advance in the Indian political opinion would be met with sympathetic and encouraging response from the Viceroy, from India generally and from His Majesty's Government."

CORRESPONDENCE NOT TO BE RELEASED

LONDON, July 29, 1943.

Mr Amery gave a negative reply to the question by Mr Sorensen (Labour) asking whether Mr Gandhi had asked permission or made any attempt to write to the Viceroy or the Secretary of State for India since last March, and whether the Viceroy or the Secretary of State had communicated with Mr Gandhi or any Congress leader. Mr Amery added: "Letters have, however, passed from time to time between Mr Gandhi and the Home Department of the Government of India, but I am not prepared to disclose their number or their contents."

Mr Sorensen: Could we have no idea whether the communications were of a political nature, making any representations or expressing any protests?

Mr Amery: No. In view of the circumstances of Mr Gandhi's arrest, the Government of India have decided that he should not be afforded any opportunity of expressing or conveying his views to the public either in India or in this country.

Mr Sorensen: How then can anyone in this country know what particular views Mr Gandhi has regarding the present situation?

Mr Amery: It is not desired that they should.

INDIA PUT IN COLD STORAGE AT QUEBEC

NEW YORK, August 28, 1943.

Mr Brendan Bracken, Minister of Information in Mr Churchill's Cabinet, who accompanied Mr Churchill to Quebec (where important

talks took place between the American President and the British Prime Minister) when questioned at a Press Conference on the Indian situation said that the political issue had been put in cold storage for the duration of the war, but "Britain stands solemnly pledged to India and these pledges will be fulfilled in every respect." India was a great base, he added, which could not be allowed to become a scene of political controversy which would impair the war effort.

CONGRESS LEADERS AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

LONDON, October 14, 1943.

In the House of Commons today Mr Sorensen asked if Mr Amery would give particulars of communication from Mr Gandhi or any Congress leader received by the Viceroy, Sir Reginald Maxwell or the Government of India respecting the Congress resolution of August 8, 1942, and if any suggestion had been made from Congress sources that civil disobedience would not be embarked upon in the existing circumstances.

Mr Amery replied: "Regarding any correspondence which may have passed with Mr Gandhi since his fast I have nothing to add to the reply I gave on July 29. The same applies to communications from other Congress leaders in detention. Regarding the latter part of the question, no such suggestion has been received from any of the detained Congress leaders."

CONGRESS NOT TOTALITARIAN

MADRAS, October 22, 1943.

A strong refutation of the charge that the Congress ever practised totalitarianism was made by Mr C. Rajagopalachari, speaking at a meeting under the auspices of the Loyola College Students' Union. He said that, if Mr Amery had made that charge against the Congress, it was for purposes of his own. It was absolutely baseless.

Mr Rajagopalachari briefly reviewed the facts of the Congress Ministry in Madras, of which he could speak with cent per cent. knowledge, and said: It had done nothing either directly or indirectly which could be described as totalitarian. The fact that the electors returned Congress candidates in large numbers was a sign of their popularity and the extent of the trust they were able to inspire. If the Congress had used fraud and prevented other party candidates from competing or had threatened or intimidated others, it could be said that there was totalitarianism. The elections were conducted by British officials and the Congress could not be charged with having manipulated the same in any way. Nor did the Congress after its success at the elections make regulations for the destruction of other parties. No one from any party that functioned against the Congress could truthfully say that their liberties were taken away by the Congress Government. Not a single officer of the Government suffered because of his political views. Not only did the Congress regime not interfere with the functioning of other parties, but it did not hesitate to take action against Congressmen and sympathizers of the Congress when it was considered necessary. Neither the Congress Executive nor members of the Congress interfered when action was taken against Mr Batliwala and Mr Meharally. This was clear proof that the Congress had the least tinge of totalitarianism.

Mr Rajagopalachari also referred to the large concession shown to the Opposition in the Legislature both in the matter of representation in committees and opportunities for ventilating their points of view. As for Muslim representation in public services, legislative, municipal and local bodies, they had far more than they were entitled to on the population basis. That more than justice was done to Muslims and other minorities certainly did not bespeak of totalitarianism. The explanation for the recalcitrance of the Muslim League and the Princes must be sought elsewhere than in "this Congress totalitarianism." He added

that Mr Amery's main purpose in making this baseless charge was to show that all that Lord Linlithgow did was good and whatever was bad was attributable to the Congress.

Mr Rajagopalachari also characterized as major lies the statements made by men in very high quarters that the Bengal famine was due to provincial autonomy there and the Cripps proposals failed because of communal differences and non-agreement among the parties concerned.

"GREATEST MAN OF PRESENT DAY"

BOMBAY, October 24, 1943.

"Not Japan, nor China, but India will be the leader of future East Asia," was the opinion expressed by the Chief Correspondent for the East of the Hearst Newspapers, Mr Karl von Weigand—a 69-year-old veteran journalist and an expert on the East—in an interview to the Press. He said: "The Japanese mentality is shallow, though quick; the Chinese mentality is profound, but slow; whereas the Indian mentality is both profound and quick. And while the Chinese are inclined to be materialistic, the spiritualistic characteristic in the Indian is an asset."

Mr Weigand referred to India's contribution to world's culture and progressive thought, and paid a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi: "I know the old man personally. He is the tallest and greatest of men of the present-day world."

MR SEAN O'CASEY

LONDON, October 24, 1943.

In a message to a conference convened by the India League to evolve measures to relieve the distressing conditions of famine in India, Prof. Harold Laski said: "I do not envy those Englishmen who can read without shame and indignation the agonizing story of the famine in India." He added that "few things do more to injure our good name than our methods to maintain subjection where we could use the spirit of magnanimity to secure a partner"

Mr Sean O'Casey, the famous Irish writer, observed that the "beginning of the solution of India's problem is simply that people like Mr Gandhi and Mr Nehru should come in and the Viceroy's Councillors should pack up their troubles in their old kit bags and go. For God's sake let men who are flesh of flesh and bone of bone in India do the job they are born to do. Delhi and Nagpur know more about these things than Eton or Harrow can ever learn."

MR SRINIVASA SASTRI'S OPEN LETTERS

APPEAL TO AMERY, WAVELL AND GANDHIJI TO END DEADLOCK

MADRAS, October 24, 1943

The right hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri has addressed open letters to the Secretary of State for India, the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi on the present political situation.

The following are the texts:—

TO MR AMERY

DEAR MR AMERY,

Was your speech at the farewell to our new Viceroy meant as a specific Instrument of Instructions? If so, it was both misconceived and unhelpful. You told him in effect that he was not to take the initiative in resolving the deadlock, but wait till the Congress High Command ate humble pie and withdrew their offending resolution. Was it right to tie him down to the present do-nothing policy? Should he not be free to try a new approach to the problem? We trust he will not be long in perceiving that your instructions are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. The war-guilt clause, it is now generally admitted, was not the wisest part of the Peace Treaty of 1920. Men of honour do not require men of honour to do public penance; they trust the new facts to teach the necessary lesson. The war and the internal situation of India unfold promising phases. In 1930, I pleaded at the Round Table Conference for honourable parley with those of another political faith, whom the logic of events had proved wrong. Let me perform a similar office now and invite your compatriots and you not to heed the promptings of passion but to walk in the footsteps of the noble statesman who in similar circumstances in the last century proclaimed: "No, I will not govern in anger." Verbal recantation is not of the essence of a changed outlook. The failure of the Congress policy is writ large on the face of affairs. None will deny it. When Mr Churchill recently made a pilgrimage to Moscow, did he wear sack-cloth and ashes? When he consented to the inclusion of the right of secession in the Cripps scheme, did he make open confession of previous unwisdom? When Lord Linlithgow paid belated homage the other day to the ideal of Indian unity, did he sit on the stool of repentance and withdraw in set terms the *liberum* veto that his declaration of August 1940, had gratuitously conferred on the head of the Muslim League? Demand not of our revered leaders that they stand with tears in their eyes at the gates of the Viceroy's Palace and strike penitential palms on aching cheeks. Play the part of the magnanimous victor and the healing statesman. Do not, I adjure you, sow dragon's teeth on the ancient and hallowed soil of this country.

TO VISCOUNT WAVELL

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

My heart misgives as I think of the many delicate and intricate tasks that await you. We have been assured of your resolution, independence of judgment and liberal outlook. That is satisfactory, but not sufficient. Your training must have exalted obedience high above all other virtues and made you impatient of the slowness and caution of diplomacy and the compromises of Parliamentary negotiation. Besides, the Indian politician's attitude, suspicious and soured by generations of deferred hope, may be a puzzle and soon become your despair. Can you look beyond the narrow circle of official advisers and invite to your aid the patriotism of the land, which now is held at arm's length, because it will not neglect Indian honour and Indian

welfare? Can you see, in men and women branded as disloyal, eager colleagues in the service of India and of the Empire? Anxious eyes and ears from every corner will be directed towards New Delhi to find out whether you weigh well and not merely Maxwell. The great desideratum is a bold measure of appeasement not likely to appear in the firmament of official possibility to be pushed forward to its consummation in the faith that generous confidence begets generous confidence. Government by Section 93 must end and the Legislatures must be restored to their normal function. As nearly as may be consistent with the requirements of the war, the Centre must be endowed with the authority and prestige that betoken in the eyes of the world the early attainment of Dominionhood, so that our representatives may hold up their heads, whether at the Imperial Conference or at the World's Peace Conference, as the recognized equals of the representatives of Great Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa. This is a change of great magnitude and will require uninterrmittent and devoted labour, even if begun tomorrow. And it must be begun tomorrow. For the sun of armistice may suddenly burst through the cloud of war, brightening the planet and calling upon the nations to tackle the hundred problems of peace.

I do not forget the communal difficulty. How can I? Thousands on the one side and thousands on the other are equally crazy and determined to use every means to secure their wish. Arbitration promises the only feasible and the only honourable way out. If Government will bring their earnest mediation and their enormous influence to bear, they have a good chance of securing agreement. My hope is strong. What the great Powers submit to in the interests of peace, no section of a country's population dare reject. "If this will not suffice, it must appear that malice bears down truth." Twice within the experience of the present generation, once in Kenya and once in Northern Ireland, have the British authorities at Westminster been deflected from the right course by threat of armed resistance by a truculent minority. Let not the ignominy happen a third time. Millions will pray devoutly for the success of your Excellency's effort. If you pull arbitration through and settle this problem, you will have secured a victory in the realm of civil affairs which any conquerer in history, living or dead, may envy.

I will ask leave to say another word. The Secretary of State has declared his fear that British Parliamentary democracy may not suit India and advises us to invent a new type of popular Government for ourselves. I am not known to be an uncharitable critic; but I find it hard to believe that he can be serious. What Britain does not know and has not tried, she cannot conscientiously recommend to people less experienced or guide them in operating it. For a century and a half we have studied British institutions and admired them. When Mr Montagu framed his proposals and published them for criticism in India, some of us would have preferred an irremovable executive. I was among these. But he was all for the system of ins and outs and the majority of our leaders were attracted by the excitement and struggle incidental to recurring trials of Parliamentary skill and strategy. For 20 years and more we have practised it and become used to it. To pronounce us unfit now and send us about in quest of another plan is to hold up things indefinitely, to strew the land with apples of discord and create such confusion as to imperil the constitutional progress so far achieved. If it was intended to punish us for venturing to look forward to further progress in the same direction, Mr Amery's advice would become intelligible. Before we become much older, however, his attempt will encounter the fate of Canute's command to the sea. Not in these days can a nation's freedom be denied or delayed with impunity.

TO GANDHIJI

DEAR MAHATMA,

I pen these words in anguish. The days are hard for our motherland. Fain would I know how you feel so that no random words of mine might add to the wretchedness and desolation which fill every minute of your life. Bear with me once more. At similar crises before, it has been my unenviable lot to address you with harshness of unheeding truth, but in accents of love. The people of India for whom you have slaved these 30 years, as no one has done, lie prostrate in the deadly grasp of hunger, destitution and stark despair. A dismal sense of frustration oppresses them like a nightmare. Their trust in you, however, is the same, if possible tenderer and purer for your sufferings and sorrows. Promising plans are promising only so far as you may work them out. Proposals from any quarter are canvassed but only so long as the execution stage is not reached; then they ask for you and speculation stops. Officials in their way and for their reasons, unofficials in their way and for their reasons, all alike turn to you. Only on half a dozen occasions have human hearts yielded themselves up in such complete thrall to one without birth, beauty of form, possessions, force of arms or honours to distribute. Every true Indian is proud that he can call you his fellow-countryman, and those that you have honoured with your friendship are among the blessed ones of the generation. Being one of these, I have used my privileged position now and then to remonstrate against the way you have allowed the doctrine of *ahimsa*, of which you are the unanointed apostle, to be muddied in its application to the work of the Congress. Your answer is that you always meant to employ it in the furtherance of national aims and could not help the lapses. You add too, with humility all your own, that you are not a saint strayed among politicians, but a politician appearing like a saint and not to be judged by the highest standards. I am, however, unreconciled and own to a feeling of grief that one so near the summit of purity should not reach it. Dear brother, an opportunity has come, the like of which never was and never will be for generations. At the ensuing Peace Conference, which may meet sooner than most people expect, the afflicted nations will seek ardently for brave and honoured advocates of justice, equality and brotherhood without distinction of race, colour or religion. You *must* be there. Who, if not you? War must be banished for ever from the earth and all possibility of its recurrence provided against, so far as it can be provided against by human foresight. Would you be missing on that supreme occasion? No, a thousand times *No*. Pacifism, non-violence—*ahimsa*—whenever and wherever these words are pronounced, the name of Gandhi will occur to the minds of people all over the earth. What should keep you from bearing irrefragable witness to the truth that you have ever cherished in your heart, the truth that must resound the ages when your body has perished. After several humiliations due to association with earthly causes, the hour of exaltation approaches you. I see you, Great Soul, in a vision of glory, go up the mount of expectancy of a weary waiting world, raise high the right hand of blessing, and solemnly utter the word which is in all hearts and which comes full of hope and full of meaning from your inspired lips.

Come then, bestir yourself. Not a day should be lost. There is so much to do before civilized administration can be restored and competent authorities in the province and at the Centre can be formed with national aims and appropriate means for the choice of delegates through whom the soul of India can speak to the rest of the world. Don't say you are not free. You can be free, if you but realize that you are waited for. Your last movement has not borne the fruit that you wished. Admit what everybody sees. No hesitation need be felt

in recognizing facts. You yield, no doubt. But you yield to Fate and not to man. Stoop and conquer. Many a hero before you has done and many a hero after you will do so. Let us consult the *Ramayana*, a book which we revere alike. It counsels against the single aim and the single strategy. A good general should vary them. These are the words of Hanuman, whose aid all Hindus invoke before beginning great enterprises:

"No single plan is adequate to achieve even a small aim. Only he can succeed in his purpose who adopts different plans in different circumstances."

MR SASTRI'S PLEA FOR ARBITRATION

The right hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, in a statement, said:—

The British Government stands pledged to make India a Dominion just like Canada, South Africa and Australia. These countries have during the war vigorously asserted their rights, greatly enlarged them in practice and proved their capacity to protect the people under them. On the contrary, India has in the same period lost the partial self-government she had, bureaucracy is enthroned in full power, and her people in dire calamity look around in vain for their natural protectors.

Whose is the blame? Obviously it cannot be wholly on one side. Yet British propaganda would make it out that the Congress High Command alone were responsible and that the remedy lay altogether in their hands. An impartial observer, however, will conclude that the Government, always the predominant partner and now the uncontrolled wielder of all authority, must bear the greater share of responsibility and cannot shirk the duty of discovering and applying a suitable remedy.

Besides, the Peace Conference will soon summon the wisest men and women of the time for the cure of the world's ills. India's gentle soul must find free and unfettered expression on the side of the large causes like the abolition of the colour bar, the equitable adjustment of the relations between the East and the West, and the establishment of the moral law among nations beyond all hazard. If the Viceroy or his Home Member chose the personnel of the Indian delegation, their voice would be but a muffled echo of that of the British delegation. Our true spokesmen will be found only by a true National Government at the Centre.

A true National Government at the Centre presupposes true National Governments in the provinces. The rule of Section 93 must go. Does it mean general elections all over the country, and the release of political prisoners and detenus? Yes. I do not expect unmanageable commotion or any impediment to war work. If there was any risk of the kind, it would be hundred times less than the rooted suspicion and the racial hatred that now poison the atmosphere.

True, alas, Hindus and Muslims threaten civil war, if they cannot each have their own way. The thinking part of the world will pass their own judgment on a great Power which after more than a century of paramountcy finds its two greatest communities ranged irreconcilably against each other, proclaims its inability and unwillingness to interfere, and recognizes only one inevitable consequence, *viz.*, the continuance of its own rule. The independent nations of the world have discovered in arbitration the only honourable method of settling their disputes. In so doing they submit to a partial curtailment of the sovereignty which they have long enjoyed and cherished. Self-determination in the case of a section of a country's population is a novel and untried idea, a figment of overwrought communal ambition. Its surrender is no great price to pay for the peaceful solution of a thorny problem.

The constitution of a satisfactory board of arbitration is a task of

great delicacy. But it may be susceptible of easy solution if the Government clear themselves of prepossessions and undertake in the genuine spirit of peace to make the main idea of arbitration acceptable.

MR MUNSHI DEMANDS CHANGE OF HEART

LAHORE, October 19, 1943.

"At a time when the war aginst Japan is the immediate problem of India, British statesmen would be unwise if they do not revise their policy which has produced the gulf of bitterness between India and Britain during the last year," said Mr K. M. Munshi in an interview to the Press.

"India is willing to fight Japan wholeheartedly," he added, "If she is allowed to do so as a partner of the United Nations. But so far British statesmen have willed otherwise. We will have to wait and see whether Lord Wavell is allowed to introduce a new policy in this matter. How the deadlock can be solved does not depend upon what we think, hope or offer; it depends upon whether the British genuinely want it. I lay stress on a change of heart more than on any specific offer."

When asked about the Cripps offer, Mr Munshi said: "What is the use of my declaring my love or hate for this offer or the other? What is the fun of getting a horse for the bridegroom ready? The bride was put in cold storage. She was frozen to death 18 months ago."

"The immediate task as I see it is to bring about a negotiating mind between Britain and India," he said. "The key to the deadlock is in British hands, and they know it. It is only when British statesmen cease to think of snuffing Gandhiji's political influence out of existence that Indo-British relations will begin to improve. We in India know that Gandhiji was anxious to fight the Japanese invasion as much as Lord Wavell himself. We also know that on August 8 he was anxious to meet the Viceroy and come to a settlement. British propaganda has tried to distort both these facts for international propaganda. When this attempt is given up the British will find that no one can perform the miracle of restoring happy Indo-British relations except Gandhiji."

Concluding, Mr Munshi said: "From my personal knowledge I know that neither Gandhiji nor the Working Committee were responsible for any programme which may have been adopted by the country after August 9 when the Government took the offensive. It was not expected when the resolution was passed that the Government will arrest Gandhiji and other leaders on the morning of August 9."

PART IV

- SITUATION IN INDIA : DEBATES IN CENTRAL ASSEMBLY AND COUNCIL OF STATE
- "EXCESSES" INQUIRY MOTION IN ASSEMBLY

SITUATION IN INDIA

FOUR-DAY DEBATE IN CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

NEW DELHI, September 15, 1942.

For four days, from September 15 to 18, 1942, the Central Legislative Assembly debated on the "situation that has arisen in the country since the passing of the All-India Congress Committee's resolution of August 8." Sir Reginald Maxwell, the Home Member, initiated the debate and as many as 30 members, including three Executive Councillors—Sir Sultan Ahmed, Dr B. R. Ambedkar and Mr M. S. Aney—took part. The following is a summary of the important speeches made on either side:—

Sir Reginald Maxwell moved "that the situation in India be taken into consideration." He said:

No specific proposition is put forward by Government for the acceptance of the House, but in accordance with parliamentary practice, Government have felt it incumbent on them to give the Honourable Members as early an opportunity as possible of discussing the situation in the light of such information as can now be given to them. I must explain that our knowledge is not yet complete. The disturbances are very recent. They are not yet at an end, and, at any rate, in the areas most affected, the Provincial Governments and their officers are still closely engaged in restoring or preserving order and taking precautions against fresh acts of violence. It will not be until some time after the situation has cleared up that full information of what has happened in each province can be collected together. And while we are in the midst of these events, it is not possible to review them, or their causes and consequences, as a thing of the past. But I shall try to give the House an outline of what has already occurred and to draw attention to certain aspects that are already becoming evident.

The Congress leaders were arrested on the morning of August 9. On the same day there was mob violence in Bombay and a few other places; but, although the news was no doubt flashed all over India, it was not until two or three days later—*i.e.*, August 11, and particularly August 12—that concerted acts of violence and sabotage began in widely separated areas. These were directed principally against all kinds of communications, and particularly against railways, telegraphs and telephones: but police stations, post offices and other Government buildings were also attacked. These troubles occurred simultaneously in parts of Bombay, Madras, the Central Provinces and Bengal, but the areas most seriously affected were the east of the United Provinces and, above all, Bihar. There has been comparatively little trouble in the North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab and Sind, or, to begin with, in Orissa and Assam.

What is not so generally known or appreciated is the extent of the damage caused and the extreme seriousness at one time of the position in the whole of Bihar (except its most southern districts), and in the eastern part of the United Provinces. In these areas, the trouble soon spread from the big towns to the outlying areas; thousands of rioters gave themselves up to an orgy of destruction of communications and other Government property; whole districts with their small defending forces of Government officials and police were isolated for days on end; there were brutal atrocities perpetrated by the mob and many deeds of heroism where small parties of police did their best to defend outlying stations. A very large part of the railway system in this area was put out of action, and it is no exaggeration to say that

for a considerable period Bengal was almost completely cut off from Northern India; while communications with Madras were interrupted by the damage done to the railways in that Presidency.

The damage done was not, of course, confined to the area I have just described, and our information from that area is still far from complete. But the following figures, which are based on the reports hitherto received from the whole of India, will give the House some idea of the destruction caused. About 250 railway stations were damaged or destroyed, of which 180 were in Bihar and the east of the United Provinces. Outside these areas, we have accounts of 24 derailments. Inside them damage was done to a few railway engines. Both inside and outside there was extensive damage to the permanent way and to rolling stock, the results of which are probably more serious than the actual destruction of buildings. In the Posts and Telegraphs Department, up to a week ago, about 550 post offices throughout India had been attacked, of which over 50 were completely burnt down and over 200 seriously damaged. Over 3,500 instances of wire cutting have been reported, and this figure is probably not complete. About one lakh's worth of cash and stamps were stolen and numbers of letter boxes were removed or destroyed by acids or other burning material. The total loss resulting from damage to buildings, apparatus, posts and wires has not yet been estimated nor that resulting from reduction of traffic. Thirty officials of the Posts and Telegraphs Department received physical injuries and many were subjected to intimidation. In spite of all this, telephonic or telegraphic communication of some kind was maintained with all the main towns of India, except Patna, throughout most of the disturbances.

Outside the Railway and Posts and Telegraphs Departments, the violence of the mob was largely directed against Government buildings. Seventy police stations and outposts and 85 other Government buildings were attacked, the majority of which were burnt or demolished. Roads and motor vehicles also suffered. Nor did municipal or private property escape. We have reports of the entirely wicked and wanton destruction of a tuberculosis clinic with its irreplaceable equipment, of the house of a private medical practitioner with all his valuable stock of medicines, of a Roman Catholic Church, of electric light installations and of attacks on A.R.P. buildings and even on schools. There have been other private persons also who have lost all they possessed. Taking into account the loss of earnings on the Railways affected and in the Posts and Telegraphs Department, which must be very serious, I should say that the total damage must be well over a crore of rupees which loss, of course, falls on the general public.

As to the present position, while it should not be assumed that trouble is completely at an end in the areas where it has already been brought under control, I think I can say that the position has been largely restored; and if our enemies are hoping that our communications and other conditions in India have been so upset as to make an attack on this country an easier matter than it was, they will be grievously disappointed. Sporadic acts of sabotage and mob violence are still reported from day to day. In fact trouble has spread in a minor form to certain areas not previously affected, such as parts of Bengal, Assam and Orissa. Special efforts were made to revive disorders on or about September 9, the day of the month on which the original arrests were made, but these were not generally successful, and there have been welcome signs, especially in the areas worst affected by disorder, of a desire on the part of the law-abiding population to co-operate with the authorities in preventing further disorders. Taking the situation as a whole, it can be said that, except in one or two small areas in Bihar, the authority of the Government is now fully re-established where it was threatened. Train services, except to the

extent that it is still necessary to restrict them in order to conserve coal, are practically normal on all railways except in certain sections in Bihar. North of the Ganges in Bihar there is still interruption, and on certain sections south of the Ganges and on one small section in the Madras Presidency, night running has not been resumed. Goods traffic, and particularly coal traffic, is obviously of the first importance: and it is satisfactory that the East Indian Railway is now delivering practically its normal loading of 2,000 coal wagons a day. Passenger traffic will have to be subject to severe restrictions for some time to come.

In the Posts and Telegraphs Department, with the exception of parts of Bihar, the position is generally satisfactory. Attacks on Post Offices on any appreciable scale have ceased. But isolated instances of such attacks are still occurring, as well as the stealing of letter boxes and attempts at incendiarism on offices and the contents of letter boxes. Scattered wire cutting also continues, especially in Eastern Bengal, Southern Madras, the southern division of the Bombay Presidency and certain portions of the United Provinces and Bihar. Sind, Baluchistan, the Punjab and the North-West Frontier continue to be remarkably free. The main lines of communication between Delhi and Calcutta, and Madras and Calcutta are being tampered with almost every day with the result that continuous perfect working has not yet been possible. Interference with certain other main lines is also continuing; and in spite of every effort it has not yet been possible to establish a satisfactory channel of communication by telegraph or telephone between Delhi and Patna.

There are one or two special aspects of these disturbances to which I wish to draw the attention of the House.

The attacks on railways and other communications started almost simultaneously in widely separated parts of India. That in itself is a significant fact. It becomes more so when one reflects that much of the damage caused must have required special implements which could not have been produced at a moment's notice—wire-cutters to cut telegraph wires, spanners to remove fish-plates from railway lines and so on. An even more significant fact of which we have considerable evidence is the technical knowledge displayed by the saboteurs. Here in Delhi the destruction of railway signal boxes was done in a scientific way. Control rooms and block instruments in railway stations have come in for special attention, and the manner of their destruction, which, of course, has a paralysing effect on the safe running of trains, also displayed technical knowledge. Signs of similar knowledge are not lacking in the sabotage of telegraph and telephone lines. Indeed I could multiply instances to bring out this point. Facts of this kind are inconsistent with the theory that these disturbances were spontaneous outbursts arising out of the arrests of the Congress leaders.

Another point equally inconsistent with that theory is the military significance of the areas and objectives selected for special attention. The disturbances have occurred mainly in areas which have strategic importance and the objects of attacks have largely been the communications which would be essential for the defence of the country in the event of a hostile attack. In the area of worst disorder—that is to say, Bihar—any dislocation of railways would seriously affect troop movements and prevent the sending of reinforcements from Northern India to the area most exposed to enemy invasion. Moreover, this is the centre of India's coal industry and inability to despatch coal supplied from this centre would paralyse transport and industry throughout the country as soon as the existing reserves had been consumed.

Both these points supply evidence of previous organization having the most sinister possible motives. We have been fortunate on this occasion in being free to give attention to this movement at a time

when there was little fear of the development of an enemy attack, with which the movement had possibly been planned to synchronize. But we might not be equally fortunate another time and I need hardly point out that such an outbreak would be a direct invitation to the Japanese to attack India if they were in a position to do so.

On the other hand, the ordinary characteristics of spontaneous disturbances have been almost entirely absent. The first object of a riotous mob is generally loot. There have, of course, been cases of looting, but on the whole this form of activity has been far less common than might have been expected. Similarly, hartals have not been observed to the extent that seemed likely and the special machinery which Government had devised to deal with such demonstrations has not had to be largely used. The selective nature of the acts of sabotage is thrown into relief by the significant fact that there has been little or no sabotage of industrial plant or machinery. It is true that cessation of work, where it has occurred under political pressure, has interfered to some extent with war production. But what is the explanation of the absence of industrial sabotage except perhaps that the owners, while ready enough in some cases to close down and accept some temporary diminution of their earnings, are determined not to be deprived of the plant and machinery on which their comfortable war profits depend?

I now turn to the measures taken by Government, first in the hope of preventing the development of a mass movement and, subsequently, in order to control and suppress the disturbances that occurred. The arrests of Mr Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee were accompanied by simultaneous action in the provinces to declare Congress Committees to be unlawful associations and to detain all important individuals who, in the opinion of Provincial Governments, were competent, and likely to attempt, to organize and lead a mass movement. We have not yet received from the provinces statistics of the number of preventive arrests so made, nor of the arrests subsequently effected for participation in the disturbances themselves. There can be no doubt, however, that the initial and concerted action of all Governments in India had a considerable effect in disorganizing the Congress plans. We might have had a much more serious situation to meet if an interval had been allowed for the maturing of those plans and if they had been allowed to choose their own moment for the launching of the campaign.

It was clear from the outset that the development of any movement along the lines envisaged by the Congress leaders must directly interfere with the efficient prosecution of the war, and Government thus had no hesitation in using to the full the powers provided by the Defence of India Rules. These rules were supplemented by additional powers to deal with hartals and to control local authorities who might act in furtherance of the movement. In addition, the Penalties (Enhancement) Ordinance and the Special Criminal Courts Ordinance, which were originally intended to apply to situations arising directly from enemy attack, were made applicable to the present disturbances. The deterrent effect of these special enactments has been useful. They enabled offences to be tried promptly and appropriate sentences to be awarded. A further measure, of which effective use had already been made by most Provincial Governments, is the Collective Fines Ordinance which enables the Provincial Governments to lay joint responsibility on the inhabitants of any area concerned in the commission of certain classes of offences.

It has also been necessary to impose a measure of restriction on the publication of news. I have no time to enter into the details of the orders issued and the changes in those orders which we agreed to recommend to Provincial Governments as a result of a very full dis-

cussion with the Editors' Conference which recently met in Delhi. I should, however, like to make it clear that our policy in this respect has been largely governed by two entirely objective considerations. In the first place, disorders of this character are infectious and news of what has occurred in one place may lead to its repetition in a number of other places which might otherwise have remained quiet; and, in the second place, much that has occurred would, if it were known to the enemy, be of great value to his plans for an invasion of this country.

Apart from the legal powers which I have just described, the fullest executive use has naturally been made of the police throughout the disturbed areas. They have been through an extremely trying ordeal and have been compelled on many occasions to open fire on riotous mobs and gangs of saboteurs in defence of property or, not infrequently, of their lives. On most occasions when fire had to be opened, the casualties were almost surprisingly small but the totals necessarily add up to a considerable figure. Our records as brought up to date during the last few days show 340 killed and about 850 wounded, but the information from some parts of Bihar is not yet quite complete. Even so, the figures fall very short of the many thousands which the Axis radios invent—less, for instance, than have occurred in many single air-raids in England. On the other hand, the police themselves suffered heavily. A very large number of policemen have been injured while 31 are reported so far to have been killed. These include a number of brutal murders in some cases of unarmed policemen. I have no time to give the House a full list of these atrocities, but I may mention the tragedy of Chimur in the Central Provinces. Here the Sub-Divisional Magistrate, the Circle Inspector of Police, the Naib-Tahsildar, and a constable were offered their lives if they promised to join the Congress and resign from Government service. They refused and were then murdered in cold blood and their bodies burnt. Similar instances have been reported from a number of other places.

A Member: Burnt alive?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: In this case they were murdered first and then burnt, but there were other cases in which they had been burnt alive.

In addition to the police, there was a very wide use of troops, British and Indian, in aid of the civil power. In no less than 60 places troops were called out while on a number of occasions they stood by. They were also widely used for guard and protection duties. The military too were forced to open fire on many occasions and the reported figures of casualties thus caused are 318 killed and 153 wounded. Military casualties were 11 killed and 7 wounded, and these figures include two Air Force officers who were taken from a train and killed by the mob and one British officer and four soldiers, who were ambushed and murdered by a mob after putting up a stout resistance. Both of these incidents occurred in Bihar. The Air Force was used and proved invaluable for reconnaissance and patrol. On one or two occasions, after warnings had had no effect, aircraft opened fire on mobs actually engaged in destroying the railway line; but there was no bombing whatever.*

Dr Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: The Honourable Member said that some aircraft were engaged?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: On reconnaissance and patrol work.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: That was in Bihar?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: They were used on various sections—not only in Bihar—but the incidents to which I referred were, I think, the occasions when they opened fire. Those did occur in Bihar.

* See chapter on "Machine-gunning of Indian crowds."

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Were any killed by the opening of that fire?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: I have not heard that they were.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know why the aircraft was used?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: To disperse the mob.

In regard to the use of the armed forces of Government to quell these disturbances, there is one point that I wish to make clear to the House. These forces have not been used to open fire on crowds engaged in peaceful or legitimate political demonstrations. Had that been the case, the word 'repression' that we so often hear might have had some application, but in disorders of the kind that have occurred the mobs or gangs of persons engaged in sabotage were in every case the aggressors. The police or the troops, where they were employed in aid of the civil government, were carrying out no more than their legal duties and obligations in using force for the defence of person and property and for the prevention of violent rebellion intended to overthrow the Government which is responsible for the safety of all. It is for this purpose that armed forces are maintained by the State; and those who use force must expect to be met by force. It has already been made clear in the Government *communiqué* of the 8th August that the purpose of Government is preventive rather than punitive and this is the principle that has governed and will govern our action. Complaints of the use of excessive force have no real meaning in situations such as those with which the police have had to deal. It cannot be expected of a small band of police confronted by a threatening mob that they should make mathematical calculations of the precise amount of force necessary to disperse it. We have to think of men doing their duty in the face of daily and even hourly danger to their lives, men charged with responsibility for the protection of vital communications. Hesitation at these moments would mean that they would be overwhelmed or that the mob would attain its object. Their first concern is to take effective action and it is their duty to do so. Cases will no doubt be quoted in which it is alleged that force was used with no such provocation. I would ask Honourable Members to be sure that such stories are well verified before they give currency to them. If, however, any such act has occurred anywhere, it is a breach of discipline with which the Provincial Governments and the officers in command of their forces are as much concerned as any member of the public. I would, therefore, Sir, deprecate any sweeping allegations as regards the conduct of the police at a time when the whole country owes so much to their courage and steadfastness. The proper course in such cases will be to bring the allegations, if they are well authenticated, to the notice of the authorities immediately responsible for the discipline of their forces and it can be assumed that, if satisfied, they will do what is proper. But it is putting an entirely wrong perspective on the whole matter to lavish sympathy on those who have brought upon themselves the consequences of their own aggression and to attempt to put the police or other Government forces on their defence whenever they have found it necessary in the circumstances of the emergency to use force in the execution of their duty.

One of the high-lights of the situation has been the manner in which not only the police, on whom the deadliest attacks usually fell, but all ranks of Government servants—even the humblest—have in the country as a whole stood firm and done their duty in face of attempts to subvert or terrorise them. I have heard of fine work, too, done by the civic guards and A.R.P. services. I do not say that there have been no failures here and there, but the country may well congratulate itself on the way in which the machinery of Government has continued to function under the very severe strain imposed upon

it. We shall not forget those who have given their lives in the execution of their duty and we may well claim that the loyalty of all classes of Government servants has proved their faith in the administration that they have served so well. Solid and stable public services are a great bulwark against anarchy. We must see that their confidence is not shaken by unworthy attacks upon them.

Another source of encouragement has been the steadiness of the country as a whole notwithstanding the inconvenience and loss caused to the general population by these widespread disturbances. Experience in Bombay, Cawnpore and elsewhere has shown that labour, if left alone, is not anxious to give trouble. Where strikes have occurred --and there are several important areas such as Ahmedabad in which labour is still out—they have been the direct result of political influences backed, we suspect, by ample funds. Nor has the population at large shown any general inclination to take part in the movement. The Muslim community and the scheduled castes, I am glad to say, have, as a whole, stood entirely aloof. Large areas of the country again, have been quite free from any sort of disturbance. Certain areas there have been—and I do not minimize their extent or importance—where for a time hooliganism had become rampant and mob rule prevailed. But speaking generally, I think it can be said that the disorders and acts of sabotage have been mainly of a local and sporadic character carried out by organized parties with the assistance. no doubt, of the local hooligan element and such others of the more ignorant population as could be excited by false stories and promises. What I would emphasize is that this movement cannot in any true sense be described as a people's movement. The whole thing is engineered and not spontaneous. There are already encouraging signs of a revulsion of public opinion against the madness of the past weeks and cases have come to notice in which the villagers themselves have intervened to prevent damage to public property. But until the malign influences that have been at work have been fully counteracted the country cannot feel safe from further attempts to disturb the life of the people.

Who then is responsible for these disorders? What lies behind them? Where the whole life of the country has been so greatly disturbed, where its defence in war has been so far prejudiced, it is important that the country should form a clear opinion on this subject. Attempts have been made and will, no doubt, continue to be made to exonerate the Congress leaders or to represent that recent events are not the outcome of the mass movement sanctioned by the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay. The terms of the Resolution which they then passed are such that they can hardly disclaim responsibility for any events that followed it. But apart from that, it is impossible to interpret the utterances of the Congress leaders themselves except on the assumption that they knew and approved of what was likely to occur. Prior to August 8, Mr Gandhi himself in his organ *Harijan* and in a series of published statements and Press conferences, which received wide publicity throughout the country, was engaged in preparing the ground for a civil disobedience movement, the exact nature of which he did not to the very end openly disclose. He did not shrink from speaking in terms of appreciation of anarchy as an alternative to the existing order and he made it known that the contemplated struggle was to be "a conflagration" and that he would "not hesitate to run any risk however great." On the 14th July, after the Wardha Resolution had been passed, he declared in a Press interview: "After all, it is an open rebellion. . . . My intention is to make it as short and swift as possible." On the 19th July he again declared: "I do not want rioting as a direct result. If in spite of precautions rioting does take place, it cannot be helped." His final message, after his arrest—which was foreshadowed in his speech of the

previous day to the All-India Congress Committee—was "Do or die," a slogan that has been quoted in many subsequent Congress circulars or bulletins as authority for acts of violence. Other Congress leaders also made no secret of the nature of the contemplated struggle, and the time between the passing of the Wardha Resolution and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was used by many of them in developing the themes that full discretion would be left to the participants (as indicated in the Congress Resolution itself) that the movement would not be called off if it led to violence; and that acts such as the destruction of communications and even derailment of trains would be regarded as legitimate. The Madras Government has already given publicity to instructions issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee which definitely included in the programme the cutting of telephone and telegraph wires, removal of rails and demolition of bridges. One item of this programme is "to impede the war efforts of the Government" and another is "to run a parallel Government in competition with the British Government." It is noteworthy that the circular itself quotes as its authority Mr Gandhi's 'do or die' message. Instructions of a similar character are found in numerous bulletins and leaflets claiming the authority of the Congress which have been found in circulation since the disturbances started. One such bulletin contains "a war programme" which contains such items as these:

"Formation of guerilla bands to give surprise attacks on the Tommies";

"Stoping of all trains carrying troops and war materials";

and, even more serious perhaps,

"Britishers' cooks are to be organized to cook bad food for their masters."

A Member: Most of them do it.

Sir Reginald Maxwell: It may be said that there is no proof that these bulletins carry the authority of Congress or the Congress leaders, although they profess to do so. I have, however, elsewhere brought out the point that the acts of sabotage that have occurred could not have been planned in a moment and show clear evidence of previous organization. Whatever part the Congress leaders may have taken in the actual work of this organization, it is impossible to believe for a moment in the light of their own utterances that they were ignorant of its existence or that their plan did not contemplate that it would be brought into play when they launched their mass movement. I am not at present prepared to say whence this organization drew its inspiration. It will be our business to find out more of what we do not yet know. But if any doubt remained as to the identity of Congress with these disturbances it could easily be removed by quoting the very numerous instances in which known Congressmen, particularly in Bihar, have been observed openly inciting mobs to violence and sabotage; while many others went underground immediately after the Bombay meetings and have remained there for reasons best known to themselves. On the basis of all the information at present available, therefore, we cannot absolve the Congress from responsibility for these very grave events and cannot allow the country to remain under any delusion as to the part they have been playing.

Sir, when the Congress threw down their challenge on the 8th August the Government gave an immediate reply. "To a challenge such as the present," they said in their *communiqué*, "there can only be one answer." They pointed out that on the Government of India "lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of her people without fear or favour. That task the Government of India will discharge in face of the chal-

lenge now thrown down by the Congress Party."

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: What about the saving of the lives of the people?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: I am only quoting part of the *communiqué*. Proof has now been given, Sir, that the Government of this country has not only the will but the power to arrest the forces of anarchy. It is little more than five weeks since the word was given to 'do or die.' The existence of a very widespread conspiracy immediately became manifest. Yet, today, although many terrible things have happened, control has been established almost everywhere and the country as a whole is quiet; and although this suicidal movement is not yet finally quelled, we can feel some justifiable confidence in our power to deal with any situation that may yet arise.

There are some who charge Government with overhastiness in taking action when they did. The answer is that had Government given opportunity for three or four weeks more of Congress propaganda of the kind that was then in progress, it is very doubtful if this rebellion could have been quelled without very much more destruction than has now taken place. What has happened is bad enough: but delay might have meant an appalling disaster for the whole people of this country.

There are those, again, who say that repression is not the right remedy and that in order to restore peace steps should be taken to release all those who have been endangering the country's defence and put them in a position to conduct the further war effort of India. That is, I think, the underlying significance of some of the amendments that have been tabled. Well, Sir, the position of this Government has been made clear in the *communiqué* to which I have already referred and there is little that I can add to it. One thing quite plain is that with an enemy at our gates and another enemy within them the prime duty of this Government is to undo the harm that has been done as soon as possible and to put this country in a state of defence against both.

Sir, the picture which I have been compelled to place before the House is one that will give no satisfaction to thinking people or to those who are jealous of this country's honour and repute. They will regret the orgy of destruction, the waste of Indian lives and property —things that can only bring loss and hardship to Indians themselves. They will regret that the forces that should have been facing the enemy at our gates should have been diverted to the task of quelling an attempted internal revolution. They will regret that, with Indian soldiers' repute never standing higher in the world, with victory drawing ever nearer and with it the promised fulfilment of India's highest dreams, one political party, for its own ends, should have descended to acts of sabotage as a means of enforcing its demands, regardless of the help thereby given to the enemy.

I have before now given warning in this House of the danger of arousing the passions of the excitable masses through irresponsible agitation. These events afford more than sufficient justification for the preventive action taken by Government in the past, for which we have often been attacked. They show how real is the peril in this country of unleashing the forces of disorder and how quickly, when that is done, the reign of hooliganism—always latent and waiting for its opportunity—tends to establish itself, so that no man's life or property is safe. Now that the danger has become apparent to all it is, I am sure this House will agree, not only for Government but for all who wish to save the country from very terrible danger to dedicate themselves, at whatever personal sacrifice, to the task of mobilizing the active help of the people themselves in preventing further acts of violence and disorder. It is not enough to condemn these things in the abstract; it is for every citizen to see that they do not happen.

AMENDMENTS MOVED

Amendments were then moved.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: Sir, I move:

"That for the original motion the following be substituted:

'That in view of the fact that the present sad state of affairs in India has resulted mostly by the activities of agencies who with the object of bringing Indian National Congress into disrepute with United Nations started propaganda against it by ascribing to it as having included in its programme sabotage and destruction of Government property and having changed its creed from non-violence to violence, and the subsequent arrest of Congress leaders before they could contradict that charge and define as to what they meant by mass civil disobedience, and thus a section of the public having been led to believe that the programme of the Congress was the same as alleged by its opponents, and who in their despair and anger having resorted to those undesirable activities—which could not be approved by any political party with non-violence as its creed—and which action in its turn has evoked the expected use of force by Government which has far exceeded the requirements in almost every case, and which has now gone to the extent of collective responsibilities and collective fines and all this has torn the peace and tranquillity of the country to pieces and is likely to result in great embarrassment to the war effort, this Assembly recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council to take immediate steps—even if no compromise be considered possible—to ascertain the views of the Congress Leaders in this respect and to give them an opportunity of contradicting this charge and clearing their position and change the violent activities into non-violent expression of their dissent, and create an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence by taking liberal steps which may inspire confidence in the minds of the people regarding the intentions of the British Government towards India.'"

Mr N. M. Dumasia: Sir, I move:

"That for the original motion the following be substituted:

'That this Assembly condemns the orgy of lawlessness and disorders that have recently taken place in India with serious loss of lives and colossal damage to property which have seriously interfered with public services, approves of the action adopted by the Government to suppress the mob violence and "Civil Disobedience" movement initiated by the Congress and to restore order in the country and recommends that there should be no relaxation of measures for the protection of lives and property until the "Civil Disobedience" movement is withdrawn and peace and quiet restored in India.'"

Sardar Sant Singh: Sir, I move:

"That for the original motion the following be substituted:

'That this House recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council to immediately take suitable steps to bring about necessary changes in the constitution of India to establish a real National Government in India immediately and with a view to assure the people of India of the sincerity of the British people in this connection, this House recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council to do the following:—

1. To make an immediate declaration of complete independence for India from 1st of November, 1942.
2. To immediately lift the ban from Indian National Congress and allied institutions which have been declared unlawful on or after 8th of August, 1942.
3. To immediately release Mahatma Gandhi, his co-workers and other Congressmen detained or sentenced for any offence after 8th August, 1942, and to release all persons arrested, detained or sentenced to any term of imprisonment for

offences connected with this movement after 8th of August, 1942.

4. To remit all fines levied from individuals or collectively levied on villages or towns.
5. To dissolve the Central and Provincial Legislatures and hold new elections at the earliest convenient date.
6. To invite the Indian National Congress and Muslim League to form a Provisional National Government at the Centre. And in case these two bodies do not agree to form the Government then the Indian National Congress alone should be invited to do so and in case the Indian National Congress declines to accept the invitation the Muslim League alone should be asked to do so till elections are held.' "

SIR HENRY RICHARDSON

We have heard from the Honourable the Home Member something of the extent and intensity of the lawlessness engendered in various parts of India by this movement; we have heard of wanton destruction of property. We have already heard how India's war effort has been impeded by this movement, and indeed, apart from anything that we have been told, it is surely obvious that even the smallest disruption of communications in time of war must be a cause of rejoicing to the enemy. Can any responsible person believe that actions of this nature, merely because they purport to be carried out in the struggle for freedom, can in fact bring that freedom nearer? If the Axis Powers are defeated, freedom for this country is a certainty, but if those Powers win, the very word 'freedom' will cease to have any meaning. We in this House know that the only possible effect of the Civil Disobedience Movement is to delay the realization of that freedom and it is for this reason we insist that Government shall continue to take whatever measures shall be necessary to put down these subversive activities.

I have said that provided we win the war, freedom for this country is assured and in saying this I am merely reiterating what has already been said publicly and solemnly by His Majesty's Government. If there is any doubt in the minds of any of my Indian friends as to the sincerity of the declaration made by His Majesty's Government, may I say here and now that in the minds of my community no such doubt exists; we accept it as a definite settled fact and we, as a community, will continue to exert ourselves to the utmost to assist in every possible way in implementing these promises at the earliest possible moment.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What happened after the last war?

Sardar Sant Singh: Why not now?

Sir Henry Richardson: In our opinion, His Majesty's Government and the present Government of India would be guilty of a grave dereliction of duty if they allowed the gift of orderly freedom which has been offered to India to be dashed to the ground in pieces, just because it has been rejected, instead of preserving it carefully until at long last it can safely be placed in willing and worthy hands.

There are some amongst the Members of the House who say, why not form a National Government here and now, and transfer power to it immediately. Let us be quite clear in our minds about this. What exactly is a National Government? What is it we want to achieve? A National Government surely is a Government which so completely commands the support of all parties and interests in the State that it is able to set to rest political controversy for the time being and to ignore the demands of purely party or sectional interests. That is the essential characteristic and virtue of a National Government. Can it be seriously suggested that such a Government can be formed in this country in the middle of the war, in the absence of a firm agree-

ment between any of the major political parties?

Sir, we in this Group attach the greatest importance to this debate because we believe that if we and all parties in India can order ourselves aright during the remaining years of the war, a great and glorious future lies ahead of a free India in the post-war world, an India which we believe under the stimulus of growing industrialization will take its place amongst the greatest and most powerful nations of the modern world. It is with that object that our troops, Indian and British, are today fighting as brothers in arms and proving themselves more than worthy of the great military traditions of our common past. They are fighting in the sure knowledge that, however long and difficult the task may be, at the end lies victory, victory for idealism over the gross materialism of the Axis Powers, victory for the belief in the right of mankind to freedom, and victory for all those values upon which depend the future freedom and glory of India.

SIR MUHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN

What is this revolution and how did it come? Why did not the Government take steps during the last two years to find out what was being hatched in the country? Did this organization come to do things simultaneously over one night? For the Honourable the Home Member says that on the 11th and 12th there was simultaneously everywhere destruction of communications. Same kind of action had been taken all over India, in all places wherever the communications had been and would have helped the Japanese if they had chosen to attack at that time. It is very surprising that the Government came to know only after the 11th and 12th that there was such an organization. Why did they not know it beforehand? How can we entrust our lives and our properties into the hands of the people who cannot even safeguard and save the property of the Government itself? I cannot say that I can endorse all that had been done. I say that the Government must know that there are three parties in the Congress. There are three wings, one committed to non-violence, one is the Communist Party which is siding with Government, and there is another party which goes by the name of Forward Bloc which nobody can control. They all go as Congressmen. Nobody can say, this is not a Congressman, or that is a Congressman. All are Congressmen. Whatever that may be, I want the Government should keep a proper vigilance and must not be that kind of Government which, after the deeds had been done, come up and tell horrible stories before us.

Some of my friends have tabled amendments and I must speak a few words on them. My Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, says that there should be formed a Government, and first of all the Government must invite the Congress and the Muslim League to form the Government. If they do not accept jointly, the Congress alone, he says, may be invited. If the Congress does not accept, then the Muslim League alone should be invited. My Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, belongs to a Party—I do not know whether he is speaking on behalf of the Party.

Dr P. N. Banerjea: No. He had no authority to speak on behalf of the Party.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I see that he had no authority behind him of his Party. These are only his personal views. For his information I may tell him that Mahatma Gandhi, just before he was arrested, elucidated the points which were made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said that Congress would welcome if the Muslim League were to form the Government. One gentleman who had his own doubts about this statement approached Mahatma Gandhi who made clear what Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

meant. Mahatma Gandhi said in his writing as reproduced in the *Tribune* of August 20:

"With reference to your letter giving me the purport of your conversation, I wish to say in as clear a language as possible that . . . . Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's published offer to the Muslim League was meant to be a serious offer. Let me explain it again for your elucidation. Provided (*this is a big proviso*) the Muslim League co-operates fully with the Congress demand for immediate independence without the slightest reservation, subject, of course, to the proviso that an independent India will permit the operation of the Allied armies in order to check the Axis aggression, and thus to help both China and Russia, the Congress will have no objection (*he does not say, he will agree*) to the British Government transferring all the powers, which it today exercises, to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India including the so-called Indian India."

Then he says:

"The Congress will not only not obstruct any Government that the Muslim League will form on behalf of the people but even join the Government in running the machinery of the free State. This is meant in all seriousness and sincerity."

One proviso is that the Muslim League must merge itself into the Congress! As he says, the Muslim League must adopt the resolution which had been passed by the Congress Working Committee and supported by the All-India Congress Committee—the Congress demand of immediate independence for India on terms which have already been passed by the Congress! That means the Muslim League must merge itself into the Congress, and unless that proviso is acted upon Mahatma Gandhi cannot agree. He puts before us a proviso which he knows full well it can never be accepted because the Muslim League had their own resolution, and Mahatma Gandhi wants that the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee without any hand of the Muslim League in it should be accepted by the Muslim League blindly. It means, "You form the Government and I will keep all the votes in my pocket and turn you out whenever I like." Supposing the Muslim League forms the Government and the votes remain as they are, for how many days can the Muslim League carry on the Government unless the Government is an irresponsible Government as the present Government is irresponsible? We cannot carry on the Government with the votes against us, with a dagger and a revolver held at our face, point blank. If we are to carry on the Government we must have the sanction of the House, that is, the vote of the House, if it is going to be responsible Government. But if it is going to be under the present constitution, we have many times said, and the Muslim League has said, there are only two big communities in the country, that is, Hindus and Muslims.

Let us have a joint equality so that none may outvote the other in the day-to-day administration during the war and if the Congress —a big party—is not willing to take up the responsibility, then the Muslim League must have at least a majority, just to discharge their responsibility. No responsibility can be discharged without a majority. The Muslim League never said that they are not willing to co-operate. They are willing to co-operate with those parties who are ready to take the responsibility on their shoulders, provided they are in such a large majority that their voice can be heard in the country.

MR N. M. JOSHI

After having listened very carefully to the speech of the Honourable the Home Member, one thing struck me very forcibly and that is the colossal ignorance of the Government of India as to the real situation in this country. It seemed to me that this Government is com-

pletely divorced from the surroundings in which they are working. The Honourable the Home Member began his speech from the passing of the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee demanding independence and mentioning that if they did not secure independence they will declare civil disobedience in this country. For the proper understanding of the situation I would go a little backwards and trace why the Congress passed the resolution which it did in Bombay on August 8 and in tracing the situation one thing which strikes me again is the failure of the Government of India to understand the feelings and sentiments of the people in this country. From the beginning of this war, there have been no people in this country who had the least sympathy with either Fascism or Nazim. People in this country are thoroughly imbued with democratic ideals. Unfortunately, the Government in this country is a foreign Government and most of the sections of the people of this country felt that although they sympathize with the ideals of democracy they could not play an active and enthusiastic part in this war unless the people were made free and there was a National Government in this country. Our Government played with the problem of the National Government. Taking advantage of the communal divisions in this country they sat quiet for a long time, and then, as a measure of self-government, they introduced a few additional Members of the Executive Council, but nobody thought it was a National Government. After some time, a new situation arose in the political atmosphere and that is the entry of Japan into the war and the war having approached the borders of this country. The feeling in this country which was already in favour of democracy became stronger but, unfortunately, the same obstacle was felt, namely, that without a National Government the people in this country could not take an enthusiastic and effective part in this war. Unfortunately, the Government of India did not realize this for a long time but the nearness of the Japanese attack made them alive to the issue and then Sir Stafford Cripps was sent here with some proposals.

So far as I am concerned, I feel that the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps, as far as the future constitution of India is concerned, were satisfactory, but they were very vague as far as the immediate present was concerned.

But it will be wrong to blame only the Congress for rejecting those proposals. The Muslim League rejected those proposals; the Hindu Mahasabha rejected those proposals; even Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr Jayakar disapproved of those proposals. Sir, I felt, that in the interests of this country and in the interests of winning the war, the British people should have acceded to give further powers as asked by the Indian National Congress, but the British people are not thinking seriously about establishing a National Government in this country.

The other day, his Excellency the Commander-in-Chief made a statement that if this country is to be saved, it will be saved by the fighting army. Sir, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and the British Government have forgotten the lesson of Malaya, they have forgotten the lesson of Burma and they have also forgotten the experience of China. A well-equipped army was made to retreat within a few months in Malaya and Burma on account of want of co-operation from the people, while an ill-equipped army of Chinese has been successfully defending China for over five years on account of full moral support of the people. This neglect of the problem of establishment of a National Government in this country has exasperated not only the Congress but it has exasperated the whole people of the country. People want to help in this war, they want to win the war, they want to defeat the Japanese, but, Sir, the people are

not permitted to do so through their National Government. We are reduced to the position of mere onlookers in this war. That has created an intolerable position, and in order to end this intolerable position, the Congress in sheer desperation tried to seek a sanction to enforce their demand for National Government. Sir, I do not approve of the Congress forging the sanction of civil disobedience at this critical time. This is a dangerous proposal, risky from the point of view of safety of this country. But, Sir, I can understand how people in sheer desperation resort to methods which they do not approve of. If the Congress made a mistake in resorting to civil disobedience, the Government of India made a blunder. The Congress had left the door open for negotiations, while the Government of India banged it in an irresponsible spirit. I feel, Sir, it was wrong on the part of the Government of India not to take advantage of the slightest opening for negotiations. Unfortunately, the Government of India think that the demand for National Government is only a Congress demand. It was not only a Congress demand, but it was a demand of the whole country, and, therefore, it was very wrong not to have yielded to the Congress demand for a National Government. It was a great mistake of the Government to have arrested the Congress leaders instead of taking advantage of the room for negotiations. The results of the Government's mistake have been disastrous. I do not wish to deal with the blood-curdling events of the last few days, I shall have another opportunity to speak about them before the end of the Session. But, Sir, I have no doubt in my mind that as the Government took upon themselves the responsibility of arresting Congressmen, they have fired the first shot and so they must retrieve the country from this difficult situation by taking the first step towards reconciliation. If this war is to be won, it can be won only by the co-operation of the people, and not by keeping the country bitter, as it is bitter today. Therefore, the Government must not think of their prestige. There is no loss of prestige in yielding to your own people, there is humiliation in yielding to your enemy. I, therefore, feel, that the Government of India should retrace the steps they have taken. They have made a mistake and they must take the initiative in rectifying that mistake. They must release the Congressmen immediately. It is wrong to expect of people who are in jail to reverse their policy. There are people who say, let the Congress first call off the civil disobedience movement. I think it is wrong to expect the Congressmen, while they are in jail, to call off the civil disobedience movement. It cannot be done. It is not even fair and practicable to expect Congressmen to do so. I, therefore, suggest, to the Government that they must take the initiative in releasing the Congressmen in an effort to reconcile the people of this country.

Sir, the next step which the Government ought to take is to establish a National Government immediately. It is wrong for the Government to think that there are large communities against the Congress. They say that the Muslim community is against the Congress. But are the Muslims with the Government? In any case it is not only the Congress which is boycotting the Government's war effort, but the Muslim League also is boycotting the war effort.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: No, the Muslim League is not boycotting the war effort.

Mr N. M. Joshi: Then they say that the Depressed Classes are against the Congress as regards the civil disobedience movement. But, Sir, neither the Muslim League nor the Depressed Classes are against the Congress in demanding a National Government. Therefore, it is wrong to say that the Congress represents only a very small body of people in this country. In any case, if a large bulk

of people in this country are against the Congress, they are not with the Government. It was, therefore, wrong for the Government of India to try to suppress the Congress instead of trying the method of reconciliation.

I suggest that the Government of India should reverse their policy immediately. Let them take up this question of establishment of a National Government in this country immediately in hand. If a National Government can be established by agreement, it is the best thing to do, but if a National Government cannot be established by agreement, let the question be referred to arbitration. If arbitration too is not accepted, I suggest that it is the duty of the Government to establish a National Government whether there is communal unity or not. When the British people conquered India, they did not insist upon national unity or the assent of the people of this country. On the other hand they conquered India by dividing us and now when we are asking that freedom should be restored to us, they insist that the whole country must unite, that there must be unity and so on. Sir, it is wrong for the Government to say so. Let them decide to transfer power to the Indian people and then take upon themselves the responsibility of distributing that power among the main elements of the population in the fairest way that the Government can. Some years ago the Government gave the communal award, but that communal award was not liked by anybody, at the same time that communal award was accepted and in practice followed by all people. Similarly, if the British people give the communal award as regards the distribution of power now, I have no doubt in my mind that the whole country will, in practice, follow it and accept it. Therefore, it is the duty of the Government to establish a National Government in the best way they can.

Sir, the Government are already late, I hope they will not be too late in establishing a National Government in this country. Whatever the Government may do, I have to make an appeal to the Assembly and through the Assembly to my countrymen. I have no doubt that the Government will fight the Japanese, but they will fight the Japanese to save a part of their Empire. If the Government are defeated, they can retreat to Iraq or Iran or even to Timbuctoo, but I would like to ask my countrymen, if they are defeated by the Japanese where will they retreat? Therefore it is the duty of the people of this country to do their very best, to do their utmost to defend this country against the Japanese and the only way of defending this country against Japan is to forge unity among themselves. Every community will have to make a sacrifice in order to secure that unity. I would suggest that the majority community, that is, the Hindu community, should grant the demand of the Muslim community for self-determination. After all self-determination is not such an unreasonable demand. I would, therefore, request my countrymen to accept the Muslim demand, and let us unite and form a National Government so that through that National Government we can fight the Japanese successfully. I have also no doubt in my mind that through that unity we shall make ourselves free from British domination. Sir, that is the way out of the present situation and let me hope that the British people and my own countrymen will follow that way; therein lies our salvation.

MR N. M. DUMASIA

I must at once confess that there is general sympathy with and support for the demand of independence for India. That demand has been virtually granted in the offer brought to India by Sir Stafford Cripps. It is most unfortunate that that offer of complete independence to India after the cessation of hostilities was not accepted by

the Congress and the Muslim League. If it had been accepted the situation would have been normal in India today and we would have been able to present a united front to a most powerful enemy who has avowed his determination to conquer and rule the whole of Asia. I am sure that a little display of statesmanship and wisdom on the part of Mr Gandhi, who is the absolute dictator of the Congress, could have prevented the extremely grave situation which exists in India today from developing. Recrimination, however, can serve no useful purpose, nevertheless the unparalleled gravity of the situation and the imminence of the menace looming over us is such that it is the duty of everyone to speak out and to act in order to preserve the best interests of the country.

The words "Independence" and "National Government" are dinned into our ears by the Congress and by political leaders of every camp and complexion in the country without anybody ever bothering to show the capacity to attain that aim—a state of affairs which reminds one powerfully of Tennyson's words: "An infant crying in the night; an infant crying for the light and with no language but a cry." The recent happenings in India have proved that the innocence of Tennyson's infant is lacking in the cry of our political leaders. We are all desirous and anxious to secure independence for India but at present the conditions essential for its success are absent and there are practical difficulties in our way. Both wisdom and statesmanship require that they should be carefully considered and tackled before attempting the experiment. Otherwise it will add fuel to the fire of communal antagonism that is now burning so fiercely in the country. A National Government cannot be imposed; it is the living expression of a people's will, and it must be evolved with careful consideration and thought and by the achievement of unity, understanding and co-operation on fundamental principles between the elements of the nation. In India, as things are today, a National Government can only be possible by understanding, agreement and co-operation between the four elements of the realm, namely, the British Government, the Indian States, the Congress and the Muslim League.

MAULANA ZAFAR ALI KHAN

India can only be saved by her own efforts. Four hundred millions of Indians cannot be defeated by any power on the face of the earth, and supported by the Britishers she would be invincible. So obviously it ought to be the duty of the British Government to see that India is placated and that the political aspirations of India are given due consideration. But what have the British Government done? Instead of placating Indians, instead of meeting their political requirements, they suddenly one fine morning arrest Gandhiji and members of the Working Committee of the Congress and ban the Congress, although this was a bit precipitate. I think the amiable gentlemen who grace the Treasury Benches, and who speak in our names, must have advised the Governor-General to issue orders for their arrest. I remember Sir Firoz Khan Noon in one of his speeches reminded us that during the last eleven months there has not been a single instance in which any proposal put forward by him has been rejected by the Governor-General. Similar assertions will presumably be made by the other gentlemen from Mr Aney downwards. So I ask them: "Did you advise the Governor-General not to arrest the Congress Working Committee and leave loopholes for further negotiation?" Because negotiation between the two might have ended in an amicable settlement. If Gandhiji and his colleagues had been out certainly the condition in which we find India today would have been different. This burning of Post Offices and attacks on the military and the police, tampering with communications—all this would not have occurred: otherwise

Gandhiji would have stultified himself. He believes in non-violence; he has believed in non-violence and has acted non-violently all these years; and he would not have allowed this state of things to go on. That section of the Hindus who are carrying on these things would have been stopped by him.

That is one thing. Then negotiations might have been made with the other sections of the country, with the Muslim League. The Muslim League, some people say, stands in the way of the independence of India, that it is an obstacle in the way of the right solution of this great problem. Nothing of the sort. The Muslim League stands as much for the independence of India as the Congress or the Mahasabha. The Muslim League has not banged its doors against any negotiations with any party. The Muslim League has declared in so many words that it is prepared to negotiate with all parties on a footing of equality, in order to mobilize the resources of the entire country to fight Nazism and Fascism. It cannot, therefore, be said that the Muslim League is averse to any proposal to unite with the other parties. In my opinion the right thing for the Government at the present moment would be to cry halt to its policy of absolute repression. Repression will not save the problem. You may kill a few here and a few there; you may shoot down a few individuals here and there; but this is not a sporadic disturbance; it is a revolution; it is revolution throughout the length and breadth of India. The Muslim League has not hitherto joined the civil disobedience movement, which was most unfortunate on the part of the Congress because the Congress very well knew that at the present moment India was threatened by the Japanese on the Eastern side and they would hail any disorder within the country—as disorder and disobedience mean one and the same thing. The civil disobedience movement under the present circumstances must, therefore, be condemned. Yet the time may come when the Muslim League, which resents the policy of the British Government as much as any other party in this country resents it, who have always been let down by the British Government in spite of their repeated offers to co-operate with them and not to embarrass them, in spite of all these facts the Government have never listened to what we say and have always let us down—I say the time may come when the Muslim may have to fight for his rights and that fight would be very terrible indeed. . . .

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: Five hundred times!

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Mr Jamnadas Mehta reminds me of the fact that the Muslims have five hundred times more guts than these amiable gentlemen who have been removing fishplates. So the Muslims will fight, but not before taking every measure to come to terms with the Congress, with the Mahasabha and with the Britisher, whoever he may be. Our Prime Minister, Mr Churchill is a very funny fellow. He tells us that these Congresswalas are nothing but a small group of politicians, mischief-makers, with certain financial interests behind them. That is the Congress, he says; and he thinks we will believe it, that the world will believe it. I tell him—although I do not hold a brief for the Congress—that to ignore the Congress is a folly of the first magnitude.

When my Honourable friend, Sir Reginald Maxwell, made his statement—which took him nearly an hour—I thought he would place before us some statesmanlike and constructive proposals; but he simply told us that five hundred Post Offices were burnt and so many hundreds were killed and so many hundreds were shot and that a systematic and organized effort was made by these mischief-makers to carry on this revolutionary movement. But we have got the picture from another source, which is a bit more interesting, and I should like the House to join with me in enjoying it. The organ of

the Communists of India says:

> "Despair stalks the land. Revenge against repression is the cry of the hour. The police smash up in one place but there is outburst in another. 'Order' is being restored in the towns with the police lathi, tear gas and, if they are not enough, bullets. This does not restore peace; enraged patriots overwhelmed by superior force in the towns are branching out into the villages where the police are few and far between, where the military cannot easily reach. Railway tracks are being torn up, trains derailed, telegraph wires cut. The Government set out to suppress the Congress, the embodiment of the Indian national movment; it has only set in motion forces that are disrupting Indian defence. The Government has called into being people's fury against itself; it has only heartened the Fascist invaders. Instead of handing over India to the Indians, it has done its worst to see that India goes to the Japs."

The constructive side of this problem, the statesmanlike side of this problem is for the Government to try and reconcile those who are now shut up behind the bars, and create an atmosphere favourable for the great parties of this country to come together. The Muslim League has left its door open to negotiate with the Congress, but Gandhiji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and others are behind the bars. With whom then to negotiate? So let them out, bring them out of jails, and in the meantime, let men like Mr C. Rajagopalachari, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr Aney, Sir Sultan Ahmed and others try to induce the Government to create facilities for negotiation, and these negotiations may be carried on between Government and Gandhiji also. The direct result of Gandhiji's release from jail and of his colleagues would be that the disturbances in India would stop. Hitherto we were told that a crore of rupees has been lost over the Railways, 500 Post Offices burnt, and lakhs and lakhs of rupees of loss in property sustained. Many people, innocent people, were killed, for it must be remembered that the revolutionary, when he becomes mad, does not distinguish between an innocent person and a guilty person. He kills. So many policemen in the discharge of their duty were burnt to death, others were burnt alive. These things won't happen. Otherwise Gandhiji would stultify himself by presenting to the world a spectacle of this sort of thing going on while he was out. So, statesmanship demands, reason demands, equity demands, justice demands that something should be done to improve the situation, and that can be done by bringing the Muslim League and the Congress together. The Mahasabha would follow suit. Lately the Mahasabha has only become the mouthpiece of the Congress so far as the demand for the independence of India is concerned, and although the question of Pakistan may be taboo so far as the Hindu Mahasabha is concerned, I think when we heard our friend, Mr Joshi, expressing the hope that the Hindus would accept the demand of the Mussalmans, there is a chance of the Hindu Mahasabha also coming round to the Muslim point of view.

SARDAR SANT SINGH

I was at Bombay on the 9th August on business when I saw the first outbreak of hostilities against the Government. Amongst other things what impressed me most was a spectacle which was a new one. I was driving along the Marine Lines of Bombay when I saw an Indian policeman, an Indian soldier and a British soldier standing together. I went ahead and found the same thing. I went ahead further and found the same, till in the whole of the Marine Lines I saw sets of three persons standing together representing law and order. This created an impression upon my mind that we were passing through a time when an Indian policeman was not trusted, when an Indian soldier was not trusted and that was why the presence of a British soldier was necessary along with them. I saw things happening there. When I travelled from Bombay back to Delhi I found Delhi in turmoil also. Immediately it occurred to me that the situation was pregnant with serious and grave consequences, if not a disaster of the

first magnitude, unless something was done to improve the situation. So I wrote a letter to the Viceroy asking for an Emergency Session. I expected and I made it clear in my letter that I wanted this Session to be helpful in solving the present political deadlock. I stick to that opinion still. But to my greatest disappointment I find that the present motion has been moved by the Honourable the Home Member. Well, we expected the Leader of the House to move this motion, but it has entered into the head of the Honourable the Home Member to move it. The second thing that struck me most was that instead of any constructive proposal or any solution or any formula being placed before the House for discussion, a simple motion that the political situation be taken into consideration was brought before this House. The 45-minute-long speech of the Honourable the Home Member contained nothing but a narrative of half-truths, falsehoods and in most cases lies, which I will presently show.

Sir Reginald Maxwell: I could not hear exactly what the Honourable Member said. The Honourable Member said, lies?

The President: The Chair did not catch what words the Honourable Member used. He must withdraw that expression.

Sardar Sant Singh: I withdraw these words. I will say, incorrect facts, that have been produced before this House. I was most amazed and shocked when I read this passage. I noted it yesterday but now I have got an authoritative publication in the *Statesman* and the passage reads thus:

> "One thing quite plain is that with an enemy at our gates and another enemy within, then the prime duty of this Government is to undo the harm that has been done as soon as possible and to put this country in a state of defence against both."

A Member: What is wrong?

Sardar Sant Singh: What is wrong about it? Malaya and Burma are the clearest illustrations of fighting against two fronts. This shows a lamentable lack of understanding of the situation.

What is the present position? I accept the position as stated by the Honourable the Home Member that the enemy is at the gates of India. If the enemy is at the gates of India, statesmanship required that the enemy within the door of India should be appeased, should be contented, should be satisfied.

And, after all, what is the appeasement demanded by the people? They want only what the Allied Nations have been saying day after day for the last three years and that is that they are fighting for the freedom and democracy of India. We want freedom. India needs freedom. If India wants freedom and it is in your power to grant freedom, why delay it? There is no logic behind the thing.

A Member: Freedom for whom? For the majority?

Sardar Sant Singh: I refuse to deal with that question in the twenty minutes that I have at my disposal. My amendment is a clear indication of my views. I refuse to be drawn into any domestic quarrels here. I shall only refer to the broad principles in the short time that is at my disposal.

The Indian National Congress, which has so far been described as the one organized great political organization in India in the House of Commons and outside, so many times has been demanding that freedom. From the beginning of the war, I will go a bit earlier, for the last 20 years, this constitutional question has been before this country. England refused to concede that freedom. At the beginning of this war, an unconditional offer of co-operation was made by the Congress, simply to be rejected. Next year, another offer came and it was rejected. If Sir Stafford Cripps's proposals had come in September, 1939, they would have had a chance of being accepted; but

in 1942, it was too late. The pity is that the present Government of India, nay, I will go further and say, His Majesty's Government, have always underestimated the strength of their opponents. I need not go into the history of the last three years of war. They under-estimated the Japanese power. They underestimated the strength of the Axis powers and today they are underestimating the power of the people of this country. The present position is this: There is not a man in India who does not crave for the complete independence of this country. Even in England, you have conceded the principle that India shall be granted complete independence but the difference is, you say —after the war; we say—here and now. That is the difference. You put forward certain conditions precedent which you know you are not going to allow the people to fulfil. It has been made clear that so long as the British people are in this country an agreement between the two communities is impossible to reach. (A Member: Why?)

It is clear. There is no need to go into that. I do not want to be side-tracked. If Mr Churchill wants to know whether it is the entire people of India that demand freedom or only a portion of it, why not have a Gallup poll of a section chosen by yourself? I make a proposal that you should have a Gallup poll of the students of all the colleges throughout India, including all communities and let us be abide by the result. If you think that the youth is too enthusiastic, you can have a Gallup poll of the Government servants that are employed by you but it should be a secret poll. Have a secret poll of the Government servants who are of your own making and abide by the result. I challenge you. You will not get more than ten votes from the Government servants even. What do you mean by saying that the will of the people is not there? The will of all the people is there. The people want independence and the people mean to have it.

The Government say that atrocities have been committed by the mob. I am not here holding any brief for the Congress. I am not here to defend their programme or even their policy. I have not been a follower of the full programme of the Congress, but I say that there is truth in one thing and that is the responsibility for the present state of affairs is entirely on the Government. Did they think that the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers would be taken quietly by the country? If they were of that opinion, they have been disillusioned but with a tremendous loss of life in the country. The fault has not been on one side alone. The fault has been on both sides. My friend, Mr Dumasia, has moved an amendment saying that he approves of the steps taken by the Government. I shall read a portion of the report which has been made by an independent body, unconnected with the Congress, the merchants of Karachi. What happened there? That report states three or four facts which will be interesting to know and I will ask Mr Dumasia whether he approves of them.

A Member: "Who are the members?"

Sardar Sant Singh: There are 12 names. I will give you the names of some of them. They are Pardaman Singh, Soonderdas Dharmsey, Sukhdev Udhavdas, Jethanand Hiranand, B. T. Thakur and so on. I will give you the full list later on, if necessary. The point I want to make clear is this. What defence has the Administration got against these charges? This is what the account says:—

> "Some of the youthful victims, mostly students, and sons of respectable citizens have stated before the Committee that at the police station after severe beatings by slaps, fisticuffs, kicks, etc., they were taken into a room and made to lie down on their backs, with a plain clothes man sitting on their chest, their

feet were lifted up by another man and they were beaten on the soles of their bare feet with canes, most of them having received 10 to 20 stripes."

Then the second thing is this:

"They were compelled to touch the boots of the Police Officer with their noses and shuffle on the ground on their buttocks or do, what is known in Sindhi, as 'Gisi.'"

Then a most terrible thing happened, which will send a thrill of horror through all men who have any sense of humanity left. What is contained in the next passage shows that a boy was taken hold of by a policeman for the purpose of committing sodomy on him. (Voices: "Shame.") I shall read that passage:—

"One case has been brought to the notice of the Committee in which a Police Officer is alleged to have asked one of the recruits to select any of the arrested boys brought to the police station and who had been severely beaten. The Makrani, it has been stated, actually dragged a boy into a room, forcibly removed his pyjama and underwear, but on the latter's raising a hue and cry, he was let off."

May I ask you whether a series of atrocities that have been mentioned here today can beat this atrocity? I ask the Honourable Member of the European Group whether they will quietly condone it in the name of law and order. This is one Committee of independent men who have gone into the matter and they have published this report. Well, Sir, if these things have happened at one place in the country, do you think they will leave a soft feeling for the Britishers or the Police in the bosoms of the people? Reflect, consider and judge coolly. The time is not when we in our desire to condemn each other forget the real psychology of the people, forget the real facts and say that we will fight both the internal as well as the external enemy. Through you, Sir, I want to appeal to the Government; pause and think over before it is too late. That is why I placed a constructive proposal in my amendment before the House. I am afraid my friends are correct when they say that my amendment has no chance of being passed in this House. I know that is the case. If I were to be guided by the verdict of this House, I would sooner be in a mad House than in this place because here reason does not reign and the verdict is not given on the merits of the proposition. It is all for propaganda. But the Government forget at this stage that the war is not won by propaganda alone. In making that supreme effort to win the war, they will have to win the supreme co-operation, unstinted co-operation of the people of this country. So long as the morale of the country is down or is converted into active hostility, they cannot win this war. They will not only ruin themselves but they will ruin the Americans and the Chinese who are here. They will ruin the Allied Nations whose number is 56 or 57.

I will only say that even if we look at the brightest side of the picture that they have succeeded in suppressing this movement, they would certainly leave a trail of bitterness behind with no love for the Britishers in this country. Do they want that state now?

The President: The Honourable Member must finish his speech now.

Sardar Sant Singh: I will only say this in the end that before it is too late, let saner counsels prevail and that Government should take stock of the situation. I have yet a lot to say which I am leaving unsaid, but let it not be said of the present Government Members that they were the coffin-bearers of British Imperialism in this country.

MR C. P. LAWSON

The argument is frequently put to me by my Indian friends that if the offer of self-government as soon as the war is over is sincere, what reason can there be for not making some advance in this direc-

tion immediately? Surely, say my friends, there must be in India 15 or 16 representatives of popular parties who would be prepared to take over the government of the country provided they are given full powers to govern the country as they think fit. Why delay if such a government could function and command the confidence of all popular parties? This attitude of mind is not confined to my Indian friends, and indeed I have seen from the Press that certain members of my community have indicated a similar wish although their identity is not made public. I do not, however, quarrel with their intention; the wish behind the sentiment is that to which I referred at the outset, namely, to end the impasse and to secure full support for the war effort. If I complain about this utterance, I do so because it is impracticable and because it makes no attempt to produce specific remedies for the more practical ills which attend the situation. A solution in theory is valueless if a solution cannot be found also in practice.

As my Leader has already said, a National Government should be a Government which eliminates all political strife and party warfare. The demands of the main political parties for the interim period have been made clear. Can these demands be combined in such a manner as to produce conditions which will eliminate all future party strife? There are no advantages to be gained and indeed there is grave danger in producing a Cabinet which will satisfy one faction and at the same time produce bitter opposition from another. Even the most sincere prosecution of the war effort cannot produce real efficiency if a Government is pre-occupied with political strife and political disturbances. We are often told that this or that faction should not be permitted to impede political progress and that such progress should continue, albeit such a faction dissented. The factor that vitiates this argument is the factor of war. Conditions in this country at present may not be ideal but in trying to improve them we must be careful to ensure that worse does not befall.

And, indeed, it is not strictly fair to demand that any political party shall abandon sincerely held views in order to effect a hasty settlement. There is no power above a sovereign power and when full sovereign powers are transferred to this country, it must be carefully considered where those powers are to rest. If they are to rest with the people, a large constitutional field must be opened and carefully examined. If they are to rest with the Cabinet itself, it must not be forgotten that no internal limitation remains upon their powers. They might be able to alter their own Cabinet constitution or the constitution of the country and who is to say that such a transfer of power would throw no shadow on future development? Could this House deny that a responsible Cabinet with full sovereign powers must develop the picture of India's future and direct to a large extent the paths to India's future constitution? When one comes to examine the matter, the implications of a transfer of power cannot be avoided and the number of matters which require careful examination are legion. For instance, we in this House are concerned greatly with what is now British India. But we are inclined to forget that two-fifths of this peninsula is without British India's jurisdiction. We are inclined to forget that 600,000 out of India's million and a half square miles exist under separate governments. If any community or political party is reluctant to commit itself to a form of autonomous government which may prejudice its ability to press its claim for representation in or its right to fashion the legislatures of the future, could we condemn it? Can we not exercise the patience that the times demand? War conditions are not peace conditions and amongst the Allied Nations there is not one that has not sacrificed some personal liberty in order to attain the end which

means no less to us than it means to them.

Sir, it may be said, "In all this, where are your constructive proposals?" May I draw attention to the fact, which seems to have been forgotten, that we have already a Government of India consisting of 14 Members, out of whom 11 are Indians? Well-deserved tributes have been paid to officials, and I add mine also but I find it in my heart to pay tribute also to the Government for the way in which they have undertaken these duties in a time of great anxiety and for having borne their burdens with success. The Congress Party have ruled themselves out of court in the matter of co-operation. I urge and I sincerely hope that other Parties will not deny us that co-operation so that strength may be given to the Government of this country to carry on this war and to finish it so that this country may get soon the freedom which we all know is coming.

MR F. R. ANTHONY

The problem we are considering today is admittedly a most complex one. In the medley of an almost bewildering variety of sentiments, of national pride, of a sense of frustration, and a spirit of negation, it is difficult to dogmatise or to apportion blame unequivocally.

Since the beginning of the war there has been a confusion of outlook, of sentiment and of policy in India. I believe that I am right in saying that no right thinking Indian has any sympathy with Nazi or Fascist ideals. But we are here to face and not shirk issues. I also believe that I am right in saying that the bulk of India does not feel that we are fighting for alleged democracy which has any application to this country.

Government cannot escape their share of blame. The God Almighty bureaucratic complex of the Government machine is unfortunately all too prevalent in India. A detached and unresponsive Bureaucracy still rules from Olympian heights. Few, if any, persons in responsible positions are really in touch with the true sentiments of the people of this country. Indian officials are drawn into the vortex of officialdom. If anything, they out-herod Herod and become more godlike and Olympian than their European counterpart. An Honourable Member on the other side asked why it was that, when Government alleged that the present sabotage and violence was the result of a preconceived and organized policy, Government had to be jolted out of its godlike stupor before they realized that anything was wrong. The answer is that Government have not got their pulse on the real Indian national feelings. The detached and indifferent attitude of the bureaucracy is identified in the minds of thinking Indians with emotional and mental insentience. This insentience is the cause of issuing statements which are almost ridiculous in their unreality. Delivered from what I may call the ethereal heights of officialdom they are usually monuments of inaccuracy and unrealism. Thus, it has been iterated and reiterated that the bulk of India is behind the war effort. This is a travesty of facts. As an Anglo-Indian and a lawyer, I have a large circle not only of European but Indian friends. I have the greatest respect for Englishmen in their own country, but I also know the real sentiments of my fellow-countrymen. And I know that the spirit of India is not harnessed to the war effort. The supercilious palate of officialdom may be tickled or even satisfied by the ostentatious publication of statistics as to munitions production and recruitment. But, Sir, these do not represent the true feelings of India. Some communities are definitely obstructive, most of the other communities are at best indifferent. Is it not possible when allegedly responsible Empire statesmen make statements, is it not possible for them to refrain

from irrelevancy—statements which are distinguished by fatuity and complete ignorance of the real feeling in this country, statements which have provoked even Englishmen themselves in this country, recently, to protest against such effusions which are nauseating to honest Englishmen and galling to the pride of every self-respecting Indian? India today will not tolerate the pointing of a patronizing or a minatory finger and being told in so many words, "You must behave like a good little boy or else—." I realize, Sir, that the price of tin has appreciated considerably in these days but India cannot be expected to be responsive to a rule of little tin gods with feet of clay.

I would draw the attention of Government to the very definite sense of frustration and spirit of negation that are present in India. I believe that every right-thinking Indian has no sympathy with Japanese ideals. We who know Japanese ideology also know that the whole Japanese military machine has been built up on false theories of racial superiority. We know that the Japanese are not anxious to deliver India to the Indians. We know that from any Axis invader India can only expect contempt and abject slavery. But still there is the spirit of negation in a large section of the people. These people do not actively desire an Axis victory but they are not unwilling to see England lose because they feel they would thus get some kind of vicarious pleasure in witnessing removal of the British power from this country. Government must approach this problem in a spirit of sympathy and reality. These persons represent a huge army of material from which a potential invader could and would enlist fifth columnists.

But I would also make an earnest appeal to my fellow-Indians. We may have our resentments. No Government over a period of several scores of years is blameless or can be blameless. But I appeal to you not to allow these resentments to cloud our judgement or to warp our action in the present or the future. No one can deny that India has travelled a long way on the road to self-government. It has been a long and hard road, but will India in a spirit of perversity deliberately throw overboard all the efforts, achievements and aspirations that have gone into the travelling on that road? It would be poor comfort indeed deliberately to sell ourselves into slavery under the Axis powers in order to pay off old scores against Britain.

Are we entirely blameless in respect of this present position of stalemate? Have we presented England with any common measure of agreement? Have we presented her with a demand backed up by the majority of the people of this country? It is very easy, Sir, for people in opposition to criticise and condemn. Destructive criticism and uninformed condemnation are the stock-in-trade of the Opposition. British political dishonesty has furnished a convenient shibboleth behind which to combine negative elements. But, Sir, Government is a very positive and practical affair and cannot be run by shibboleths and opposition methods. Who is there in India today who is able or willing to take over power from the present Government? It is all very well to indulge in slogans of "Get out and let us rule"; "It is better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven." These may be very good political propaganda pap, but no Government can be run by such slogans. "Divide and rule" is another charge which is levelled against the Government. But if this is true then is it not a reflection on the intelligence and patriotism of communal leaders that they should submit to being made puppets of? Rather, is not the blame to be found among ourselves? So long as we hear cries of Hindustan for the Hindus and that the future con-

stitution of this country must be evolved by the major elements, so long will the minorities who represent a very large section of India not be able to regard future developments with equanimity. We defer, Sir, to no one in our love for this our Motherland. We defer to no one in our desire to see India ruled by a real National Government. But we do not accept political propaganda which may purport to invest a bid for hegemony or dictatorship as bearing the complexion of nationalism. These efforts are a negation of nationalism. Let the major elements in this country attract the support of the smaller elements not by threatening them with penalization or extinction but by magnanimity and a policy of breath and vision.

MR JAMNADAS M. MEHTA

The causes of the present discontents are deeply rooted in the history of the last 200 years. My honourable friends cannot be unaware that the East India Company made us grind dividends at the rate of 100, 150 and 200 per cent. for the holders of the East India stock. They cannot forget that besides the grinding of these dividends, at which Shylock would have blushed, the agents, factors and the clerks of the Company looted and plundered, smuggled and practised every atrocity and outrage that could be conceived. Adventurers of all types left India with colossal fortunes and settled as Nawabs in Great Britain, regardless whether this country was swallowed by an earthquake after they had left. These are not my words. These are the words of Adam Smith. In one memorable passage Lord Macaulay in words of moving pathos describes the corruption, the tyranny which you practised and which left devastation in its trail. Macaulay says: "India was made to witness the most frightful of all spectacles, the strength of civilization without its mercy." This is the beginning of our connection. Since 1792 onwards the same policy was continued either through trade, taxation, transport or tariff. Huge crores flowed into British pockets through currency and exchange manoeuvres, from monopoly of trade, and in every other conceivable manner. With what results, Sir? The result is that today three-fourths of my countrymen do not get two square meals a day. Half of them are in every condition of illness and disease. Every fourth man in the street is suffering from malaria. The expectation of life is 26 years in this country against 56 elsewhere. The death-rate in this country is rarely below 30 against 12 which is the normal rate in progressive countries.

From 1892 you became conscious of the cruel wrongs which you had done us. But did that change your policy, Sir? You have tried to conceal what you could no longer deny. You started inventing excuses for not doing the right thing. Against a nominal transfer of power and crumbs of authority, the same policy of exploitation continues with even greater force: you have started creating defences against the on-rush of democratic forces in this country—through various Empire preferences, racial, political and communal discriminations, special electorates, communal franchise, minority protection. All these are the protective paraphernalia of a guilty conscience against the tide of the democratic movement in this country. You are building barricades against freedom, and the Indian nationalist movement finds itself today confronted with a powerful Maginot Line of vested interests and privilege; but I promise you that we shall by-pass this Maginot Line even as Hitler did. We the Hindus and Muslims and other communities of this country, the workers and the peasants, will by-pass this Maginot Line of privilege and reaction, and enter the Paris of freedom and there might be a Dunkirk at Bombay or Karachi, after which no Dieppe raid even will be possible. I, therefore, request you to awaken in time. I make this request in all humility...

The only reason why the other parties in this country do not join the Congress in its present "Quit India" policy is not that that policy is not right. It is true that we are offered Dominion Status with the right to secede, full independence; but on what condition? Only if we will produce an agreement, an agreement which they, yes, they and they only make it impossible by this paraphernalia of communal and discriminating administration and legislation. They are like incendiaries who set fire to a house and then go into the streets loudly shouting for the fire brigade. But the fire is their work; and I ask you that this will not do any more. The only reason why the other parties in the country are not with the Congress is because the war is on us. I say the Indian National Congress is not the only body which strives for freedom. We are all—each and every one of us—for independence. The Congress was nowhere even to be seen when Savarkar struggled for independence 32 years ago....

A Member: The Congress is older than 32 years.

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: But not for Independence; it was then petitioning and memorialising; it was praying when Savarkar struck the first blow, when Mr M. N. Roy sacrificed his own home and remained in exile for the Independence of this country, when a humble worker like myself in 1927, at the Madras session in face of the opposition of the present members of the Working Committee of the Congress, got a resolution for Independence passed. Therefore, the Congress Party are not isolated in the stand for Independence. They must not consider that everybody who is not with them in this campaign is, therefore, a traitor. That is the greatest mistake that the Congress Party is doing; as I said before if we are not today with the Congress, it is because the war is on us. In the war I forget all differences. I have told you in what light I consider the danger. I am, therefore, prepared to blot out the evil memories of the last two hundred years, and I desire that the whole of India should stand shoulder to shoulder with the Britisher and with the American to fight the Axis out. At such a time, this "Quit India" policy has absolutely no meaning. Not only it has no meaning, but it has a sinister meaning. It is a direct invitation to the Japanese to invade India and nothing less. Whether the Mahatma does it or the Maulana does it, whether it is the Patel or the Pandit who does it, it makes not the slightest difference....

To my Congress friends I say, to my Muslim friends I say, to my Hindu Mahasabha friends I say, to Government I say the same. The Mahasabha has put forward a scheme which offers the possibilities of a settlement for all, at least for the time being, although I am sorry to say that neither the Congress nor the Muslim League nor the Hindu Mahasabha ever calls the workers and peasants to its confabulations. I ask you, first of all, to enlist the sympathy and the support of the workers and the peasants, because they, after all, are 90 per cent. of the people of this country. To Government I say, so long as you give them sufficient food, so long as you give them protection, so long as you look after their human needs, the workers and peasants of India will be true to you in the present war because it is their war and you have nothing to be afraid of from the Axis powers so long as you remain true to the workers.

DR SIR ZIAUDDIN AHMAD

The issue in the present debate is not whether a difference of opinion exists in the demand for self-government. The Congress and the Muslim League do not differ on this issue. The difference lies in the connotation of the word "self-government" and in the method adopted in achieving the object. The demand for National

Government is common but its connotation is different. We want equal partnership and right of self-determination. The Congress wants the rule of the majority and to maintain the domination of a particular class which from our experience of the Congress administration the Mussalmans cannot accept. Mr Joshi rightly pressed the formation of a National Government. He put the entire b'ame for not having it on the present Government. Suppose he becomes the Government himself. May I ask him if he will be prepared to frame a new Constitution for the interim period which will satisfy both the Congress and the Muslim League?

But what is the use of a constitution for a National Government if it could not achieve national enthusiasm to win the war? There is also a difference in the manner of achieving self-government. I want to achieve it by constitutional methods. Some persons desire to have it by terrorism and by paralysing the Government. This method cannot achieve the object especially with the enemy at our doors. I put a simple question. Does the Congress want a National Government? They cannot have it, much less can they run the Government without giving full satisfaction to the Muslim League and other minorities? Can any sane person believe that Japan will shed blood in this country only to instal a national Government and then retire? If she ever comes, she will come with the intention of staying and ruling this country. However much a Congressman might dislike the present Government, he would not like to change it for the Japanese Government. We want a National Government and not change of one foreign government for another.

SIR ABDUL HALIM GHUZNAVI

India is going through one of the greatest crises in her very long and varied history. I would not be far wrong when I say that the crisis we are facing and to the solution of which all of us are striving hard to make some contribution is one of the greatest crises in the history of the world, and it would need all the wisdom, political sagacity and statesmanship both of India and of England.

We have read the amazing statements made by Mr Churchill and Mr Amery and on Tuesday we listened to the statement of the Honourable the Home Member. In these statements, if I may say so, one would search in vain to find some constructive suggestion, some note of sympathy with the national aspirations of India. On the other hand, the whole burden of the statements is that the Congress is a nonentity. There is only an attempt to discredit and criticise the Congress. This, to my mind, is in sharp variance with the British Government's earlier attitude towards the Congress.

I must, however, say that the largest parties are not the only parties that count. All parties, to my mind, are important. Among all such parties, among all men and women in India, there is unanimity as regards the ultimate goal. All want freedom. The difference among the various parties lies only in the path each elects to follow for the attainment of that freedom. If we must win this war—and we must—we cannot afford to let the lessons of the set-back in Malaya and Burma be lost on us. We must profit by those lessons. This total war can be won only by rallying the people round the fight. No military, however strong, can fight effectively if the people are divorced from it. I owe allegiance only to my beloved country and the progressive features of mankind. The demand for transfer of power is the national demand. It is also in conformity with the ideals for which the United Nations stand and fight this war. I admit there are difficulties in making wide constitutional changes during these abnormal times. But they are not impossible of overcoming. Larger constitutional changes have been undertaken in the past during similar trying conditions and the Cripps offer itself disproves the myth

of constitutional impossibility. In any case, viewed objectively, these difficulties must be overcome. It is no use harping on the existing differences among sections of the people. They are only apparent and on sight of the goal, which is common, must disappear as mist before the rising sun. Mere promise of freedom at a future date will not achieve this unity among the people and enthuse them. There is much deplorable distrust of Britain's intentions. For this, if I may say so, Britain has only herself to blame. With and since the Queen Victoria Proclamation on 1st November, 1858, the history of British connections in India has been a long line of broken pledges and promises solemnly given. This is no time, however, to harp on past sins of omission and commission on both sides. The enormity of the danger confronting this country overwhelms me, as surely it must overwhelm any one who has the country's cause at heart. To ensure the whole-hearted co-operation of India's 400 million people and her vast resources on the side of the United Nations, it is most essential that Britain should forthwith transfer real power into the hands of the Indian people and make this the people's war.

The Honourable the Home Member gave us an estimate of the loss of property and material as a result of the present turmoil in the country. He condemned the actions of the people who caused such destruction. He painted lurid pictures of horrible and fatal attacks made by infuriated mobs on civil servitors and military personnel. I am not satisfied, however, that the brutality with which the people attacked Government offices and officers has not been retaliated with unusual and excessive force by the forces of law and order. I am informed that in various places, and Bengal in particular, the military patrols indulged in indiscriminate shooting on crowds, dispersing frantically but peacefully on their approach, and in doing so, did not at all observe the humane principle of shooting the unarmed beneath the waist. This, it is said, was done in order to strike terror in the minds of mischief-makers, but it was inhumanly cruel.

I must draw the attention of the Government of India to what Mr Churchill, in the course of his recent statement, said on the Congress. He stated that the Congress is a political organization "sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests." This statement presumably is based on information supplied by the Government of India. I must most emphatically protest against such generalized insinuations against a section of the people as wholly unwarranted and uncalled for. This is only calculated to produce very unwholesome results and wean away even those who are sympathetic and co-operative in spirit. Both the Indian and the European commercial communities in this country are co-operating fully with the war effort. But the two fundamentally differ in their views as to how the present effort could be enhanced. Even eminent British and American experts have challenged the policy which the Government of India now pursues and which the European commercial and industrial interests here support. I need only name here Sir Alexander Roger and Dr Henry Grady. The Indian commercial and industrial interests do want political freedom because it is the prerequisite to economic freedom, without which they will only remain Cinderellas of world commerce and industry. They want freedom also to enthuse the masses to work more and produce more towards the war effort.

Sir, Britain has so long professed to act in the role of a "Trustee." She must realize that her period of Trusteeship is over and India is getting impatient to have power in her own hands now and at once. As I see, no agency on earth can prevent the transfer of this power. Unfortunately every British official in this country, from the highest

to the lowest, is grudging at every step the Indian getting or trying to get some of his responsibilities, and I am disclosing no secret when I say that the entire Government of India is open to this charge. Every British officer tries to keep as much control in his hands as he can and will not, on plea of efficiency, part with it till he is compelled to do so. That is what is making the position worse, and the reaction to that is this mass movement in the country.

I earnestly appeal, in conclusion, to Britain to show magnanimity, to part with the control of administration gracefully to the Indians, because the time has now come when India is determined to have that control, with the co-operation and goodwill of Britain if possible, without it if necessary.

MR LALCHAND NAVALRAI

The British Government cannot rule here with repression as its policy. No repression has ever been able to put down the legitimate demands of the people. The situation may be suppressed, but it will be seething underground, and statesmanship requires that some early conciliatory steps should be taken. There are complaints all round in India that there has been excessive repression and harm done even to the innocent civil population. Even in a place like Sind, where the Honourable the Home Member admitted that the movement was much less, I say he went so far as to admit that the North-West Frontier Province, the Punjab and Sind continue to be remarkably free. Yet in Sind a responsible body of the Indian Merchants Chamber have given their own report, a portion of which was read by the Honourable Sardar Sant Singh yesterday and I would throw more light on it.

After this movement started and atrocities were being committed, the responsible and respectable Indian Merchants Chamber and Buyers and Shippers Chamber sat together to consider the situation. Sir, they appointed a committee from amongst themselves, in which there were Muhammadans also, the name of one of them is Faridullah Lukhman Allahji. They were asked to get evidence of what was seen. This is what they said:—

> "From the depositions made before us by the various witnesses who are alleged to have been belaboured by the police, we have come to the conclusion that the police in dealing with the public, particularly on Tuesday the 12th August, 1942, has acted in a very high-handed manner and used more force than was actually necessary in suppressing the alleged agitators, and that it also indulged in indiscriminately assaulting innocent persons who were not taking any part in any demonstrations."

Then further on they say:—

> "The police used lathis not only for dispersing crowds, but they belaboured respectful persons going about their lawful business, either on foot or on bicycles. They also entered reading rooms, restaurants and clubs and indiscriminately assaulted persons sitting therein and also arrested a number of them. They chased the young boys, knocked them down with lathis and trespassed into the private residences of these people."

Then, Sir, further on it said that some of the respectable citizens have stated before the Committee that at the police station, after severe beating by slaps, fisticuffs, kicks, etc., they were taken into a room and made to lie down on their beds with plain clothesmen sitting on their chests: their feet were lifted up by another man and they were beaten and so forth. It was also stated that one mackrani (the peculiar system of the Government to employ mackranis, hooligans) actually dragged a boy into room, forcibly removed his *pyjama* and underwear with a view to committing sodomy. I say, Sir, if this is the deplorable state in Sind, what justification has the

Honourable the Home Member to say that repression is not very tense?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Is the Honourable Member aware that the Sind Government held an inquiry into the allegations and published the results?

Mr Lalchand Navalrai: I know. But in regard to this I was just going to say that while this inquiry was going on the Government, very openly and with an intention of white-washing the police, appointed one of their own Secretaries to make inquiries into a few instances.

Sir Reginald Maxwell: A Ministerial Government servant.

Mr Lalchand Navalrai: Yes, yes, whatever it is. They still get inspiration from the British Government. It is a deplorable way of saying that we have made investigations. . . .

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: Who is responsible? Sir Reginald Maxwell or Allah Bakhsh.

Mr Lalchand Navalrai: I think I will say both together. What I mean to say is this: If the Honourable the Home Member thinks that these allegations are false, the only course is to appoint a judicial enquiry, a public enquiry, take evidence and then come forward and say that not only in Sind but elsewhere also the severity is not so much. The Home Member suggested that the complaints should be much. The Home Member suggested that the complaints should be appoint one of their own officers with certain instructions and with certain terms of reference. The Honourable the Home Member says that the use of excessive force does not matter much. I was very grieved to hear when he said that it does not matter as force is used against force. That is a clear incitement to the police to do what they like. It is absolutely an incitement; it is an encouragement to them to say that even after this Assembly met here the Honourable the Home Member was in a mood to say: "Go on; commit all these atrocities, and you will be immune."

In his long speech the Honourable the Home Member has not told us any remedy to solve the question of the present situation. I say the remedy lies in removing the root cause. It is the political problem that should be solved. On this issue the views of all the political parties and recognized leaders have been more than once declared. All want independence for India. When it should come—now or after the war—is also not very much in dispute. If it is guaranteed after the war, the political parties have no objection to that; on the part of the Government also, the British Government stands committed to the declaration of Sir Stafford Cripps, as to the recognition of independence of India after the war; and also as to the formation of a constitution by the Indians themselves. But the question over which the negotiations between the British Government and the Indians broke is with regard to the establishment of a National Government in India now. All parties in India, not merely the Congress, are united and unanimous in demanding the transfer of power here and now. The reason for it is that such steps will bring confidence and faith in the *bona fides* of the British Government. We have tried their promises several times. In the end, I say that the Viceroy should invite all the parties, even the Congress Party, and sit together to solve this difficulty.

SIR COWASJI JEHANGIR

It was the rejection by the Congress of the Cripps offer that was the foundation for the Working Committee's resolution. I am sure that many of my friends here are aware of the fact that, there were many Congressmen and there were many others as patriotic and as sincere as any Congressman, who believed that the offer was as good as, and better than, any other offer that England had ever made to

India. I have no time to go into the reasons for that rejection, but it is a well-known fact that on the 8th April that offer was practically accepted. It was only on the 9th, the very next day, that something occurred and its rejection was announced to India and the world. But may I point out another fact which some of us are inclined to forget—that the demand made by the Congress on the morning of the 9th April did not have the complete support of the Muslim League, and if it had been accepted by the British Government as suggested by the Congress, I am afraid that it might have been strongly opposed by a political party worthy of the same consideration as the Congress itself. It is not much use our decrying etiher the strength, the influence or the power of either the Congress or of the Muslim League. We have to admit willy-nilly that the Congress is the most powerful political party in India. We have to admit that, although it does not represent the whole of India by any means, it is the most powerfully organized party in India. We have to admit willy-nilly that the Muslim League largely represents the Muhammadans as a whole. There can be no political party that represents every person, but as a whole it must be understood that the Muslim League does represent Muhammadan opinion. The very fact that there is one block in this House of my Muslim friends representing the Muslim League—I see very few outside that block except my friend on my left....(Interruption.) I see there is one behind me. But the fact remains that the Muslim League does represent the Muhammadans if any political party does. Therefore, I desire to point out that the demands made on the 9th April by the Congress did not appear to have the complete and absolute support of the Muslim League. That was perhaps one of the reasons why it was rejected. But it is deplorable, it is most unfortunate for this country that the offer was rejected. It has led to the Congress resolution, it has brought about, for the time being I hope only, a state of affairs in this country which cannot but be described as most deplorable.

Now I would ask myself, what is it that the Congress desired to attain by the decisions that it arrived at? It, for the first time, called the civil disobedience movement "open rebellion." We have had many civil disobedience movements in this country, but never have the Congress or any of its important leaders called them "open rebellion." On this occasion they called it "open rebellion." Naturally by the consequences that they would bring about in this country they hope to attain their object of making the British Government quit India. They must have been overconfident is all that I can say, but suppose they did or will attain their object of forcing the British Government to their knees and making them quit this country, do the Congress leaders believe that once they themselves are in the saddle after the British Government have quitted, they will get the willing, cordial co-operation of the other parties and specially of the Muslim League? If they had that belief, may I ask, why did they not make an attempt to get that co-operation before landing the country into "open rebellion"? If they were confident of attaining their goal by "open rebellion," why did they not get that co-operation before they attempted an "open rebellion," and thus attain their object, most probably, peacefully? They failed to get that co-operation....

Sardar Sant Singh: Because of the British people here.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I have heard it on hundreds of occasions. May I tell my Honourable friend, the Sardar, that I have never known of two men who desire to be friends and who know that a third person is an enemy and desires to keep them apart, to fall an easy prey to that third person the enemy, if they have any commonsense. I cannot think much of any parties which can be made to quarrel by a third party even though they are aware of the fact that the third

party is deliberately out for mischief. It must be due to weakness, mental, physical and moral. I want to ask my Honourable friends what a Swarajist Government would have done if they had been in a similar position to the present one. I would ask my Honourable friends, especially the one who is the ex-Dewan of an Indian State, and the other who is a would-be Member of the Executive Council, what they would have done in a similar position. Being responsible men, I maintain that they would have acted like those distingushed Home Members of the Provinces of Bombay and Madras.

MR P. J. GRIFFITHS

It seems to me that there are three main factors which have been at work. Of these three main factors, there are two towards the removal of which the European Group can make some contribution, while the third factor must be in the hands of Indians themselves. I emphasize this point because we in the European community are anxious to take our full share of responsibility for the welfare of this country. As my Honourable friend, Mr Lawson, told you yesterday, whatever may have been the case in the past, we now seek no privileged position. We seek nothing but the right to share in the duties and rights of the other communities of this country. I have said that there were three factors producing the present disturbances. The first of those factors is the profound and widespread mistrust of Britain's intentions which exists in large classes of the Indian public. The second factor is the economic one,—the difficulty with regard to the purchase of foodstuffs and other essential commodities, while the third factor is the determination of the Congress Party to have its own way at all costs.

First let me take the factor of the very widespread mistrust which exists regarding Britain's intentions with regard to the future of India. To some extent, my community are to be blamed for the prevalence of this mistrust. We have kept silent too long and we ought to have said very much more in the past about our determination to see a free India. To the extent to which we failed to make our sentiments known on that point, we must accept some share of responsibility. The fact remains that there is this widespread suspicion that Britain does not intend to part with power, and this is the real root cause of the trouble. If the people of India believed in Britain's genuineness, if they were convinced that in a short time—immediately after the war—Britain was going to part with power, I do not believe that for the sake of gaining two or three years they would have been willing to plunge this country into disorder and to endanger it more greatly than it is already endangered. We, therefore, have to remove this suspicion that Britain does not intend to part with power. The argument seems to run like this. The August 1940 offer, poor as it was, was only made after Dunkirk; the Cripps offer, however much you dislike it, was only made, it is said, after Britain was in trouble in the Far East. In other words the allegation is that Britain has only acted when circumstances have forced her hands, and the allegation is that, when circumstances improve, Britain will once again wriggle out of what she has promised and will find some excuse for not implementing her promise. That is the suspicion and I want to reply to that suspicion. I want to reply to it, not merely as the Deputy Leader of the European Group, but as an individual Englishman. I trust the nationalist Press will give full publicity to this statement so that they can, if necessary, hold it up against me in years to come. I want to make it perfectly clear that I regard myself, as an individual, solemnly and completely bound by the promise of His Majesty's Government. I understand that promise to be, that India is to have full and complete self-determination at the earliest possible moment after the war. When I say "at the earliest possible moment," I do not mean ten,

fifteen or twenty years. I understand that promise to mean that the only time interval which is required will be the time mechanically necessary for the holding and the decisions of the Constituent Assembly. Whether that will take six weeks or six months, I have no idea. It is in the hands of the Assembly. As far as I am concerned, I will stand for no juggling with the promise which Britain has given that India at the earliest moment after the war shall determine her own constitution, her own future.

Who is that you really doubt? Is it the British capitalist? There is some curious suspicion that the British capitalist at all costs will prevent India from attaining freedom. Could you think of a more solemn assurance than has been given you on the floor of the House by three Members of this Group on behalf of the British capitalist? Who is better fitted than my friend, Sir Henry Richardson, to tell you what the British capitalist is prepared to do? As a former President of the Associated Chambers and the head of a great industrial and commercial concern, surely when he tells you that he stands firmly by Britain's promise, you can put aside the suspicion that the British capitalist is not prepared to play. Then, you have my friend, Mr Lawson, the President of the European Association. Who is more qualified to give you an assurance on behalf of the British people? If assurances of this kind will not satisfy the Honourable Members of this House, then it is beyond the wit of man to do or say anything which could drive away from them these lingering suspicions. Why, in fact, is it that some Honourable Members are inclined to distrust our sincerity? It seems to me there are two reasons. I cannot deal with either of them in detail, but I will just mention them. The first is our alleged unwillingness to transfer power immediately. To whom are we to transfer power? Are we to transfer it to the Congress? Will my friends over there acclaim that proposal? Are we to transfer it to the Muslim League? Am I expected to believe that just because of the so-called Congress offer, the Hindu Mahasabha or any of my friends sitting here will stand for an arrangement of that kind? Perhaps my Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, with his fondness for metaphysical abstraction, would say, you should transfer power to the Indian people. You cannot transfer power to an abstraction, you have to transfer power to a set of individuals, to some who is entitled to pass orders. The whole job of a Constituent Assembly, after the war, will be to decide which is the body or bodies of people to whom Britain has to transfer power. That is the very meaning of a Constituent Assembly. I do appeal to everybody in this House and through the House to the country at large, to say that however much we are desirous of and determined to secure India's independence, we will not stand for the tyranny which, under the cloak of non-violence, is used by the Congress as an instrument for imposing their will upon their unwilling fellow subjects.

RAO BAHADUR N. SIVARAJ

We (the Scheduled Castes) have never said at any time that we stood for the continued slavery of India or that India should be under a foreign domination. We have always made it plain that we shall not interfere with any measure or any agitation that is carried on for the freedom of this country. What we have been all the time claiming is a just and a right share in the administration of the country, not with a view to run the Government ourselves, but with a view to see that the Government is not run against us. It is for that purpose that all our leaders, from whatever platform they have spoken, have mentioned this particular aspect of the question. We are not anxious to run the Government of India. We do not certainly like to become the President of the Indian Republic, or become the Viceroy of India at once.

Sir, I wish to conclude my statement by saying that we feel that the question of the Scheduled Castes will be ultimately settled before the tribunal of the United Nations: and secondly, we are interested in the victory of the United Nations. Towards that end we shall do everything to see that we support this war effort. There is a particular point which I wish to mention, *viz.*, that if the Government should let us down in the matter of giving protection in this emergency, we shall be obliged to take our own action which may lead to bloodshed and obstruction of the war effort.

MR MUHAMMAD NAUMAN

We Muslims have a very modest demand on the British Cabinet or the Government of India. We say, we are prepared to co-operate with you within the framework of the constitution. We are prepared to render all possible help that we may be capable of provided you give us an opportunity to do so, provided you part with some real power and at the same time make a declaration in unequivocal terms about Pakistan which you have accepted during the Cripps mission by implication.

MR K. C. NEOGY

In asking the House to consider the situation in the country, the Honourable the Home Member confined himself to a narration of the deplorable incidents that happened during these few weeks. To my mind, an adequate appreciation of the position is not possible unless we remember two dominating factors that go to contribute to the general political atmosphere in the country. The first is that there is installed today in the seat of power as British Premier one who has been an inveterate enemy of India all his life. He has exhibited himself in his latest utterance which has done more mischief and alienated more Indians than any other single speech of any British political has ever done. The other equally tragic factor is that in India itself, authority is actually monopolized by a set of reactionary die-hards, not overburdened with conscientious scruples, buttressed as they are by the moral support of Indians of the type of Sir Cowasji Jehangir whose number luckily for us is not large. The Honourable the Home Member confined himself to the incidents since the arrest of the Congress leaders and laid the whole blame on them. Like the proverbial ostrich burying its head in the sand, he has ignored the widespread prevalence of anti-Government feelings in the country that had been steadily growing in volume and intensity long before the Congress Working Committee met at Allahabad. Indeed, anti-Government feeling was never stronger in India than at present, and much of the responsibility for it belongs to the Government itself. The recent distutrbances are to be ascribed to many complex factors, all of which are not directly political in character, and in ignoring the seething discontent prevailing for a long time in the country, the Government were unwittingly helping to set the stage for the violent outburst which we have witnessed. The general economic distress which is associated with British rule in India has been rapidly increasing of late. The people, a large proportion of whom normally live in a chronic state of semi-starvation, are now faced with a shortage of food due to various factors some of which are connected with the War. Other commodities which are required to meet their frugal needs are getting scarcer and scarcer, and the prices of all articles are steadily soaring higher and higher. Medical help, inadequate in the best of times, is already beyond the means of the vast majority of the people. While the very physical existence of the people is thus threatened, the thoughtless and heartless actions of a callous bureaucracy, while carrying out measures of evacuation involving thousands of poor and ignorant people, have not certainly helped to create a feeling of

loyalty to the Government. Complaints on this score have been heard for months past, and I myself, in my own humble way, have been drawing the attention of the Department concerned to the vagaries characterizing the orders of evacuation of the civil population ever since April last. The Government of India could not, however, make up their mind on the subject earlier than last month when they issued a *communiqué* laying down certain principles which should be followed in such matters. Meanwhile, the mischief had already been done, and untold hardships had been caused to a silent but resentful population whose economic life was seriously disturbed and who were bodily uprooted from the homes of their ancestors without adequate provision being made beforehand for settling them elsewhere. As an instance of the policy so far followed by the Government in this matter, I would briefly recall the salient features of a typical case which I brought to the notice of the Government.

On the 4th April last, as many as 35 villages in the district of Noakhali in Bengal were simultaneously evacuated at the shortest possible notice, and I find that the Government officer concerned made his report recommending scales of compensation on the 9th, that is, five days after the actual evacuation had taken place; and in making this report he says that "the people were not allowed to take away their standing huts from their villages. There was a smart shower of rain yesterday, adding considerably to their difficulties. It is essential that we should give them some money quickly for helping them in building new huts in sites in which they choose to live." Imagine the distress of the large population affected by this order who were expected to look for alternative sites for rebuilding their huts after they had been turned out of their hearth and home in pouring rain. The scale of compensation proposed in the report is so poor and arbitrary that no civilized Government can possibly support it. But I have no time to go into the details. Many more instances of this kind are known to me and other Members of this House. I can assure Honourable Members that these instances are supported by documents, some of which I brought to the notice of the Department concerned in April last, and are not based upon rumours, which His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, in addressing the joint session of the Bengal Legislature on Monday last, said "were *almost entirely* baseless."

Coming next to the actual operation of the policy of denial in some parts of Bengal, with which I am familiar, I should like to point out that perhaps Sir Edward Benthall's statement that boat traffic was encouraged rather than discouraged, requires modification. Even the Governor of Bengal in his speech referred to the denial to the enemy of all forms of transport as one of the most pressing needs, and to the control over boats in coastal areas that it has led to. From the complaints received by me, some of which I duly forwarded to the Government a few months ago, it appears that normal internal trade in certain parts of Bengal, where the boat constitutes the only method of transport, was seriously interfered with, to the detriment of the economic life of the people at large. Another action in carrying out the policy of denial consisted of shifting so-called surplus stocks of foodstuffs from places exposed to the threat of invasion, without due regard to the interests of the people concerned. In arriving at an estimate as to what actually constituted such surplus, the officers concerned adopted most arbitrary methods, and apart from removal of such surplus stocks they were in many instances kept under lock and key by the police and the owners themselves had on occasions to resort to bribery for the purpose of drawing upon such stocks for meeting their needs.

I now come, though most reluctantly, to a few other painful

episodes that have happened as a result of the location of troops in different rural areas of Bengal. I drew the attention of Government in May last to two specific cases, in one of which a few persons, in one area within ten miles of Calcutta, lost their lives at the hands of the soldiers, while many others were wounded, as a result of a protest which these persons had made against pilferings of garden products in which the soldiers were discovered, and abuse of their women-folk in which they indulged. In the Departmental reply dated the 8th June, I was assured that the matter had already been the subject of careful investigation and that the Government were awaiting its result. I have not heard anything further in the matter. The next case to which I will refer was also brought to the notice of the Department by me and it relates to "atrocities of a revolting nature" committed on innocent villagers by a number of soldiers. In making this characterization, I am merely quoting a few words of a resolution adopted by the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League on the 19th April last. I have no desire to shock the House by entering into the horrible details of this incident. Briefly put, it was a case of indiscriminate and wholesale rape by soldiers on a large number of womenfolk inhabiting certain Muslim villages in the district of Noakhali, the gravity of which can be judged from the report that a number of them were discovered later in a half-dead condition and some of them actually dead. The resolutions adopted by the Muslim League in this connection do not appear to have led to any tangible result, except that their publication in the Muslim League journal, *Star of India*, was followed by the suspension of that newspaper for a few days under orders of the Government of Bengal. I wrote to the Department on the 9th May last drawing attention to the reports that I had received in this connection, and which had not been permitted to be published in the Press, and I pointed out in my letter that the stoppage of the publication of the news in the Press had not prevented its circulation from mouth to mouth, possibly in an ever-increasingly exaggerated manner, throughout the eastern districts of Bengal. I tried to impress upon the Department the incalculable harm that was done by the circulation of such reports, unless they were followed by prompt inquiry and publication of an authorized version at an early date. The reply to my letter is dated the 11th May, 1942, in which I was told that the Government had already received intimation of the occurrence, and that the matter was under examination, firstly, by a Military Court of Inquiry, and secondly, by an inquiry by a Magistrate. Nothing further is known.

Promptitude and frankness have never been characteristics of this Government even in matters of such gravity. Reports of other incidents also occasionally reach us where unfortunate clashes have taken place between the civilian population and the military, and womenfolk have been subjected to molestation. Is it, therefore, to be wondered that bitterness of feeling between the Government and the people, which is not merely most deplorable but dangerous in the present circumstances, has been increasing by leaps and bounds in the country, even without the assistance of any political agitation? We had the amusing spectacle the other day of the British Premier hugging the census report as an armoured breast-plate that made him invincible. May I ask the Home Member to go down to the rural areas in Eastern Bengal, particularly in the districts of Chittagong, Noakhali and Barisal, fully armed with the census report, if necessary, and truthfully describe to the House on his return the degree of loyal support which Government can count upon from the people at large, belonging as they do either to the Muslim Community or the so-called Depressed Classes?

While the popular feeling has thus been deeply embittered, the influx of Indian evacuees from Burma carrying tales of heartless

treatment and racial humiliation on an unprecedented scale, has set the whole country ringing with denunciation of the present Government. I have just received a printed message from our Honourable colleague, Shaikh Rafiuddin Ahmad Siddique, of Chittagong, whose ill-health prevents his attendance here today, in the course of which he states that "the Government are doing absolutely nothing for the Indian evacuees who have no hearth and home, no food and no clothes. These poor people are wandering in Chittagong with their children and wives just like nomad tribes and begging from door to door. Many of them are still daily coming to Chittagong on foot from Burma. Their pitiable plight, if you could be shown, must have moved you to pity and tears. The differential treatment meted out to the Indian evacuees and the apathy of the Government towards their cause are highly deplorable."

Sir, it is against this background of mass discontent and disaffection that the decision taken by the All-India Congress Committee in sheer desperation, and the untoward repercussions that followed the arrest of Congress leaders can be properly examined.

During those anxious days when hooliganism was rampant in the Imperial City, fearful accounts trickled through despite censorship, not merely with reference to the position in Delhi but also in the provinces, and there could be no doubt in the mind of any impartial observer that the spiritual successors of O'Dwyer and Dyer, who rule the roost at New Delhi, had initiated a reign of terror. In the name of combating violence and sabotage, which no one in his senses can exonerate or fail to condemn, they had resorted to methods reminiscent of some of the worst brutalities ascribed to the Axis Powers. Hooliganism on the part of the *goondas* has been answered by equally, if not more, reprehensible terrorism on the pretext of restoring law and order which cannot find support from any live *zubberdust* Dewan of any Indian State—not to speak of any ex-Dewan. Society at large has been penalized for the offence of the few. Collective or, to be more accurate, commmunal, fines on the principle of the *jazia* have been imposed, and masses of innocent people have thus virtually been treated and punished as hostages for the misdeeds of the guilty, in correct Nazi style. Insult, indignity, injury, assault or even death, has been meted out to the innocent along with the guilty with a degree of impartiality. Inoffensive Indians, irrespective of their position in society, such as Sir Madhorao Deshpande of Nagpur, have in places been made to remove litter from the streets in order to impress on the public at large the might of the British authority in whose eyes all Indians are equal. And Sir Cowasji Jehangir should not flatter himself that he is immune from such experiences. Heroic attempts have been made to promote the interest of truthful statistics of the dead and wounded. It is alleged that the wounded could not always count upon proper medical attention in certain Government hospitals because they were 'rebels.' These are among the reports that reached us from different affected areas, but I shall not dwell further on this infamous chapter of British history in India which has just opened, because there may be another opportunity of dealing with it during this Session in greater detail.

Today, frightfulness is the measure and expression of British might in India, but the moral cowardice of a despotic Government dictates the necessity for stifling publicity of legitimate information inside the country. Moreover, control and manipulation of public opinion in friendly countries abroad necessitate the ladling out of information with the help of the official spoon. The Press has been gagged so successfully that nothing but officially approved news can be published either in India or abroad. The Press in India, according to Government, should either behave as a subordinate branch of the Home Department, or it must be scotched. A former Member of this

House and ex-colleague of mine, Mr Arthur Moore, is understood to have been jockeyed out of the editorship of the *Statesman* through wirepulling from New Delhi as a punishment for his occasional expressions of pro-Indian feelings, and the British editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore may share the same fate unless he becomes sufficiently careful in time.

The magnificent achievement of the Press censoring policy is indicated by the fact that for some time 96 Indian newspapers, including some of the most leading and influential dailies, voluntarily ceased publication. Out of this number, about 22 have later resumed publication. The rest continue their voluntary suspension as a protest against the illogical and dictatorial control exercised over the publication of news which does not even according to foreign journalists present at New Delhi, permit a balanced picture of the situation to be given. I do not for a moment contend that under conditions of war, the Press should function regardless of any untoward consequences which undesirable publicity may lead to. There should be a system under which a responsible institution like the Press, which is considered to be an essential limb of any civilized administration, may be put in touch with the executive authorities for the purpose of mutual appreciation of their respective view-points and voluntary regulation of the conduct of the Press. I understand that a system of what is called Press Advising started some time in 1940, and was originally intended to assist newspaper men by giving them guidance when they wanted it. This voluntary system has now gradually been transformed into compulsory precensorship. It appears that for some months past, particularly after the breakdown of the Cripps negotiations censorship of messages became increasingly stringent. Press advising has now assumed the form of actual authorititative official censorship, and there are today so many different authorities exercising powers of censorship that the Press is altogether bewildered, and the reading public cannot be sure of getting any reliable or even rational presentation of facts relating to the political situation in the country. Apart from the so-called Press Advising, there are authorities who are responsible for censorship on behalf of the Military Department. Under cover of Military censorship, the Government have succeeded to a large extent in preventing pro-nationalist political materials devoid of any military significance, from being published in this country or in the friendly countries overseas. Press comments from Britain, America and China of a pro-Indian character were either discouraged, or sometimes even suppressed, in India, in the name of military censorship. Prominence was given, on the other hand, to adverse comments appearing in the overseas Press, particularly those critical of the Congress. A significant example of that policy is to be found in the omission of President Roosevelt's reference to the Atlantic Charter being applicable to all the countries of the world, in his speech at Washington on the 23rd February last, from the version published in this country at the time, and this reference was not published in India until the text of the speech reached here through the American Press. While India was flooded with adverse American comments on the Wardha resolution of the Congress, the favourable comments of the overseas Press were not allowed to appear in India. The news agencies were not allowed by the Chief Press Adviser to send Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek for publication in the various Indian newspapers, these news agencies being particularly under obligation to refer all matters to the Chief Press Adviser or the Provincial Press Adviser.

I hold in my hand a notification signed by the Chief Press Adviser in which he grimly reminds newspaper men that "while speeches made on the floor of the Assembly are privileged, no privilege attaches to

Press reports of the proceedings which are subject to the usual censorship."

The President: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Mr K. C. Neogy: I will finish my speech within that time. Not content with this message, he obligingly informs them that 'for the convenience of correspondents wishing to obtain guidance, an officer of Chief Press Adviser's office will be in the Press Gallery on September 15 and 16 between 12 noon and 2 p.m. This officer will only give general guidance on points in the debate which may be referred to him and copy for Press advice will be dealt with as usual in Chief Press Adviser's office.' This is how the Goebbelses of India regulate and regiment reports of India's Parliament.

Is the Honourable Member sure that he is not over-reaching himself in the pursuit of this policy? Already we hear that certain foreign journalists have flown over to Chungking to outwit the censor and send unmutiliated accounts of the Indian situation. And the credit of newspapers in India is now a minus quantity, as few are prepared to accept their censored reports to be anything but misleading. For a parallel of the situation one has perhaps to turn to Nazi Germany.

Sir, I have attempted to give the House a picture of the situation as it strikes me. The Honourable the Home Member has delivered a speech worthy of the Chief Constable of India. It dealt only with crime and ended with the rattling of the sabre. He is obviously a believer in the doctrine that India was conquered by the sword and by the sword it must be held. Conciliation is not in his line. He may repeat formulae about agreement, but he will do his best to make any agreement impossible. And for proof of this one need only refer to the refusal of permission to the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha to interview Mahatma Gandhi. With his eye on the large force of white soldiers, referred to by his master in Parliament, he is sure of waging a successful war on as many fronts as may be necessary.

QAZI MUHAMMAD AHMAD KAZMI

We all know, we have heard Government say it again and again, that in India nobody wants either the Japanese or the Germans to come. This is a proposition which nobody is going to dispute. I think if the Government say that India is behind the war efforts, they also mean to say that no political parties in India are prepared to invite Japan or Germany to this place. You condemn your opponent by dubbing him as a fifth columnist or that he wants to invite Germany or Japan to invade India. That is not the proper way of arguing things. Which of the political parties is not intelligent enough to understand that the people of India who have got nothing but moral force behind their back are not in a position to fight against material forces? Can we not understand that Germany and Japan, the one in Europe and the other in Asia, have overcome moral force by their material power? Can we at this stage and, after understanding that, ever think that we, who desire independence even during the progress of the war, would get it from people who are devastating countries and which we are not being given by the Britishers today? So, it is absurd for any one to argue that any political party, any recognized political party, any party that has any following in India has got that motive behind it. It is useless to condemn people on that account.

The question is what is the reason for the present disturbances that have taken place. Again, I say nobody deplores more than we do the disturbances that have taken place. If you are told today of injury to person and property, I must say that the public have received greater injury, they have died in greater numbers and they have suffered materially more than persons belonging to the Government Departments. I do not say that it was not the duty of Government Depart-

ments to suppress hooliganism. I say and I maintain that in almost every case greater force was used than was necessary by the Government and the Government utilized this opportunity of hooliganism for the show of their power and for striking terror in the minds of the people. That is the point on which we fight. That is the point which we want to bring to the notice of the Government.

Then, Sir, it is said that the programme of sabotage or the programme of cutting communications is the act of the Congress. This is a serious charge that is levelled against the Congress, but the Congress have not been allowed the opportunity to contradict that charge. As an ordinary observer of events, I want to draw the attention of the House to the statements of responsible British statesmen and public men, who long before the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay gave out that in the present days, the Congress had changed its policy from non-violence to violence, and that this time the programme of the Congress would be sabotage and cutting of communications and destruction of property. These were the things which were given out definitely before the All-India Congress Committee meeting. Today, spokesman after spokesman stands up and says that this can be inferred from the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi as they are being read out today. But, Sir, look at the background in which Mahatma Gandhi has been working all his life and even before. Could any word of violence be read into those declarations? Then, what I say is this. Supposing for a minute the All-India Congress Committee passed a resolution of that type, was it then in the interest of the Government to broadcast it and proclaim it to everybody that the programme of the Congress this time would be sabotage and cutting of communications, and destruction of property? Was it a wise act on the part of the Government that even before the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee they started interpreting civil disobedience movement to mean that it is one of violence and not non-violence? I say it was the duty of the Government that even if the Congress were to pass a resolution regarding violent activities, they ought to have suppressed it. But the Government did not do that. The Government put some interpretations and broadcast them not only throughout India, but almost everywhere. I fail to see the reason for that. That was an extremely bad statesmanship. Probably, to my mind, it seems they wanted to suppress the Congress itself and they wanted to bring the Congress into disrepute throughout the world and in India. I maintain that it was on account of that impression created in the public mind that since the Congress leaders were arrested after the passing of the resolution in Bombay, a section of the public understood that the programme of the Congress was the one which had been propagated mostly by Government agencies.

Now, Sir, that having taken place the Government have resorted to force. As I have said, it was the duty of the Government to do that, but the fault of the Government lies in having committed excesses in every case. I maintain that even if the Congress Working Committee had passed a resolution as alleged by the Government and if the Government had allowed it to be propagated throughout India the condition would not have been much different than it is today. In my opinion it would have been much better, because if the Congress had been allowed to make that declaration then the Congress itself would have come in the eyes of the public in the reality in which it is alleged to be by the Government, and we would have stood up today and supported the Government in having dealt with the Congress in that fashion. But what has the Government done? They have sent them to prison and ask from us a vote that they were guilty of that on circumstantial evidence. Were the Government with all their powerful machinery ignorant of any propaganda which was being carried out

by the Congress Working Committee that they had come there for violence? Just as one of the Honourable Members has accused the Government that if they knew that the Congress was carrying on its propaganda in regard to violence, why did they not say so earlier? I say that that was not the reason. It is with the intention of condemning the Congress, of bringing it into disrepute that these things were alleged to have been propagated by the Congress. The result was that they were sent to the prison, and they are being condemned today that they were sent to prison, they were given no opportunity to explain their position, and they are being condemned today without having been given an opportunity to explain. This treatment should not be accorded even to the worst type of criminal. Even he is asked an explanation. But have you given an opportunity to the leaders of the Congress to say why they have changed their activities and taken up violence as their creed? Have you given them a chance for meeting the charges that are levelled against them? Therefore, Sir, I moved this amendment. The object of this amendment is not to pray for any privileges, any concessions, for the Congress leaders who are carrying on the Congress propaganda, but what has prompted me to move this amendment is the fact that this Government cannot condemn any person without giving him a chance to explain his position. What I suggest is that they must ascertain the views of the Congress leaders and see whether as a matter of fact they had the intention of carrying on these undesirable activities and whether they had propagated them throughout India. If they deny, then the Government should release them and give them an opportunity to tell to the masses in India that these acts of violence can never be approved of by them. That will be one of the means of restoring peace and tranquillity in this country.

MAJOR NAWAB SIR AHMAD KHAN

So far as I know, the Congress and the Muslim League and all other political parties rightly or wrongly—that question I am not going to discuss here—believe that the British Government in India or at Home do not like or intend to part with real power, and are not prepared to give effect to their promises which they have made from time to time in reply to the various demands of Hindus and Muslims of India for independence. This seems to be the real cause of the present trouble as I understand it. Knowing this to be the real trouble in India—and I stand corrected if I am wrong—we have now to find what is the real remedy for this trouble, if not cent. per cent., say 80 per cent. In my opinion it is in the hands of we Indians—the political parties in India and the elected Members of this House—and we should sit together and put forward a united demand.

SIR SULTAN AHMED

It was neither my intention nor even my desire to take any part whatsoever in this debate as a full statement of the case of the Government had been made by the Honourable the Home Member, and I and all my colleagues take the fullest responsibility for every word that he has said. But lest our silence should be misconstrued and as one of the Honourable Members sitting opposite to me called us non-entities, it is necessary that some of those non-entities should say what we feel about the situation.

I have got another reason which has impelled me to make a few remarks. I come from a province which has been, as you know, shattered badly by the recent events, and though I am thankful to say that law and order has been to a great extent restored there, I cannot say that we are still out of the wood. I never regretted the decision which I along with all my other colleagues took on the 8th August, because placed as we were, we had to choose between complete abdication of our responsibility as a Government and surrender to the

challenge thrown out to us. And now, after all that has happened, we feel convinced that our decision was right. We made it perfectly clear in the resolution that we issued immediately after, that we were aware of the preparations that were being made in the name of and on behalf of the Congress for the various acts of sabotage, and if there was any doubt about the accuracy of the estimate that we made of the situation at that time that doubt is completely dispelled by the events that have happened.

Before the ink was dry on the All-India Congress Committee's resolution, the whole of India was in flames and acts of destruction followed with lightning rapidity and virulence almost unparalleled in the history of India, and it is most remarkable that the movement was most violent in provinces where the Congress Ministries had functioned before they went out of office. Another extraordinary feature of this movement has been, and which demonstrates beyond any doubt that it was well planned as well as well directed, that throughout this movement no looters, rioters or rebels attacked Muslim life or property. All that was done could not have been done by professional dacoits or looters, because they do not discriminate between Muslim and Hindu victims, nor do they discriminate between private and public property. The whole objective was to paralyse the administration and thereby paralyse the war efforts, and this had to be done in the Axis fashion of "blitz."

Government had to be on the defensive from the very first day. Their only duty was to prevent the extension of the crimes of sabotage. If being on the defensive when there is widespread rebellion is repression, Government pleads guilty to it, but if what they did was to save the country from the danger of the greatest disaster possible, then what they did was in the normal discharge of their functions as Government. We are convinced that in the discharge of their extraordinarily difficult and perilous duties the police and the troops as a whole have not committed excesses, but if there are individual cases which have occurred it will be the function and duty of Provincial Governments to see that those who have been guilty of excesses do not escape punishment.

Now, Sir, I come to another aspect of the question referred to by a number of my Honourable friend in this House. They are disappointed and they say they are extremely disappointed, that Government have not produced any constructive programme for reforms to deal with the situation. Faced as we are I am surprised that such a demand should be made from us. Let me repeat what I said before—that the rebellion is not yet completely quelled. There are still places where law and order have not been fully restored. In fact there are one or two places in Bihar where we do not know what is happening today. But we hope that a reaction has set in amongst the general public against the barbarities and excesses committed by the rebels and the recrudescence of the mob rule is being resisted by the inhabitants of the devastated areas themselves. In these circumstances, to expect Government to sit down and consider and formulate constructive measures whatever the meaning of that phrase may be, is to say the least, exceedingly unreasonable. Apart from that, the Cripps proposals were and they remain today the constructive proposals put forward by His Majesty's Government. That, unfortunately, has been spurned.

Then, again, are the constructive measures only to be initiated by the Government and the Honourable Members who have collected here have no part or share in it?May I appeal to them not to go back to their homes without making some tangible contribution to the constructive measures which will command a fair measure of agreement of all the parties. The greatest danger and futility of any criticism is to ignore

the complexity of this problem. Once that is realized, it is possible to find the remedy. Sir, in this House is fully represented the genius, the intellect and the patriotism of the country. Is it too much to hope that those who still dominate the public life of this country will not fail to produce an agreed programme? They should not suffer from inferiority complex. Any proposal which has the unanimous support of the Honourable Members opposite cannot be lightly treated by any Government here or in England. But if the House wants the Government to impose upon the country a constitution, irrespective of the agreement of the parties during the extremely critical period we are passing through, it will be neither fair to itself nor to the country. Honourable Members have been talking about "National Government" and that is the cry which is coming from all corners of India but is it realized that National Government cannot be imposed but it must be the creation of the fairly unanimous will of the people? With the consent of all parties, it comes in automatically in places where there is a government of the people by the people and in places where there is a foreign government it has to be formed first by the people themselves and the proposal is submitted then to the Government of the day, and if denied, the so-formed national government asserts its will.

SYED GHULAM BHIK NARAING

If in the course of measures adopted by Government to quell disturbances some excesses were committed by the military or the police—and I must say there are complaints to that effect which deserve serious attention and looking into—it is the duty of the Government to inquire into these complaints, punish the guilty and see that such things do not recur. I am glad after having had the advantage of listening to the Honourable Law Member that that is the position of Government and that Government do mean to dispose of these complaints after proper enquiry and in a proper way.

DR B. R. AMBEDKAR

The critics of Government have said that the Government were not justified in arresting the members of the Congress and if I understand the argument correctly, the argument seems to be that Congress is a body which believes in non-violence and that if the Congress had been allowed to be free they certainly would have controlled the situation in such a manner that they would have prevented violence from emerging. It seems to me that the Members who take that line have not correctly read what has happened to the Congress and the members of the Working Committee during the last two years with regard to the principle of non-violence. Sir, as I read the proceedings of the Congress during the last two or three years, the impression that has been left upon my mind is that there has been a terrible landslide in the principle of non-violence as has been proclaimed by the Congress.

It has been said by the Members of the Opposition that, although repression may be justifiable by the circumstances of the moment, it should not be the duty of the Government merely to stop with repression but that Government must take some constructive step. When one begins to examine the constructive steps to which reference has been made from different sections of the House, one cannot but be surprised at the bewildering medley of suggestions that have been made. I, therefore, pick upon only one which appears to me something definite and something which you can put your teeth in and examine. The suggestion has been made that the Government of the day should be recast, refashioned, and should work as a National Government. Now, in order that I may be able to present to the House the point of view which I am urging with regard to this suggestion, it would be better if I began by stating what the

present Government is, what its nature is. The government is vested not in the Governor-General, not in a single authority, but it is vested in the Governor-General-in-Council. Every Member of the Executive Council is a colleague of the Governor-General. That fact can never be forgotten and ought never to be forgotten; and my submission, therefore, is that if Indians are wanting a Government which is democratic, which excludes autocracy, and which by law—not by convention only—imposes upon those who are in charge of the administration a collective responsibility, then my submission to the House is this: that you cannot devise a better form of Government than the one we have. I know it has been said against this Government that although that may be so, this Government is subject to the veto of the Viceroy and of the Secretary of State. With regard to the veto of the Viceroy I would like to point out that the veto is confined to matters which relate to the safety and tranquillity of India. It is not a general veto. It is not a veto which applies to the day-to-day administration of the country.

The only question, the only quarrel that can arise—I can perfectly understand that sort of quarrel—is where should the veto lie? Should it lie with the Secretary of State, should it lie with the Viceroy, or should it lie at any other place or in some other organization? That can be the only point of quarrel. As to the existence of the veto, I submit that there can be no quarrel among those who believe in responsibility, among those who believe in democratic government. The question, therefore, that arises is this. If we are not to have the veto with the Secretary of State, where are we to have it? It seems to me that if you want to transfer the veto from the Secretary of State, the only place where I can see it can be rightly placed is the Legislature. There is no other place for the veto.

The question, therefore, is this, and I think it is a simple question. Can we transfer the veto to the Legislature as it exists today? What is the composition, what is the character of this Legislature? Now, Sir, it is quite true and I do not think I am saying anything derogatory to this House, that, having regard to the efflux of time, this House is almost in a deceased state. It was elected for three years, but it has been sitting for almost nearly nine years. I do not know to what extent the present Members of this House can be said to derive a mandate from their constituencies which can be regarded as direct and fresh, if it has not become stale by the efflux of time. I won't say anything about it, but let us proceed further and examine the composition of the House. Examine the Legislature from any point of view you like, examine it from the point of view of the mandate, examine it from the point of view of the composition of the Legislature, its representative character. Examine it also from the point of view of the electorate which is represented, and I have no doubt about it that this House cannot be regarded as sufficiently representative to impose a veto on a National Government.

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: Why did you call the session?

(There were some more interruptions.)

Dr B. R. Ambedkar: The point, therefore, is this. Either you must acknowledge the fact that this House is not representative enough to have the veto deposited in it, or you must consider whether during the period of the war it is possible for us to enter upon refashioning this Legislative Assembly in such a manner that it will contain within a sufficient number of Hindus, a sufficient number of Mussalmans, a sufficient number of Depressed Classes, and all the other elements which go to make up the national life of the country. Therefore, my submission is that this demand which has been made for a National Government is certainly the result of confused

thinking, is the result of the desire of most people to avoid what I regard as the most crucial question, namely, a communal settlement, because until we get a communal settlement, it is quite impossible to re-fashion this House in a manner in which it would be regarded as fit to receive the veto powers over the Executive that may be fashioned under the new Constitution.

MR HOOSEINBHOY A. LALJEE

We had today what I considered to be a bright day when we heard the Honourable the Law Member admitting on the floor of this House that he looks to this House, a House which his colleague, the Honourable Dr Ambedkar, says is a good-for-nothing House. We are between the verdicts of two Honourable Members of Government, and I do not know whether there is any good of our going into this question until they come to hold one and the same opinion. They have undertaken collective responsibility and they say, "You are no good. Trust us. You do not represent the people. These nine years you have not seen an election. We are the representatives and ought to be trusted! Not only are we under the Act colleagues of the Viceroy but have a collective responsibility." But the fact is, Sir, they have been appointed by the Viceroy and their term of office is until the pleasure of the Viceroy. I have never had a business proposal like that put before me, and I say that as a businessman I shall not be proud of such a business. I call my servant and tell him, "You are my equal. I have appointed you. You shall remain during my pleasure, that is, no sooner I do not want you, then you are to go." Is this collective responsibility?

We have been told further by our Honourable friend, Dr Ambedkar, about the great veto. He asks, where is the veto to be placed? It is certainly not with this Legislature but I admit it is in reality with the Secretary of State. We know as a fact that the veto lies in the hands of one gentleman 6,000 miles away, and the Viceroy and the Executive Council are humble servants of the Secretary of State and have to be there during the pleasure of the Secretary of State. This is the true position. I am sorry I have to deal with this question but it is the bounden duty of every one here who has been returned by his constituency to maintain the rights of the people. If I have said anything which my friends do not relish, I am certainly very sorry. But I strongly appeal to them to feel that we represent the people of this country, especially at a time when every day the freedom and the rights of the people to self-determination is dinned into our ears. If the Government as a whole have kept us on in this House it is not for anybody to challenge our position. We have told Government often and I am prepared to tell my friends today: 'Dissolve this House if you want fresh verdict of the people.' Your policy is like the dog in the manger policy. The other day you grudged to give us more than two days to discuss the whole situation and, when great persons like Marshal Chiang and Sir Stafford Cripps came to this country it was so arranged that this Legislature had nothing to do with them. Not till this morning did we hear the least anxiety on the part of the Government Benches to take us into confidence or treat us as people's representatives. I take the pronouncement made by the Honourable the Law Member today very seriously and I tell him that if that is the spirit with which they are going to work with us, who are now here, they will not be sorry. It is high time I feel that you and we all must go round the country and explain the true position of the Government to the people. It may be that the powerful parties have been able to carry the people in their own way a great deal, but the fault really lies with the constitution and specially with the manner in which the Government have often treated the people and the people's

representatives who have been co-operating with them. Change that policy. Let Government openly acknowledge those who are always prepared to discuss matters and co-operate with them and not only those who come at times to co-operate with them. You should not also surrender to those who sit on the fence and say that they will co-operate with you on certain terms. You should co-operate with all those who are bold enough to offer their services to you, not as a master, but as the Government of the country. Let me again express the hope and trust that the pronouncement made by the Law Member is serious. He will excuse me if I still have doubts.

I may tell my Honourable friends, the Britishers sitting on the Treasury Benches, that if they really wanted to treat this country as their own, they must treat us on equal status. I assure you that the moment the Japanese or Germans or anybody else know that Indians have been won over, that Indians have acquired equal status, and India to a man is behind the British and that India is out doing all it can in the successful prosecution of this war, then believe me, Sir, both Japanese and Germans, our enemies, would not dare to make any advance on India or Asia and very soon they would even try to sue for peace. India has great potentialities, she has done great things and she can do much more. Our enemies have made a great study of this country, let me tell you, when you gave them all opportunities and they very well know the real power of India, and the very great potentialities existing in it to fight them to a finish.

DR P. N. BANERJEA

I strongly condemn the acts of violence and hooliganism; and there is no Party in this House, there is no person in my Party who does not condemn such acts with equal emphasis. But I cannot see eye to eye with the Honourable the Home Member when he observes that there were no excesses committed by the police and that due care and caution was adopted in repressing lawlessness. Concrete instances have been pointed out by many Honourable friends and I have myself personal knowledge of innocent persons having lost their lives through no fault of their own. This is, therefore, a matter for full and proper investigation.

There is another reprehensible feature of the present situation, and that is the muzzling of the Press. Sometimes ago the restrictions imposed on the Press of the country were so stringent in character that most of the nationalist papers thought it incumbent upon them to suspend publication. Some relaxation of control has now been provided, but even now the restrictions which continue are harmful not only to the people but also to the Government. The Government should remember that the Press is a great safety-valve and that it is dangerous to tamper with it.

I cannot agree with the Honourable the Home Member when he seeks to connect the Indian National Congress with loot, arson and murder. I have my own differences with the Congress. I was the chief organizer of the party which was formed in Bengal under the guidance of our venerable leader, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and the great scientist, Sir P. C. Ray, a party which returned all its candidates to this Assembly, after inflicting crushing defeats on their Congress rivals. But whatever differences may exist between myself and the Congress, I cannot believe that non-violence is no longer the creed of the Congress. My Honourable friend, Dr Ambedkar, pointed out that there have been serious differences in the Congress ranks with regard to non-violence. But these differences, he forgot to mention, refer only to the question of defence of the country. I cannot believe that Gandhiji and other Congress leaders

have fallen so low as to soak their hands in the blood of postmen and police officers.

The Government mishandled the situation. And what is the consequence of this mishandling of the situation? The consequence is that anti-British feeling is today twenty times greater than it was ever before. And what is worse than that, is that before the 7th of August there was no pro-Japanese feeling in this country, but today there is a feeling which approaches dangerously a pro-Japanese feeling. A feeling of active hostility to the Japanese invasion is gradually giving place to a feeling of passive acquiescence. That is a most dangerous symptom of which the Government must take note.

Mr N. M. Joshi: They do not bother.

Dr P. N. Banerjea: The Government should also consider that in addition to the political discontent there have been other factors such as economic distress, food shortage, misbehaviour of the soldiers, and the policy of repression followed by Government officers which have greatly enhanced the seriousness of the situation.

The Government should also consider the present situation, in relation to the most urgent need of the hour. And what is that? The most urgent need of the hour is to aid the war effort of the United Nations to the fullest ext nt. But how is that to be done? That can only be done with the goodwill of the people, but can goodwill be secured by means of whipping, shooting, collective fines and gagging of the Press? The answer ought to be an emphatic 'no.' The Honourable the Home Member spoke the other day about the "internal enemy," but why is he desirous of converting a friend into an enemy? The Congress has said again and again that it is prepared to aid the war effort of the United Nations to the fullest extent and I do not know why the Honourable the Home Member is seeking to open two fronts in India. If a second front has to be opened, let it be opened in Europe against the Fascist Powers, but in India what we want is a single united front against all the enemies of the United Nations—Japan, Italy and Germany. If this object is to be achieved a reversal of the policy of the Government will be needed. The policy of repression must give place to the policy of conciliation. The administrator has played his part. Let him now stand aside and make room for the statesman. The first act of statesmanship in India will be to reverse the present policy, to convene a conference of the different parties of the people including the Congress, and transfer a substantial measure of real power to the people of the country.

Sir, I maintain that even within the limits of the present constitution considerable advance is possible. You have to remove certain sub-sections and amend only certain unimportant portions of the Government of India Act. If you do this and alter the Legislative Rules and Electoral Rules you can make the Government responsible to the present Legislature. Without much difficulty that can be done. But my Honourable friend pours his vial of contempt on this House. Does he represent in this House the Government with regard to this matter? Do the other Members of the Government share that view? If the Government pour such contempt, why do not the Government order a re-election? A general election would be welcome; in fact we have urged again and again that there should be a general election. But the Government, instead of taking that step, is seeking to pour contempt on this body. Sir, within the framework of the present Constitution, a considerable advance is possible; the transfer of a substantial measure of power is possible without changing the whole constitution and without order-

ing a general election. If the Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed is sincere in his offer, as I believe he is, then we can sit round a table and point out such changes in the Constitution as will bring about a better Government which will be responsible to the Legislature.

But where is the statesman? Is there any statesmanship in this country or in England? The people have doubts about it. But if Britain fails to rise to the demand on this occasion, let the United States of America stretch out its hand of fellowship to a country struggling for freedom. It was that great country that wrote the noblest and most brilliant chapter in the history of world freedom; let the United States help an ancient nation which once was so great as a pioneer in art, in science, and in civilization.

NAWABZADA MUHAMMAD LIAQUAT ALI KHAN

There is an opinion in this country that there is no popular sanction behind the present Government; and I think if Dr Ambedkar had given us some details regarding the different types of sanctions that are needed for a Government, it would have been more advantageous for the purpose of this debate. He made certain observations regarding this House. I think it was in bad taste. If there have not been any general elections during the last eight years, the responsibility cannot be thrust on the shoulders of the Members of this House, the responsibility is on the Government of which he is a party today....

Dr B. R. Ambedkar: What is the electorate behind this Legislature? (Interruptions.)

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: I say that there is greater popular sanction behind this Legislature than behind the Government of which Dr Ambedkar is a part.

I contend, Mr President, that the present situation is a direct outcome of this policy of appeasement which the Government have been following during the last three years. If the Government had got on with the job, if they had taken courage in their hands and taken into their confidence those elements in India's life which have been crying hoarse for the mobilization of war efforts in the country, the situation today would not have been what it is and, Sir, the Government cannot absolve themselves from the grave responsibility which, due to their action in the past, rests on their shoulders.

It has been stated, I think by Mr Lawson, that they wanted the co-operation of all the Parties at this juncture. I do not believe that the British want the co-operation of any party at this juncture. I believe that they are suffering from the disease of self-satisfaction. They seem to be under the impression that it is not necessary for them to have the co-operation of any party in this country. They tried their best to get the Congress co-operation but may I know what they did to get the co-operation of the Muslim League and such other parties in this land that have been willing to take their due share in the prosecution of the war effort? Our hand of friendship has been extended since 1939. The British Government have spurned the offer of co-operation. They want our co-operation not as allies, not as equals, but as camp-followers, and I am afraid that type of co-operation no self-respecting nationality, no self-respecting party could give. Only my Honourable friend, Mr Jamnadas Mehta, could give that type of co-operation. After having given us the past history of the misdeeds of the British Government and after having painted them in the darkest colours possible, what was his appeal to his countrymen: Follow the British. This is not the time for this kind of co-operation and let me tell you quite frankly that that type of co-operation will not help you. Really speaking, unless you make up your mind to get the co-operation of any party in this country as your allies, it is much better not to talk about it. If you want

co-operation, then you must have it as of allies and as of equal partners. It is only then that they will be able to face dangers on equal terms with you. You cannot expect any decent party to give you any co-operation on your own terms.

We have no share, no authority, no voice in this Government and we are certainly not here to register their decrees and give our approval to the actions of the Government. Therefore, the Muslim League Party has decided not to vote for the resolution of Mr Dumasia. As regards the amendments that have been moved by Sardar Sant Singh and others, I have at great length explained our position which shortly is this. We stand for the independence of India; we stand for the freedom of India. We are prepared to form a provisional Government in co-operation with any party in this country for purposes of prosecuting the war successfully and defending our hearths and homes, provided we are given a guarantee by every party and by the British Government that the hundred millions of Mussalmans of India will have, not the right of self-expression, but the right of self-determination, to determine their destiny, to establish completely independent States in those areas where they are in a majority and thus to achieve freedom for our own homelands.

Sir, this is the position of the Muslim League, and I once again appeal to my Hindu friends to consider over this matter. The whole world is crying for freedom. Every country in Europe which is under the heel of Nazi Germany is longing for independence. Cannot we, the Hindus and the Mussalmans of India, give to each other what is their due? Is it better for us to live in a united India as slaves, or is it better for us to live as free-men in a divided India? I appeal to my countrymen in this House, to my countrymen outside, let us join hands; let us defend our hearths and homes; let us push the enemy away from our borders and let us give to the other what is his due. I can assure you that if we would agree to recognize the right of each other, there is no power that can stop India from achieving independence. Here is a proposal from the Muslim League —a fair proposal and a just proposal to our countrymen. Take three-fourths of India and give us one-fourth. Let us both join together and take the whole of India from the British Government.

MR M. S. ANEY

A number of points have been made by certain speakers to show how in executing the present policy and making an effort to put down the disturbance, excesses have been committed in many places and some instances have also been given by certain Members. Now, it is not claimed by anybody that in the big efforts which the Government of India have had to make through the Provincial Governments to put down the disturbances scattered over the whole country, there would be no place where somebody did not commit some indiscretion. It is difficult to make a sweeping statement like that. All we have been claiming is this, that the authorities who are entrusted with this work have to meet a very uncommon situation. It is not easy to put down riotous assemblies and rebellious people. In meeting a situation of that kind, necessarily recourse is to e had to force and in the use of that force, certain lattitude is to be given to those persons who are on the spot. If there are excesses of any kind, it has been stated very clearly in the speech of the Honourable the Home Member that it is in the interest of the Provincial Governments and Officers of those Forces concerned who are responsible for the discipline of their Forces to take note of those facts and make an inquiry into the matter. So far as the law on that point is concerned, I may say once for all that no soldier and no police

officer is above the provisions of the law if serious charges are made to the effect that the officer concerned made wanton use of force against innocent persons who cannot be supposed to have been involved in any way in the troubles and so on. These are matters for inquiry in the case of individuals. If there are cases of that kind, the proper authorities to investigate into these matters will be Local Governments. I believe, as my Honourable friend, the Law Member, said in the course of his speech, if these matters were brought to the notice of the Local Governments, then I have no reason to suppose that those complaints will not be considered and the matters gone into.

Now, I come to certain specific cases which have been brought to the notice of this House by my Honourable friend, Mr K. C. Neogy. There is one important case to which he made a reference and it sent a thrill of horror through the whole House. Reference was made to the case of my friend, Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande, of Nagpur. Yesterday, my Honourable friend, Mr Neogy, stated in the course of his speech, I do not know on whose information....

Mr K. C. Neogy: I will tell the Honourable Member the source of information.

Mr M. S. Aney: I will just tell what I know of the matter. In the first place, I am sorry reference was made to this thing. In the second place, I want to say what my Honourable friend, Mr Neogy, said was that Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande was ordered to remove the litter from the street, at the instance of some officer who was there, whether he was a police officer or a military officer—he did not specify. In this connection, I may inform the House that Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande had been here a few days ago in connection with some work and as an old friend of mine, he did not like to go away without calling on me. He told me many things, but he never referred to this personal incident to which reference was made by Mr Neogy now. After this disclosure was made in this House, I made an attempt yesterday to get into touch with Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande on the telephone to get the facts ascertained. Unfortunately the telephonic line last night was not clear and whether it would be clear today or not, I do not know. But I am glad to find that efforts were made in other directions also and I am in a position to make the statement which, I am sure, Mr Neogy will accept and it is this:

> "Enquiries made by the Chief Secretary of the Central Provinces Government indicate that the allegations made about Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande were entirely without foundation and Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande himself denied it entirely and vehemently."

That is the information I have got.

Mr K. C. Neogy: On a point of personal explanation, Sir. The Honourable the Leader of the House wanted to know the source of my information on this point. I hold in my hand a slip of paper on which I wrote down the thing at the dictation of Dr Moonje whom I met a few days ago in Delhi. Having heard this story from some other source, I was anxious to have it verified. I asked Dr Moonje: "Is this true." I did not unfortunately know the full name of the gentleman, nor had I any occasion to meet him. I said to Dr Moonje: "Is it a fact that a distinguished gentleman—Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande of Nagpur—had been asked or rather was made to remove the litter from the street?" Dr Moonje said, "Yes, he was actually made to remove the litter." I put it to him: "Was he only asked or was he actually made to do it. He said: "Oh! yes, he was actually made to remove," and then he added, "he went and complained to the police authorities, and they said, unfortunately, he could not be recognized." Then I asked Dr Moonje: "Would you

dictate to me the name of this gentleman, so that I could take down the name properly and also the purport of the story?" This is what I took down then, "Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande had to remove obstruction from the road near his house."

The President: The Honourable Member is making a speech and not giving a personal explanation.

Mr K. C. Neogy: This conversation took place in the presence of Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the Finance Minister of Bengal.

Dr P. N. Banerjea: I also saw. Dr Moonje and he gave me also the same information.

Mr K. C. Neogy: You may also ask my Honourable friend, Mr Govind V. Deshmukh, for confirmation of this story. I am glad the existence of this gentleman is not denied. It is a great mercy.

Mr M. S. Aney: I am not at all suggesting that there is no source from which my Honourable friend could have got this information. I am not suggesting that my Honourable friend made this statement without getting it from any source which he considers reliable. I am afraid, Dr Moonje might have been misinformed about this matter and *bona fide* he might have mentioned the story. Now, Sir, we have got here a categorical statement made by Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande himself to the Chief Secretary who has communicated it to us, that he denied this episode entirely and vehemently.

Now, I would come to the main question. At the very beginning I want to say that the Members should not go under the impression that the Government of India have no regard for this House. It would be an entirely wrong impression if anybody thought that the Government of India treats this House with contempt. I believe you do not require to be told....

A Member: Your own colleague has said that?

Mr M. S. Aney: I am sure the interpretation that has been put on certain observations of my Honourable colleague is far-fetched. He did not mean that the Government of India is treating this House with contempt. He had something else in his mind but I am not going to enter into that discussion now. He could not mean that, I am sure, and I have his authority to say, that he did not mean that.

Dr P. N. Banerjea: He did not mean what he said?

Mr M. S. Aney: The Government of India would really not have thought fit to associate the members of this House on several committees which deal with matters of great importance—my Honourable friends know that there are Members of this House on the Defence Consultative Committee—a Committee before which matters of confidential nature are discussed. If there had been no respect for the Members of this House, the Government of India would not have given them an opportunity to travel all over India to see all the positions of strategy and the nature of defences there. The Government of India are conscious that one of the great factors on which they can rely for the successful prosecution of the war is the support of this House and, therefore, they make every possible effort to keep them informed and get the support that they need. The very fact that this House was summoned much earlier than usual shows the attitude of Government towards this House.

Mr K. C. Neogy: What about Ordinances which are being enacted by the Government of India?

Mr M. S. Aney: That is a different point.

This is a proof of the regard which the Government of India have for the House as a whole.

Mr K. C. Neogy: What about the other proof which I gave?

Mr M. S. Aney: Ordinances? Well, my Honourable friend will

realize that emergency arises from moment to moment and things have to be done in the form of Ordinances. The Government certainly cannot wait for the Session to meet and there are matters which if they are taken through the procedure of the Legislature would take a good deal of time. Sometimes the action that is demanded requires promptness and immediate attention and no time can be wasted by the Government. These are considerations that come in the way and Ordinances have to be promulgated to meet various emergencies as they arise.

Sardar Sant Singh: Why not get the sanction of this House afterwards? You never place those Ordinances before us.

Mr M. S. Aney: Now I come to the first point—the step which the Government of India have taken in arresting Mahatma Gandhi and members of the Congress Working Committee—a drastic step as some of the Members have characterized it—immediately after the resolution of the Working Committee was adopted by the All-India Congress Committee.

In a matter of this kind I must say what I feel on the point. When I got the information—I am going to say something and I hope my Honourable Colleagues will not be unnecessarily frightened —when I got this information on the 9th—I did not get it on the 8th, because the decision was taken here in my absence—I first thought that it was a mistake which the Government of India had committed. I felt like that. In fact, I was even prepared to communicate my views to the Government of India, but as I left the place where I got the information and was proceeding on my journey and was gathering information and meeting friends and saw students and others, and met mobs, and saw railway stations burnt and Government and public property damaged and destroyed, I would have committed a great mistake of my life if I had communicated my views to the Government at my first impulse. These things I may not have anticipated then. Then I realized that behind that step was the collective wisdom of the Council, and they were right.

Mr Hooseinbhoy A. Laljee: Are we to understand that the Honourable Member did not know this position till the 8th?

Mr M. S. Aney: I did not know what they were going to do. If the Honourable Member was in possession of information as to what was going to take place then he as a loyal citizen of the country should have supplied the information to the proper authorities and I am sure they would have made use of it.

Mr Hooseinbhoy A. Laljee: I am not to take action. Did the Honourable Member take action on the 8th?

Mr M. S. Aney: Any action taken by the Government of India would have had results on the whole of India and, therefore, in view of the consequences that were likely to follow, it is the duty of every one of us to keep the Government of India properly informed.

There is one more point. Many friends think that the mistake of the Government was this: that the time asked for by Mahatma Gandhi should have been given and the country would not have lost anything by it. I could have understood that if the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee really left some scope for negotiation. If my reading of the resolution is right—and I do not want to take the interpretation of anybody else—my knowledge of English though not very deep is sufficient to enable me to understand the language of the resolution for myself.

Dr P. N. Banerjea: May I ask one question? What were the Government doing between the meeting of the Working Committee and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee—these three weeks?

Mr M. S. Aney: I have made a note of the point of my friend, the Leader of the Nationalist Party, and I am answering that point. In the first place I want to say that the resolution leaves no room for negotiation because it states in categorical terms: "This is our demand: if it is not satisfied, we have our own way of proceeding in the matter." It leaves absolutely no room whatever for any kind of interpretation. Therefore, I do not see what advantage there would have been in having an interview between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy. Probably Mahatma Gandhi—so far as I can venture to make a guess—would have said: "Well, Lord Linlithgow, my good friend, here is the resolution that I have brought on behalf of the Working Committee. This is what it means. I tell you it is in the interests of England. If you do not do that, be d—d. Let God take care of you." I claim to know Mahatma Gandhi; and with whatever little knowledge I have of the workings of his mind I say this is the only thing that he would have placed before him. He makes no difference between a Mr Aney and a Lord Linlithgow. To him Lord Linlithgow and Mr Aney or any others are persons of the same level; he makes no distinction between man and man in dealing with them.

Now, there is a very pertinent point raised by my friend, Dr Banerjea, the Leader of the Nationalist Party. I find his main point is this: what did the Government of India do in the period between the passing of the resolution by the Working Committee and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held in Bombay? I would like to put a counter-question, without meaning any disrespect to anybody and least of all to my Honourable friend, Dr Banerjea. What efforts were made actually by any one of these representatives to prevail upon or persuade the members of the All-India Congress Committee to bring to their notice the dangers inherent in the passing of a resolution like that, the consequences of which the country would be called upon to face? What efforts were mad· to bring these matters to the notice of those gentlemen? And having made those efforts is there any record to show that they failed in their efforts. . . .

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: Yes, of course.

Mr M. S. Aney: Mention them please.

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: That is all. I say that attempts were made most seriously from different platforms in the presence of hundreds of delegates warning Mahatma Gandhi against this step.

Mr M. S. Aney: I know that; but I believe that Dr Banerjea had something more than that in his mind. He wanted the representatives to meet together and come to a decision. I am afraid the Government of India could not have taken notice of a resolution like that unless it was a proposition which came authoritatively in the name of the Congress; and when they found that all the efforts, my Honourable friend, Mr Jamnadas Mehta, said had been made, were found to have been futile, the Government of India were probably justified in thinking that their efforts would not have met with any better fate at all; and therefore, I say, that viewed from any point of view you cannot accuse the Government of India of having taken any step to precipitating the matter by the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee. That is all I have to say.

Dr P. N. Banerjea: What about the immediate future?

Mr M. S. Aney: The Government have given an opportunity to this House to express their opinions on the present situation, and I will appeal to those gentlemen in whose name the amendments stand that according to approved parliamentary procedure a motion like this is merely debated and no vote of the House is demanded.

The amendments were withdrawn and the debate concluded.

The President: I do not know if Honourable Members who have moved their amendments want the Chair to put them to the vote.

Mr N. M. Dumasia: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the amendment that was moved by me.

The amendment was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Sardar Sant Singh: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the amendment that was moved by me.

The amendment was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: Sir, I also beg leave of the House to withdraw my amendment.

The amendment was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

The President: There is no need to put the main motion to vote.

DEMAND FOR TRANSFER OF POWER

DEBATE IN COUNCIL OF STATE

NEW DELHI, September 22, 1942.

The Council of State also debated the motion moved by Sir Mahomed Usman that the "situation in India be taken into consideration," for three days—September 22, 23 and 24, 1942. Mr P. N. Sapru, Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, Rai Bahadur Sri Narain Mahtha, Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das and Mr Hossain Imam vigorously attacked the Government's policy and demanded the transfer of power to Indians. Two Members of Government—Sir Jogendra Singh and Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava, who described himself as "a Baby" of the House—nttempted to justify the Government's action.

Moving the motion that "the situation in India be taken into consideration, Sir Mahomed Usman said:—

Soon after the arrest of the Congress leaders on the 9th August there were concerted acts of violence and sabotage not only in Bomlay but in Madras, Central Provinces, Bengal, the United Provinces and Bihar. They were specially directed against the railways, telegraphs, telephones, post offices, police stations and other Government buildings. The Provinces of the Punjab, Sind and North-West Frontier were remarkably free from these attacks.

To control and suppress these disturbances and to maintain law and order in the country, the following measures were taken:—

(1) The Congress Committees were declared to be unlawful associations and important individuals who were likely to organize and lead mass movements and create disturbances with the object of paralyzing the administration were detained.

(2) As this movement was intended to interfere in the prosecution of the war and to paralyze the war efforts, action was taken under the Defence of India Rules.

(3) The Penalties Enhancement Ordinance, the Special Criminal Courts Ordinance and the Collective Fines Ordinance were put into operation.

(4) Certain restrictions on the publication of news were imposed in the best interests of the country.

(5) In the disturbed areas fullest use was made of the police who had on several occasions had to face very difficult situations and were forced to open fire on riotous mobs. As a result of this 390 people were killed and about 1,060 wounded. A large number of policemen were injured and 32 were killed.

(6) British and Indian troops were used in aid of the civil power in about 60 places. They were forced on many occasions to open fire, the casualties being 331 killed and 159 wounded, and the military casualties being 11 killed and 7 wounded.

(7) The Air Force was employed for reconnaissance and patrol.

The police and the military have been called upon to meet a very grave situation in various places. I should like to take this opportunity of expressing the appreciation of the Government of the excellent work done by them. It is a matter for congratulation that all ranks of Government servants have done their duty most faithfully and loyally—on many occasions under very difficult circumstances..

As in all engineered movements the general public had nothing

to do with these disturbances. In several cases labour has been forced to take part in them. It is a matter for satisfaction that the Muslim community and the Scheduled Castes have as a whole stood entirely aloof.

The cutting of telephone and telegraph wires, removal of rails, demolition of bridges, impeding the war efforts and running a parallel government were all on the Congress programme of open rebellion as may be seen from the instructions issued by the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee which have been published by the Government of Madras.

Mr Shankar Rao Deo, a Member of the Congress Working Committee, who has been arrested and is now detained, speaking at Marol and Ghatkopar in the Bombay Suburban District on July 26 and 29, said that he thought the entry of Japan into the war should be an encouragement to Indians, who should, and did, derive pleasure from the successes of the Germans. He went on to suggest that the mass civil disobedience movement would take the form of a general strike in all factories, mills, and transport undertakings which would cripple the war machinery.

For all these disorders the Congress cannot be absolved from responsibility as Mr Gandhi and the other Congress leaders had been preaching for some time an open rebellion against the Government of the country, apart from the terms of the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee. Some say that Government have been hasty in taking action. If we had only delayed taking action, this dangerous movement to rebel against Government and to impede the war efforts would have taken such a tremendous shape as to cause an irreparable damage to this country. The Congress alone is responsible for the present situation and for the destruction of life and property during the last six weeks. By encouraging and promoting these acts of violence and sabotage, the Congress has done the greatest disservice to this country at a time when Japan is at the very doors of India. The measures taken by the Government are therefore thoroughly justified.

SIR A. P. PATRO

After the graphic description of the tragic results that we see around us today, and that we saw lately, the Government ought in justice to the people to have stated or indicated also what has brought about the present state of things, what are the causes that have led to this disruption and disorder and destruction of property. It would have been very enlightening at this stage if we had indications of that from the Government. The absence of any allusion to that is indeed to be deplored. The issues before the country are clear. There is no doubt as to what Indian political parties demanded. That being so, it seems to me the only way in which we could approach this problem is with a mind to solve it and with a desire to see how best it could be improved. To my mind the political or constitutional issues are not as important as they would be afterwards. At the present moment what we require is honest and sincere co-operation of every citizen, man or woman, with the Government here and in Great Britain in order to defeat the enemy. Thereafter we could have our full Swaraj.

MR M. N. DALAL

In the tide of this war there is a terrible warning for India, apathetic, disordered, truculent, sodden with communalism, her leaders fiddling in constitutional terms, when the very conditions under which these ideas are possible are faced with the threat of extinction.

The weakness of Indian Defence arises out of her unnatural political condition.

The time has come for a supreme effort at internal settlement to

make the country ready for the external menace. Malaya and Burma have taught us some lessons which we should profit by.

This debate will fail in its purpose if it is not to be followed by something constructive, something positive, which would herald not only a change of policy on the part of Government but a chance for India to fight the enemy and secure her freedom.

The Allied Nations are watching this country with very great interest and perhaps the Axis countries have their eyes on India. Mr Churchill's statement on India has provoked reactions the significance of which, I am sure, has not been lost sight of by our Government. I have been a life-long friend of England and I sincerely hope the light of reason, justice, and fair play will dawn on British statesmen.

MR P. N. SAPRU

The Leader of the House has made a statement which might have been made by any District Magistrate or Superintendent of Police in any mofussil town. His speech shows that he is completely and absolutely oblivious of the currents of thought and feeling in this country, and of what is happening in this country. His speech shows an utter lack of statesmanship, ill-suited for a man occupying the position of Leader of the House. Never before in the history of Indo-British relationship has India had to face the situation which it is facing today. At a time when the international situation is such as to cause real anxiety to those who believe in the principles of democracy and social justice, at a time when the international situation is such as to cause real pain to all those who wish to see a better world, free from the taint of all imperialism, British or non-British, at a time when people wish to see a world based on principles of justice emerge out of this war, Government and Congress nationalism have engaged themselves in a deadly contest which is not calculated to increase India's capacity to defend herself against Axis aggression. For it would be stupendous folly on the part of any patriotic Indian to deny the extreme gravity of the present situation. Following the arrests of Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders, the country has witnessed both repression and widespread disorder on an unprecedented scale. No man outside the lunatic asylum thinks that violence, arson, looting and murder can do the country any good. I do not, therefore, hesitate to denounce violence and hooliganism with all the strength of which I am capable. No one conversant with the situation in the provinces and districts can also deny that in maintaining order not all officials, high and low, have adhered to the maxim that the force used must not exceed the necessities of the situation, that in restoring public peace care must be taken to see that the innocent do not suffer along with the guilty, that things are not done which are likely to excite racial passions, that people are made to feel that the object is not to humiliate them or any particular section of them, but merely to assert the majesty of the law. We live, Sir, in a period of firing, lathi charges, collective fines and whipping. The great Mr Amery has discovered the virtues, which the Allied Nations should take note of, of this punishment of whipping in the Indian Penal Code. Many things have occurred in this country which have made many thoughtful Indians ask, many patriotic Indians ask, whether there is any essential difference between Nazi methods of administration in occupied countries and British methods of administration in British India. Be that as it may, the question which I consider important is whether the conflict in which the Government and the Congress have entered was or was not avoidable and whether the main responsibility for the present disorders, whether the main responsibility for the present unrest, whether the main responsibility for the growing estrangement between Great Britain and India—and let there be no mistake about it that the

estrangement between Great Britain and India is growing and increasing in intensity every day—whether the main responsibility for this growing estrangement rests or does not rest with the British Government.

But before I go to answer these questions, let me state in the plainest terms possible that I do not agree with the view which was put forward by the Leader of the House that these disturbances are merely engineered in the sense that there is no popular sympathy with the rioters. I am not in a position to speak about the Muslim community. The Honourable Mr Hossain Imam will dispute my claim to speak for the Muslim community, though I have heard many Muslims express sympathy with the rioters, I have heard many Muslims express sympathy with civil disobedience and I have heard many Muslims express horror at the things that have been done by officials in putting down disorder. But I am more in touch with the Scheduled Castes. I do not know, Sir, that there is such a community as the Scheduled Castes. The Hindu caste system represents a hierarchy which it is difficult for an Englishman to understand. I am not quite sure, Sir, that the name of the great representative of the Depressed Classes, Dr Ambedkar, is known to these Depressed Classes; and if I may judge from the results of the last election I find, Sir, that except in Bombay, the Congress had the majority of the Depressed Class seats in the Legislatures. The real problem before statesmanship today is that people feel alienated from the law and they so feel alienated as they find that Government has been preparing them not for the freedom that they desire but for perpetuating a *status quo* which they intensely dislike. In a normal community, popular sympathy is always with the law, because law in a normal community is the expression of the popular will and there is a consciousness in the community of identity between it and the State. The feeling is entirely absent in this country. Government, notwithstanding the fact that its 11 Indian supporters, 11 members who have now been discovered by the great Mr Churchill to be "wise and patriotic," does not rest upon popular support or upon the will of the people. It is an imposition from without, not a growth from within. It is obviously difficult in these days of strict Press censorship, when even factual news cannot be objectively written for or published in newspapers, to comment with knowledge upon all that has happened in various parts of the country. But I will not conceal from the House that in my humble judgment even though the attitude of Government had been extremely and extraordinarily provocative, Congress nationalism would have been well advised in thinking in terms of sanctions other than those which one associated with direct action and mass action. An objective study of the situation has convinced me that the main responsibility for the present unrest in the country rests mainly, if not entirely, upon the Government of this country. Let us examine how the situation has developed. A constitution was working when the war broke out which had not generated a feeling that power had really been transferred. The demand for Indian freedom which had been gathering strength for many years was pressed by leaders of almost all parties just after the war started, and why should it not have been? You said that it was a war for freedom. What about our freedom? You wanted to fight German imperialism. What about your imperialism? It was emphasized by Indian parties that a satisfaction of India's legitimate aspirations was needed to put heart into the Indian people who wanted to fight—there was an absolute offer of complete, wholehearted, cooperation as equals in a war which was represented to be a struggle against the soul-killing tyranny of Nazi Germany. Britain in the ans-

wer which she gave through the Marquess of Linlithgow and the Marquess of Zetland was unable to indicate any definite time, if ever, within which India would achieve her objective of self-government; and in the early stages of the war there was even reluctance on the part of the authorities in this country and in England to admit an Indian element, a political element, into the Viceroy's Executive Council. I will not go over the ground which has been covered by me in previous speeches on the constitutional issue in this House. But I will content myself with saying that it was not until after the collapse of France that the notorious August offer was made, and that, as we know definitely, turned down the main demand, not only of the Congress but of the Liberal Party also, that there should be a National Government in charge of all portfolios at the Centre.

It is important to bear in mind that the Cripps offer did not represent a decision of His Majesty's Government as regards the manner in which the Indian constitution shall be drawn up by Indian political parties. Let me explain this. It merely represented a suggestion by His Majesty's Government for acceptance by Indian political parties. The position, therefore, today is not, as Sir A. P. Patro said, that Britain is committed to full self-government after the war. The position today is that Britain is not committed now or within any definite period to full self-government for this country. It is only committed to giving full opportunity to India to realize her destiny, consistently with her obligations to her numerous creeds, interests and races. It is against this background that the original cry of "Quit India" by the Congress must be judged. "Quit India" is just an answer to the theory of trusteeship and obligation which has been trotted out by Britain. After the failure of the Cripps mission and after it had been made clear by Sir Stafford Cripps that no further initiative would be taken to break the Indian deadlock, the situation rapidly deteriorated. It was clear to every one who followed the proceedings of the All-India Congress Committee at Allahabad that the country was in for stormy days. The Mahatma was writing week in and week out in *Harijan* that in view of the attitude of the British Government he would not be able to maintain his policy of non-embarrassment of the war effort. The Congress Working Committee at Bombay passed a resolution, which, in effect, stated that if India's demand for independence was not conceded, the Congress would resort to mass civil disobedience. Between the 7th July, on which date the resolution was passed by the Working Committee, and the 7th August, on which date the resolution was ratified by the All-India Congress Committee in a modified form—I wish to emphasize these words—in a very much modified form—for, there is no demand for withdrawal of Allied troops in the resolution; on the other hand, there was an offer of full co-operation with the war-effort in that resolution—what was this wonderful Government consisting of 11 Indians doing? There was a clear indication in the resolution of the 7th August that the Congress was prepared fully to co-operate with the war effort if the principle of independence was conceded. Indeed, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whom the documents which were seized by the police disclosed to be a cent per cent. supporter of the United Nations, described the resolution as one of offer of full co-operation with the war effort. He did not wish it to be regarded as an ultimatum. It contemplated certain action in the event of its not being accepted. Why was the suggestion that Mr Amery should encourage the idea of a round table conference, why was the suggestion that the Viceroy should convene a round table conference, why was the suggestion that the Indian Members, failing the Viceroy, should convene a round table conference, ignored

by this wonderful Government of 11 Indians? Why was no effort made during this period of one month to break the deadlock, mobilize reasonable opinion behind the Government and take constructive steps to endow India with a National Government? Why was the Government of India sitting with folded hands? What Government was doing in this period—Government was fairly active—was to represent to the world that Mahatma Gandhi was either pro-Japanese or at all events inclined to make peace with Japan, independently of the United Nations, on dishonourable terms. So far as the notes of the Assistant Secretary of the Congress are concerned, they have been explained by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and their word is final for their countrymen. But, assuming that there is defeatist talk in the ranks of the Congress, may I ask if this defeatist talk is entirely absent in official circles? I heard one of the highest officers of the land, a man occupying a position not inferior to that of the Leader of the House, tell me in Kashmir, just after the collapse of France, that "We won't be able to last this autumn." He thought that defeat was staring England in the face. I disagreed with his estimate of the situation. He met me at Firpos in Calcutta last September. We reminded each other of that conversation and he said that I had proved to be right. Would my Honourable friend the Leader of the House be prepared to describe him as a fifth columnist or defeatist? If he wishes to know his his name, I can give it to him privately and he can verify my facts from him. It is nonsense to say that Indians are either pro-Japanese or defeatists. We have been fighting for our independence. We do not wish to go under a foreign and new imperialism, perhaps more ruthless than British imperialism. The fact is that your prestige in the East has suffered on account of the reverses that you have sustained in the East. We are full of admiration for the heroic and epoch-making stand which our valiant friends of China, that great Eastern country with great possibilities, whose friendship we greatly value, whose friendship is one of our most cherished treasures, have been making. We are full of admiration for the resistance of the brave people of the Soviet Union with whom many of us have shared many ideals. We have nothing but the most genuine admiration for the great American people who are fighting this war with clean hands, who did not get anything out of the last war and who are combating aggression in the Pacific with great heroism. But you must not blame us if we do not think that Singapore, Tobruk and Rangoon constitute victory. If you think that we would be prepared to make peace with Japan if power is transferred to us, you are entirely mistaken. I have heard many Indians say that rather than fight to the finish, Britain will make peace with the Axis on imperialist terms. I do not share that view. It is, therefore, a tragedy that you have interned Indian leaders who are definitely and wholeheartedly opposed to Axis aggression. You rely on Rai Bahadurs and people of that type. I think it is easier for them to transfer their loyalty, than for the people who have an anti-imperialist ideology. It is a tragedy that a large number of people who were willing and eager to help you in putting up a very strong resistance, have had to keep aloof from the war effort on account of the Government attitude. It is nonsense to say that the Congress is fifth columnist or is pro-Axis. A free India would have been able to render the maximum help she was capable of to China, the Soviet Union and other countries. What you have done is to deprive these countries, by your policy, of the maximum help that they could have obtained if you had settled with the Congress and the League. The paradox of this war is that you can and will win this war if you de-imperialize yourself and assume the moral leadership of a community of free nations, equal in status and functions, one with another. It is India's misfortune, it is Britain's misfortune, that

Britain has as her Prime Minister one who is so entirely devoid of imagination, one who is so absolutely racial in his outlook as Mr Churchill. He has made a speech full of venom against the people of this country. Even *The Times* had to remind him that the Congress was not a negligible factor in Indian politics and such is the arrogance of this statesman that he actually boasts, while fighting a war for freedom, that there are more white troops in this country at this time than at any period in Indian history. It is, therefore, impossible, having regard to this background, for any thinking Indian to support the policy culminating in the arrests of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress leaders. The Mahatma's offer to talk over matters with the Viceroy before starting civil disobedience was spurned with scorn and I cannot act on the assumption that had the Viceroy met him and had he made an offer which went beyond the Cripps proposals the Mahatma would have been unreasonable. I cannot persuade myself to believe that the Mahatma is anything but a pacifist, and pacifists as my old friend Mr Wilfred Roberts said the other day in the House of Commons, often find themselves in difficulties in war-time. I cannot agree with the view that the country or the Congress or the Hindu community is pro-Japanese. We have been fighting for our Independence, not for the purpose of going under a new imperialism but for the purpose of giving a higher standard of living to our people, for the purpose of giving them a more tolerable mode of existence. Surely the progressive front today is one and indivisible and commonsense ought to teach Government that Indians cannot be so foolish as to wish for the defeat of the progressive front. Therefore what emerges out of all I have been saying is that Government has fired the first shot, that they have taken the initiative and opened the long looked-for second front in India and we cannot accept the view that if Government had stayed its hands until it had tried conciliation and definitely failed, its position would not have been stronger. I cannot accept the view that it would have been difficult to restore order if Government had delayed action. Popular feeling would in that case have been more favourable to Government than it is today. Reasonable people would have said, if Government had tried and failed: the Government had gone as far as it could; what more could it do? these Congress folk are unreasonable. That is not what people say today. It is no use saying that you could not negotiate with parties which are threatening direction action. You negotiated with Irishmen, with Griffiths and Cosgrave, while there was open rebellion in Ireland. You negotiated after you had fought with General Smuts and Botha; General Smuts is one of your pillars today. You gave responsible government to Canada at a time when Canada was seething with internal disorder. You salute the American flag of independence today with reverence. You speak of George Washington, who must have appeared to the statesmen of his days as a rebel, as a great American patriot. You negotiate with trade unions and labour organizations which hold out threats of strike and even a general strike and you think it is all right. But you refuse to negotiate with an organization which is definitely anti-Axis and anti-Fascist, which is pro-United Nations and which is prepared to support you if its plea for independence of the country, is recognized and a provisional Government consisting of representatives of all communities formed and power entrusted to this composite Government to frame a machinery for devising the future constitution of India. Why? The reason is obvious. The reason is that you are not prepared to part with it even if all the communities agree. Your policy therefore has led to frustration with all its terrible consequences. While I would have had India adopt a different strategy, the strategy of adjustment and compromise with various interests and groups, I am, howsoever much I

may differ from those who have resorted to civil disobedience, at this juncture not prepared to give you and your Government, your wise and patriotic Indians, an atom of support in the policy of mere negation on which they have embarked in this country. Neither can I persuade myself that you are not using your influence to divide communities in this country.

It is in the friendliest spirit possible that I make the suggestion that an earnest effort should be made to compose our differences and that failing that the United Nations should intervene and arbitrate so far as this country is concerned. It is impossible for any one to look at the suggestion that the fate of the Provinces should be decided by a communal referendum. The position therefore as it has crystallized itself is that all parties are agreed that there should be freedom. We all want a declaration of freedom now. I do not see why it cannot be made when an Anglo-French Union could be proposed at the time when France was collapsing. Why can't you make a declaration of freedom now here. We must be given a National Government. For enabling the problem to be considered in a fresh light, it is necessary that Government should release the Congress leaders, but if it is not going to release them—it has not allowed the Mahasabha leaders nor that good liberal-hearted Englishman, the Metropolitan of India, a truly Christian Englishman, to visit the Mahatma—why is it not possible for it to negotiate with the Mahasabha and the Muslim League? Why cannot a National Government composed of representatives of these organizations capable of giving full support to the war effort be formed? It must be left to this new Government to release the Congress leaders and negotiate with them. The present state of affairs is intolerable. You have the Communal Award! Why cannot you seek the aid of the United Nations to give a new award if we fail to arrive at a settlement? The feeling in the public is that the Indian Members are not one. Indeed I sometimes think that Indianization unaccompanied—and this will interest my friend the Honourable Mr Hossain Imam—I sometimes think that Indianization unaccompanied by popular control, either of this House or of organizations, is at times a curse. Witness, for example, the activities of the Indian Embassy at Washington today. The question is not, therefore, one of Indianization but of the powers the Indian Members will enjoy and of the control either of organizations or of the Legislatures under which they will work. This may be a jaded Legislature but the present House of Commons is also a jaded Legislature. The responsibility for maintaining order is not mine; the remedy for the present situation is not in my hands. I am not even being consulted in regard to the Ordinances which are being promulgated by the Governor-General; they have not come before this House. Therefore, Sir, for these reasons I am not prepared to give any support to a policy of mere negation, on which the British Government has embarked. It may have the support of eleven wise and patriotic Indians but let them remember that these wise and patriotic Indians are not pulling any weight in their own country.

SIR HISSAMUDDIN BAHADUR

Mr President, Sir, the Leader of the House to whom I accord a cordial welcome has delivered a speech which I am sure will command general support and acquiescence.

The Motion before us has a significance of its own, as it shows a readiness on the part of Government to take the House into their confidence and to afford, on its own initiative, an early opportunity to express its views on the present political situation in the country.

I have heard with interest and attention the different shades of opinions and angles of vision put forward by Honourable Members.

Sir, we are passing through very critical and serious phases of the world war and war clouds are gathering very close to us. For the safety of our country it behoves us to do nothing likely to hurt the cause of Allied Nations or obstruct efficient prosecution of the war. In my opinion no useful purpose would be served by blaming and accusing each other and thereby embittering feelings which lead us nowhere. Let us imbibe the spirit of forgive and forget. Let us appreciate and face the realities of the situation.

I take this opportunity to appeal for co-operation, mutual tolerance, and forbearance, when the enemy is knocking at our gates. The momentary lull in the activities of the Japanese on our border is due to their being engaged in consolidating their position in the occupied countries, making preparations and reorganizing their forces. We should not only get ready to defend our country but to strike them in their country and dislodge them from the occupied countries. I am confident that at the victorious end of the war India will get her coveted freedom and emerge as an equal partner in the comity of free and democratic nations of the world.

RAI BAHADUR SRI NARAIN MAHTHA

The situation in India is the natural result of Britain's attempt to arrest the progress of those forces which have been at work, slowly it may have been, but none the less steadily, since the last war. The country insistently called on Britain to act up to her professions so freely made, but all that Britain did was to play off one party against another and to represent to the world that self-rule was impossible in India. Even those who had for years clung to a pathetic faith in the professions of British politicians were crudely disappointed, and a sense of despair intensified the sense of frustration. Out of this has arisen the situation that faces us today.

For what after all is the real inwardness of the situation? Disrespect for law and order, disregard of authority, and the attempt to show that disrespect and disregard by acts of violence directed primarily against the symbols of British authority in India. It has, in some form or other, manifested itself throughout India; somewhere more and somewhere less, but manifest everywhere. One might well ask, why should it have been so? Why should it so happen in India where, the world has so often been told, the British have governed so wisely and so well; why should the people have risen almost in revolt against a rule that professes to do them untold good? If at all it has been the work of "pestilential agitators," why should people have been led away so easily from the most perfect of all governments, from the paternal guidance of a government that parades its own benevolence, and from the control of an Executive that boasts of its super-efficiency? On their own showing the Government stands self-condemned; they have been able neither to carry the people with them, nor to hold them against those who are alleged to have misled them.

And why? Simply because the Government has not moved with the times, has not progressed to meet the growing aspirations of the people, has failed to satisfy their elementary demands for recognition of human democratic rights. It had not had the sense to realize that the masses were getting tired and weary of the inefficiency and arrogance of the bureaucracy; that the classes were getting weary of petitions and prayers, and the time was, therefore, ripening for some sort of direct action that would strike at its very foundation. The Government would not listen to reason, it would not pay any heed to the voice of its best friends: it would learn nothing and forget nothing. It would cling to its delusions as if they were the only realities. Thus only can the August offer be explained; thus only could the Cripps proposals have been thought of. For after all what did these amount

to? Nothing more than a larger association of Indians in the actual work of administration, retaining effective control all the while in British hands. My friend the Honourable Mr Sapru in his eloquent speech yesterday exposed the nature of the August offer and the Cripps proposals and it would be superfluous to add to his lucid analysis. I shall content myself with Sir Stafford's own words. He said in the House of Commons:—

> "I had from the outset made it clear to all those whom I saw that it was not possible to make any constitutional changes except of the most 'insignificant' kind prior to the new constitution which would come into operation as a result of the labours of the constitution-making assembly."

Naturally, therefore, as he wanted to part with nothing immediately, his proposals met the fate they deserved.

I am not one of those, Sir, who hold an individual or an organization responsible for the present situation. To my mind, forces there are that work in human affairs, influencing men's actions, individual and collective. And a statesman is he who reads correctly the direction and objective of those forces and canalises them along safe and fruitful channels, using the energy for creative purposes. The mere politician, cursed with the ignorance that myopia breeds and obstinacy aggravates, merely seeks expedients to neutralise those forces, and in practice does actually seem to succeed until the inevitable crash comes. The present situation is an illustration in point. It is futile to seek to hold Mahatma Gandhi or the Congress entirely responsible for the present disturbances. These are to a very large extent the necessary results of the forces that you have driven underground all these long years. And what is worse, your methods of dealing with the present situation are as antiquated and will in their ultimate effect be as futile as was Britain's attempt to coerce America in the eighteenth century. Against America, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, you employed the Red Indian savage with his scalping knife. Against the Indian mob you now boast of your collection of white forces, largest in India at present than at any time of its history. Have you collected them in India to fight Japanese aggression or to assert your strength against the million that do not get a square meal from year's end to year's end, and to cow down those that merely ask you to act up to your own vaunted professions?

Speaking of the methods of putting down disturbances brings me to the tragic events in my own province of Bihar. Up to the evening of the 11th August, nothing at all serious had happened anywhere in the Province. But on that fateful afternoon, in front of the Secretariat at Patna, a mob that had begun to disperse was fired upon. As if this was just the spark necessary for the movement to blaze out, events moved with incredible speed; acts of sabotage and violence culminated in the roasting alive of some policemen and the tragic murder of a sub-divisional magistrate. It appeared as if anarchy born of mob violence would stalk supreme. I well realize that no Government could for a moment tolerate such lawlessness; but the measures taken have been such that the average citizen found himself placed in the most perilous situation, midway between the violence of the mob and the infinitely better organized violence of those who seek to assert the majesty of law. Troops and police were let loose on the countryside, and in the course of my tours in the villages as a leader of the National War Front for my native district, I had reports made to me of the oppression of the police and of the troops, of vandalism, of wanton destruction and loot of private property, of whole villages burnt, of extraction of money on threat of arrest, and in some cases of actual physical torture. I have placed in the hands of my District Magistrate and of the Chief Secretary of my Province a statement of instances of such brutal

oppression. This statement has been signed by me and by the Secretary of the District War Committee and Chairman of the District Board, perhaps the only one in India whose employees have bought war bonds of the value of nearly four lakhs. I have also related to the Chief Secretary and to the Adviser to his Excellency the Governor of Bihar what these eyes of mine have seen in the villages; all wealthy shops in the bazaar looted; entire villages burnt, not by the mob but by the soldiers and by the police; and I must confess that these sights would haunt me to my dying day. Indians in Bihar have by now been taught that there is very little difference between shooting down a pariah dog and a pariah nigger. As the train I was travelling by to attend this session was passing Bamrauli aerodrome, I noticed a European in military uniform aiming a rifle at a pie dog about a hundred yards away; he fired but missed; but those who wear the King's uniform in my part of the country are better marksmen, and they find their targets much closer.

Were I to narrate all that my hapless province has been passing through, I would take up much more time than has been allowed to me. I shall, therefore, content myself with a few general observations about the nature of the movement, and the measures that should now be adopted to restore public confidence. The extent, depth and import of this movement has not been properly understood or realized. It is neither a students' movement nor a Congress movement, nor even a Fifth Column attempt to sabotage India's war effort; it is the desperate gesture of a nation before whom you have dangled the offer of political freedom, a nation exasperated beyond the limits of human patience, a nation that has seen the anomaly of having to protect a freedom that it does not enjoy.

It is not my purpose to extenuate the excesses of the mob nor to exaggerate the repressive measures of the Government, but must say that while mob violence had a clear line of action, Government measures seem to have proceeded on no plan or method, except that of striking terror throughout the entire countryside. The net result of this has been an impression that the Government has become panic-stricken and has consequently aroused in the minds of the people a feeling that if this is to be the Indians' lot under British rule, to be shot on suspicion, to be hanged on evidence inadequate in law, to be arrested on the whim of a policeman, the average Indian may well be pardoned if he thinks of the Axis occupation of the conquered country as different only in degree. The war in India may, therefore, be said to have already begun on the moral plane, and even the simple-minded villager has begun to compare British methods of maintaining law and order with what he has been told about Axis methods in occupied countries, and to him the comparison may appear to be flattering. What is then the remedy? Statesmanship demands that the root causes be eliminated, and the people conciliated, so that India takes her rightful place as a free and equal partner in the comity of the United Nations. You can repress, with the power that you now have, any popular movement, but you will merely drive it underground, where it will wait its time and burst forth at a more perilous hour. Conciliation should be the motto, and you can very easily conciliate Indians if you only consent to part with power. Free your mind from the suspicion that India will not stand by you once she is independent. It is common wisdom that a good friend is a better ally than a disgruntled slave. The events of the last few years should have taught you the lesson that imperialistic domination cannot last. Only in March 1931, Mr Churchill in a Liverpool bye-election speech asked, "Is there any other country in the world which would tamely submit to be pushed out of its rights and duties in the East?

Would France be chattered out of Indo-China? Would the Dutch give up Java to please the Javanese? Would the United States be hustled out of Philippines?" Since these would not, Mr Churchill went further to say: "We alone seem afraid of our own shadow." That was Mr Churchill eleven years ago. He does not seem to have changed much, but whither have gone the Eastern possessions of France and of Holland?

In times like these, it is the essence of strategy to keep up the morale of the people. The National War Front, conceived in this spirit, seemed in my Province to be capable of infinite good. If you pardon a reference to what may be considered a personal achievement, I would like to tell you that in my District of Muzaffarpur, the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League agreed to work with the National War Front in order to maintain internal security and internal self-sufficiency. Dr Rajendra Prasad, who held the meeting at my house, was a party to the agreement. I was chosen as the Executive Officer of this Co-ordination Board, and it seemed to promise well for the good of the country. Only one week before the disturbances began, Muzaffarpur was chosen as the venue, and my house as the place, of a conference of all the leaders of the National War Front for the Province of Bihar, and his Excellency the Governor of Bihar did us the honour to inaugurate the conference. Nothing could have been more auspicious for a movement designed to maintain the morale of the people, and we all had high hopes that whatever comes we shall be able to hold our own. Unfortunately, the indiscriminate repressive measures of Government have created an atmosphere in which our ideals cannot be adequately realized, for as I have already said the war on the moral plane seems to have begun in India, and our difficulties are correspondingly greater.

It is, however, not yet too late. If only statesmanship would look a little beyond the immediate, if real power is transferred to the people, all will yet be well. The finest anti-Nazi material is to be found in India and it will be a tragedy if India remains unreconciled. I realize that there are difficulties, but these have to be overcome. I shall close with a quotation from Professor Harold Laski's book published only in 1940. Speaking of the situation in India, Professor Laski says:

> "The point I am making is the simple one that an Empire is a handicap to freedom whenever its subjects deny the validity of its maintenance. At that stage it must either become a partnership or degenerate into a tyranny. And it is particularly dangerous to permit that degeneration if it offers to our enemies an opportunity of reproach to which we have no adequate response. The plea made by our enemies that the real nature of our domination is shown by the way in which we maintain our rule in India we cannot answer by reference to a single Indian representative able freely to secure the full support of his own people. We can answer that plea only by saying that we are satisfied with our achievement there. But we have, in truth, no more right to constitute ourselves judges in our own cause than the Fascist leaders possess; less even, since we deny them that right so soon as its attempted application touches ourselves. A nation can justly stand as trustee of another people when it can be shown that no vested interest of its own is safeguarded by that trusteeship, and when a detached observer would admit first, that the people so ruled do not claim freedom from trusteeship, and, second, when the objective results of its exercise are clearly and mainly for the benefit of that people. Judged by these standards, it is clear, I think," (continues Professor Harold Laski) "that the sooner we end our paramountcy over India the better for Indians and for ourselves. And there is no moment more fitting to end it than in a war where we declare ourselves to be the world defenders of democracy and freedom."

SIR RAMUNNI MENON

Sir, no person who reflects on the happenings in this country

during the past six or seven weeks, and particularly in the light of the information which the Honourable the Leader's impressive statement now makes available to the public, can help feeling a sense of relief that this country has successfully emerged from a grave crisis of great magnitude.

No human problem is insoluble, given time and the necessary goodwill; and there is no reason to imagine that, if all the parties who are in the public eye today, throw in their best in a co-operative effort, a solution could not be found. But I must confess that in the prevailing atmosphere and with a realistic appreciation of the attitudes of the major political parties in this country, I can find no promise of a speedy settlement. In the meantime, while hoping for the best, let all people who are interested in the progress of this country do everything in their power to support the great effort which this country is making to win the war.

RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS

The course of the debate has shown that there is a fundamental difference of outlook between the Government and this side of the House regarding the origin of the disturbances and the requirements of the situation. The reason for this diversity is that the Government is to my mind suffering from propaganda complex. Having made up its mind not to part with power, it realized that it must one day come into clash with the Congress. It prepared itself for that clash in the convenient belief that it was in this belief that the Government acted on 9th August. Having assumed that the Congress movement would have no backing, it gave to the world a daily picture of "All quiet on all fronts." For some weeks we were told that there were hardly any disturbances worth mentioning and All-India Radio even ceased mentioning the matter after the first few days following the arrests of Congressmen. Suddenly the Government appears to have changed its propaganda angle. It has now let loose an account of arson, loot, murder and sabotage to show that it had been faced with "an open rebellion" and that but for the loyalty of the military, the police and the Government servants, the rebellion might have paralysed the machinery of Government. At the same time we are given the assurance that the general public has remained steady and has not supported the rebels.

What can be the motive of publishing now these blood-curdling accounts of hooliganism? I suspect that the motive is to keep the Congress leaders locked up in jail for the period of the war and to carry on the administration on the existing pattern. The refusal to allow Dr Mookerjee to see Mahatma Gandhi is a pointer in the same direction. I am not here to plead for the Congress. I have all my life had differences with the Congress programme and I unreservedly condemn the ourburst of violence which followed the arrest of Congress leaders. But what I wish to know is whether the Government feels satisfied that after imprisoning the Congress leaders it has done its job and that it can take a complacent view of the situation in the country.

I have a stake in the country and during my long public life I have been a supporter of ordered progress. I am pained to find today that the Government stands friendless. Even those classes such as the Taluqdars of Oudh, who were Government's most loyal supporters, are not without misgivings as to the policy Government is pursuing. The sectional interests which are opposed to the nationalist movement are not afraid of the Government either. They are only out to promote their narrow interests. At a time like this when public opinion is becoming more and more divorced from Government it is the path of wisdom to adopt the policy of conciliation. If the

Congress is irreconcilable, the other parties are not. How is it that there is no party in India which is satisfied with the manner in which the Government is responding to the demand for real power so that the country may find its emotion roused to support the war effort?

No one denies that there has been mob violence and that the Government has done well by putting it down at once, but the whole basis of Government and the psychology of its agents convert the instrument of force into a weapon of repression. It is the lesson of history that extreme expression leads to extreme reaction. I have no hesitation in saying that the Defence of India Act is being misused. I have heard from my Bihar friend an account of the loot in which the police and army are alleged to have indulged. Some day the facts will become known when there will be no censor to stop their publication. A friend of mine who came from Bihar told me that the shop of one Madan Lal at Pupri Bazar was looted and as many as half a dozen iron safes were broken open and it is alleged that this was done by the police. I was informed by my friend that on the representation of the sufferers and of the Leader of the Bihar National War Front and some of its members, the Government is holding an inquiry into the matter and that the result of that inquiry may be published very soon.

Both Mr Churchill and Mr Amery have made the situation worse by their recent utterances. I wish they had not spoken, but now since they have, it is up to the Government of India to convey to them the true reaction in India to those speeches.

What I say, then, is that you have completely misjudged the situation and that you will continue to do so at your peril. The Congress Party which held the reins of Government in seven provinces is not so unimportant as you wish to make out. But conceding that it has put itself out of court by making the demand for "Quit India," why not transfer power to those who represent that steady public opinion which you say is behind the war effort? There never was a time when this country was governed more autocratically than today, when British officials had such supreme control and had such utter contempt for Indian opinion and sentiment. My information is that in a number of districts in Bihar where Indian I.C.S. officers were in command (*i.e.*, Collectors or Deputy Commissioners), European I.C.S. officers were also appointed in joint charge; so confidence in the Indian I.C.S. officers according to information has been lost. Collective fines are being imposed without discrimination. There are people who have done nothing and even they are to pay fines. It is alleged properties were burnt by police. My information is that some time back—I mean about 20 or 30 years ago—in tribal areas in the frontier Province—if I am wrong in my information General Hartley will kindly put me right—the villages which were not friendly to the British were burnt down and people in them were burnt alive, and the feeling of Muslims has been, as you all very well know, one of disgust on account of the burning of the dead bodies in those areas. I am sorry, Sir, that such like things are being repeated now in times when every country condemns such action.

I should like to say, Sir, that no efforts are being made by the Government of India to put down the discontent. Some time ago I mentioned in this House that the mentality of the masses is entirely changed. You cannot compare the mentality of the masses during the last Great War and the present war. I am telling you a fact when I say that whenever there is any British victory the masses do not believe it and whenever there is any defeat or retreat people re-

police. Have Government taken any pains to find out the reasons which have led to this change of mentality and the remedial measures that they should adopt? After all, everybody can realize that in a police station the police force ordinarily consists of a sub-inspector, two head constables and six constables who control 50 to 100 square miles of area and people hold them in respect but that in case of any change in mentality that force is infinitesimally small to resist mob violence. It is the *Iqbal* itself which has made the Government to rule and I wish that loyal sentiments of the masses should not be spoiled. I can tell you that when you commit excesses the minds of the friends and that of the vitcims and their relatives and of the other people are embittered and the consequential results when the masses are swayed are discontent, and history can tell you what then happens. I will ask you and earnestly request you to learn some lessons from happenings in Malaya and Burma and not to repeat the blunder here in India.

Well, Sir, another reason of discontent among the Defence forces is—and I think General Hartley is very well aware of it—the proportion of Indian officers to British officers in Defence Units. From the statement that the General has made today in this House we find that in the Indian Army 4.75 British officers have been recruited against one Indian. I know that there are a lot of suitable Indian officers available, but even in the time of war this disproportion which has not been set right is to be deplored. Why are you creating discontent among those who are ready to sacrifice their lives for the sake of the Empire? My information is, Sir, that experienced Indian officers holding honorary commissions—I mean Viceroy's commissioned officers who have been re-employed and are holding ranks, some of them as Majors and Captains—are being put under planters newly recruited who know nothing about the art of tactics, and there is consequently discontent among those officers. I do not want to mention names, but in case General Hartley wants I can mention instances. It is not in the public interest, nor in the interest of the officers serving to give their names. I understand that at Dimapur there was an Indian contingent which is commanded by a planter officer and orders that the planter commander gives are in contravention to the relative Army Manuals. I hope General Hartley will kindly see to this and remove the discontent. Now when the proportion of Indian officers was increased it was announced on the floor of this House that in future there would be agreed increases in the proportion of Indian commissioned officers to British commissioned officers. Now, Sir, what do we find? We find that even the recommendations of the Skeen Committee, which were accepted by the Government and declaration made on the floor of this House and the other House were totally violated and so the Government failed to fulfil its pledge. Such-like things, Sir, injure the feelings of Indians who are prepared to sacrifice their lives for your sake. Is that not sheer injustice, particularly in these days of war? Instead of creating happier feelings in the public mind or in those who are serving for you in the field that differentiation, that breach of pledge, is something which cannot be tolerated to continue. It is time that Government should make up that proportion now and fulfil its pledge. What are the proportions which General Hartley has given us today? He says that in the Indian Army there is one Indian to 4.75 British among King's Commissioned officers; in the Royal Indian Navy one Indian to 2.4 British. Regarding warrant officers which were to replace Viceroy's commissioned officers in the Indian Army, I am not concerned. There was a time when the Indian Government had decided to abolish the Viceroy's commissions which step I regarded as a blunder and in this House I advocated that such commissions

should be revived for those people who had been serving you loyally for practically a century and had done well and had been a proper link between the soldiers and the officers. I am very glad to learn that the Government realized this mistake and revived the Viceroy's commission, but I can tell you that in those Viceroy's commissioned officers you find men who have done well, but now some of them are being put under command of planters who have been given ranks of Majors and Colonels in spite of incompetency in staff duties and want of knowledge of Army Manuals. For Military discipline practically they are killing their conscience in following orders of such commanders.

The salaries and allowances of the British King's commissioned officers are different from those of the Indian commissioned officers and racial discrimination still exists in the Navy, in the Air Force and in the land forces. Why is that so, Sir? When Indians can do quite as well as the British officers, why should there be increased recruitment of British officers? I do not want to dwell long on this subject because most of the ground I wanted to cover has already been covered by my colleagues. But I want to make an appeal to the Government because I am a firm believer that India's destiny lies with the nations which stand for democratic progress. I would ask the Government, as one of the well-wishers of the country, to give up their present attitude and face the realities of the situation in India today. If the Government does not change its policy and give up repression, it will bring about a state of affairs which I shudder to contemplate. May I end with an appeal to the President of the United States and to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek to put an end to the present disorders in India by their intervention? I hope that the Government will now find its way to put the matter right soon.

Before I sit down, I must say that the people suspect that the visit of Mr Wendell Willkie to India is not taking place at the instance of the British Government. People are at a loss to know why his visit to India has not been included in his programme. There are misgivings in the minds of the people, and I would like Government to make it clear whether it was at their instance that Mr Wendell Willkie has not included his visit to India. If he had come here, he would have been most welcome and helpful in removing the deadlock and in maintaining and restoring peace in this country.

MR R. R. HADDOW

I confess to considerable concern at the "Quit India" demand expressed by the Fuehrer of the Congress Party. It is true that the Congress have for the present fallen from grace, but I have no doubt that they will rise again and create further mischief with the financial backing of certain Indian business magnates. Let it be clearly understood that we do not wish to leave India and we ask for no special treatment or concessions not granted to the citizens of the country. We hope to continue to assist the country to further advancement in all respects.

The European community during Sir Stafford Cripps's visit assured him of its readiness to assist in every way possible in the hope that if a permanent settlement was not possible, at least a temporary settlement would be attained although they realized that to introduce drastic reforms and turn out of office during a life and death struggle tried and experienced legislators, not on account of inefficiency, but for political reasons, was not furthering India's ultimate claim for freedom. To change horses in midstream is always a hazardous operation and should never be attempted except when, if successful, the result justifies the risk. Only if a truly National Government is the result would the risk be warranted. But with one

allegedly representative party showing no desire to join with others in presenting a united front against the common enemy and the other major party standing aloof, it is impossible to form a truly National Government. This being the case then, I can see no possible advantage in any change at the present juncture. That does not mean that when peace once again prevails Indians will not have the right to carve out their country's destiny. In the interim I would beseech all Indians of whatever religion, caste or creed to forget their differences and prejudices and to exert every effort to the gaining of an early and complete victory over our common foe—Nazism or life-long servitude.

HAJI SYED MUHAMMAD HUSAIN

The debate on this motion in the other House as well as in this has been, in my estimation, a very pathetic drama. At the present juncture, when India is passing through a most critical time, what good has it done to the Government or the people? One group standing up and supporting the Government measures and another group standing up and condemning the Government in the strongest possible language they could find! I personally put the whole responsibility for the futility of this debate upon the Indian Members of the Viceroy's Council. These are the gentlemen who are being proclaimed from the house-tops by the British Government in every corner of the world as members of a Government which is Indian. Have they discharged their duty to India in this debate? Is it sufficient for them to support the measures of repression for counteracting the present subversive movement? If they did that, I think they certainly discharged only one of their duties, but that duty was only to the Government. Have they come out with any constructive proposal? Have they done anything to remove the present deadlock, and to ease the Indian situation, or have they merely joined hands with the Government in repression? I should have expected something better from the Indian Members at least. They are men of integrity and experience. They are of all types—feather weight, light weight, middle weight and heavy weight. When I first learnt of the session of the Central Legislature, and when I further learnt that this particular item was to be on the programme, I thought that in co-operation with such of the members of the Central Legislature who are willing to co-operate, the Indian Members of the Executive Council would evolve a formula which, if it would not entirely remove the deadlock, would at least ease the situation. The last suggestion that I heard was from the Honourable the Law Member who said in the other House that it was for the Members of the Central Legislature now to come together and tell them something. If the Indian Members of the Executive Council want to keep the reputation of their being Indian, and to enjoy the position that is being given to them in other countries of being members of a Government which is predominantly Indian and with which India is satisfied, even now, at the eleventh hour, they can very well take into confidence those members of the Central Legislature whom they think they can consult, and try to evolve some proposition which would ease the present political situation. The situation should not be underestimated. It is a very serious situation. The hour of test has not yet come, but it is approaching very fast. It is true that this movement, which everybody has condemned on account of its method and which certainly deserves condemnation, is causing injury even to the cause of the Congress, the people of India, the Government and the war effort, which is so necessary to the country. But I hope the Government realize the present atmosphere in the country. A formula ought not to be applied under-

all conditions, in all atmospheres and in all seasons. In this country, since the last 30 years there have been public popular movements against the British Government. The fight for freedom which was confined some time ago to within the four walls of a certain room or to drawing room politicians came into public and popular movements started a few years ago. This movement openly created an atmosphere in the country which was wholly anti-Government or anti-British; they were repeated time after time. Nothing was done to counteract those agitations and establish goodwill among the people of India by the British. Why? Because they did not bother their heads to create goodwill among the Indian people and wanted to rule so long as they could. The result is that in India today—I hope I am not very wrong—there is not one single Indian, whether he is a Government servant, a man in the street or whether he is a member of any institution of the Government, even of the Executive Council who is enamoured of the present administration. It is only natural. No Indian today, having realized what slavery has been and what freedom means, can possibly be a supporter of the system of Government which exists today. Among the masses there is very great anti-British feeling. If officials want to know the mass mentality—which they never care to know and I am quite certain that they do not know correctly—let me tell them. Now I am going to tell them how best to act in a manner which would be beneficial to everybody. The mass mentality is anything but pro-British—not because of the present movement which is only accelerating and accentuating the thing which already existed. The methods which are employed in suppressing the movement are helping a good deal in that direction. It is true that everybody has supported and I am also supporting the measures taken to stop the subversive movement. No Government worth the name could sit quiet at what is happening. A challenge was thrown out to the Government. What could the Government do? Either they had to accept the demand and surrender or to accept the challenge. The Government did what any other Government would have done. At the moment there was no chance of any settlement. I am prepared to say that the Congress took a decision which was not likely to succeed and was likely to create confusion and chaos in the country. The Congress did not seek the co-operation of any party in this country which was so essential for a popular mass movement. The Congress went ahead on its own responsibility. The Congress took the decision to create a situation in India which would affect every Indian solely and entirely on its own responsibility treating itself as the representative of all the people of India. Now, when no party was consulted, no effort was made to come to a settlement on the future activity of the Congress with any party in this country, how can the Congress or anybody blame that people are not supporting the Congress? Voices have risen from every quarter when the final decision was taken and even before that the step they intended to take was wrong. They paid no attention and they took a plunge. The Government also decided that activities which were not only illegal but which would destroy not only the administrative machinery but the whole daily life of the people in this country ought to be stopped. No one has got up to condemn that decision. There was no necessity for support for that to have come from Indian members in this debate. What we expected was something more than that. Unfortunately there is no suggestion in any speech made in the Assembly or in the opening speech of the Honourable the Leader of our House as to how best we can act now; but I hope I will find something in the closing speech of the Honourable Leader of the House and in the speech of other Indian members who are likely to speak tomorrow to indicate what steps should at once be taken to ease the present situa-

tion. It is very difficult to find a solution even for the most experienced politician. So far as the major parties are concerned, they have taken a firm stand from the very beginning that they will not budge an inch. Well, what is to be done? That is the question, and something must be done as quickly as possible. Now in the country, whether your repressive measures are justified or not, they are creating an atmosphere which would be exceedingly dangerous at the hour of test, namely, when an attack is launched on India. We have had experience of Malaya and Burma. There is a shout that in India forces of Fifth Columnists are working. I do not believe it. If you merely extend and elaborate the definition of a Fifth Columnist a little more the mentality of an Indian today is such that every one can be called a Fifth Columnist. The action of the Government, even if justified, is making even their friends enemies. Now, what would be the result of that? You may be able to stop mob violences, demonstrations; you may be able to shoot down people like dogs who bark at you, but what is the ultimate result? You are creating a deep-rooted spite and anger in the minds of those people whose association and co-operation you would require in the nearest possible future. No thinking Indian, sensible Indian, I am sure, wants to have a change of masters. No Indian wants to encourage Japanese or any Axis Power to come to this country as slavery of Indian people, which has now reached almost to the stage of X or Y, will begin again from A and B. They do not want the change of masters but what they want is freedom, and it is wrong to say that Indians are in any way encouraging Japanese. What is happening is a thing which happens in the ordinary every-day life, namely, sometimes a person loses his sound sense of judgment on account of spite, anger and desperation. Is it not true that, however justifiable the repression may be, the use of it and such use of it as is being made will ultimately drive the Indians so desperate that their feeling of anger and spite might very well overpower their sound judgment? There is a story which a friend of mine related to me yesterday that God became pleased with a person. He said, "Look here, you will get whatever you want. Ask what you want." Now this man had an enemy in his neighbour. He said, "Please God, tell me what my neighbour will get." Then God told him, "Your neighbour will get double of what will be given to you." The man said, "All right, take out one of my eyes," simply because that his neighbour should lose his both! Now that is the feeling of spite and anger which sometimes works in the mind of a person. It is not a question of Fifth Columnists or encouraging Japanese. It is merely the question of what the present condition of the people's mentality is and under what atmosphere we are working. Now that again, as I said, is a criticism and that alone will not do. We must find some constructive thing to remove the distrust. My idea had always been and is that the methods that the Government is employing, namely, the brutal force, might ultimately prove to be very dangerous. What they could do at the present time was to have mutual trust and confidence with the people who are prepared to co-operate, but should not be like this: "What will you bring me when you come to my house and what will you give me if I go to your house?" It must be a question of give and take. Government must necessarily be prepared to part with power and must trust Indians; create goodwill. India is a sub-continent. The people of India when they will be ready to work shoulder to shoulder with the British people I am quite certain could provide an Army which will absolutely wipe off Continents. India is a huge thing. It has enormous martial races who have proved their merits on not one but many battlefields. Secure it, try and get the co-operation and goodwill of those people, and then winning of the war is certain, and without this,

if the Government wants to win the war by terrorizing people, by threatening people, by bluffing people, I am afraid that will not do now.

My definite proposal is—and I would like to hear some reference to this when the Indian Members of Council deliver their speeches tomorrow—that they should at once, without losing a moment, call and sit in conference with important members of the Central Legislature and, with their help, should try and reach some conclusion which, even if it does not entirely satisfy all parties, at least would ease the situation, and they should submit their proposals or recommendations to his Excellency the Viceroy and ask him to act upon them.

SAIYED MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR

These disturbances have no popular sanction and as such they are bound to be a passing phase. May be that they are a little more persistent than ordinarily, but they have no deep roots in the country. But there are some things which Government will have to consider. It is not merely this movement which is disturbing the country, and which has to be taken notice of and remedied. There is a general feeling existing in this country of discontent and disaffection. Somehow or other, it seems to have come to stay in the minds of the people in this country. Something has got to be done to try and allay doubts and misgivings which exist in the minds of the people of this country about the *bona fides* of the British Government, about the promises they have made and about their solicitude for the various sections of the people. They have to try and see that matters are adjusted in this respect and that a better atmosphere comes to prevail in this country. I do not want to enter here into the various reasons which have given rise to this kind of mistrust. Everybody knows what those reasons are. I will simply concern myself with those very simple and obvious reasons which have gone to aggravate feelings in this respect. It is the duty of every Government to see that the bare necessaries of life are made available to the people. After all, the man in the village, the man in the street, the ordinary man, is more concerned about his food and other necessaries of life for himself and his family than other things after which he is said to be hankering. It is very disappointing to find that the measures taken by the Government have simply proved perfectly ineffective. Unless the man gets what he wants, he is bound to be discontented. The Government should try and see that there is improvement in this respect, and this the Government should do without any delay.

I would also join my honourable friends who have voiced their complaints against the invidious distinction which is made between an Indian and a European in the ranks of the Army. It is impossible to see how the military authorities, in an hour of trial, when all the forces of law and order should be mobilized, when all patriotism and loyalty that they can secure should be got for strengthening their hands to resist the enemy, could still have that obsession that there is a superior race and an inferior race. This is very dangerous. I would make an appeal to my Congress friends to try and see things in their proper perspective, to realize this that after all we are living in a world of realities, stern facts and ugly realities, where we are not simply to be carried away by ideologies.

SIR JOGENDRA SINGH

I have listened to the debate with deep concern and a feeling of frustration. It would be futile at this stage for me to dissect the carcass of deplorable events. No Government can rejoice in these fateful days if it is compelled to maintain law and order when all its energies should be directed in preparations to meet the perils which it may be at any moment called upon to face.

Nothing is lost; indeed everything would be gained if we face the realities, sink all party and communal differences and enter upon our heritage. We can then ask His Majesty's Government to close this sorry chapter of misunderstandings, negotiations and declarations by a definite Act, and endow India with Purna Swaraj. By giving at once, England can secure India as a willing partner in her struggle for survivorship. Would to God a wave of wisdom swept away cobwebs of distrust and disbelief on both sides and between the communities in the realization, in the words of Sadi, "That we are limbs of one another." Even Mr Jinnah may see that he cannot create a holy land unless he sees, in those amidst whom he lives, the face of a brother. May I take this opportunity of mentioning that Mr Jinnah was wrong. Muslim representation in the Army stands at 32 per cent. and the others provide the remaining 68 per cent.

Let Gandhiji worship at the shrine of non-violence and Jinnah sharpen his knife to carve out a Pakistan but let the Central Legislature do the one thing that is needful and act as the representative of millions who desire peace, a better living, whose hearts throb in unison in thousands of villages, who are aware that all religions teach concord is a blessing and discord a curse, who in spite of preachings which have been racing in full blast, have lived for centuries, and live now, as good neighbours.

Let us forget that there are such organizations as the Congress and the League. Let us no more waste our stock of emotions in vain pursuit of theories which have no relation to facts. Let the representatives of the Princes and the people come together and resolve the deadlock. Let them present a united demand for fulfilment of the promise, which was reaffirmed by the Prime Minister only the other day. My lips can utter no word of indifference regarding the aspiration of all the people of India. Let us work for the realization of these aspirations.

My friend, the Honourable Mr Sapru, and other speakers have spoken of the eleven contemptibles who have joined the Government.

Mr P. N. Sapru: I never used the word "contemptible."

Sir Jogendra Singh: My friend the Honourable Mr Sapru seems familiar with the writings of John Morley. He must have noted the controversy over the appointment of a single Indian to the Viceroy's Executive Council. Lord Linlithgow can in any case claim that he has secured an Indian majority in his Executive Council, while the great Positivist thinker and liberal statesman could not reconcile himself to the appointment of a single Indian.

I can assure the Honourable Mr Sapru that we hold these positions in trust. I have not studied the Act or the rules of business, but I can affirm without any fear of contradiction that we exercise all the powers which the Members of the Executive Council have exercised. Further, it is not our purpose to make Bibles of the fading script of rules, which may not suit the new complexion of expanded Council. It shall be our endeavour, of all my colleagues who think alike, to transform the Executive Council into a Cabinet, if you also play your part, and endow us with power, but if you leave us in splendid isolation then you rob us largely of our power to carry out your wishes. I feel like asking, in the words of Ghalib, "What kind of friends are these who have turned into advisers and critics, they who ought to have been busy in translating their sympathy into action."

I can assure you I have not come in this last stage of journey on this earth to waste my days, but to serve my King and my Country, to advocate to the best of my power the views of those whom I represent, to stand for the integrity of India, to utilize every opportunity to secure what the heart of India desires, and to make a larger happiness more universally possible.

May I say with all humility that the mantle of a minister cannot cloud the spirit of a man who no more wishes to please men but to please God.

PANDIT HIRDAY NATH KUNZRU

Before I deal with controversial matters, I think I must pay my tribute of admiration to my Honourable friend Sir Jogendra Singh for what he has said and for the tone in which he has said it. His speech showed that he regarded himself as a representative of the people and was in the Council not for administrative purposes but to voice the aspirations of those whom he morally represents. I wish that my honourable friend the Leader of the House had shown a similar realization of his responsibility when he spoke on the present situation yesterday. I cannot congratulate him on the speech which he delivered which, if he will pardon me for saying so, was only a poor summary of Sir Reginald Maxwell's speech in another place. I can understand the preoccupation of the Members of the Executive Council with the seriousness of the present situation. I can understand their anxiety to put down lawlessness and to restore peace and order throughout the country. There is no one on these Benches who is in sympathy with the acts of violence that are being perpetrated today or who can ask Government to let those, who are engaged in carrying out the destructive policy which Government are opposing, go on with their campaign unhindered. All those who desire the progress of their country would wish that there were peace in the country, and that we could unitedly face the common foe of civilization and humanity. But, while I recognize the primary duty of the Government to put down disorder I also ask them to realize the causes that are at work today and to understand why the unrest that has been in existence in this country for years and years has manifested itself in the form which we all deplore. My Honourable friend Sir Mahomed Usman, when asked yesterday whether Government considered it their duty to inquire into excesses that might have been committed by their own police and military and whether the Executive Council was considering measures to bring about reconciliation between the people and the country, replied that Government had no reason to suppose that their agents had been guilty of any excesses and threw the primary responsibility for suggesting changes in the constitution of India on the Governor-General and His Majesty's Government. He would not even admit that the Government of India had any concern with the matter or that they could on their own initiative take up and consider questions of constitutional policy and tender that advice to His Majesty's Government which they thought to be best in the interests of this country and England.

Let me first deal, Sir, with the manner in which the disturbances are being suppressed, at least in some places. My Honourable friend the Leader of the House was able to give us fairly full information regarding the lawless acts committed by those who have been guilty of cutting wires or removing rails or burning post offices and police stations. We have not the same means as he has for making inquiries into the manner in which the authorities are putting down acts of lawlessness. In the present disturbed state of the country the provincial authorities will scarcely allow any person to proceed to those districts where the police and the military have been stationed. But my Honourable friend, Mr Sri Narain Mahtha, who was fortunately able to tour his district, gave us yesterday an exceedingly disquieting picture of the state of things that prevail there. The account that he gave us of the lawlessness committed by the guardians of law and order was moving in the extreme and showed that Government had on their part been guilty of no less violence than the people at least

in certain places. I should like to give one or two instances relating to the United Provinces which seem to me to be based on accurate information. The first instance I shall refer to relates to Allahabad. I have made some inquiries on the subject and I understand that a man was caught hold of by an Indian soldier or the special military police because he was wearing a Gandhi cap. He was asked to take it off which he naturally refused to do. His part was taken by a passer-by. Two or three soldiers came and beat the man who was wearing the Gandhi cap. He turned round on his assailants and attacked them and then finally, shaking off the person who was holding his shirt, he tried to run away. He and his supporters who also ran away were at once fired on by one of the soldiers or military police. He was not hit but a passer-by who was hit died immediately. Another instance of the same kind, I understand, occurred in Allahabad, quite near the place where the first incident occurred, but I have not been able to inquire into it. The next incident, Sir, that I shall invite the attention of the House to relates to one of the eastern districts of the United Provinces, Ghazipur. One of the inhabitants of the village which I am going to refer to, who is a substantial zemindar, paying between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 4,000 annually as land revenue, has made representations both to the local and the Central Governments regarding the excesses committed by the military in his village. The village concerned is Manjha and the story which the zemindar refers to in his representations runs as follows: On the 24th August, four European soldiers—I think he meant four European officers—accompanied by about 100 or 150 Indian soldiers visited the village of Manjha in tehsil Saidpur, ordered all the males in the village to come out of their houses and stand on one side of the road. They then entered the houses, forced the women to surrender all the ornaments they had on their persons, took hold of all the cash, jewellery and other valuables they could lay their hands on and then set fire to a number of houses. Afterwards they returned to the place where the male members of the village including children were standing. The children were asked to go away, but all the males were whipped, each of them by two men, one standing on either side of the victim. One of the houses that were looted was that of this zemindar who has complained to Government. He is one of the men who helped Government to put down the non-co-operation movement in 1921. He has helped them to a small extent in recruiting soldiers in the present war. He has contributed to the war fund and has been made an Honorary Magistrate. Yet he was not spared. Sir, if this is the treatment that can be meted out to a loyal supporter of the Government, one naturally shudders to think what happened to those people who were not in that position. I should not like to suggest that things of this kind have happened in every village. But I must state that so many complaints have reached me from the eastern districts of the United Provinces that I feel, and feel strongly, that the Government ought to institute an impartial inquiry into the manner in which lawlessness has been suppressed in these districts. I have received complaints from other parts of India also, for instance from Gujerat, but I do not want to go into any further details on the subject. It has been no pleasure to me to recite even the instances which I have placed before the Council, but I was compelled to do so by the refusal of my Honourable friend the Leader of the House yesterday to admit that the police and the troops might in some places have been guilty of taking the law into their own hands and committing excesses.

I hope, Sir, that the instances that my Honourable friend Mr. Sri Narain Mahtha and I have placed before the Council will convince the Leader of the House that at least something has been done by the Government which they should not approve of and that if they are

jealous of their reputation they must institute an inquiry into these matters. In asking them to do so, I am only proceeding on precedents set by the Government themselves. After the disturbances in the Punjab in 1919 the Secretary of State instituted an inquiry into the conditions governing the exercise of the powers conferred on the Punjab authorities under the Martial Law that was proclaimed there and I see no reason why when the present abnormal state of things is over Government should shrink from following the same procedure. Indeed, if they have any regard for their reputation it is their bounden duty to let those who have complaints to make place for them before an impartial authority, so that it may be known whether their grievances were justified or not.

Sir, I shall now, by your leave, deal with another point which arises out of the speech of my Honourable friend the Leader of the House. Speaking the day before yesterday he said that taking all things into consideration those responsible for the present disturbances seemed to be actuated by the definite object of inviting Japan to take India. I think the Honourable Member went a little too far in making that statement. I am not a member of the Congress, nor do I agree with its present policy. But I cannot for a moment agree that the object of the Congress was to invite Japan to India. It wanted certainly to embarrass the Government; but I am sure that it has not the slightest desire to invite Japan to this country.

Sir, Government, instead of dealing only with the present situation and thinking that they have no background and that there will be no aftermath which they need trouble themselves about ought seriously to think of the measures by which reconciliation can be brought about between them and the people. It is futile for them to think that the dissatisfaction which has manifested itself in the country has been engineered by the Congress. Considering the fact that the adherents of the Congress got no time to prepare the people for carrying out their programme, did not get time even to inform the people fully of their programme, it is absurd to say that the movement is wholly engineered. I think, Sir, considering the situation impartially one cannot doubt that the upheaval that has taken place reflects the feelings of the people towards the British Government. The despair and exasperation to which the policy of the British Government have driven all people, whether Hindus or Muslims, has unfortunately resulted in acts of lawlessness on the part of the people, but my Honourable friends opposite should on an occasion like this bear in mind Lord Morley's words that when people rebel it is not their fault but their misfortune. A friend of mine, Sir, convened a meeting at Allahabad to ask the people to co-operate with the Government in their war effort. This meeting was convened under the auspices of the Communist Party. My friend in the course of his speech attacked the Japanese for the atrocities of which they have been guilty in China. A man in the audience excitedly got up and said, "You might have said that some time ago but please do not say that now." A day earlier, or the same day, a procession of students had been fired on by the police and one of them had died. The students I understand had not been guilty of any violence and when the news of the firing on the students spread through the city it touched the hearts even of those who deplored the present movement. This little incident should suffice to show to Government which way the wind is blowing and instead of burying their heads like ostriches in the sand they ought to look facts in the face, realize their responsibilities and think of their duty towards the people whose trustees they profess to be instead of always thinking of their prestige and power.

Sir, it is a tragedy that Government have failed to recognize their responsibility for the present state of things and it is not until they realize their own faults, realize their own tardiness in satisfying the

legitimate demands of the people for freedom that they will be able to strengthen their position or bring about friendly relations between India and England. My honourable friends opposite will challenge this statement and ask whether since the war broke out Government have not taken two steps in order to make the Executive Council more representative of popular opinion than it was before. The Government Resolution issued on the 8th August claims that the Executive Council as constituted at present is stronger and more representative than it ever was before. Sir, considering the situation objectively there is nothing to show that the Executive Council today is stronger than its predecessors and if it is not stronger and does not therefore reflect public opinion as forcibly as it ought to I cannot regard it as more representative. But, apart from this, Sir, let us consider the manner in which the expansion of the Executive Council has been brought about. I do not want to go into the details concerning this expansion because we have dealt with them repeatedly in this House. I shall, therefore, content myself with saying that in spite of the expansion that has taken place in two stages a majority of the most important portfolios still remain in British hands. When the last expansion of the Council took place the portfolio of Communications was divided into two, those of War Transport and of Civil Aviation and Posts and Telegraphs. The latter portfolio was given to an Indian and the former was given to a Britisher. The cry is for Indianization in every quarter of the country. All political groups are united in demanding it; yet the British Government who have expanded the Executive Council in order to convince us of their political sincerity appointed a Britisher to one of the most important portfolios. Can we wonder, Sir, if such actions on the part of His Majesty's Government have created profound distrust and resentment throughout India. The Government have said in extenuation or in defence of their present policy that while they were always prepared to consider suggestions relating to constitutional advance they could not carry on negotiations with the representatives of the Congress in face of the threat of rebellion which they had held out. The demands which were made by the Congress are in substance the demands which have been put forward by other parties. There may be differences between the Muslim League on the one side and the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress on the other, but I have yet to learn that the Muslim League, or its leader, is satisfied with the present state of things or wants that Government should remain in undisturbed enjoyment of their present power. I make bold to say that the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Liberal Federation and the Non-Party Conference are in effect united in demanding of the British Government that freedom which the Congress has asked for. What heed did the British Government pay to their demands before the Congress passed its threatening resolution? Had they tried in the least to be conciliatory, had they shown any earnest desire to part with power, had they placed the key portfolios in the hands of Indians, they might today have been entitled to say that they had all the parties in the country except the Congress behind them. But today they are in the unenviable position of having all thinking sections of the population of India ranged solidly against them. They may flatter themselves that owing to the internal differences that exist in the country they are discharging their duty in putting down the Congress agitators. I wonder, however, Sir, whether they can satisfy their conscience so easily if it ever pricks them. It is, Sir, the refusal of Government to consider the proposals put forward by the other parties that has produced that desperation in the country of which the present upheaval is a forcible manifestation. In order, Sir, to show that the demands of all parties were virtually the same as those of the Congress I shall read out part of the resolution passed by the last Non-Party Conference which

was held on the 21st and 22nd February, 1942, in this city. The Conference asked among other things for a declaration that India shall no longer be treated as a dependency to be ruled from White Hall, and that henceforth her constitutional position and powers should be identical with those of the other self-governing units of the British Commonwealth. What attention did the British Government pay to this resolution? They threw it into the waste paper basket. I honour, Sir, those Englishmen who, in the face of discouragement which they are receiving from the British authorities and some of their own countrymen in this country, are trying to make the authorities both in India and in England realize that their best interests lie in their satisfying the just demands of the Indian people. Government have tried to carry on propaganda in other countries that if only there was unity in the country they would be prepared to surrender power to the representatives of the people. This sentiment was given expression to even by my honourable friend Sir Jogendra Singh. I do not however, Sir, think that this propaganda is based on truth, for when Sir Stafford Cripps came here he made it plain that even if all the parties united in asking for the transfer of Defence it would not be transferred. My friend Mr Arthur Moore, in view of this and other facts, writing the other day to the Editor of the *Pioneer* said what was essential was that "Allied military opinion should learn that the problem of obtaining internal peace in India and enthusiastic support for the war against Japan could be solved by a British offer to transfer power (*Hear, hear*) which has hitherto been lacking." He then says that India should be in the same position as the Government of Australia and Canada, and states that "the British and American public would seem to be under the impression that conditional upon agreement between Indian parties, such an offer is in existence, whereas in India it is universally known that it is not so." It is clear, Sir, therefore, that not only Indians, but fair-minded Britishers admit that the Government, though carrying on propaganda assiduously against Indians in other countries, have never admitted that union among the people would result in the transfer of complete power to Indian hands.

And now, Sir, I venture to address a word to the authorities who have it today in their power to decide whether England and India shall be friends or enemies. The authorities seem to take the view, judging from the speech of my honourable friend Sir Sultan Ahmed in the other House, that Government can, at the present time, consider no measures of a constitutional character in order to bring about a settlement of the differences which unhappily divide the authorities and the people of this country. I am surprised that any Indian Member of the Government should have given expression to such a view. It was therefore, Sir, with a feeling of genuine relief that I heard my Honourable friend Sir Jogendra Singh say that he did not consider that he would be doing his duty if he did not try his best to work for the satisfaction of those aspirations which actuated the country from one end to the other. Let the British authorities remember how they have acted in similar situations in other countries. What I shall say in this connection will answer to the quesion which my Honourable friend Mr Hossain Imam put to me at the commencement of my speech. In the midst of the last Great War the Irish people despairing of obtaining their freedom from the British Government rebelled in 1916. The Liberal Government was on their side, but the strong minority of Ulster prevented them from doing anything. The situation in this respect was the same in Ireland as it is in India, and what was the result? The Irish people did not want to be under the domination of Germany. Yet in their exasperation they went so far as to ask for German help in order to obtain their freedom. They might have been mis-

guided. But nobody can charge them with deliberately working for the victory of the Germans and inviting them to rule over Ireland. This incident ought to enable Government to understand the reality of the situation that exists in this country. No Indian wants to be under Japanese rule. Government know this in their heart of hearts as well as any of us do. Yet they are carrying on propaganda in every quarter of the world against us and telling the world that Mahatma Gandhi is pro-Japanese. It is not, Sir, by such propaganda that England can strengthen its position in this country. It is only by taking account of its own history and by being guided by the wisdom which it showed in other parts of the world that it can succeed in uniting this great country with itself. Mr Churchill who delivered an arrogant and uncompromising speech recently in connection with India which instead of conciliating has irritated the people and added to the complication of the situation was one of those who took part in the negotiations which were carried on with the Irish by the British Government in 1920. When the war was over there was a second rebellion in Ireland. The British Government did not persist in attempts to suppress it by taking purely military action and Mr Lloyd George had the wisdom and the greatness to recognize that the aspirations of the brave Irish people for the freedom of their country must be satisfied. He therefore asked for a truce between Ireland and England, invited those very people to his conference whose hands were dripping with the blood of the loyalists and in this conference such noted Conservative leaders as Lord Birkenhead and Mr Churchill took part. I wish that Mr Churchill would show even a small part of the wisdom that he showed in helping the Government to arrive at a settlement with the Irish in 1920. In any case he should realize that the conflagration which has spread to the whole country, though it may be put out temporarily, cannot be extinguised for ever. The history of the world tells us that people in despair have followed such methods everywhere. Even in this country the example of Bengal shows that pure repression cannot achieve any permanent results. The British Government have been trying to put down terrorists for over 30 years and although the people at large did not have much sympathy with the terrorists, yet it is a fact that the authorities have succeeded in suppressing terrorism only to the extent to which they have widened the bounds of Indian freedom. This small example ought further to convince the Government of the policy which they ought to follow in their own interests and in the interests of the country. A great deal of harm has been done to Indo-British relations by the unwisdom and short-sightedness of the British authorities. If they are wise they should still reconsider the position and grant the demands put forward by the people. We have argued a great deal theoretically about the removal of the Viceroy's power of veto, but Government if they desire to do great things can in accordance even with the spirit of the Government of India Act, 1935, take steps which will enable us to have a Government which in many important matters will be free from the veto of the Viceroy. This can be understood by consulting Section 12 of the Government of India Act, which enumerates the special responsibilities of the Governor-General. Some of these responsibilities the Governor-General cannot be asked to part with in the present circumstances; for instance, his responsibilities in connection with the protection of the minorities or the maintenance of the safety and tranquillity of the country or the defence of the just interests of Indian States. But there are equally other cases in which he can refrain from exercising his special powers. These cases fall broadly under two heads, financial and economic and commercial. The British Government have declared through Sir Stafford Cripps that in connection with the future Government of

India they will not ask for any guarantees for British commerce in this country. The authorities can, therefore, easily put an end by convention to the veto of the Governor-General in regard to financial, economic and commercial affairs. They can also transfer "Defence" to us, although we shall not be able to control Defence—which we want to have under our power in order to be able to train our people to defend their country—as fully as the questions which I have just referred to. These are the two ways in which I think that the British Government can still act in such a way as to win the confidence of the people, but if they wish to talk only about the future without parting with an iota of power at the present time I cannot hold out to them any hope that they will be able to establish peace in this country. They may be able to suppress lawlessness by force for a while, but the relations between Indians and the Britishers will deteriorate to such an extent that India will be a thousand times worse than Ireland. (Applause.)

MR HOSSAIN IMAM

In these days of inter-dependence and corporate existence and of total war, it is strange and depressing that in India the three forces that count are each pulling its own way and not heeding about the other. I refer, Sir, to the peoples of India, the Army in India and the British Government of India. These three forces when they are facing and fighting with the Nazi menace of regimentation of life yet think in terms of individuality. The Commander-in-Chief of India, the best General that the British Empire has got, comes out with a dictum that he can win the war without the help of the peoples and of the politicians, through the mercenary army that he has got. Did not he have an army in the Dutch East Indies? Was not there a big force in Malaya, and what has happened to the divisions in Burma? Have you not yet seen how American possessions in the Philippines conducted the fight in spite of lack of help, because the people of that country had liberty and they were willing to support the army and the Government? Will not this live for ever as a monument to American justice? Will not the Dutch East Indies ever remain a shameful reminder of the methods of the Government of Holland? (*Applause.*) *Yet even now you believe that by repression and by iron heel methods you will be able to keep India in subjugation and defend it from the menace that is coming to it.* Have you realized how great is the danger which India faces? On the east we have got the dragon of the Rising Sun entering our outer area steps and knocking right at our door. It has already broken some of the staples, the Andamans have fallen. On the west the Nazi cohorts are looming large. They have nearly crossed the Caucasus. No doubt, overhead there is the British lion roaring and there is no dearth of Quislings in India to support you, but remember Burma. Your own men, men who have lived their lives here, like Arthur Moore and others, are pointing out to you the danger of carrying on a government without the goodwill of the people and yet you are not waking up.

Sir, in England, the British are in the perpetual habit of disregarding those who are their real friends. There is no love lost between any Indian and Mr Churchill. He is a Die-hard, but I must give him his due, that he was the only first class politician who realized the Nazi danger; but what was the result? He was regarded as a war-monger, and kept out of successive British Governments; but when the rainy day came Britishers then realized that Churchill was the only man who could save them. Why did you not realise it before? Because you were complacent. In the same manner you do not realize today that it is only we the representatives of political parties who can extricate you out of this morass. *No amount of Indianization, no number of Indian Members, no transfer of port-*

follies, will ever see you through unless you get the support of the recognized parties of India. (Applause.) Indianization is a failure if it is not accompanied by this first and over-riding consideration that the members must be responsible to somebody outside the Cabinet. They must not look to the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for support. They must be able to force them. It is only by forcing them that you can win the victory. I am hopeless of this Government; I have seen enough of it.

Sir, facing as we do the difficult times I am going to tell you frankly, fearlessly and clearly the truth, however unpalatable it might seem. It might shock my colleagues in this House, but I am going to tell you exactly the truth and nothing but the truth and it is for you, the powers that be, to decide whether you wish to exist at all, because it is now a question of existence, nothing less. The whole British Empire and India stand in jeopardy. If you are complacent and think you can ride roughshod with Indians you can; but with the enemy you cannot.

Sir, India has got an eternal triangle: the Muslim League, the Hindu Congress and the British Government. I welcome, Sir, the change that has come about in the thinking population of India. In spite of the behaviour of certain parties, I find that thinking men, at least in this House, are now realizing the truth and are seeking elucidations, and much of the hostility to Muslim League has disappeared, and there is a genuine desire to understand. Especially, Sir, my very great friend Mr Sapru has now become a convert to the policy which I initiated in 1941, that Indianization unaccompanied by transfer of power to political parties is useless. He now realizes the truth and even the Honourable Pandit Kunzru has given an inkling that he is also coming round to my view. Sir, I would like to explain that Mussalmans are the most reasonable people. I do not ask you to believe merely because I say it, but I will prove that according to every canon of democracy and fair play we have done the utmost that any man could do. We have asked not for 16 annas in the rupee, although we could have easily asked for this as the British Government took over India from the Muslim hands. We could have asked that the Government be handed over to the people whom the British dispossessed, but we have not done that.

May I say, as I started by saying, that the Muslim League would have been with the Congress in the jails if the Congress had not treated us like this and had come to terms with us. Similarly, I must warn the British people that there is a limit to patience. You have exasperated the Congress and you are fast exasperating the Muslim League, too. For three years you have been dangling with the Congress. You had the excuse that it was not prepared to support you in the war effort. We have been offering our support. What do we ask in exchange? Acceptance of the democratic principle of self-determination. You are not prepared to grant that and yet you think that the Muslims will support you or even remain neutral. *In sullen despair one's actions are not guided by the head. If the British Government has any regard for its future and has not forgotten the lessons of Burma, it should awaken and concede our demands, because without that concession—I say immediate concession—you will rue the day.* If you are guided by the advice of your own nominees whom you have selected out of the 400 millions of Indians and you think that they can deliver the goods to you, you are welcome to the delusion; but that delusion will not last long. Some of my European friends have given the advice that no transference of power should take place in midstream. Was England not in midstream when the Low Countries were attacked and did not they change the team then? Was not England in great danger a month

before Dunkirk when you changed the team? To say that you cannot change it now here is but petty excuse, untenable position, and self-aggrandisement. I say, Sir, with full responsibility that you are listening to gentlemen who had a glorious past and you have given then a good present; but they have no future. Whether the British win or the British lose, the present Indian Cabinet has no future. We had new election in 1937. None of these gentlemen after the interim Ministry could find a place in the governance of India. Similarly, when the day comes and you are victorious and the British people are honest and truthful in their promise of handing over power, if that happens, even then these gentlemen will have no place. We know them; they are amiable gentlemen, but they are not in the good books of the political parties. As to the permanent civilians, Indian officers as well as British officers, are actuated solely by the desire of bettering their position, because they know that the time is short. They believe in the promise of Churchill and Cripps that as soon as hostilities cease power will be handed over. Where will they be? They will be nowhere. *It is wrong to expect the honourable members to commit hara-kiri and recommend to the British Government to hand over power to the representatives of the peoples.* They may be willing to do so if circumstances force them to do so, but they will not be human beings if they do not try, the British as well as the Indians, to hold on to their position as long as they can. Now, Mr Churchill's statement is a glorious statement! It at the same time disposes of and treats with one tar-brush all those who co-operate or who do not co-operate but happen to be unfortunately Indians. We, Muslims, have been given the great right of self-expression. What enormous concession! What magnanimity! What generosity! No share in the Government. No mention of the League in spite of the fact that the League has kept the Mussalmans out of this affair. If the Mussalmans had joined the Hindu friends now or do so at any future time, you will not have a day's rest.

I for one, Sir, not only recognize but I believe in the right, the inherent right, of a slave nation to revolt. It is our misfortune that we are kept in slavery. The primary responsibility for revolt is on those who keep us down and do not give us a share in the Government. I for one have no share in the Government and therefore I do not feel called upon to adjudicate how far the responsibility is that of the Congress or of the others for the present subversive movement. But, Sir, when I said that it is the inherent right of a slave nation to revolt, like every human right it carries with it its liabilities. *The liability of revolt is that it must be for the well-being and freedom of all parts and peoples of the country, and not for the exercise of semi-imperialism by the majority over the minorities. It should not be used to keep down a people against its wish under subjection to anyone—it does not matter whether the imperialist is of the same country or of another country.* Ireland could revolt, as I said, and it has been praised for its revolt. The British Government have accepted their demand and given then freedom. If the Congress had come to terms with us and accepted our right of self-determination, I would have regarded that at least in this respect their right to revolt is justified. The Congress from the very beginning has been unwilling to share power with others. It can only come to terms with the British provided the whole thing is handed over to them alone. When I say this I can quote chapter and verse for it. The Congress assured the British Government of certain fundamental things: that the provisional Government will carry on the war and that they won't come to terms with Axis Powers. These assurances have been given without asking, consulting or even knowing the will of the other parties in India.

I was saying, Sir, that the Congress is not willing to have half powers and you are not willing to give full power. Yet you use that argument to deny power to others, and in the same breath you say that the Congress does not represent a majority of Indians. Was it not just that Mr Churchill should have announced simultaneously that he is calling the representatives of the other parties—the Muslim League, the Mahasabha and others—to come and join the Cabinet? That would have been the right thing and I may tell you that if we are placed in power we will be able to wean the Congressmen from their misguided actions, because we know them better than the other Indians who do not belong to political parties do. We may have our differences, but we honour each other and we have greater regard in spite of our differences than the Members of the Viceroy's Cabinet can have for us or the Congress and we are better able to be and we will be more conciliatory than the present executive can be. I say, Sir, that the British Government must be willing to hand over power to representatives of parties. Without that they may carry on the Government, but, the prospects of victory will be gloomy, if nothing more.

Many of my colleagues have stated the fact, which I for one do not combat, that there is exasperation in India, that people of India are dissatisfied with the present Government. Was it wise in this condition to start the civil disobedience movement? The Congress ought to have known the present position. Mr Aney, I am told, Sir, —and I speak subject to correction,—while he was in Madras sent a long telegram not on behalf of the Government but in his individual capacity (just as Sir Firoz Khan Noon spoke in his individual capacity at Aligarh) requesting the Congress to forgo from its action, to be wise, but it had no effect. And Mr Aney was once a dictator of the Congress—don't forget this. Was it wise of the Congress to start the movement knowing full well that it will embarrass the war effort, knowing full well that this is just the same scorched-earth policy which has been condemned by them but recourse to which would be taken by its own people, if not its own party men? Who is losing? Whose lives are lost? It is Indian lives which are lost; it is Indian property which has been burnt down. Was it wise or statesmanlike to start the movement at this juncture? I say, Sir, whoever might be responsible for this movement it was singularly ill-advised, ill-timed and ill-conceived.

But simultaneously with this I must say that the British Government of India has given proof, positive proof, of its incompetence to govern. In the 8th August statement of the Viceroy's Council they stated they had pre-knowledge that the Congress intended to attack communications. Sir Reginald Maxwell has stated in the other House and perhaps the Leader of the House also stated here that the Governors had warned the Central Government that something of this nature would happen. May I ask what precautions had been taken? Any Government worth the name would have taken precautions to make this kind of arson and looting impossible at least in cities. But is that the record of this almighty, representative and democratic Government of India at the present moment? In the present movement in the City of Delhi, in the Imperial City of Delhi, a Government building was burnt down, involving a loss of Rs. 8 to 10 lakhs, and the fire continued not for an hour, but for hours together, probably 18 hours, and big girders of 12 to 15 inches were distorted by intense heat. I would ask Honourable Members of the House to go and see the Clearing Accounts Office and see the competence of this Government in the Imperial City of Delhi. It can only clap in jail a few leaders, but could not take measures to prevent such things from happening,

even with all the armies stationed in Delhi. You say that you have got control of this movement when the Congress had not been able fully to organize its movement. Remember this, for that is the only justification for clapping them in jail. If you had given them time they would have perfected their system: and how will you save the situation if and when the Japanese come and fifth columnists are let loose? You may not have saved the telegraphs, but at least you could have saved the railway lines. You should have introduced a system of collective responsibility.

I am at the end of my speech. I will say this in conclusion *that to carry on the government is a comparatively easy task, but to face the enemy and defeat the enemy, as you have never done so far in the east, mark these words, it is a different task.* All the time you have been having glorious retreats and masterly withdrawals. The casualty list, which was published yesterday showing the number of Indian troops killed, missing and wounded in Burma being less than 5,000, shows how little you fought.

The President: Will the honourable member please finish his remarks now?

Mr Hossain Imam: I will not take more than two minutes, Sir.

I was saying that in order to carry this war through and to check the order of your eastern battles, that is to win victory, you must have the support of the people; and without that support you may rest assured that victory will never be won, it will ever elude your grasp.

SIR JWALA PRASAD SRIVASTAVA

Sir, I am one of the youngest Members of the Government. I am in fact a baby! (*Laughter*) But, Sir I might perhaps place the point of view of the Indian Members before the House.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: All the Indian Members?

Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I could not swear to it, but I should say of at least many of the Indian Members. Sir, I do not think we are as bad as we have been painted to be by some of our friends. I do not say this with pride, but I am making a bare statement of fact. Sir, we have endeavoured from the very beginning to do what little we can to resolve the deadlock. I hate the word "deadlock" but still it has got to be used sometimes. Sir, we have been working night and day to restore peace and harmony, and if we have not achieved more success surely the fault is not ours.

The information which I received here when I joined my present appointment was that preparations had been going on by the Congress to embark on a mass movement of great magnitude. I do not know whether any of the Honourable Members present here are cognizant of that fact. But I believe that these preparations had been in train for several months and it was openly hinted that the machinery of Government should be paralyzed. I would like the House to look at the position of Government from this background. We were faced with a life and death struggle; the enemy was standing at our doors and we were presented with the prospect of a mass movement of that character. As I have said, I only joined the Government a few days before the crisis took place, but I wish to assure the House that so far as the Government was concerned, they had a lot of information which gave them no alternative, no choice at all, if they were to save the country from a catastrophe of the first magnitude. It may be that the steps they took did not succeed as well as they thought they would. Still, what was the alternative before the Government when they had that kind of information? Sir, it cannot be said that the Government is composed entirely of men who have no love for the country. I do not claim myself as a great patriot although I have my own opinions of love for my country. But there are people in the Executive Council

who yield to none in their love for the country and if they all deliberately took a decision like that, the circumstances must have been grave. That is the only thing that I can say on that point. And, Sir, supposing the whole blame rests with the British Government, why did they take such a step? What was the reason? We know very well that they have been endeavouring very hard to win over the Congress. Why should they embark on a step which would cause all this trouble in the country unless they were driven to it? They were on the edge of a precipice and they had to do it. The steps that we took were never intended to be punitive. They were entirely preventive, and although I am not aware of the excessss that have been talked about, I hope my Honourable friend the Leader of the House will answer these charges. I wish to assure the House that we, Indian Members of the Executive Council, in fact the entire Executive Council, was fully agreed that no vindictive steps should be taken, that the minimum force only should be used and that distinguished leaders should be housed in conditions of comfort and even luxury. They are merely detained so that they might not actively support the Congress programme. We had thought that their detention would not be long. We had thought that very soon probably the country would learn better and that this danger would pass off. But things have turned out to be different and I hope the House realizes that we are not doing anything with a view to penalize leaders whom we all respect. I have never been a Congressman myself. In fact I have been a strong opponent of the Congress; but I have great respect personally for Mahatma Gandhi and many other leaders. They are India's greatest sons.

Now, Sir, I turn to some of the points raised by my friends the Honourable Mr Sapru and Mr Kunzru. The position of an Executive Councillor under the Act of 1919 is a little bit peculiar. The House is doubtless aware that so far as the Centre is concerned most of the provisions of the Act of 1919 still apply. Sir, if we had had Federation, then these transitory provisions would have gone. But, Sir, Rules are one thing, the Act is one thing, and yet practice and convention can be different. I wish to assure the House that we, Executive Councillors, today are being treated in the most liberal manner and we have never had an instance, if I am not giving away a secret in which the Governor-General has seen it fit to exercise his veto. I make that statement categorically. Of course I have been a Member for only six or seven weeks, but during this brief time I have never had an instance of interference and what is more we have been allowd to function as a composite Government. Sir, what the law cannot do can be done by practice and convention. As regard the controversy about the Executive Councillors not having done anything to resolve the deadlok or to initiate proposals, I think there is a little misunderstanding. According to the letter of the law no Executive Councillor or the Executive Council as such is allowed to initiate measures for constitutional changes. The reason is very simple. My friends who are eminent lawyers will know this better than I do. My Honourable friend over there says "No." Dr Kunzru too has been an eminent lawyer at one time. Now, we cannot in the very nature of things frame a constitution affecting ourselves. We are not allowed technically to initiate constitutional measures and I make bold to say that never so far has the Executive Council initiated any such measures. Before us there have been distinguished Indian Members of the Executive Council and excepting in one instance—and that related to the Muddiman proposals, because that was a more or less local matter; they appointed a committee to examine the working of the Montagu Reforms—except in that one instance, never have any constitutional proposals been initiated by the Executive Council. Whether this is the right position or not I do not know, but the Act makes it clear.

When I have said that I do not mean that the Executive Councillors cannot use their influence and adopt other methods for the resolution of the deadlock. Sir, my friends over there know that we cannot give out secrets of the Executive Council. Our mouth is closed and I do not wish to say definitely what we have been doing or not doing. But, Sir, I wish to assure the House that we are not oblivious of our responsibility in the matter. We are very conscious that something must be done and in doing anything in that connection it is the members of this House who can be of the greatest help. Sir, when we want to put forward any proposal for the establishment of a National Government we are at once faced with the communal deadlock. In fact the speeches which have been made here today give us the completest justification for not doing anything. These speeches had better not been made on the floor of the House. I think these speeches ought to have been made outside th House. It would have greatly strengthened our hands if Messrs Kunzru and Hossain Imam had come to me or to my friend here with an agreed formula. That is what we are up against all the time. In fact, what is a National Government? A National Government is one in which all parties are united which leaves no room for controversy or opposition, and unless we have these fundamental prerequisites there can be no National Government. What is the use of a National Government from which the Congress or the Muslim League is standing out? We have these real difficulties and I appeal to the House to assist us in solving them. I wish to assure the House that we are most anxious that a way should be found out of the present impasse. We have been exerting all the little influence which we possess in order that a solution may be found, but so far we are no nearer it. Sir, my friend Mr Hossain Imam has talked of the eternal triangle. That is a very bad thing. I wish he would get rid of the triangle. I feel as soon as we get rid of it we shall have our freedom. If only Mr Hossain Imam and Mr Kunzru could talk out their differences and come to us as one man, not as a Muslim Leaguer and a Liberal leader, but as one man, I think no power on earth could refuse to give us what is our birth-right. It is only these differences that are stopping us. I myself have been and probably am still a member of the Hindu Mahasabha, but all my advice to that body, to whom I owe my loyalty, has been that they should try and reach an agreement with the Muslim League. We have been endeavouring to do it. So far we have not seen daylight and I do not know how long it will be before the two parties will come to an agreement. I wish to assure the House once again that the Indian Members of the Executive Council are at their command, beck and call. We regard you as our masters. I have been a Minister; so I know the position of a Legislative Council. We regard you as our masters and it is for you to command us, to come to us with a definite thing. Give us a definite formula, do not talk in the air and do not make us more confused. We shall carry out your wishes, provided you would come and give us a definite lead. (*Applause.*)

MR R. H. PARKER

There is an unfortunate feeling which has been mentioned in this House, of some doubt as to the real intention of the British Government—of His Majesty's Government—regarding the handing over of power after the war. There is a suspicion that this is not the real intention. Personally, I can find absolutely no grounds for that suspicion at all. I have had a lot of correspondence with people in England and in India and generally speaking the impression left on my mind is that the anxiety is not, as somebody said this morning, to cling to power by the British Government but the anxiety is to find somebody to whom to hand it over. That is the difficulty that I can see. In fact I know there are those among the British who very strongly hold the view that we

have done our best for India and that we ought to say to her: "Whether you like it or whether you don't, we shall take no part in Indian affairs after this war is over." Now I do not think that is a right point of view at all. I am one of those who have always believed in co-operation, but co-operation does involve each party helping the other and that is what we have got to learn to do. I think what we ought to do when we have little time to think about matters is to see whether we can learn anything from the mistakes which seem to have led to this present state of world-wide war in which we are very much concerned. I think the democracies failed in the main because they depended so largely on a high sense of duty being found in a large proportion of the people. The other kind of control, the Nazi kind of control, is based on force and cruelty that we all heartily disapprove of and dislike, but if we wish to attain or retain freedom from the Nazi kind of control we must each of us accept the duty of contributing our individual quota to the affairs of the State. We must not think, as many of us are apt to do now, that when we have paid our taxes we have performed our duty. Our duty to our fellowmen is really limited only by our capacity to help them and we have only to look down the past and see the conditions of today to realize the failure of a policy of standing on one side and leaving it to someone else to do our share. All too often such a policy leads to power being in the hands of the incompetent or the actively wicked.

We must therefore watch and work. If we do not we cannot expect reasonable results. If we fail we risk more than existence—nothingness, non-existence, may not be a serious state. The conditions of horror which the Axis States have brought about must be destroyed. That is the first thing.

SIR MAHOMED USMAN

I am reminded of an Arabic proverb which says that truth is bitter. If it was my duty yesterday and the day before yesterday to place before the House true statements of facts and figures and if they have produced bitter repercussions in the minds of the Honourable Mr Sapru and the Honourable Mr Kunzru, it only justifies the truth of that proverb. My Honourable friend Mr Sapru said that my speech was characterized by a lack of statesmanship and irresponsibility. All that I can say is that when we have to face difficult situations, statesmanship and responsibility consist not in ignoring facts but in taking facts into account and trying to find remedies for them. As regards the speech that I made in connection with the Resolution that I moved the day before yesterday, I am glad to find general support from this House. Except for three speakers who evidently took exception to two or three small matters of fact, there has been general support from this House.

As regards excessive force, of course in a big movement like this, I do not deny that here and there may have been some little excessive force used by the police or by the military. In such cases, I think the Honourable Member should bring such instances to the notice of the local authorities. As far as the Government of India are concerned, from the facts and figures that we have got before us, there are no strong reasons at all to assume that excessive force was used either by the police or by the military. Therefore there would be no inquiry into their conduct.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: You ignore facts: it is shameful.

Sir Mahomed Usman: Order, order.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: You are not the man to call us to Order.

The President: I have given some latitude. You should not overstep it.

Sir Mahomed Usman: I would repeat the Arabic proverb that

"Truth is bitter."

As regards the political situation, Sir, speeches have been made from the point of view of the non-Congress, from the point of view of the Muslim League, and from the point of view of the Congress or the Liberal Federation, expressing different views. But unless and until it is possible for leaders to come to an agreed formula, how is it possible for Government to accept any such proposal with such difference of opinion. The views of the Princes and other bodies have to be considered. Unless and until there is a joint, agreed formula, I do not see how there could be a real solution of the political problem.

The Honourable Mr Sapru said that in quelling disturbances Nazi methods were adopted.

Mr P. N. Sapru: On a point of personal explanation, Sir, I did not say in all cases Nazi methods were adopted. What I said was that people were asking whether in some cases those methods were not adopted and whether there was much difference between Nazi methods and the methods adopted in some places in the country. That is a very different thing.

Sir Mahomed Usman: Anyhow, some suggestion like that was made. I should like to assure the House that Nazi methods were never adopted by the British Government in the administration of this country at any time. If they had been Nazi-minded, they would not have brought parliamentary institutions like the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State into existence and have allowed a discussion of the present situation.

Mr P. N. Sapru: What about the bombing of the Hurs? Is it not a Nazi method?

The President: Do not interrupt now.

Sir Mahomed Usman: Today, barring the Congress, the whole country stands behind the Government in the prosecution of the war -

Mr P. N. Sapru: Nonsense!

Sir Mahomed Usman: It is due to the sense of British justice and fairplay which they have introduced in the administration of the country.

The Honourable Mr Sapru condemned the speech of Mr Churchill, pleaded for the abolition of the India Office, and condemned the attitude of Sir Stafford Cripps. We all know that when Sir Stafford Cripps, well known for his sympathy towards the political aspirations of India and a great friend of the Congress, came to India and carried on his talks with all the important political parties, he discovered that the real object of the Congress was to get unlimited power for itself. As a true Britisher he refused to allow this, as it would be very unjust to other parties. Mr Amery has been trying to protect in any political settlement the interests of the Muslim community, the Depressed Classes, the Princes and other interests. For this offence the office of the Secretary of State for India should be abolished, according to the Honourable Mr Sapru. Instead of being grateful to the Prime Minister for making the Cripps proposals as the settled policy of the British Crown and Parliament he is condemned because he spoke the bitter truth that the Congress does not represent the whole Indian nation. When the Muslims have all practically gone out of the Congress and have come under the leadership of Mr Jinnah, the Congress has lost its national characteristic. If further evidence of this was needed you will find that the Muslims throughout India obeyed the mandate of Mr Jinnah and completely abstained from joining the present civil disobedience movement.

As regards the political solution, Sir, we have got the Prime Minister's assurance. He said:—

> "The broad principles of the declaration made by the British Government, which formed the basis of the mission of the Lord Privy Seal (Sir Stafford

Cripps) to India must be taken as representing the settled policy of the British Crown and Parliament. These principles stand in their full scope and integrity. No one can add to them and no one can take anything away."

And the Secretary of State has made the following statement:—

"Statements already made show that the Viceroy will always be willing to listen to suggestions made within the framework of our previous proposals by any representative body of Indian public opinion."

Thus, the solution of the political problem lies in our own hands. If we do not agree among ourselves and do not show any spirit of give and take, why blame the British Government? (Applause.)

INQUIRY MOTION IN ASSEMBLY

ALLEGATIONS OF EXCESSES BY MILITARY & POLICE

NEW DELHI, September 24, 1942.

On September 24, 1942, in the Central Legislative Assembly Mr K. C. Neogy moved a resolution recommending to the Governor-General-in-Council the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the allegations of police and military excesses in the country. .The debate took a lively turn and members from both official and non-official sides participated. The debate remained unconcluded when the Assembly adjourned 'sine die' on the same day. It was resumed on February 12, 1943, and concluded on February 18. The resolution was rejected.

Mr K. C. Neogy moved:

"That this Assembly recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council that a committee composed of nine Members of this House, with a majority of non-officials selected in consultation with the Leaders of the Parties, be set up immediately to inquire into the allegations of excesses committed by the military and the police in dealing with the recent disturbances in the country, and to report thereon to the Governor-General-in-Council."

I should like, at the very outset, to make it quite clear that I do not in the least contest the right of the executive Government to use force in repelling force and in upholding law and order. Circumstances may arise where the executive Government may be justified even in taking the law into its own hands, suspend the normal rule of law and make over the control of the internal situation of the country to the military under martial law. In circumstances of lesser gravity the executive Government is perfectly entitled to utilize the assistance of the military in enforcing law and order. At the present moment, although the entire country has been convulsed with acts of unheard of sabotage and violence, martial law has not been proclaimed and the civil authorities are, at least in theory, functioning in the affected areas, although to my mind the spirit of martial law determines their actions. Now, Sir, whether it is martial law or whether it is not, when the executive Government takes recourse to force, its actions are expected to be regulated by certain rules which are either contained in our laws or are laid down in the departmental instructions relating to the police or the military. These rules require the minimum of force to be used in quelling any disturbances. They also require a minimum of injury to person and property to be done as a result of such use of force. Nowhere in the civilized world can we find a parallel, however, to the situation that at the present moment obtains in this country arising out of the Government's action in upholding law and order. My time is very limited and instead of going more into these preliminaries, I should like at once to come to the facts, as I take it that the House must be eager to know from me the reasons which have impelled me to occupy its attention with such a Resolution. I have tried to summarise the various charges that are brought against the administration in this connection under six categories.

The first and foremost is: general pillage and arson and wanton damage to property by the police and the military in places, whether directly affected or not by any hooliganism. This has particularly happened in many villages in Bihar and the United Provinces.

2. Shooting at random in places not affected by any hooliganism, just for the purpose of creating an impression— I am borrowing a very well-known expression used by certain martial law authorities in the Punjab. I may say that so far as this practice is concerned, this has particularly happened in Calcutta.

3. Random shooting of innocent people found in any locality affected by hooliganism, after the hooligans had already left the place, the object being to chastise the locality rather than the criminal mob which cannot be traced at the moment. This has happened in Delhi and in Calcutta as well as elsewhere.

4. Assault or shooting of non-violent crowds or individuals without proper warning. Technical violation of the curfew order by ignorant and innocent people is believed to have been promptly met with shooting at sight, leading to death in many cases. This is supposed to have occurred particularly in Delhi.

5. Excessive amount of force used in dispersing non-violent crowds.

6. Merciless assaults, particularly whipping, insults and indignities on all and sundry on the same principles that actuate the collective fine. In some cases, whipping and other kinds of assaults are reported to have led to death.

It will not be possible for me during the time at my disposal to give typical instances in support of all these various categories of excesses which I have tried to summarize under these heads, and I very much hope that it will be possible for some of my friends who will speak after me to supplement my observations. I am particularly anxious that my Honourable friend, Mr Joshi, who, as the President of the Civil Liberties Union in Bombay, had occasion to conduct an inquiry into some of these allegations, will have an opportunity of speaking. I am also very anxious that my Honourable friend, Mr Deshmukh, will have an opportunity of dealing with the situation that has prevailed in the Central Provinces for some time. I am also anxious that my friend, Mr Chattopadhyaya, will have the opportunity of dealing with many specific instances that have been reported to us from Calcutta, instances supported by signed and verified statements of the people who have suffered.

Sir, I do not think I can do better than begin with the province of my Honourable friend, the Law Member, who, I understand, is going to reply to the debate on behalf of Government. I was particularly touched the other day when he referred to the distress from which Bihar was suffering: and may I tell him in all sincerity that my heart goes out to him in sympathy for all that Bihar is suffering, not merely at the hands of hooligans but also at the hands of the military and the police?

Sir, in dealing with this part of my subject I have the high testimony of a very respected citizen of Bihar, a man who is held in high esteem and who is an Honourable Member of the Council of State, and I have the advantage of having a copy of the speech which this Honourable gentleman delivered yesterday in the Council of State, and I will with your permission extract just a few sentences from his speech to describe what the position now is in Bihar.

The President: It is not Parliamentary etiquette for an Honourable Member to reproduce speeches made in another place.

Mr K. C. Neogy: This is a very serious matter. . . .

The President: The Honourable Member can incorporate that as part of his own speech.

Mr K. C. Neogy: This gentleman, in his capacity as the district leader of the National War Front Movement, had occasion to visit some of the affected villages in the district of Muzaffarpur to which he belongs, and in the course of his tours, in the company of the Chairman of the District Board of Muzaffarpur and the Secretary of the National War Front Movement, he saw sights which he says would haunt him to his dying day,—sights not due to the action of hooligans but sights resulting from the wanton acts of damage, loot and arson which were indulged in by the police and the military. He says:

"Troops and police were let loose on the countryside, and in the course of my tours in the villages as a leader of the National War Front for my native district, I had reports made to me of the oppression of the police and of the troops, of vandalism, of wanton destruction and loot of private property, of villages burnt, of extortion of money on threat of arrest and in some case of actual physical torture . . . . what these eyes of mine have seen in the villages: all wealthy shops in the bazaar looted, entire villages burnt not by the mob but by the soldiers and by the police: and I must confess that those sights would haunt me to my dying day."

Sir, I should not like to dwell any further on this particular picture. It will be for the Honourable Members to read his speech in the proceedings of the Council of State. May I appeal to my Honourable friend, the Law Member, to inquire from his friends in Bihar as to whether these accounts are in any way exaggerated. I have cited as high an authority as was possible for me in the circumstances in which we are placed today. There is a complete black-out of news and we have to depend upon what glimpses we get from here and there in support of our contention before this House.

Now, Sir, the next document to which I will refer is a notice under Section 80 of the Civil Procedure Code, which a zamindar in the district of Ghazipur has served on the Government of India and on the Government of the United Provinces, claiming damages for wanton destruction of property committed by the military and the police in his village. I have got a complete copy of the notice in my hand. He first of all gives his own pedigree of loyalty. He mentions what his grandfather did and how his services were rewarded, what is the amount of income-tax that he pays, and finally, this is not without some amount of grim humour, he reproduces a certificate that was awarded to him only in the year 1933 in recognition of his meritorious services in connection with the putting down of the civil disobedience movement. Now, the House will soon realize what has happened to him, in spite of all his faithful and highly appreciated services. He adds that he is an Honorary Magistrate. Now, Sir, I come to the most important portion of this notice. He says:

"On the 26th August, 1942, at about 3 p.m. my Manager sent a man to me and through the message of my Manager I came to know that four European soldiers accompanied by about 150 military men armed with rifles and along with the Sub-Inspector, Nandganj Police Station, came to my village in the afternoon of the 24th August and asked all the male members of my village including my Manager and servants to leave the village and file on a 'kutcha' road, which passed through the village, on pain of being shot at. The male members including children came out of the village and sat on the 'kutcha' road. Thereafter, the four European soldiers along with the military men entered the village leaving a few military men to guard the villagers sitting on the road. In the village, the women were asked to come out of their houses on threat of being shot at should they refuse to do so. When the women came out the soldiers deprived them of all their ornaments which they were putting on their person and after that they raided the houses and looted cash, jewellery, ornaments, clock, etc. They also raided my house. The Sub-Inspector warned the European soldiers that the house belongs to an Honorary Magistrate who was a loyal British subject but the European soldiers asked the Sub-Inspector to shut up. They then looted my house and broke some of the valuable furniture and articles. That I have been put to a loss of Rs. 30,405-7-3 approximately as detailed hereunder on account of the acts of vandalism committed by the said soldiers."

I do not want to mention the details. Now comes something which, I think, would not rouse the House into any hilarity:

"That the soldiers removed the clothings from the houses of the villagers outside the houses and set them on fire and further set fire to 20 houses of my tenants in addition to several straw-thatched houses in the village.

"That after having looted my house and the houses of my tenants, the soldiers came back on the road and asked all children below the age of 12 to go out of the line of the people sitting on the road. After this order was com-

plied with the adult persons sitting on the road were asked to sit like frogs after undressing themselves including my Manager. They had to obey the order at the point of the rifle.

"That thereafter a bamboo stick was split up into a few parts and five stripes were severely inflicted on the naked back of each of the villagers so sitting including my poor Manager, who was throughout protesting that he was a servant of a loyal zamindar and of an Honorary Magistrate. The condition of all these persons has become very serious and they will make their separate representation in due course if they so desire.

"That one of my peons, who was protesting, was tied to a tree and mercilessly beaten with 30 stripes and was later on taken under arrest along with three other villagers.

"That no public property is situated near my village and that none was insured by the residents of my village."

As the ornaments belonged to his wife and daughter they too have joined in the service of notice on the Government, and perhaps, they will join him in the subsequent suit. This is a typical case, and I hold in my hand a bundle of papers giving very great details regarding some outrages perpetrated by the soldiers and the police in the districts of Ballia, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh and Jaunpur. These papers give a summary of the various acts of tyranny and torture which the police and the military practised on the villagers. In one paper they give, village by village, the names. . . .

Mr C. C. Miller: Are they all signed?

Mr K. C. Neogy: They are not signed but they have been sent to me by a party in whose integrity I have every confidence. They give in very great detail the names and the nature of the damages caused, articles looted, and the houses that were burnt down. If the Government are at all anxious to find out the truth about these matters, I would be very happy to hand over these papers to the Honourable the Law Member.

Before I leave the United Provinces, I should like to dwell for a few minutes on the situation in Cawnpore. Cawnpore, the House will realise, was one of the districts which were not affected by these disturbances to the same extent as the eastern districts of the United Provinces. What I am referring to is the correspondence which has passed between the Merchants' Chamber of the United Provinces and the District authorities.

Now, Sir, this is a letter addressed to the District Magistrate from the Merchants' Chamber, dated the 17th August, in which they refer to indiscriminate beating, assaults and arrest of merchants made at Cawnpore, particularly in the Naraingunj market. I am afraid I have no time to go into these details, but again, I make an offer to the Government that I will be prepared to place these papers in their hands if they would be so pleased as to order an inquiry into the very grave allegations made by no less a body than the Merchants' Chamber of the United Provinces.

There is another letter dated the 24th August in which they say:

"It has further come to the notice of the Chamber that people without any consideration for their respectability have been arrested, insulted and beaten in their own houses and in the absence of male members of the house, the ladies have been insulted and subjected to misbehaviour by the police."

Then, again, take the letter from the Secretary, Hindu Sangh, Cawnpore, dated the 14th August. He says:

"Apart from the frequent and indiscriminate arrests, the police has resorted to breaking open the doors of houses, in the absence of male members terrorising the women-folk and smashing and throwing all belongings and removing the valuables of the houses."

Sir, there are certain true copies of statements made by the people who have been affected by this sort of behaviour of the police, but I have no time. I should, however, like only to refer to the statement

made by Mr Onkar Prasad Saxena, who is a Government employee, being employed in the Laboratory Office of the Ordnance Laboratories. He says:

> "They ran amock in the whole house, smashed the gramophone, damaged our radio, and hurled our utensils down on the road. Crockery, glassware, photos and E.P.N.S. calendars met the same fate, and as if it was not enough, they further proceeded to abuse and kick the ladies who stood aghast, trembling with fear . . . . They also relieved us of our cash amounting to Rs. 210 and jewellery worth about Rs. 1,500, a loss of roughly Rs. 5,000 . . . . When I had gone to lodge a report in the Collectorganj Thana the policeman declined to write anything about it."

Sir, my time is passing. I have now to content myself by giving very briefly the facts regarding a few other Provinces. When I come to Madras, I should like to read out the published resolution of the Madura Municipal Council which was adopted on the 19th August. In this resolution, which was passed without any dissentient voice, the Municipal Council strongly condemned the shooting of innocent persons without warning on the pretext of the curfew order. This is one typical sample which I can give regarding the atrocities committed by the police.

Now, Sir, I should like very briefly to deal with the situation that prevailed in Calcutta. The House is aware that many of the Calcutta newspapers suspended their publication as a protest against the interference by the censoring authorities with the publication of news depicting the true situation in that city. And in an article which appeared in the *Statesman*, dated Delhi, Friday, the 21st August, headed "Newspapers in Suspense," we find the following rather significant observations:

> "Government in Bengal should also attend without loss of time to statements made and repeated in certain quarters about events in Calcutta. Whether true or false they cannot safely be ignored. For want of a reply from Government the public is believing the worst."

No reply came to this from the Government, and the public have all along believed the worst and the public are convinced that the worst is really what actually happened. My Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, whose absence today I very much deplore, gave his personal testimony as regards the indiscriminate shooting that took place in Calcutta to which he was a personal witness. I am now speaking in the presence of my Honourable Leader, Dr P. N. Banerjea, who has also some personal experience of shooting which was indulged in in a locality, twenty-four hours after the act of hooliganism was committed there. After twenty-four hours of the happening, the police came on the scene and shot down people at random creating panic in the locality and then the police went away. This matter was debated in the Calcutta Corporation itself and they adopted a resolution condemning all these outrages. The House should remember that the Calcutta Corporation does not enjoy any privilege which the Legislature enjoys, and any statement which any member of the Corporation makes there must have been uttered with the utmost caution. I am going to quote just a few words from the speech delivered by a very prominent Barrister, who may not be unknown to some of my Honourable friends of the European Group, especially my Honourable friend, Sir F. E. James. I am referring to Mr N. C. Chatterjea. He said:

> "I openly declare from my place in this House that if this policy of frightfulness which has been pursued in Calcutta had been pursued in the City of London, the Head of the Metropolitan Police would have been lynched."

Then he gave several instances about which he had satisfied himself, particularly one in which a boy of seven was killed. He was standing on the ledge of his house in a lane. A sergeant entered the lane and shot him. That lane was not the scene of any hooliganism or

disturbance and yet the sergeant rushed into the lane and shot dead that little boy, and got away after committing this act of great bravery!

I would make a passing reference to Bombay. I find that as many as 34 Commercial Associations led by the Indian Merchants' Chamber passed certain resolutions on Monday the 17th August "condemning the repressive measures taking the form of the police and the military compelling the householders and merchants who were at their places of business, and also passers-by to clean the streets of obstacles and debris littered there, and effecting arrests from residential houses, shops and padhis even of business people who were not implicated in the disturbances and who were entirely innocent." The resolution continues: "This meeting regrets that several businessmen and their employees while engaged in their usual vocations have been beaten and arrested. . . . ."

I should particularly like to refer in this connection to an observation which was made in the *Bombay Chronicle* under the heading "Stop Such Humiliation":

> "We welcome the assurance that law and order will be maintained. We presume, however, that this does not mean that the police and troops have been given a 'carte blanche' to adopt methods which are intended to humiliate innocent and respectable citizens. Most of the Bombay papers have carried the story of residents . . . (This is not the only paper in which this story appeared.) "Most of the Bombay papers have carried the story of residents of and passers-by in certain localities being compelled to sweep the streets! Some Members of our staff have personally witnessed such incidents, when even ladies were asked to sweep the street at the point of the gun."

This sweeping of streets appears to be a sort of special technique in putting down lawlessness because we find this headline in the *Searchlight*, dated the 16th August, 1942:

> "People forced to do work of road clearing."—This relates to Patna and this is what it says—"People in different 'mohallas'—even respectable people of high position and status—are being dragged out of their houses and forced to do the work of clearing the obstructions on the roads. And on refusing or hesitating to obey the orders they are severely dealt with and even given good thrashing. This morning . . . ."

I particularly draw the attention of the Honourable the Law Member to the following:

> "This morning, Babu Nawab Kishore Prasad No. 1, one of the senior members of the Patna Bar, who is the President of the District Hindu Sabha and the Vice-President of the Provincial Hindu Sabha and who is one of the very prominent and respectable citizens of the town, while out for his morning walk, on the Kadamkun Road was suddenly caught hold of and ordered to clean the road."—Then,—"Dr. Damodar Prasad, M.B., B.S., a well-known medical practitioner of the town, is reported to have been dragged out of his sick bed on the upper storey of the Central Medical Hall and taken up to the Patna Collegiate School probably for the same purpose of doing the work of cleaning and was given a severe blow on his head which caused a deep wound in his skull from which blood oozed out profusely."—Again,—"Maulvi Shakarullah, a prominent Mokthar, also it is reported was dragged out of his house and given a severe blow."

Now, Sir, in close juxtaposition to this column appears an interesting, but speculative, item of news under a rather mischievous headline "Mr Aney to Resign." No, Mr Editor, Mr Aney is engaged in the most important work of saving the prestige of Mahratta Knights. I do not think I have any more time to go into more details of this character.

Sir Sultan Ahmed: Will the Honourable Member please repeat his last remarks?

Mr K. C. Neogy: I was saying that in the *Searchlight* of August 16, 1942, an item of news appeared under the rather mischievous headline "Mr Aney to Resign" and this item of news appears in close juxtaposition to the other item of news to the effect that people

were forced to do work of road clearing. And I observed that the Honourable Mr Aney is now engaged in the most responsible and grateful task of safeguarding the honour of Mahratta Knights.

Sir, I have asked for a Committee of Enquiry and I understand that the Government are in no mood to concede this demand. I must say that I was not quite unprepared for the attitude because already we have *communiqués* issued by the Governments of the Central Provinces and of the United Provinces firmly taking their stand on this point and stating that, in the case of the Central Provinces Government, they have no intention of holding a judicial or any other inquiry into the measures which have so far been taken to restore order and that any such measure would only tend to affect the morale of the forces employed to counter the disturbances. I have already given to the House an idea of the technique which they adopt to counter these disturbances. The Central Provinces Government have gone one better. They have refused permission to the High Court Bar Association to hold a non-official enquiry in regard to the police excesses which they wanted to hold.

In the case of the United Provinces Government, they say that "the morale of the police is high,"—of course, it is high as you have already seen from the various instances to which I have drawn the attention of the House—"the Inspector-General of Police has given them the watchword 'Guard the people'." We know how they have been guarding the people, incidentally enriching themselves and burning down the property belonging to the people! In order to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, the United Provinces *communiqué* says that the United Provinces Government wish to make it quite clear that no public enquiry will be held into the incidents arising from the disturbances.

The President: The Honourable Member has exceeded his time limit.

Mr K. C. Neogy: Now, Sir, the only conclusion to which one can come to from these *communiqués* is that the acts to which I have drawn attention have been deliberately done, and the same policy has been pursued everywhere with the full knowledge and concurrence of these provincial administrations. If anything, these declarations made by the two Provincial Governments are a direct encouragement to the police and the military to continue these outrages, these acts of vandalism which the police and the military have been perpetrating on innocent people. If anything, this is likely to aggravate the situation beyond measure. I have no desire at all to say anything or ask the Government to do anything, which will in any way weaken their hands in regard to any legitimate use of force which may be required for the purpose of meeting the situation. But I should like to warn the Government that they have already allowed the situation to get out of their hands, and it is high time that they sought to control their unruly hordes which were let loose on innocent people.

The President: Resolution moved.

> "That this Assembly recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council that a committee composed of nine Members of this House, with a majority of non-officials selected in consultation with the Leaders of the Parties, be set up immediately to inquire into the allegations of excesses committed by the military and the police in dealing with the recent disturbances in the country, and to report thereon to the Governor-General-in-Council."

There are five amendments to be moved. The first is in the name of Babu Baijnath Bajoria.

Amendment moved:

> "That for the original Resolution the following be substituted:
> "That this Assembly, while strongly condemning acts of murder, sabotage, arson, loot and other forms of violence committed by unruly mobs and

hooligans in the country which have caused serious destruction and loss of life and property and while supporting Government in all legitimate measures taken or to be taken to suppress such mob violence and restore law and order, emphatically condemns the use of excessive force and frequent firing which have resulted in the deaths of and injury to innumerable innocent persons including women and children and recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council that all complaints about excesses committed by the police and the military in quelling these disturbances should be investigated by judicial tribunals to be established in all the Provinces for the purpose and those found guilty be suitably and condingly punished."

The next one is in the name of Pandit Nilakantha Das.

Amendment moved:

"That for the original Resolution the following be substituted:

'That while severely condemning all acts of violence and sabotage resulting in serious loss of life and destruction of property, and while recognizing that it is the duty of the Government to restore law and order and prevent the breach of public peace and to use legitimate force for that purpose, this Assembly recommends to the Governor-General-in-Council that with a view to ensuring public confidence in the Government measures, immediate and effective steps be taken for the investigation of well-supported allegations of the use of excessive force by tribunals consisting of high judicial officers, and that those found guilty thereof be suitably and condignly punished'."

The next amendment is in the name Dr Ziauddin.

Amendment moved:

"(1) That after the words 'inquire into' the following be inserted:

the nature of organization leading to dislocation of communication, murder, loot and forcible extortion of money under the threat of murder, the allegation that some factory owners helped hooligans by deliberately turning out their labourers after paying their full wages and',

(2) that after the word 'country' the words 'in a manner that may not benefit the 'enemies' be inserted."

Mr N. M. Joshi: Mr President, my Honourable friend, Mr Neogy, has rendered a great public service by bringing forward this Resolution before this House. Sir, before I deal with the subject matter of this Resolution, I would like to say a few words on the amendment moved by my Honourable friend, Mr Bajoria.

Babu Baijnath Bajoria: Sir, I think it would not be fair for him to comment on my amendment until I have had an opportunity. . . .

The President: Why not? Not only the Resolution but the amendments also are under discussion.

Mr N. M. Joshi: When I spoke on the motion of the Leader of the House regarding the present situation, I said that I would not deal with this aspect of the situation at that time as I would get another opportunity to deal with it. I simply contented myself by saying at that time that the policy of the Government of India in arresting a large number of leaders of the Congress resulted in great distress. The disasters which I referred to at that time were the spontaneous, violent as well as non-violent, protests on behalf of the public and the Government's action regarding them. I have no desire to say, Sir, that there was no premeditated violence at all. There may have been some attempts at tampering with communications and other methods of sabotage. But, Sir, I have no doubt in my mind that the large bulk of the protests, though violent in some cases, from the people against the action of Government, was spontaneous. Sir, let me make it quite clear that I do not approve violence either by Government or by the people, and, personally, I also feel that violent methods are not even effective when used against a well-established and well-armed Government. But, Sir, I cannot absolve the Government of India from their responsibility for the violence that has taken place in the country on account of the wrong policy which they followed in arresting the

leaders of the Congress. It has appeared from the speeches of the representatives of Government that nothing has happened between the resolution passed by the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay and the violence that has taken place. The Government should have known that the arrest of the leaders of the Congress had intervened between the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee and the violence. I thought that the Members of the Government of India are honest. They would themselves admit that the arrest of the Congress leaders, at least to some extent, led to the violent protests by the people. Sir, I do not wish to deal with this aspect of the question which was introduced in today's discussion by the amendment of my friend, Mr Bajoria.

Now, I shall deal with the question dealt with in the main Resolution introduced by my friend, Mr Neogy. Sir, Mr Neogy has placed before the House a number of particular instances of the excesses committed by the police and the military in various parts of the country. He referred to certain investigations made in Bombay by the Bombay Civil Liberties Union of which I happen to be the Chairman. Sir, the Bombay Civil Liberties Union some time ago, after Government had initiated their policy of arresting the leaders of the Congress and after the violent protests by the people, requested the Vice-President of the Bombay Civil Liberties Union, a gentleman who is an experienced solicitor in Bombay, to make an inquiry into some of the cases; and from the inquiries made by the Vice-President of the Bombay Civil Liberties Union I have no doubt in my mind that in Bombay, too, cases of different kinds of excesses described by my Honourable friend, Mr Neogy, have taken place. He has already mentioned that people were forced at the point of the bayonet to sweep the roads of the debris. We have also found out instances of unjustifiable firing: firing not only on the crowd, but shooting at persons who were not in the crowd. Dr Jivraj Mehta, who is a very distinguished doctor in Bombay and the head of a big hospital and medical college in Bombay, had published that a boy, who was not in the midst of a crowd, and whose only fault was that he said *"Gandhi Maharaj ki Jai,"* was shot at in cold blood. Sir, people were dragged out of their rooms—people who had not gone out of their houses at all in the crowd—and lathi-charged and very severely handled by the police.

Sir, besides this as a result of the inquiry made by the Bombay Civil Liberties Union, I have also got information regarding some cases. One of these cases has happened in the district of Kaira. Some students were going about in villages preaching what they call 'satyagraha.' After finishing preaching 'satyagraha' they were going to take a train at some railway station in the Kaira district. The police party, which was hunting these boys, alighted from the train which these people were going to catch, and marched towards them. The leader of the boys told the officer in charge of the police party that they were satyagrahis and if the police wanted to arrest them they were ready to be arrested; there would be no opposition to the arrest. In spite of this willingness of being arrested peacefully, the police fired on these students. Three of them were killed and a large number of them were wounded. Not only that, after firing on these boys the police prevented help being given to the wounded by way of water. The wounded felt thirsty. People in the village wanted to give them water; they were prevented from giving water to the wounded. The railway staff out of pity wanted to give water to the wounded; they were prevented from doing so. I do not think I shall find time to describe the whole incident.

Then there was another incident, which has come to my notice, that had taken place in the district of Meerut. The Manager of the Gandhi Ashram in Meerut went to a village called Bhanwori and some

fifty or sixty people gathered round him. A police party came to the village and started bayoneting this crowd of people who were absolutely peaceful. When some people in the crowd began to retaliate against this bayonet attack, the police fired; and again three or four people were killed. This is not the whole story. The police found that this manager of the Gandhi Ashram, whose name is Ram Sarup Sarma, was not among the killed nor even among the wounded. Therefore, one policeman said that the chief culprit had escaped and they must shoot him. He was thrice shot and ultimately killed.

I shall give only one more instance and stop this narration of stories of excesses by the police and the military. There is a small town called Nandurbar in the Dhulia district of the Bombay Presidency. On the 9th, when the students heard about the arrests of the leaders they took out a procession. These students can only be very small children because in Nandurbar there is no college and there could, therefore, be no grown-up students. While the procession was marching, the police sub-inspector was hit either by some stone or by something else by a person whom the people in Nandurbar knew as being an enemy of this police sub-inspector. The police sub-inspector, who was hit, got angry and instead of catching hold of his assailant and punishing him, he fired on these school children: three or four of them were again killed.

I do not wish to add to the list which either my friend, Mr Neogy, has given or the small list which I have given. The point to be considered is this, that we want an inquiry into these excesses.

The Government of India themselves will not say that there was no likelihood of excesses. The Honourable the Home Member said in his speech the other day that if there were any cases of excesses or injustice, they should be brought to the notice of the Provincial Governments or of the military authorities who, in the opinion of the Government of India, would do justice. We do not think that either the Provincial Governments or the military authorities or even the Government of India would do justice. The Provincial Governments themselves announced beforehand that there would be no public inquiry, and by making that announcement they gave direct encouragement to some of the excesses committed by the police and the military. I would also say this, that the Government of India giving full freedom to Provincial Governments and to local authorities themselves encouraged the commission of some of the excesses which have been described and which have taken place in all parts of the country on many occasions.

I feel, therefore, that the Government of India should accept this challenge by the Assembly for the finding out of the truth. If the officers of the Government of India had done nothing wrong, the committee will declare them not guilty; but if they have done wrong, the committee will find them guilty. I do not know whether the police or military officers will be punished or not; but I am afraid that the highest authorities responsible for the commission of these excesses by the police and the military, namely, the Provincial Governments and the Government of India, may escape the consequences of even the decision of these committees against them. Sir, I support the Resolution moved by Mr Neogy.

SIR F. E. JAMES

Sir, my Honourable friend, Mr Joshi, spoke of the movement which has led to the present disturbances as a spontaneous protest. I take leave to differ from his interpretation of the position and would suggest to him that the evidence is overwhelming that this movement is not a spontaneous movement but is a well-directed attempt at revolution by force. In any case, if the movement grew out of some sponta-

neous desire to express a political wish, how is it that that spontaneity has continued for over six weeks? My Honourable friend further spoke as President of the Civil Liberties Union of Bombay. He spoke on behalf of civil liberties; may I ask him whose civil liberties?

Mr N. M. Joshi: The people's.

Sir F. E. James: He says the civil liberties of the people; and what about the civil liberties of those people for whom he stands, which were interfered with by the way of movement which he has refrained from condemning? What about the civil liberties of those who cannot get food because of the interruption of communications?

Dr P. N. Banerjea: Mr. Neogy condemned those things.

Sir F. E. James: My Honourable friend is not aware that I am referring to Mr Joshi's speech. What about the civil liberties of those inoffensive persons, not in any way connected with any political organization, using no violence whatever, who have been fired upon by the mob, who have been beaten to death, who have been burnt alive, what about their civil liberties? If my Honourable friend is President of a movement to protect civil liberties, let me invite him to put his whole energy into the protection of the civil liberties of all the people in this country; and not only the civil liberties of one particular section. My Honourable friend, Mr Neogy, said that he was dealing with a large number of allegations. May I here say that during this session he has proved himself to be a past master in the art of making or repeating allegations, most of which have not been founded on any tangible fact? He said he would refer to certain broad classifications—general pillage and arson, shooting at random, assault on non-violent crowds, excessive use of force. All those classifications apply to those who have begun this movement and upon whom falls the responsibility for the disturbances that have taken place. Sir, it is not easy to take an objective view of the situation under present circumstances. There are reasons for that. One reason is that the movement which has been started under the auspices of the Congress Party has indirectly—I say indirectly—the sanction of the Leader of the Congress Party, who is Mahatma Gandhi, who, let it to be admitted, is the idol of practically every Hindu home. . . .

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: No; that is not true; the Hindu Mahasabha does not recognize him.

Sir F. E. James: May I say that in most Hindu homes, whether the head of the home belongs to the Congress Party or not, you will find a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi and you will find also that portrait garlanded on all suitable occasions. . . .?

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: You are quite wrong. How many houses have you seen?

Sir F. E. James: Many friends of mine, who are by no means Congress-minded among the Hindu community, have shown me in their own houses these photographs. I make no complaint about that . . . . (*Interruptions*). But that is one reason why, at such a time as this, it will be very difficult for many people to apply their minds objectively to the situation. I remember that Lord Balfour once said of George Lansbury, who was a most attractive but sentimental pacifist, that "the great trouble about him was that his bleeding heart always ran away with his bloody head." And there is a danger that in critical times like these, emotion may crowd out reason and passion may become the enemy of realism. However my Honourable friends may describe the movement which has been commenced under the auspices of the Congress, it is, in fact, a revolution by violence, which has invoked the law of the jungle, the law of force, and which must be dealt with by force.

May I appeal to my Honourable friends, however much they may

feel that Provincial Governments should exercise the power which is in their hands at present, with as much care and justice as is possible—may I appeal to them that one thing which is needed today is for all parties to stand solid and four-square behind authority as constituted by law in this country? (*Interruption by Mr Neogy*). There is as yet no alternative to that Government and until that comes, I would ask my Honourable friend, Mr Neogy, to stand four-square behind those who, after all, are not only defending civilization in this country, but are trying to remove the obstacles which have been deliberately placed by ill-disposed persons in the way of the final and complete victory of the Allied Powers.

SIR SULTAN AHMED

My Honourable friend, Mr Neogy, has moved his resolution with the speech of a skilled advocate. He has placed certain cases which have been brought to his notice in support of his claim for a non-official inquiry. Amendments have been tabled and moved which in my opinion do not widen the scope of that inquiry, because I respectfully submit that without going into the earlier history of the revolution which is taking place and is not yet over, it will be impossible to consider these stories in their true perspective.

After the speech which had been made by the Honourable the Home Member last week, I had hoped that no such motion will be pursued in this House but my learned friend, Mr Neogy, however, has thought fit to move the Resolution and at this stage I should like to read a passage from the Home Member's speech which represents the considered policy of the Government of India, to which a reference was also made by my learned friend, Mr Neogy. The Home Member said:

> "If . . . . . any such act has occurred anywhere, it is a breach of discipline with which the Provincial Governments and the officers in command of their forces, are as much concerned as any member of the public . . . . . The proper course in such cases will be to bring the allegations, if they are well authenticated (this is very important) to the notice of the authorities immediately responsible for the discipline of their forces, and it can be assumed that, if satisfied, they will do what is proper."

I submit that this is the considered policy of the Government of India and I, on behalf of Government, reaffirm it today. The Resolution, however has to be dealt with now. It asks for a Committee of the House to inquire into the allegations of excesses committed by the military and the police in dealing with the recent disturbances. It is obvious that we will have to find out all these allegations if the inquiry is ordered, as is asked for in the Resolution, but I do hope that the House realizes, as I submitted before, that even if these amendments had not been tabled, it will be impossible to understand the situation without closely examining the other side of the picture as has been mentioned in the amendment of my Honourable friend, Dr Sir Ziauddin Ahmad.

Leaving aside the machinery by which this inquiry is to take place —and the Government is absolutely indifferent to it—the main question is whether such an inquiry is possible or even desirable. Whether it is possible or not must depend upon various factors—Firstly, the character of the rebellion and whether normal condition has been restored, secondly, the number of occasions on which fire had to be opened and thirdly the territorial area over which this rebellion operated. Whether it is desirable or not will depend on what effect it is likely to create on those in charge of law and order throughout the country.

As regards the character of the movement, one can safely say that every possible method of sabotage, every known method of attack on public property, every method of defiance of law and order, as was fully stated to the House by the Honourable the Home Member and

some other speakers on the last occasion, was resorted to. So far as the attack on person was concerned, no officer of Government who tried to save human life or property was not the object of the attack by the mobs. As regards the ferocity of the crimes nothing was considered too brutal, and atrocities were committed, some of which would shock the conscience of the world.

I will now deal with these points *seriatim*. The number of occasions on which firing was resorted to was 239 by the police only. This number does not include the firing in Bihar and Assam, as the reports have not been received from these provinces and the reports from the United Provinces and Bengal are also very incomplete, and indeed it was bound to be incomplete, as disturbances are still occurring in some parts of the country. Honourable Members must have read in the papers only the other day, about the use of muzzle-loading guns in an attack on a police station in Bihar and other serious incidents are still reported from that province. The area which was covered by these disturbances may be roughly stated to be the whole of India *minus* the North-West Frontier Province and Sind, and practically the Punjab. Honourable Members will, I hope, agree with me that on this statement alone an inquiry of the character which is asked for is absolutely ruled out. If an inquiry is to be held, the inquiry itself will take quite a year before any satisfactory result can be achieved by it and I, therefore, submit, that on this statement alone the House will turn down the motion.

I will now deal with the question of excesses. In order to find out the excesses, it will be necessary to find out what was done by the mobs in different parts of the country. My Honourable friend, Sir F. E. James, has very rightly pointed out that it is not enough to say a few words that the Members are very sorry for all that has happened, but what is it for which this sorrow is expressed? We must know that first before we find out whether any excesses have been committed. To begin with, I feel certain that this House is fully satisfied that the military or the police were not the aggressors, anywhere in India. Once that is conceded, it is necessary to find out in detail, even from the incomplete information that we have got, the activities of the mob. Further, it is also perfectly clear that in every case in which firing had to be resorted to, it was when something extraordinarily serious was being done by the mobs and it was mainly to prevent any serious sabotage or attack or to prevent extension of it that firing was opened. The House last week heard from the Honourable the Home Member the figures of the loss to person and property. To complete the picture which I am going to give you this afternoon I will give the figures very quickly. 250 railway stations were damaged or destroyed. 550 Post Offices attacked, 50 completely burnt and 200 seriously damaged. Over 3,500 instances of wire cutting have been reported. 70 police stations and outposts and 85 other Government buildings were attacked. As regards the casualties so far reported, the police lost 31 killed and a very large number were injured. The details have not yet been reported to us. The military casualties were 11 killed and 7 wounded. Amongst the mob, the number killed was 658 and the total number of wounded were 1,000. As some killed and wounded are reported to have been carried away by the mobs, we may roughly take this figure to be well below 2,000.

Now, all these statements were made by the Honourable the Home Member on the last occasion.

I should like to supplement this by a reference to some of the gross cases of murder of public officers and men. So far as these figures are concerned and so far as this devastation is concerned, no inquiry is necessary. All these are facts. One has only to go and see what has happened. But I must again premise by saying that the information

so far received by us is not quite complete and I am not in a position, as I said before, to give the large number of injured persons.

Now, I will give you a few cases and try to put them in their proper places as against the stories which have been placed before you by my Honourable friend, Mr Neogy. In Bihar, on the 16th of August, at Minapur, the police station was attacked by a mob of five thousand, headed by Congressmen with Congress flags and armed with deadly weapons, and the Sub-Inspector who resisted the attack was chased, bound to a pillar, and then burnt alive. This was done by a Congress mob who had the emblem of the Congress with them. A number of policemen also were injured. The police station was destroyed, and two constables who were left for dead by the mob, were later taken to a hospital. At Sitamarhi, the Sub-Divisional Officer, a most devoted public servant, a police Inspector, one head constable and an orderly were held up in a car and murdered brutally. Every bit of his body was separated. At Rupauli in the district of Purnea a mob of about ten thousand surrounded the police station and hoisted the Congress flag. This was objected to by the Senior Inspector and the other staff. They were, however, overcome and had to fly to their quarters and they were attacked there. They managed to resist the attack from their quarters, but the Junior Sub-Inspector and the two constables with him were overcome and the insurgents poured kerosene oil over them and burnt them alive.

In the Central Provinces, at Ashti, a Sub-Inspector of Police and four constables were murdered, the Sub-Inspector having been beaten to death with stones and lathis and three of the constables having been soaked in kerosene oil and burnt alive on the spot and the fourth who had been rescued by his friends was later on caught and killed. At Chimur, a Circle Inspector and a constable were burnt, and two Magistrates were beaten severely and the Rest House in which they were still alive, was set on fire. In the United Provinces, in Bihar and the Central Provinces and also in other parts of the country there were murders of Magistrates and police officers and men.

I now want to refer to three other cases which are, in my submission, absolutely ghastly. Unfortunately, these cases come from my province of Bihar. At Narayanpur, a plane crashed west of Narayanpur on the 18th of August. The pilot was killed in the crash, and the remainder of the crew were killed brutally by the mob. At Marhowra, one British officer and four British other ranks, part of a detachment on protective duty, were ambushed as they alighted from a car in a field and speared or beaten to death. The last case is the murder of two Canadian Air Force Officers, officers who had come here to defend India and to protect the lives and property of Indians. I should like to give a few details of this crime, as the brutality and the ferocity with which they were murdered display the colossal callousness of the mob. These two young officers were travelling as ordinary passengers in a train and were not on duty in connection with the disturbances. Their train was attacked by an angry mob and stones were hurled at the windows of the carriage in which the two officers were travelling. Attempts were made by them to pacify the mob, but absolutely in vain. Finally, the officers were forced to come down from the carriage and they stepped out on to the platform. One of them was dressed only in a pair of shorts and the upper part of his body was bare. They were both set upon immediately and hacked to death in a most brutal way. Their bodies were then paraded through the town on an *ekka* and were finally thrown into a river. The train in which they had travelled was afterwards burnt. I do not know in what language one can describe the brutality.

I have given these details only for the purpose of showing the enormity of the crimes and the large area that it covered and the

number of occasions when it became necessary to open fire. It is obvious from this that those who were out to prevent damage to life and property by the mobs had to be mainly on the defensive and were suffering from the tremendous handicap of the superiority of number against them. As I submitted before, it is in this perspective that the question of inquiry into excesses can be considered. Knowing these facts and knowing the area where the devastation took place, is it possible to have an inquiry? Is there any *prima facie* case for an inquiry of this character? I respectfully submit, none whatsoever.

I will now take up the question of the propriety of inquiry against the troops and the police separately. As regards the allegation of excesses by the troops, it must be pointed out that the troops are always averse to be engaged in the suppression of riots. It is not their legitimate function and they only come in because they are called upon to operate in aid of the civil power. The army is a highly disciplined organization which can be trusted to do the best possible in an emergency and their confidence should never be undermined. If their conduct is called in question on any and every occasion when they have to carry out a duty which they do not like and which is perhaps the most unpleasant and difficult duty any citizen can have thrust upon him, it will be perfectly clear that their morale will be sapped and, when called upon to act, there will be a great and natural disinclination to do so. And there is a very strong feeling in the army that they shall not undertake such duties with the ever present fear before them that they will have to defend themselves and answer questions inspired by hostility, or even worse, by the desire to find a scapegoat. They are bound by very strict rules and they are taught that they will be trusted in an emergency to do the best they can. In an emergency a soldier must be trusted to do his duty as best as he can. In the conditions already described, these arguments apply with almost equal force to an inquiry into the conduct of the police. If an officer is always to have to justify his action before a Committee of Inquiry, there is bound to be a tendency to take the line of least resistance and not to take drastic but effective measures. From the reports which have been received, the Government are fully satisfied that the troops and the police have done their duty remarkably well under most trying and perilous conditions.

Government do not suggest that there may not have been cases when in a serious disturbance as this, there may not have been some excessive force or that innocent persons may not have suffered. To begin with, the primary responsibility for this must fall upon those who actually started this movement of sabotage and destruction. But if there have been cases of excesses which are authenticated and not stories from newspapers or from men who come and say all sorts of things, if they are authenticated, then the attention of the Army Department and the Provincial Governments will be drawn to them so that they may try to see that those who have been guilty of them do not escape punishment. The military authorities are exceedingly jealous of their reputation and the reputation of their soldiers, and I have no doubt that once a case of unjustifiable shooting is brought to their notice, they are sure to take action themselves.

As regards the police, there may be a question whether the Governor-General-in-Council would have any power to appoint a Committee of Members of the Central Legislature to enquire into the operation of the police forces which are entirely a Provincial subject. But leaving this aside, here again we feel sure that gross and callous cases of police excesses, if any, will most certainly be examined by the Provincial Governors. The *communiqués* which have been referred to by my Honourable friend, Mr Neogy, and also by my Honourable friend, Mr Joshi, all tend to show that such cases will be enquired into. But

what they object to is the holding of a general enquiry. But if there are cases which are well authenticated and which are brought to their notice, then enquiries will be held.

The main objection to the proposal, as I have submitted before and I am glad my Honourable friend, Sir F. E. James, has supported it, is the disastrous effect it would have on the morale of the services concerned, if an enquiry such as has been suggested was ordered. It is interesting to note that the Sind Government which had agreed to hold an official enquiry into certain allegations against the police in Karachi, which incidentally turned out to be completely unfounded, has reported that it had immediately an adverse effect on the morale of the police forces in that area. The cases that have been mentioned in this House will no doubt be noted, and the attention of the proper authorities drawn to them, but I respectfully submit that simply because some people come and start stories before some of us, it does not necessarily follow that they are true. Most of them may turn out to be without foundation and may be on a par with Sir Madhava Rao Deshpande's story, or the story of machinegunning in Bombay and Calcutta. Lots of stories had been brought to me from Patna, which, on enquiry from the persons concerned, nave been found to be absolutely untrue; one of these concerned an Honourable Member of this House. I hope, if there is time, he will say something about it. It was exactly the same story that he was dragged out of his house and asked by the Police or the military to clean the roads and remove the boulders. Well, Sir, at present I have only to say that this is unfounded and the Honourable Member will no doubt say what he has to say about this. Any attempt, I submit, to bring discredit on the forces which have so courageously and loyally performed their onerous duties in the face of tremendous odds would be most unfortunate. We are in the midst of a life and death struggle; the enemy is knocking at our doors and surely on such an occasion, it is better to look forward rather than look backward, and to see whether the orgy of destruction cannot be put behind us and all endeavours concentrated to bring peace and tranquility in the country and defeat our external enemies.

May I, in conclusion, Sir, respectfully submit to the House that this chapter should now be closed and we must now go ahead? Enough damage has been done by this senseless anarchy. Let us not let down those who have stood by us and who deserve our gratitude, because if we do, that will not only be the end of any discipline, but we must also be prepared for disasters of the worst kind in the country.

BABU BAIJNATH BAJORIA

Sir, as a non-violent man, non-violent in thought, word and deed (*interruption*)—I am not a Congressman, you know—I detest and abhor all violence of all sorts, either committed by the unruly mob or by the hooligans or by the agents of Government in the name of law and order. Sir, that is why I have tabled this amendment, which in my opinion is a balanced one. I have stated therein that I strongly condemn all acts of murder, sabotage, arson, loot and other forms of violence committed either by the unruly mobs or hooligans or by the police and the military. The police and the military have, I am sorry to say, had recourse to unnecessary firing, they have also burnt numerous houses, they have also pillaged villages and they have also done all sorts of mischief which could be imagined in the name of law and order.

Sir, I do not want to go into great details and give stories which, the Government may say, are all stories without any foundation. I will give them some facts which I think will not be denied. On behalf of the trading community, which consists of all castes and creeds, Hindus and Muslims and even Europeans, I say we have all suffered tremen-

dously both at the hands of these unruly mobs and also at the hands of Government agents.

But, Sir, what I want to say is that there was shooting at each and every step. Excessive force has been used, and by excessive force I mean that the force used was in excess of the legitimate force which would have been necessary to prevent those miscreants to perform their misdeeds. Sir, this will be the criterion, this will be the test of proving whether any excessive force has been used or not. In the case of burning of these tram-cars, which has been a feature of Calcutta disturbances, the mob could have been easily dispersed by lathi charges. But what did actually happen? The miscreants cut a few wires and set tram-cars on fire, and some of them ran away. After that the police and the military came and went on firing right and left. There was one incident in the College Street, very near my own house, and I could see as to what was happening. There was firing on the right and left and those who were in their houses nearby were hit. Sir, this could be easily inquired into. It is no use for the Honourable the Law Member and for my friend, Sir Frederick James, to say that if we make any inquiries it will undermine the morale of the police or the military. I think, Sir, that if that is their opinion then, I feel, that their opinion of the police and of the military is very low. If they think that merely an inquiry will upset them and will put them off their guard, they have got very little faith in the police and the military. In our opinion and in the opinion of the Members on this side of the House the police and the military are already totally demoralized. They are acting like mad dogs just in the same way as the hooligans are acting. They have put themselves in the same low category. If there is a check from above, I feel, Sir, that will have some salutary effect and it will check them from committing excesses and they will be able to render much more useful service to the cause of restoring law and order.

In conclusion, I will say that if the Government refuses to accept even a judicial inquiry by their own high judicial officers, we on this side of the House and the public in general will be justified in thinking that this irresponsible Government, who think they are responsible only to themselves, and to none else, are giving shelter to those who have committed murders, loot and arson in the sacred name of law. This Government and its agents who have perpetrated these crimes may not be responsible to this House and to the people of India, but they will be responsible to God and they will have to stand their trial before Him.

MR MUHAMMAD AZHAR ALI

I have listened very patiently to the speech which has been delivered by the Honourable the Law Member today, and I would say first of all that the amendment which has been put in by Dr Sir Ziauddin Ahmad gives only a wider scope to the inquiry which is to be made. It is not the one-sided inquiry as required by Mr Neogy but it is an amendment to have an equal inquiry for both sides. Sir, it was the Government and not the public or the Opposition that brought that Resolution moved by the Honourable the Home Member. If in that Resolution the Honourable the Home Member put instance after instance of the perpetrations of the hooligans in the country, and today if Mr Neogy has also put in instances, where is the harm? They are put before the House to judge on the merits of the case presented by the Honourable the Home Member, by Mr Neogy and by people from the Opposition side. I ask the Government to be honest, to be equal to the occasion and to consider the propositions which have been put from this side too. It is a matter that should not be shelved in this way and we be told that we ought not to quote instances in the House. Where is the forum or place where the public and the representatives of the people are to put in instances,

if not before this House? I ask my Honourable friend and those members of the Government on the Treasury Benches to consider it. Which is the forum? Where are the local Councils where the people's representatives can put in these cases? To say we ought to go to the Local Government, I submit that it is not an easy job for an individual Member to approach the Local Government in that way, just as we can put in cases in this forum. At least Government ought to know that this is the only forum where people can represent cases, individual cases, or cases where the public is interested.

If these fifteen Members of the Government are here for the contempt of public opinion, I tell you it is a menace to Government and to your democracy. Sir, they ought to remember that we, the Mussalmans, never said that we would not go with the Government and would not fight for the Government. We said that we would. But it is really very strange that yet no solution has been found by the British Government; and to say it is our responsibility; however, I would not expatiate on that point today. But I must tell the Government that we were always ready to work with the Government and to take up these matters in our hand, but it is a pity that our friend, the Honourable Dr Ambedkar the other day said in words of derision that we are all irresponsible people or so.

It is not only to the public but to the representatives of the people that they give offence. I am prepared to relate to the House that in my own town a police Sub-Inspector came to two of the big zamindars and told them to give their 12-bore shot-guns with 50 cartridges in the thana. When they protested, the Sub-Inspector of Police said that it was the order of the Superintendent of Police, but the latter denied it when questioned about it. Is this the way to ask for help? How are we to defend ourselves? These are the things under which we suffer in this country. I do not say that the Congress is not to blame, or this party or that. But the blame is also on the Government. You are to take courage in both hands and if the inquiry is asked for, what is the harm? Just as you say it is not an occasion to go and inquire about the doings of the police or the doings of the court or the doings of the army, so also it is not an occasion where people should go and lodge complaints and carry on the prosecution for days and days. We have told you sincerely and honestly, and with deliberate intention, that you are the guardians of peace of this country and so must look after these matters and do what you can help. But, I say that in these difficult times, these dilatory methods of Government will not help. I find what Mr Churchill has said....

The President: That has nothing to do with this Resolution.

Mr Muhammad Azhar Ali: It is he, the greatest Tory, who is today driving the destiny of this country. It is Mr Churchill again who is sending troops from outside to guard India but he is not retaining the Indian troops in this country. Why should he send our children outside and get outsiders from abroad to defend us? This shows the distrust of the Government of the people of this country. I lay stress on this point, that Government distrust the people of this country. We are prepared to help them in every way, but they will not accept our help. These are matters which I want to lay stress upon. Dr Sir Ziauddin Ahmad's motion says that there are some millowners who are paying the labourers and then turning them out. It is common knowledge that millowners in this country are helping their own labourers to go on strike. If that is a fact then I ask the Honourable the Law Member to look into it very carefully; these things are done under your own eyes and you ought to look into them.

These are the representations which the representatives of the people want to make to you and if you are not prepared to listen, it is your own fault. We have come here for a few days and we want to

represent these matters. The people were given to understand that the Expanded Council of the Viceroy would handle the affairs in India as if it was all peace and calm and quiet everywhere. Is that a fact today? Ever since the day you had this Expanded Council, these eleven heaven-sent people, you have found these hooligans and others disturbing the country's peace. (*Interruptions.*) I do not know who are the real leaders of the hooligans but it is well-known that this hooliganism started only afterwards.

The Assembly adjourned 'sine die' and the debate was resumed on February 12, 1943.

MR JAMNADAS M. MEHTA

Sir, I rise to support the amendments moved by my friends, Mr Bajoria and Mr Nilakantha Das. By that, I do not mean to oppose the original Resolution. The reason why I support the amendments is that they are more complete and state both sides of the case far more fully than has been done in the Resolution. The Resolution itself does not condemn the necessary force used against acts of sabotage. The support for the use of legitimate force is implicit in the Resolution. Nearly five months have elapsed since the Resolution was moved. There has been considerable improvement in the situation in the country. Those who were active saboteurs have gone underground and except for an occasional burning of a station or the robbery of a postal peon or some procession, the movement has definitely failed to get public support. We are, therefore, in a position to discuss it more dispassionately than we were in September when feelings were roused and passions were more in evidence.

No condemnation of the excesses of Government in suppressing disorders would be just unless the condemnation of the acts of violence is also full, strong, open-mouthed, complete and unequivocal. I am one of those who condemned the violence which broke out on the 9th August, 1942, at a time when the country was in definite danger of being invaded by a foreign enemy; the result of the movement set on foot on that day was, in my opinion, highly prejudicial to the safety and security of this country and highly impolitic and unpatriotic. It was a movement based on irritation and a sense of frustration. It lacked a sense of proportion and it definitely lacked any appreciation of the international and national situation. For these reasons, as also for the reasons that the sufferers were mostly my countrymen, men, women and children, I denounce that policy of the 9th August without any reservation and every legitimate action which the Government of India might have taken or might hereafter take for suppressing that movement will have my full, unequivocal and constant support. I do not wish to minimise the gravity of the situation that was created on the 9th August in the name of the freedom of this country. Far from being a movement for freedom it was quite the opposite. It was a movement for the enslavement of this country by the Japanese. Therefore, I have nothing but condemnation for those who started and continued it or have still got some sneaking sympathy for it or who are honestly misled into the belief that that movement can do anything good to this country. I condemn those who are privately supporting it and outwardly pretending not to know it. I condemn those cowards who have put women and children and students in front and ruined the careers of the students and brought about the deaths or injury to many boys and girls. I condemn those cowards who sulk behind and put forward those innocent people as their victims and their dupes. I would have expected that every patriotic man then and now would have taken the first care that the security of this country above all should be inviolate. The movement, in my opinion, was, therefore, utterly ill-advised and wholly wrong and unpatriotic. Therefore, I say that in supporting these

amendments I am, first of all supporting Government as strongly as they could desire of a citizen; I support the steps which they took for suppressing the violence and the sabotage that was involved in the "Quit India" movement. I am not one of those who believe that Government arrested these people too soon. They arrested them rather late. I compliment the Government for their considered courtesy and consideration even to the point of fault in tolerating people who had openly proclaimed their intention to rebel. I ask anybody whether anywhere in this world, even under a National Government, it would be possible to receive a considerate treatment for avowed and open rebels. I doubt that even if it was a National Government. Some Congress newspapers have practically threatened with hanging those who differed from them. That is the toleration which some of the Congress papers have shown, that people who differ from them should be hanged.

The President: The Honourable Member is not speaking on the Resolution. The Honourable Member must confine himself to the Resolution.

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: I was simply illustrating the toleration which the Government have shown to those who are saboteurs.

The President: If the Honourable Member covers a wide field like this, then he should remember that there are other Honourable Members who might wish to discuss these matters which are really irrelevant to the Resolution.

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: I will not amplify that any further. All I have to say today in support of the latter part of the Resolution, namely, the excesses, is that, first of all, it is based on this unequivocal declaration of condemnation for the disorders. It comes from one who is a friendly critic and who wishes success to their war effort but who also insists that Government should take care that no excess of any kind is indulged in and that it is the policy of the Government that they would scrupulously take all steps to prevent the excesses and punish those who have gone beyond the necessary force. That is the burden of what I am going to say now. I am very sorry to say that Government have not shown that keenness to maintain the balance; while suppressing violence against the State, they should equally suppress all unwarranted use of force against the citizen. Government have no intention, indeed there is lack of real desire to probe behind the action taken by the various Provincial Governments. The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed in making his speech that day said that the police and the military were very jealous of their honour and that if any excesses had taken place they would be the first to repudiate them, and that if the use of excessive force were brought to the notice of the Provincial Governments, they will take the earliest step to look into them. That kind of attitude was welcome to me. If that was really so, I would not press this Resolution; but all the evidence that we get is that wherever an excess has been perpetrated, the authorities are most unwilling to examine it—in fact, they are willing to screen it—and much less willing to punish those who have been responsible for these acts of excesses. In fact, in the provinces a policy of frightfulness has been indulged in, a frightfulness which the present Prime Minister has condemned in no unequivocal language. Here is what the Right Honourable the Prime Minister said on another occasion about frightfulness relating to India:

> "What I mean by frightfulness in the inflicting of great slaughter or massacre upon a particular crowd of people, with the intention of terrorising not merely the rest of the crowd, but the whole district or the whole country. We cannot admit this doctrine in any form. Frightfulness is not a remedy known to the British pharmacopoeia."

This is Mr Churchill's statement on the debate of General Dyer's massacres at the Jallianwala Bagh. I stand by this statement and demand that if frightfulness is not in the British pharmacopœia, the

Government must inquire into the frightfulness complained of. I do not want to speak about the events that have happened in the whole country. I confine my observations primarily to my constituency and to the City of Bombay and the district of Thana. I speak from personal knowledge of people who have suffered. I know from personal knowledge of the people who were shot. I am asking Government that, if they do not want to lose their reputation with those who are very friendly and with those who are against any anti-war movement, they must accept this Resolution. I will give only two cases in my constituency where guns were used against women—not against the Japanese, not against the Germans, but against women—who were proceeding to their houses or were already there. Government have admitted this grave misuse of authority and have come forward with small compensation instead of punishing those who were guilty. I ask the Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed whether or not these guns, which should be used only in war against the enemy, were used in the City of Poona and whether Government do not feel that their sense of honour and sense of responsibility demand the punishment of those who were responsible for those murderous attacks on the citizens. Soldiers who fired on those innocent women deserve nothing except hauling up for murder. I will give only one more case. In Nandurbar, a town in my constituency, school boys and girls were going in procession through the bazaar on the 9th September or 10th September—I don't remember the exact date. They were going in procession from their schools. The public had nothing to do with it. It was purely school boys' demonstration. They were shouting the usual slogans—harmless slogans. What happened? The police got scared and opened fire on those boys and girls aged mostly from five to fifteen. A procession—not of citizens, not of Congressmen, not of politicians—only of boys and girls returning home from their schools. The police fired on this crowd. The crowd began to run away. One boy of fourteen went to the place where the Congress flag was hoisted in that town and remained there. The police instead of arresting him fired on him. The boy was hit in the leg and the police went on firing till the boy was killed. The name of that boy will go down in the history of this country as a hero. I have seen the place where he was shot dead; I have met many citizens of Nandurbar. As soon as firing started the procession dispersed, all running for safety. Some ran, say, towards the Assembly, others towards the Council of State Chamber and the rest towards the Princes Chamber—for the purpose of illustration—I am pointing out that the boys and the girls were shot after they had dispersed and were running for safety. I, therefore, ask the Government to take note of this and institute an inquiry. I have complained to His Excellency the Governor of Bombay. He has promised to inquire if I sent him the necessary papers. But the police have effectively prevented me from collecting full information by terrorizing those who had cars to lend me for going to Nandurbar. Even if any friend of mine offered me his own car he is threatened with the stoppage of his petrol supply. Therefore, I say that in the interest of good Government and the safety of the citizens—as promised by the Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed—I appeal to the Home Member to accept the amendment that has been moved. Sir, I support.

PANDIT NILAKANTHA DAS

Sir, the Resolution as well as the amendment, both of them are very old.

The President: Is the Honourable Member moving his amendment?

Pandit Nilakantha Das: I have already moved my amendment. Sir, at this stage I feel there should be avoided all unnecessary controversy on the matter. So, I propose only to refer to certain principles of administration involved in these excesses. My object in moving the

amendment is to bring into bold relief the fact that while this Assembly wants the Government to guard in all possible manner against the use of excessive force it also supports the Government in the use of legitimate force that may be necessary in dealing with acts of violence and sabotage.

Sir, I differ from those who think that in spite of the Indianization of the Governor-General's Executive Council no change has taken place in the Government of India and that, therefore, no change is called for with certain intervals for a period of more than 18 years. I regret in the traditional duty of the Opposition of which I have been a member most deeply that even today the Council has not been wholely Indianized. The important portfolios of Finance, Home and Transport are yet in foreign hands. Even so, for the matters to which the resolution and my amendment relate the Indian Members of the Executive Council have taken the fullest responsibility. I sincerely welcome this evidence of collective responsibility of the Executive Council and I hope that when members of different parties and different races have been able to pull together in matters of highest importance which have given rise to great passions, they will be able to function as a Cabinet Government on questions of still deeper moment.

My friends, Mr K. C. Neogy and Mr Jamnadas Mehta, have narrated to you the stories of excesses in different parts of the country. We, on this side of the House, believe that most of these stories will be found to be true on an impartial investigation. But the wildest rumours of excesses find ready credence from the public and the public mind being thus inflamed prepares the atmosphere for further and more heinous outrages. This is a factor to which I ask the Government to apply their mind in all seriousness. Why is it so? What is the psychology behind it? I say that the public confidence in the administration of law and order has been shaken to its very foundation, mainly because the administration has been entrusted to civilians here in the Centre and in most of the Provinces. I mean no disrespect to my Honourable friend, Sir Reginald Maxwell, when I say that the edge of much of the criticism that has been levelled against the Government in the matter of controlling the situation created by the recent disturbances would have been blunted had the administration of law and order been in charge of a representative Indian.

Civilian rule has always been an anomaly; today it is a positive danger to the peace of the country and the stability of its Government. I ask the Government to take this fact deeply to their heart. Even in some Provinces with popular Ministries the application of law and order today is, in fact, directed and controlled by the civilian Governors and Secretaries who have never had any real touch with the people and consider repression to be a panacea for all violent and vengeful expressions of popular discontent.

The conditions in the Provinces with Ministries and those under Section 93 have often times been contrasted. I can speak with personal knowledge about Orissa. The first point is that most of the disturbances there took place in the lands which are under Princes. But even for that little which took place in the Province under popular Government an inquiry committee was appointed by the Provincial Government for one case of alleged excesses, and this is the only Inquiry Committee of its kind in India, so far as I know. What has been the result there? Surely nothing worse has come of it. In fact that Province is practically free from any disturbances today.

I say in all solemnity and with a deep sense of responsibility that rule by people who are alien to us in race and culture, who do not understand our ways and our customs, who are deadly opposed to our aspirations must end here and now. Rule by civilians, white or brown, must go, if India is to be saved from the horrors of a revolution and

perchance the devastation of a foreign invasion. When I say this, I do not indulge in any idle rhetoric. I state only a sober fact. The responsibility that rests on the Government of India today had never been borne by any Government in this country before. It is for them to determine whether the history of India henceforth shall be drenched in blood or whether it shall be a record of peaceful progress towards the fulfilment of her destiny. I want to offer them all help in carrying out their terrific responsibilities. Therefore, in spite of my intense dissatisfaction with the composition of this Government, I extend to them in all sincerity my hand of co-operation modifying the policy I have followed during a life time. I ask them to think not once, not twice, but many times before they reject the co-operation so offered.

Times have changed. We are in the midst of the most supreme crisis in the history of our country. It is easy to say it; but I am afraid that few of us realize it in the way we should. New conditions call for new policies and actions. We have got an immense army of invasion standing on the borders of India. Inside the country we have got differences between the communities which are well nigh irreconcilable. The Congress, the biggest organized political party in the country, will not depart from its traditional policy of self-abnegation. The Muslim League will not co-operate with other parties except on impossible terms. The prestige of the ruling race is at its lowest depth for reasons on which I need not dilate. Hatred of the British has gone down and now permeates the entire masses of this country. Britain had never statesmanship enough in dealing properly with the non-white races of the Empire. She had always relied on a policy of somehow muddling through. Today when the aspirations of the people are at their highest pitch British statesmanship has nothing to offer but the abuses of Mr Churchill and Mr Amery. Does Mr Churchill envisage the national resistance of India against the Japanese invasion?

One more word about the amendment and I have done. I do not think that a peripatetic committee consisting of the Members of this House of Legislature is the proper body to inquire into the allegations of the use of excessive force by police or military. Such investigation should be entrusted not to politicians but to Judges trained by long experience to weigh in scales of justice the evidence before them. My amendment, therefore, calls for investigation by judicial officers of high standing and qualification. In my amendment, perhaps the word "Tribunal" is not very appropriate. This may in its implication mean something which may not be very convenient for the Government to appoint. So, I even agree and concede that the word "Tribunal" should be deleted. I shall drop it from my amendment if the Government care to consider my amendment favourably. I shall substitute for the word "Tribunal": judicial officers of standing should be appointed to inquire into any alleged excesses which are found to be well based by the Government, and for which there is a *prima facie* case made out. So, I say the Government will have to do all these things, appointment and punishment; and whether the allegations are *prima facie* well founded will be for the Government to judge. My amendment is so simple and so mild that if the Government do not accept an amendment like this, it must be said they never accept the hand of co-operation. They only want "yes"-men in this country and not men who are out to co-operate. With these words, I resume my seat.

SIR MUHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN

I should have thought that after a lapse of such a long time this matter will not come before this House and when the normal relations are being restored in the country this Resolution may not be debated in order that it may not create some kind of excitement again. But the harrowing tales, which have been told by Mr Neogy, are of such a

nature that they cannot be brushed aside, and it has been the policy of the Muslim League that they do not tolerate and cannot allow excesses by any party whatsoever, whether those excesses have been committed by the hooligans in August last or those committed by the people who were in charge of keeping law and order. We have been told—I do not know how far they are right or wrong,—but a Member of the position of Mr K. C. Neogy has made those allegations before this House, and today I find that certain allegations have been made by Mr Jamnadas Mehta, who is a member of the Defence Council. When the allegations come from Members of that status, they require some consideration, and we cannot say that they are all false, and there should be no inquiry into those excesses. After all it is the Government who is responsible to keep law and order, but at the same time it is the duty of every civilized Government to keep their employees under proper control so that when they are sent out to deal with disturbances they should not lose their heads. We find that there is some justification for getting a proper inquiry made by the Government. We do not want this matter to be left to future Governments to appoint committees later on to go into these incidents, and let the bad spirit continue as was evidenced after the Jallianwala Bagh incident. We do not want a repetition of that kind nor do we want the same spirit to prevail in the country in future. At the same time, we cannot ignore the position which has been taken by the Honourable the Home Member. He gave us a full and detailed report of the excesses committed by the other side—the hooligans. And we know, as public men, not only what he gave us, but what appeared in the Press—mostly in the papers edited by the partisans of the Congress—giving accounts of people who were burnt alive, the soldiers and police being attacked, and certain police officials being burnt alive. After all the police and the officers who had to deal with these disturbances were human beings—and they are not very highly paid officials, either—when they find that an attack is made on their class, naturally what is expected of people of that status would come from them also. Therefore retaliation and excesses might have been committed by them in return. But even if they have committed excesses in return, we cannot ignore the fact that the perpetrators of the first act of excess was the other party, and the blame, therefore, ought to be apportioned on all sides and not thrown on one side alone. I quite agree with the Government position that if we make inquiries into everything which is done by an official after the disturbances are over, and his action is questioned later on, nobody will be willing in future to do anything under those circumstances. And, therefore, it is really right and proper that an inquiry should be made into the allegations which have already been made before this House, and this position is strengthened by the *communiqué* which has been issued by the Government of India recently on the correspondence which took place between the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi.

SARDAR SANT SINGH

The Government has taken up the attitude that as the mob has committed excesses, therefore we are bound to maintain law and order. If they had gone a bit further and had said that in punishing the excesses they did not pay any regard to the law of the land, and thus equally committed excesses, the position would have been understandable. But this is not the position taken up by the Government. I find Sir, that in the course of the debate during the last Session, the Honourable the Home Member said then that:—

> "If any such act has occurred anywhere, it is a breach of discipline with which the Provincial Governments and the officers in command of their forces are as much concerned as any member of the public. The proper course in such cases will be to bring the allegations, if they are well authenticated (this is very important) to the notice of the authorities immediately responsible for the disci-

pline of their forces, and it can be assumed that if they are satisfied they will do what is proper."

Now, that was the position taken up. May I remind the Honourable Member that above five months have elapsed since Mr Neogy gave the details in this House. Has he taken any step to find out whether those details and facts were correct or incorrect? Has the Government issued any *communiqué* during that period of five months, explaining the position that the Government, in their capacity as members of the Government—and I hope as members of a civilized Government—enquired into the allegations made publicly on the floor of this House, and that they found them either exaggerated or unfounded? No. Why, Sir? The issue which requires to be decided between the Government and the people is this: Is it maintenance of law and order—which is, of course, the function of any Government whether civilized or barbarous—or is it the policy of frightfulness indulged in for motives other than the good administration of the country? The charge is that the Government have indulged in a policy of frightfulness. They want to terrorise the people into submission. They are not maintaining law and order.

Before I go to give some instances of excesses committed, may I ask one question? Is a police sub-inspector who commits dacoity or the military indulging in indiscriminate loot and plunder—are they not offenders in the eyes of the law? If they are offenders, do not the penal provisions of the country apply to their acts, or do they hold any privileged position in the eyes of the Government? That is the point which requires serious consideration of any Government.

Now, I come to the facts. What has happened in the country? I will quote from some documents which are authenticated. One is a memorial submitted by a retired sub-inspector of police to His Excellency the Governor of the United Provinces. Therein I will read only the relevant portion—he says:

> "In spite of the fact that Your Excellency's memorialist and his whole family are faithful and loyal subjects of the Government, his country house at village Sherpur Kalan, police station Mahmudabad, district Ghazipur, was, along with others, burnt to ashes and all his other movable property, namely, 25,000 rupees in cash, 10,000 rupees by way of gold and silver ornaments, 10,000 rupees by way of clothes and furniture and 2,000 rupees by way of damages to the house, were looted away and destroyed by the military under the direct command of the district authorities, leaving the family in utter ruin and despair."

Further on, he says that not only the cash tempted our brave soldiers fighting against unarmed civilians, but look at the mentality which prompted them to burn to ashes all the important and valuable documents, mortgage deeds—both registered and unregistered—and throw away the key of the iron safe, which they had forcibly taken away from the inmates of the house, into a deep tank. May I ask if this is not a specific instance? The date is not given in the copy, but this memorial has been submitted to the Government. May I ask the Honourable the Home Member when he gets up to give some reply on behalf of the Government—which I hope he will do—has any action so far been taken on this memorial and any inquiry made by any official and any conclusions or findings reached on it?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Which memorial?

Sardar Sant Singh: This memorial, which I have read, from Suraj Narayan Rai to the Governor of the United Provinces. I can send him a copy if he needs it.

Then there is another signed letter which is in Hindi and which has been translated for the purposes of this debate: It is from Mr Jagannath Rai of the same village. He says:

> "The senior police inspector accompanied by a posse of constables made their appearance in my village and indulged in acts of loot and pillage. None

dared oppose them because the people were assaulted, fisticuffed, prodded with the butt end of the guns: Many people fell down unconscious as a result."

Further on, he said that the people killed in the firing were thrown into the water, although some of the victims were still alive and could possibly have been saved on receiving proper treatment. Further on the allegation is that a woman was molested and her house was looted and set on fire afterwards. This state of things continued for two days in Arrah and other villages. The villagers were robbed of their property and even horses and elephants were not spared. These things are alleged by one side and denied by the other. How is the public to judge? If they are to be judged by any method, it is the method of inquiry. Why do they shirk inquiry? Will the Honourable the Home Member please tell us what are the worse methods which Nazism indulges in, in punishing persons who are against Hitler and his colleagues? If these methods have a family likeness with those of Nazism, will he tell us how does he defend the war in the present stage? That is the pointed question which I place before the House.

MR T. T. KRISHNAMACHARI

The acts of the police and of the military have created such a terror in the minds of the people, made them completely silent and dumb, made them put up with all the atrocities of the local police without complaint, and unless some relief is forthcoming, some gesture is forthcoming from the Government to the effect that they do not wish to countenance this kind of atrocities or encourage such atrocities on future occasions, the morale of the people will indeed be affected and to that extent the war effort on which every Member of this House appears to be keen will suffer.

There are two aspects to this question, Sir. One is where there is a particular outbreak, in the act of quelling that outbreak there may be police excesses. Well, perhaps, in a case like that police excesses can be justified to a certain extent. But, Sir, there is the other aspect of the question. There is a continuous movement on the part of those in authority to terrorize people into obedience, to take reprisals against acts of sabotage from which particular localities have suffered, which people of those localities are said to have indulged in. It is this aspect which is more frightening than the first one. We in Madras are accustomed to police shooting in the past—in the past, unconnected, with the movement that is supposed to have been launched in August last. We have had occasions when unarmed crowds have been shot down, but since those occurrences have taken place during war-time no redress of those grievances was vouchsafed to us. We are accustomed in the past to that peculiar technique which has been evolved by the police in Madras called the lathi charge—lathi charge which has frightened people in the past—as long back as 12 years ago when the non-co-operation movement of 1931 was in progress. But the new method of terrorism indulged in by the police for the punishment of offenders is something totally new to us. It is a fact that in Madras we did not have military firing on occasions when there were outbreaks or subsequently thereafter. We have, however, a special branch of the police called the Malabar Special Police,—a police which are quasi-military, and who are so wholly kept away from the people of the country that they could be as ruthless as, if not more ruthless than, the military. In my own province, in the district which I have the honour to represent on the floor of this House, there have been occasions when police excesses had been so great that they have terrified the people of the entire district. In Tanjore there have been instances of firing, not only in the town of Tanjore, but in Kumbakonam, in Mannargudi,

and in the suburbs. And on what account? To disperse the crowd. No enquiry was made whether the firing was justifiable, because the police had always held that the prestige of the Government would suffer, that the morale of the officers who were carrying out the work of keeping the peace in the country would suffer. That has been the age-long cry of British Imperialism in this country and it is still being used today, notwithstanding the fact that we have wise and patriotic Indians on the Treasury Benches. Another instance is that of the district of Ramnad where the worst type of police atrocities have taken place. There villages were burnt. Thatched sheds, huts were burnt during the absence of the male members of the village, and it is said that women also were molested. The matter was put before the local police officers; some of them had the decency to admit "Reprisals we have to carry out. Otherwise we cannot put down this movement." A distinguished police officer in my province has said that hooliganism must be met by hooliganism, but they would not admit that there have been occasions of molestation of women. In the town of Madura I have heard of a well authenticated report of bad handling of two women. Two women were taken away by the police, stripped of their clothes, dressed in rags and then left on an open road 12 miles away from the city, and it is said that that particular action on the part of the police has evoked a reprisal from the public, the sequel to which is now a matter under the consideration of a judicial tribunal. Again, further south in Tinnevelly similar instances have occurred. Villages after villages have been looted. Thatched sheds and huts have been set fire to, and there has been no inquiry of any sort. I can take the House into my confidence and say that a very highly placed person in my own province had approached the highest authority of that province and told him: "These are the instances we hear. Why don't you investigate? Why don't you, when you go about, call some non-officials and find out the truth? That at least will put the fear of God in the minds of the police." There was no response. It is not merely in these districts that I have mentioned, that such things have happened. In other districts as well, in the Andhra Districts, in the Ceded Districts, in the district of Guntur, in the district of Coimbatore such acts of terrorism have taken place, and only for the purpose of terrorising people into obedience and to prevent them from resorting to acts of sabotage which they are reported to have indulged in.

Is that really the policy of the Government? The resolution of this Government issued after the arrest of the Congress leaders seemed to indicate that punitive action will not be taken. But what is this? This is not perhaps punitive action, then this is sheer terrorism. The result of it is, as the House will understand, that if there is a movement it will be driven underground, if there is no movement people will be hardened against the Government. And that is the feeling of the people today in my own province at any rate.

I shall not appeal to the Treasury Benches in the name of fair play. I shall not appeal to them in the name of the standards of justice for which great nations of the world are supposed to be fighting. But I shall appeal to them this way. I shall tell those people of my own colour, people who are sons of the soil, that they have to sit up sometimes and see that some remedy is vouchsafed to their own people who are suffering, who have been stricken down by these acts of terrorism. The members of an alien bureaucracy who are not natives of this country might feel in the same way as Madame la Pompadour, 'after us the deluge'; but people of the soil cannot afford to do so. The deluge will come and will overtake them. They have got to be here and with us, they will have to sink or swim with us in the deluge. I appeal to those wise and patriotic Indians on the

Treasury Benches, pull your weight to see that something is done, some inquiry is instituted, some courage and hope is infused in those people who have been terrorised into abject obedience. In my province no meetings are possible, there is a ban everywhere, we cannot have even meetings where Gita can be expounded. The District Magistrates use the Defence of India Rules for the purpose. We cannot write to the newspapers, as newspapers won't publish them. How else are we going to ventilate these grievances except in this only forum which is vouchsafed to the people of this country, and that is why I have asked your permission to stand up and support this resolution of Mr Neogy for an inquiry whatever may be the method of inquiry.

MR GOVIND V. DESHMUKH

Sir, the use of force can only be justified when those who wish to establish order have to deal with a riotous assembly, and the use of firearms can only be justified when those who wish to establish order and preserve peace are in such a position that their lives are in danger. If none of these conditions can be satisfied, then resort to arms cannot be justified. These are certainly cases which have occurred and I am going to cite them and they can only be designated as cases of murder.

Now, I am going to cite some instances in Nagpur. For instance, milkmen coming from the suburbs in the early hours of the morning were shot at by the military men. Mind you, the suburban people are not expected to know any curfew order or any orders that were promulgated. Not only was this curfew order which was issued in Nagpur not made known to these suburban people who brought milk and vegetables but even Government servants were not aware of it. I can cite the instance of a person who was connected with the Agricultural Department of the Government. He was connected with the breeding branch of the Agricultural Department. His boss was coming to Nagpur and he wanted to receive him at the station. The scheduled time of the arrival of the train was 5 o'clock, but that day it was late. So, I told him that there was a rumour that a curfew order was going to be issued. He said, "Is it so?" I told him it was so. I was sitting at the house of a person who is a very responsible person; he is a doctor and he was a Member of the Assembly, I mean Dr Khare. So, the gentleman who wanted to go to the station to receive his boss put himself in touch with the police. The reply that he got from the police station was that they did not know but they promised to make inquiries and then let him know. The fellow waited for half an hour and got no reply. So, even the police did not know the promulgation of this curfew order. When even the educated people did not know anything about this curfew order how can you expect the milkmen and the vegetable vendors to know about it? These milkmen come to Nagpur to sell their milk; they ride on their cycles and their cans are filled with milk. There was no earthly reason for shooting a man who was riding on a bicycle carrying his milk cans. The next thing that I wish to say is this. The soldiers, whether Indian or European, who were employed to establish order or the officers who commanded them, did not care a tuppence for the lives of Indians. When the disturbances occurred, I went to the city and there was firing going on. When the military came, there was no mob round-about those places and yet they started firing at random. I saw men coming in Dr Paranjpye's hospital who were shot on all parts of their body. Among them were persons who were living in their houses and who were doing business in their shops. What earthly justification was there for using firearms against them? Not only that, even after order was established, respectable persons

were brought out of their houses to remove the refuse in the streets. So, it was not a solitary instance which Mr Neogy quoted. I can say that this happened to retired Government sub-assistant surgeons. The unfortunate part of it is that these people who suffered at the hands of the military will tell you in private all that happened to them but not in the public. Their idea is that they would go down in the estimation of the people. If there is a regular inquiry, they can come forward and speak the truth. There was a member of the Bar, who was treated in a very disrespectful fashion. The peons of Judges and other respectable persons were shot at. I know the case of a person who is now on the Bench and whose peon was shot at when he was returning from the Bank. When he wrote to the military authority about the matter, they did not pay any attention to it. When cases like this do occur, they certainly impress the public and people begin to ask, as a friend of mine did ask, whether there is British Raj or Goonda Raj. These things are unjustifiable. Even ladies have suffered at the hands of the military. Of course, they are not prepared to mention their names because their self-respect is involved.

Now, Sir, after narrating these incidents that happened at Nagpur, let me come to Chimur. Things became so serious at Chimur that they have occupied the attention not only of the public here but also in England and other countries. This is a place which has made itself known. I have a Government *communiqué* in my hand. From this very *communiqué* I will point out that there are grounds for inquiry. What happened was this. There were disturbances on the 16th and the District Magistrate went there on the 19th. He took with him 200 British soldiers, 50 Indian soldiers and 50 men belonging to the reserved police force. They went there and what did they do? They started breaking open the houses and arresting men and the following night the women were molested. Force was used, the houses were broken open and the people were terrified. I can establish this from the statement which was issued in justification of it by the Central Provinces Government itself. That is what the *communiqué* says:

> "As the Deputy Commissioner points out, the force sent to Chimur was 'dealing with violent persons whose thirst for blood had not yet subsided' and who were concealing themselves in groups of 8 or 10 behind locked doors. In such circumstances a certain amount of damage to property and rough handling were inevitable."

The fact is clear. The comment which I wish to make is this. How could these blood-thirsty men behind the locked doors confine themselves in the houses in batches? If they were blood-thirsty men, they would be out to take somebody's blood. The Government says that damage to property and rough handling were inevitable. You have to prove that these things were inevitable. If you are not going to accept the statements which some of the ladies made and among them was included the wife of an ex-Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar and many of them were graduates, what earthly reason is there for us to accept your statement?

Then Sir, besides the allegations relating to Chimur incident there are other cases of molestation of women. What had the Government done? What is it that the Government says? It says we are not going to do anything. The reason is that the names of the women are not disclosed. Nobody comes forward to give out the names of persons. We cannot convict persons unless their names are known. It is no use to have any inquiry. What Government forgets and what we are claiming is this, that allegations against military and police are made by responsible persons. Government wish to disbelieve the attacks of the military merely by saying that no name was given. They say the complaints of women are false. We say that there have been these

acts, it is for you to prove that these are false. Hold an inquiry and prove the falsity of these; if you do not, then I feel justified in saying that these complaints are true and that the allegations that we have made are correct. Sir, I want to say one thing in justification of my proposition and that is this: You cannot disbelieve a statement simply because no names are disclosed. For instance, this National War Front issued a leaflet called "Hounded Eyes"; that gives an extract from a newspaper called *The Leader* of Allahabad. It contained an article or an extract of article which said that some person whose name is not given, interviewed a person, whose name also is not given, and complained that his wife was raped by a Japanese soldier. The woman's name is not given. This interview took place after many months of Japanese attack on Burma. I am prepared to believe it,—this statement that a Japanese may have raped this woman. Why should anybody blame us for not giving out names of women? Even in this article the names of persons are not mentioned. In the leaflet which has been issued by the National War Front no names are mentioned. They are carrying this propaganda. They want the people to believe this statement.

MR LALCHAND NAVALRAI

I submit we have a strong case for showing that too much cruelty has been done in exercising the powers which the military and the police did. On this point, I will take only two factors, firstly, if there has been firing and, if so, was it in excess or if there was any necessity for firing at all, and, secondly, whether the punishment inflicted upon the people in the way of flogging young children and schoolboys, whether this punishment was in excess or not. These are the two points. On these, I do not think much evidence is needed. With regard to firing, I have in my hands a pamphlet written by Mr R. N. Mandlik, a Member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, a responsible man. He has given his own experiences of what he has himself seen. I cannot understand how the evidence of such a responsible man could be brushed aside. This gentleman, Mr Mandlik, asked constitutionally for the appointment of a Committee. The Bombay Government refused his request. Then, he found that when this matter was discussed in the Central Legislature during the last Session, the Honourable Mr Aney gave expression to certain statements. According to the conditions laid down in those statements, Mr Mandlik tried his level best to persuade the Bombay Government to make inquiries into the excesses that have been committed. But nothing has been done. In his pamphlet he says that he simply followed up what the Honourable Mr Aney announced in the Central Assembly. The Honourable Mr Aney said in this House:

> "The authorities had to meet an uncommon situation. It was not easy to put down riotous and rebellious people. In meeting the situation force had to be used and in the use of that force a certain latitude had to be given to the persons who were on the spot. If, however, there were excesses it was in the interest of Provincial Governments and Officers responsible for the discipline of the forces to take note of the facts and inquire into the complaints. I believe that complaints would be considered and grievances put right."

But they have not been put right. After exploring all other avenues to get a remedy, Mr Mandlik has at last come to the Members of the Central Legislature to table this Resolution and bring the facts again to the notice of the Government and urge upon the Government to institute inquiries. If this modest demand is not agreed to, then woe unto the situation. With regard to firing Mr Mandlik says:

> "As a representative of the people in the Bombay Legislative Assembly, I did everything that was possible to be done in a constitutional manner to secure a Judicial enquiry from Government into the alleged wanton firing at Poona on

the 12th August, 1942, by the Military and at Nandurbar on the 9th September, 1942, by the Police. At Poona among others, innocent housewives were shot dead, not on the street or in the midst of the mob, but in their homes."

Is this not a tragedy? Last year, I also mentioned that in Karachi, the excesses went so far that when small boys were taking a procession or something and when they went into their houses, they were pursued by the police into their houses and they were beaten. Is it possible that the steps taken by Government to put down the disturbances were in any way lenient? So far as firing is concerned, it cannot be justified on any ground. He further on says:

"At Nandurbar, the police are alleged to have opened fire, without a warning, on a peaceful procession of school children! In this firing four school boys of ages between 8 and 15 and one college student aged about 20 were killed and about 12 persons were wounded among whom is a girl of 8 years old."

What more should I say?

With regard to flogging, here is what appeared in the Press regarding flogging in Sind. I was very sorry when the War Secretary came forward to say that these boys were given cane stripes only. It is not so at all. I challenge that statement, and propose that an enquiry should be made into this.

The manner in which these schoolboys between the ages of 11 and 14 years, excepting one of 18, were flogged was this:

"They were stripped naked before their comrades and tied to a 'tik-tiki' and then flogged on the thighs by a sepoy or a 'mukadam'. The cuts were sharp and severe and they did bleed."

Mr C. M. Trivedi: I challenge that.

Mr Lalchand Navalrai: I submit, Sir, that this is a very great excess and a committee should be appointed to go into this.

SIR REGINALD MAXWELL

Sir, in his speech this morning, my Honourable friend, Sardar Sant Singh, asked what steps Government had taken to investigate the allegations made in the course of the debate at the last session. I can assure him that we have not been idle on that point, and that copies of the debate have been sent to the Provincial Governments with a view to the verification of such cases as was possible. Of course, no investigation can be made or expected, of wide and sweeping allegations, such as that the police generally indulged in random firing, and so forth. No investigation is possible of anything which is not sufficiently definite to enable somebody to go and find out whether this or that took place at all. In so far as specific allegations have been investigated, and I have information about them, I am in a position to assure the House that nothing has come to notice as a result of the last debate in which the allegations were entirely substantiated. The enquiries show that most of the allegations either misrepresented the facts or represented only one side of what occurred. And in some cases investigation has failed to reveal any incident of the kind described to have taken place at all.

Of course I am not in a position to reply to allegations made in the course of today's debate, because they could not be referred to Provincial Governments. But I can give one or two instances showing the kind of results revealed by investigations on assertions that were made on the last occasion. Mr Jamnadas Mehta, for instance, has referred to the Nandurbar case which was quoted in Mr Joshi's speech. What the House was told failed entirely to bring out the fact that the police had to deal with an excited mob of about a thousand persons armed with sticks. The police ordered it to disperse several times, but that had no effect. They then arrested the leaders and they were escorting them to the police station but they lay down on the ground and refused to move. At the same time stones were

thrown at the police and a Sub-Inspector was attacked and stabbed in the eye and abdomen. It has been stated that this was a stone thrown by some enemy of his. In fact, this Sub-Inspector had only been transferred to the Police Station—not even in Nandurbar but in Sakri—in August. He had never been to Nandurbar and the people did not know him and there could not have been anybody there who could possibly have any grudge against him. Then, finding that the lives of the whole police party were in danger, the Resident 1st Class Magistrate, who was present on the spot, ordered the Police to open fire after warning the crowd, and as a result of that in all 19 rounds were fired, 14 persons were injured of whom 5 died but only one of those killed and 3 of those injured were under the age of 16. We were told that the police fired wantonly on merely a students' procession or a boys' procession. That will show to the House that there was another side of the matter. I do not at all doubt the sincerity of my Honourable friend, Mr Jamnadas Mehta, who referred to this incident this morning, but after all, he was not present on the spot. He can only give the House what he has been told.

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: I have seen some of the injured who were still alive.

Mr K. C. Neogy: But was the Honourable Member himself present on the spot?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Of course I was not.

Mr K. C. Neogy: Then, is his testimony any more reliable than that of Mr Mehta?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: I warn the House of the tendency which arises in such cases for persons to make a story of police excesses in order to create a diversion. When some one goes afterwards to the place to find out about the matter, these stories are presented to him with all appearance of sincerity and he may believe them, but at the same time here we have a well authenticated case of firing under the orders of a Resident 1st Class Magistrate.

There was another case of which mention was made in the previous debate about a notice under section 80 from a Zamindar of Ghazipur. That was told by Mr Neogy. But his story of the matter, which he gave to the House entirely omits to mention that a mob of 600 persons from that and other villages were attacking the police with lathis and that is why the police and military had to open fire to disperse them...

Mr K. C. Neogy: And set fire to the houses....

Sir Reginald Maxwell: This point was omitted from the story given by Mr Neogy.

Mr K. C. Neogy: What about incendiarism, looting and occasional raids? It is a sense of shame.

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Mr Neogy mentioned four cases from Cawnpore in which he alleged that excesses had been committed. His allegations were based on letters which he had received from other persons and did not purport to give his personal knowledge of the matter. Of these four instances, not one has come to the notice of the Provincial Government. The position taken up by Government in the previous debate was that if well supported allegations are made to the local Government, that Government will be as much interested as any member of the public in investigating them. But if such allegations do not reach the Provincial Government, how can it be expected to do anything? One can presume that if no complaint was made to the Provincial Government nothing of the kind took place.

Mr K. C. Neogy: They do not enjoy any confidence. The Honourable Member knows it very well. Who trusts them?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: There is another case mentioned by my

Honourable friend, Mr Joshi, about the Manager of the Gandhi Ashram, Meerut, who was alleged to have been attacked by a police party together with the persons associated with him, and it is stated that the Manager was subsequently shot. This again has not come to the notice of the Provincial Government at all. No such complaint has been made to them. All I can say is, therefore, that the presumption is that no such thing occurred; but at any rate Government are clear in the matter. We have said that well supported allegations will be investigated. Well, if they are not made it is not our fault.

Sardar Sant Singh: What can you say of a Government which does not even know about the firing!

Mr K. C. Neogy: If you care for your reputation you should yourself investigate them.

Sir Reginald Maxwell: As regards the general allegations the Government position was stated very clearly by my Honourable colleague, the Law Member, on the last day's debate on this Resolution. Government stand entirely by what he then said. I must repeat that Government deny altogether that there has been any general policy of frightfulness, such as Mr Jamnadas Mehta asked us to repudiate. I fully repudiate any such thing. There is no general policy sanctioning the use of excess force.

Mr Jamnadas M. Mehta: Is there any particular policy?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Certainly there is. The policy is there and it is that force used must be such as is sufficient to restore order.

Sardar Sant Singh: The Nazis say the same thing. They say it no differently. The question is how do the people feel?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: If excess force or unjustifiable action has occurred anywhere, I can only say that it is no part of any general policy sanctioned either by this Government or by any Provincial Government.

Sardar Sant Singh: Why not make an inquiry?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: And, therefore, instances in regard to which any complaint may arise must be regarded as isolated instances and dealt with as such.

Pandit Nilakantha Das: Have there been such instances?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Certainly, I will come back to it in a moment. At this very moment, so far as my information goes, a number of cases against policemen are under investigation, or action has been taken, in various provinces. I have not yet got the full particulars of these cases. But for instance in Bihar 13 cases, involving 35 police officers, are either being inquired into at this moment or are being tried. I am informed that in the Central Provinces one constable has been suspended and one dismissed. In the United Provinces there is a case in which five policemen are being tried on a charge of murder. In Delhi there is one case in which four policemen are being tried on a charge of murder.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Altogether how many scapegoats?

Sir Reginald Maxwell: I have not complete statistics. I am giving the House instances to support what I have said, *viz.*, that the Government and the Provinces are in no way reluctant to take adequate action where the cases are properly brought to their notice and where investigation shows that they are well founded. But as I have said, these cases must be regarded as isolated instances. They are no part of any general policy and, therefore, on that ground no case is made out for an all-India inquiry.

Now I would ask the House to be careful in judging allegations of excess force. The force used in any situation must be judged in relation to the situation with which the police had to deal. As I pointed out in my speech at the last session, it is entirely wrong to speak or to

regard the matter as though in all these cases the police were the aggressor and the persons who suffered were doing nothing or carrying on some legitimate activity. In all cases which have come to our notice, in which force has been used, the violence was on the other side. It was the mob who were the aggressors and it was the duty of the police to protect Government property, or to prevent their own party from being overwhelmed. It is very easy to judge these instances long after the event sitting in the comfortable safety of this House. Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan asked that the police should be kept under control and should not be allowed to lose their heads. But as I pointed out before, in situations of that kind where a small body of police is confronted by a large armed mob, you cannot expect the men on the spot to judge the amount of force necessary by a yard stick.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I did not use the word "police," I said those people.

Sir Reginald Maxwell: Well, the debate relates to persons who did use force. Didn't it?

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: They were not always at fault.

Sir Reginald Maxwell: I shall now give the House illustrations of the situations with which police parties had to deal.

At Katra in the Bihar province, on August 15, an armed mob of about 5,000 strong attacked the police station and assaulted the Sub-Inspector and his 8 constables before the police could open fire. The Sub-Inspector lay unconscious, one constable was killed and the remaining constables were disarmed and severely beaten. The rioters looted the police station and barracks and the Sub-Inspector's property, and finally set fire to the police station. If the police had fired on the mob, they would have been doing their duty and no more. This particular instance shows how wrong it is to say that the police should have withheld their fire. This was a case in which the police had not fired. They were overwhelmed and their police station burnt. There are many other cases in my hand here, but it is no use reading them to the House. There are many such cases of the same kind in which small parties of the police had to deal with very large armed mobs of an extremely violent disposition, and it is impossible for us to judge such cases by applying any standard of measurement to the force which was to be used.

Statistics up to the 30th November show that there were 49 fatal casualties among the police. Non-fatal casualties numbered 1,363. These would not include a number of unreported injuries. The number of police stations or outposts destroyed or severely damaged was 192, and the number of other Government buildings 494, not counting municipal property, schools and so forth. The number of railway stations destroyed or severely damaged uptil the 31st December was 318; cases of serious damage to railway tracks were 103; serious damage to rolling stock 254; post and telegraph offices, sub-offices and so on, destroyed or severely damaged 309; other cases of damage to telegraphs and telephones 11,285. I may add that among the military forces there were 14 fatal and 70 non-fatal casualties inflicted by the mobs and nine cases in which military property and installations were destroyed or severely damaged.

I quote these figures in order that the House may realize the great seriousness of the rebellion and the extreme violence with which the Government forces had to deal.

Now, some of the allegations relate to the shooting of innocent persons, including women and children. It is not denied that when mob violence necessitates firing, innocent persons may sometimes be injured or even killed. Actually I could quote an instance at Mahad in the Colaba district where a revenue head clerk was killed by firing

by a police party because the mob had captured him and some other Government servants and put them in front as a shield when they were about to attack a *kutcheri*. These things cannot be helped. Many innocent persons suffer in such disturbances. But the position of Government is that no wilful action of this kind is part of the policy employed; and in regard to these allegations about women and children, I should like the House to remember on the other side the record of the rebellion itself in terms of injuries or loss of property inflicted on innocent persons and the loss of life, even of women and children, caused by bomb outrages. There again I can give the House numerous instances but time will not permit me to quote many. But I would like to read this instance. On the 23rd August in a place in the Monghyr district of Bihar rioters caught several men who had refused to join them and maltreated them. Three victims had an eye deliberately put out by a spear point, whilst a fourth had an eye burnt out. Four of these men had also fingers cut off and five of them branded. One subsequently died. As regards the bomb outrages, I will just quote one or two. On the 29th September, 1942, a crude bomb thrown from the Cotton Exchange in Bombay city injured five innocent men. On the 4th October, 1942, a bomb exploded in a gymnasium in Pandharpur town, killing one boy and injuring three others, one seriously. The boys were preparing a wrestling pit and finding an object inside they threw it to the ground and the bomb exploded. Another boy was killed while flying a kite on the top of a temple in Sholapur—he picked up a bomb and showed it to his friends and accidentally dropped it. Three boys received serious injuries and one succumbed later. Again on the 9th December, 1942, a bomb exploded on the road in the Ahmednagar district and seriously injured three girls who were passing by at the time: one of them had her palm amputated.

I could quote many other instances of the same kind, and I would ask why is no inquiry demanded against those who are responsible for such outrages? Why do the movers of the Resolution concentrate on injuries into the conduct of the police? Actually up to the 30th November, fatal casualties among the public caused by the use of explosives was recorded as 8 and the non-fatal casualties included 8 women and 17 children. I forbear to mention the number of passengers killed or injured in railway accidents—one was recorded only three days ago in the *Hindustan Times*. Even the amendments proposed by Mr Bajoria and Pandit Nilakantha Das, deploring the occurrence of such things, demand only inquiry into the conduct of the police and the military. Dr Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad's amendment is more logical on that point, but I have already shown that there is no case for an all-India inquiry into the conduct of Government servants.

As regards the other side I have already informed the House in answer to a question that 26,000 persons have already been convicted by the courts up to the end of the year. Government do propose to make certain facts public, by which the responsibility for these disturbances can be judged. I have a document under preparation on that subject at this moment and I hope to make it public shortly. This will, however, be only intermediate information, such as can be given to the public now; and what further steps to be taken to bring home responsibility to those concerned in organizing these disturbances must remain a matter for consideration. But one thing upon which the House will agree with me is that outrages such as those which I have described must be suppressed with all possible speed and by all measures available. I would remind the House of the concluding words of my last speech in which I pointed out the extreme danger of allowing hooliganism to establish itself in this country and to produce a state of things in which no man's life or property was safe. Events, since I spoke have confirmed my words and we have seen so many instances in which per-

fectly innocent people going about their daily occupations or travelling by rail have been exposed to those outrages. Effective measures cannot be taken against this kind of hooliganism if the immediate reaction of this House is to demand committees of inquiry. The idea that the police and public servants are the enemies of popular institutions and should be regarded with hostility by this House is entirely wrong. I would like to remind the House of what its own position would be without the maintenance of order and respect for authority. How far do Honourable Members think the writ of this House would run without firm and loyal public services and police forces? That is true in any democracy. But the House has had too much evidence in recent months to bring the point home to them. But for respect for authority and but for firm and loyal police forces, this House and its power would be of no account in the institutions of this country, and the only conclusion to which Honourable Members should come is that public servants should be supported in all legitimate action to maintain order. The effectiveness and even the existence of our constitutional machinery depend on them. I must, therefore, oppose any motion which creates the impression that the House desires to place those Government forces who have been instrumental in putting down these disturbances in the dock.

DR SIR ZIA UDDIN AHMAD

Dr Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Sir, I moved an amendment on the 24th September, 1942, that the following words be added to the Resolution moved by Mr Neogy that while making an inquiry on the points raised by him, the inquiry should also include some other matters. It should not be a one-sided inquiry but a complete inquiry, and the words that I wanted to add were:

> "(1) That after words 'enquire into' the following be inserted: 'The nature of organization leading to dislocation of communications, murder, loot and forcible extortion of money under the threat of murder, the allegation that some factory owners helped the hooligans by deliberately turning out their labourers after paying their full wages, and'
>
> "(2) that after the word 'country' the words 'in a manner that may not benefit the enemies' be inserted."

That was my amendment which I moved on the 24th September, 1942, but unfortunately I had no opportunity to explain the reasons on account of which I moved my amendment on that occasion.

The President: It was in accordance with the ordinary practice.

Dr Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Yes, I mean that we had a full debate on that day and we had another debate in this Session. I had no opportunity to speak on the original motion. The reasons on account of which I moved this amendment were already explained in detail in the speeches delivered by the Honourable the Home Member and by the Honourable the Leader of the House, not the then Leader. It is not necessary for me to repeat in a greater detail all those points which have already been mentioned on the floor of the House. There is no doubt that we have had dislocation of traffic, and it had been so much, that in spite of the many months that have passed we are not yet back to normal. The number of trains has been cut down on account of a large number of trucks being destroyed or burnt. So the people are now suffering on account of this dislocation of traffic. The number of trains, even on the East Indian Railway main line, has been reduced by 50 per cent. and the same is the case on other railway lines. This has been due primarily to the number of trucks and wagons destroyed or disabled and engines put out of order necessitating their being sent to repair shops. This is a serious state of affairs and we have not yet got over these difficulties. It is desirable that this fact ought to be included in the scope of the inquiry, so that we may be able to find out what

were the reasons for such dislocation. The other thing that I would like to mention when this inquiry is made is that a number of pamphlets were distributed, printed on different coloured papers, but the general purport of these pamphlets was the same. They described the method which ought to be adopted in the case of such emergency, and the method which was followed by the hooligans was exactly the same as that described long before the incidents occurred. One such pamphlet was sent to me. I read it. I did not take it seriously at the time, but when so many different incidents happened then I realized that it was a clear warning. There is no doubt that some District Magistrates were careful and took precautions in time and in those districts the loss was nominal. But some other District Magistrates did not take this warning seriously till the whole position deteriorated and then they came forward and attempted to restore order. Delhi was one such town where no timely action was taken. If the provincial authorities in Delhi had acted two days earlier, I am sure there would not have been this burning of the Railway Clearing Accounts Office and the Municipal Hall. Everywhere else also such things would not have happened. In addition, a number of persons received threatening letters—I think some Assembly Members also might have received these; it shows that they all belonged to the same organization. Therefore, I repeat that if an inquiry is to be made it should be very comprehensive and it ought not to be one-sided because one-sided inquiry will not give any definite result. To take a definite instance in my own district of Ballia, every organization there was destroyed and they took possession of the treasury and of the armoury and everything else; and one person assumed the office of one administrator and another assumed the office of another officer and they attempted to carry on the administration in their own way. When such serious things happen, somebody will have to restore order and peace. If you wish to ascertain whether the steps taken were commensurate to the situation, that can only be found out by investigating into the situation itself, about the damage and loss incurred and the property looted and the dislocation of trade and traffic, including damage to post offices and railway stations. I do not know if my Honourable friend, the Railway Member, has made any detailed inquiry about the burning of these railway stations—I wish he has a detailed report before him about the number and names of burnt stations and the personnel who were present at the time, because he will be able to draw very valuable inferences from those facts, if indeed they are supplied to him accurately. I know the conclusions myself, but I am not going to communicate my own conclusions or my opinions, but I would like him to draw his own conclusions from the facts supplied by his own department, and they will be an eye-opener to him and could be a guide for action if similar occurrences possibly happen in future.

About Bihar, I have been reading this morning the speech of my Honourable friend the Leader of the House about the excesses committed there. I was told by a number of persons who were stranded on that occasion. The damage done was so great that when a Railway officer came to Aligarh and found the railways working normally, he was astounded to see it and asked "How is it possible for clerks and others to be working here without any police help at all? I see that people are getting everything they want and I could not imagine that things could be so normal." He could not believe that things could be like that, after his own experience in Bihar. There, things were so much dislocated that one must make inquiry about it, if this question is to be opened at all. I am, therefore, strongly of opinion that if an inquiry is to be made, it ought not to be one-sided, and every side of the question must be looked into before any definite conclusion is arrived at. If these matters are allowed to be shelved on account of some

bigger problems, that is a different matter, but if an inquiry is held, it ought to be thorough and complete. With these words I move my amendment.

This amendment as well as other amendments and the original motion were negatived.

PART V

- CHIMUR—AN UNHAPPY EPISODE
- C. P. GOVERNMENT'S 'COMMUNIQUES'
- DR MOONJE REPLIES TO GOVERNMENT
- MR MUNSHI ON PROF. BHANSALI'S FAST
- SETTLEMENT AND BREAKING OF THE FAST
- PRESS COMMENTS
- ALL-INDIA PRESS HARTAL

CHIMUR

AN UNHAPPY EPISODE

There are as yet no adequate means of ascertaining the full details of the disturbances of the latter half of 1942 or the measures adopted to put them down. Open and satisfactory investigation from the point of view of the chronicler is still impossible for a variety of reasons. To attempt a narration would be to court the risk of both exaggeration and understatement. The broadest outline, however, would include the fact of nearly one hundred lives lost on the side of the Government. Some of these were cases attended with every form of brutality associated with mob fury. On the other hand, estimates of the number killed on the people's side would vary from two thousand to ten thousand. Many of these doubtless resulted from cold-blooded retaliatory action by the forces of Government. There were grave allegations of atrocities and of suffering wantonly inflicted on innocent men, women and children. Some of these, in the light of clear information which became available later, happily turned out to be untrue. In other cases, the proceedings of the Central Legislature published earlier in the book furnish testimony of the dispute which persists. One matter, however, has gone on record by a "settlement" which took full cognizance of events. That relates to very serious allegations of misbehaviour by troops at Chimur in the Chanda district of the Central Provinces. The awful happenings on which the allegations rested were preceded by disturbances, in the course of which four officials were killed. Exact details of those disturbances are not clearly discernible, and whether mob action was provoked in any degree is a moot point. But in so far as the action of the mob led to reprisals the following is the graphic version of the circumstances under which four officials lost their lives as given out by Government shortly after the event: "Further details have been received of the tragedies at Ashti (Wardha district) and Chimur (Chanda district) on August 16. The Station House staff at Ashti, consisting of a Sub-Inspector of Police and seven constables, gallantly defended the Station House against the attacks by a determined and violent crowd. They were eventually overpowered and the Sub-Inspector and four constables were brutally done to death. The reports show that two of the constables were burnt alive with kerosene oil. The Sub-Inspector was stoned to death. Equal courage and fortitude marked the end of the four officers at Chimur. They were brutally pounded to death with lathis and it is alleged that the assailants offered to spare their lives if they forthwith disowned allegiance to the Government and joined the rioters. The bodies were burnt by the mob. The Circle Inspector, disabled by lathi blows on the head, fought back for two miles along the road to Warora, with a party of three constables. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate and the Naib-Tehsildar were trapped in the rest house and were murdered in cold blood. The Provincial Government records its unstinted admiration of the high sense of duty which impelled these officers to lay down their lives in the cause of security and order in the charges entrusted to them. To the bereaved families the Provincial Government extends its deepest sympathy and support in their misfortune."

Events following immediately upon the incident described above became the subject of protracted controversy between leaders of public opinion and the Press on the one side and the Provincial Government on the other. In the following pages are reproduced in chronological order some of the material documents of the episode.

PROF. J. P. BHANSALI

With Chimur is very closely associated the name of Prof. J. P. Bhansali of Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram at Sevagram. He had felt driven to the extreme measure of sacrificing his life for the vindication of the honour of womanhood, as he termed it. In an article republished here, Mr K. M. Munshi has described this man, who forced the issue by staking his life. When he heard authentically of the grave happenings at Chimur his first step was to visit Mr M. S. Aney, then a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in Delhi. This he did on November 1, 1942. Mr Aney, who belongs to the Central Provinces, gave him a patient hearing, admitted that atrocities had in all probability happened at Chimur, but pleaded inability to do anything under the prevailing circumstances and at such distance of time—two and a half months—since the occurrence. A long and good-humoured conversation ended unfavourably for the Professor. He thereupon decided to undertake a fast at Mr Aney's house. Mr Aney offered him accommodation. In the evening, however, the Professor was arrested. In the Delhi District Jail he continued his fast and was forcibly fed. On November 6 he was conveyed to Sevagram and there set at liberty on the 7th. The Professor ended his fast and on the 10th started for Chimur, about 60 miles from Sevagram. Resuming the fast there at a temple on November 11 he addressed a letter to the Deputy Commissioner on the purpose of his visit. He was turned out of the place forcibly and taken to Sevagram on the 13th. The fast which had commenced on the 11th did not end now. In his weak condition he set out for Chimur again on the 19th, this time on foot, and did the 62 miles in 56 hours. He met several people on the way, including officials; conversations confirmed his conviction that the allegations were well-founded. He was brought back on a stretcher. Still continuing his fast and living by sheer will-power, he left for Chimur once more—for the third time —on November 25, on foot. He had had no food or water for fourteen days. This was a miracle of determination and the conquest of the flesh by the spirit. But the third trek was at snail's pace. He was arrested on the road long before he reached his destination and brought back to Sevagram. The policemen and officers who undertook the task handled him with tenderness and respect. Here he lay peaceful and calm, eager to die for the cause he had taken up.

Meanwhile, this unique and silent demonstration had begun to reverberate in the country and to a certain extent in the Press. There was clamour and disquiet. Chimur was a black spot. While Bhansali's life was ebbing away the people and the Press in particular showed unusual restiveness. Quick executive action was taken to enforce a rigorous ban on the publication of all news about Prof. Bhansali's fast and Chimur. The Press, however, took a serious view of its duty in the matter and made an effective joint protest. All this is fully described in the pages that follow. But soon welcome signs of activity in Government circles behind the scenes became apparent. In this Mr Aney had a bigger part than is generally known. Eventually, but none too soon, the Government of the Central Provinces relented and negotiations yielded results which enabled Prof. Bhansali to end his fast on January 12. He had gone without food for full 62 days and was on the verge of collapse.

SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS BY RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE

As the documents published further below indicate, the serious allegations of offences committed against women by the military and police in August, 1942, are mainly to be found in two reports. One is a lengthy joint statement by Dr B. S. Moonje, the Hindu leader (unconnected with the Congress), and his friend Mr M. N. Ghatate. These gentlemen visited Chimur on September 25, along with some Government officials to investigate the allegations. The other is a statement by prominent ladies of Nagpur who also investigated the matter by personally visiting the place on September 19.

The disturbance in which four Government officials lost their lives took place on August 16. On the 19th the Deputy Commissioner went to Chimur with British and Indian troops, said to number nearly 300. The troops stayed at the place till the 26th. Dr Moonje's statement deals with the action of the troops on and after the 20th when there was hardly anyone in the village excepting women and children, all able-bodied men having either fled or been arrested. It is a lengthy and detailed report and is dealt with in the *communiqué* issued subsequently by the Provincial Government. It has, however, not been published in the Press and it would not be desirable to reproduce it *in extenso* in this collection. In substance, the report states categorically that cases of rape had occurred along with other forms of frightfulness such as the looting and demolition of property on a large scale. It gives details and mentions that during the investigations the Commissioner of the Nagpur Division and the Deputy Commissioner of Chanda were present. The report winds up with a strong plea for a sifting enquiry.

The report of the ladies is in many respects more specific and detailed. Those who undertook the unpleasant but nevertheless patriotic task of making a personal investigation on the spot were Mrs Ramabai Tambe, the wife of an ex-Governor of the Province and herself a former member of the Legislative Assembly; Mrs Vimlabai Deshpande, M.A.; Miss Vimalabai Abhyankar, B.A.; Mrs Dwarkabai Deoskar; and Dr Mrs Wazalwar, M.B., B.S. These ladies were able to make an investigation which would appear to have been more thorough than Dr Moonje's. Their report makes very damaging statements which substantially corroborate the conclusions of Dr Moonje and Mr Ghatate. Dr Mrs Wazalwar refers to a "lane by lane" tour of the village made by her and instances eleven cases of rape which she was able to establish to her satisfaction.

GOVERNMENT'S REFUTATION

The following was the first public statement issued by the Government with reference to happenings at Chimur:—

NAGPUR, October 16, 1942.

The Provincial Government has received complaints of rape and looting alleged to have been committed by the Military and Police at Chimur in Chanda district where, it will be remembered, two Magistrates, an Inspector of Police and a police constable were done to death by a mob on August 16, 1942. The Chimur village was visited by Dr Moonje and Mr Ghatate on September 26, 1942, and they stayed there from 10 a.m. to 5-30 p.m. Some of the complaints have been received from Dr Moonje, and other from ladies of Nagpur, who visited Chimur on September 19, 1942, or through other channels. None of the complaints has been filed before a Magistrate and none of them has been attested on oath or by solemn affirmation.

The Provincial Government has considered these complaints very carefully. As the complaints have not been sworn to or attested, it has been not possible to examine the complaints in the usual way. The complaints relate to incidents which are alleged to have taken place between August 19 and August 27, 1942, and apparently are confined

to the period from August 19 to 21, 1942. The first intimation of complaints of this nature was given in a resolution of the Bar Association, Chanda, dated August 22, 1942, which merely gave currency to rumours and gave no details of any kind. It was not until September 22 that written complaints were received by the Chief Secretary. These complaints included two allegations of rape, one on August 19, 1942, and one on a date unspecified which, however, seems to relate to the same period. These two allegations were against unknown police constables and in both cases it was alleged that the victims were nine months gone in pregnancy.

Subsequently, on the date of Dr Moonje's visit to Chimur on September 26, 1942, six complaints of rape were preferred, of which two appear to be the incidents referred to above. These later complaints, however, include an allegation of rape by five white soldiers, but the complainant did not herself come forward to make the complaint which was preferred through a sister-in-law.

Again subsequently (on October 1, 1942), two separate reports on Chimur were received from ladies of Nagpur who visited Chimur on September 19, 1942. In one of these reports, it is alleged that after removing the men, the soldiers took complete possession of all the houses, looted everything they could lay their hands on and outraged women to their hearts' content. As the population of Chimur is about 5,000, while the number of arrests at that time was only 225, it is obvious that this statement is wildly exaggerated. This report mentions that four white soldiers attempted molestation on August 19.

Altogether, apart from the resolution of the Chanda Bar Association, four reports have been received, all about four to five weeks after the alleged events: they are grossly discrepant *inter se* in matters of detail and as regards the number of cases of rape and outrage complained of.

The first important point to notice in connection with these complaints is that Mr Subramanian, the Deputy Commissioner of Chanda, was present at Chimur, together with the District Superintendent of Police, throughout the period covered by these complaints, except that the Deputy Commissioner was away for about 27 hours on August 21 and 22. Mr Subramanian states that the women of the village had ample opportunities to make complaints to him from the very first day. From the morning of August 20 onwards the women of the village were allowed to bring food, both morning and evening, for the persons who had been arrested, and were lodged in a room next door to the room occupied by the Deputy Commissioner who, in order to ensure that they did not receive inconsiderate treatment, made a point of being present while the prisoners were being fed by their womenfolk. The Deputy Commissioner observes, "If the women had been required to go a long distance to lodge their complaints, failure to do so could be understood, but failure to open their mouth when I was in their midst cannot certainly be accounted for. And when the women of the village made no complaints to me day after day, meal after meal, I could naturally take it that everything was all right. Every day nearly 100 to 200 women, and later on even more, used to come."

Secondly, on August 21 certain ladies complained to the Deputy Commissioner that some soldiers "were trying to enter" their houses, but they made no allegations of looting or molestation, still less of rape. To restore their confidence immediate steps were taken to prevent the occurrence of any such incidents. One of these women was subsequently prominent in making allegations of rape to Dr Moonje in respect of the same period, August 19.

Thirdly, the Commissioner, Mr Rau, himself visited Chimur on September 6, 1942, and interviewed several non-officials, but not a single complaint was made to him. It was not until on or about

September 10, 1942, after a number of Chanda and Warora pleaders had taken up the matter, that written complaints were addressed to the Commissioner and, even then, these complaints included one only of rape.

As regards complaints of looting, the Deputy Commissioner reports that not a single complaint was made to him by the public at any time, but on the occasion of Dr Moonje's visit, about five weeks after the incidents referred to, the evidence of the havoc alleged to have been caused by the military and police appeared. It consisted of rooms with some broken photographs, tumblers and gramophone records; a broken door, two or three wooden pillars slightly chipped; and some boxes from which property was said to have been stolen. The Deputy Commissioner points out that hooks, chains and staples were found invariably intact, and observes, with regard to a number of rooms in which books and articles were found strewn about, that it was very unlikely that people would have allowed their houses to remain in such an untidy mess for as long as a month.

It may be mentioned that on August 25, 1942, when a suspicious bundle was seized from a constable, he was dealt with immediately on the spot and dismissed from service. Two other cases came subsequently to the notice of the District Superintendent of Police and are now under investigation.

The Provincial Government has received an exhaustive report from the Deputy Commissioner, Mr Subramanian, together with the comments of the Commissioner, Mr Rau. At Chimur, a Magistrate and a Naib-Tahsildar, who were still at the rest house, a mile or so from the village and had not yet even had an opportunity of visiting the village, were brutally done to death without any provocation whatsoever, and a Circle Inspector of Police together with a constable, resisting overwhelming odds, had also been brutally murdered. As the Deputy Commissioner points out, the force sent to Chimur was dealing with violent persons whose thirst for blood had not yet subsided and who were concealing themselves in groups of 8 or 10 behind locked doors. In such circumstances, a certain amount of damage to property and rough handling were inevitable. It is incredible that complaints of the nature now brought forward would not have been made to the Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner, both of whom are Indian officers, if they had really occurred. The Commissioner's conclusion is that it does not lie in the mouths of the complainants to bring forward these accusations now nearly five weeks after the events, that in the nature of things there can now be no proofs on the allegations as the women themselves have admitted that they are unable to identify their assailants, and that, as the people concerned have postponed complaining they have only themselves to blame if the complaints are held to be "not proven."

On a review of all the circumstances, and after securing the depositions of the British officers who were in command of the small detachment of British troops, the Provincial Government is satisfied not only that the complaints are "not proven" but that there are strong reasons for supposing that the allegations have been put out in order to divert attention from the heinous crimes committed at Chimur. There are many inconsistencies and gross improbabilities in the allegations which have, moreover, not been made on oath or solemn affirmation, although there was every opportunity for doing so. The allegations are so belated as to be largely untrustworthy on this account alone. In particular, the Provincial Government has no hesitation in describing the accusations made against the British troops as highly improbable, incapable of proof, and contrary to the known facts regarding their disposition and discipline at Chimur.

The Provincial Government, therefore, declines to appoint a

committee to inquire into charges which are properly cognizable by the Police and the Magistracy. To do so would be to invite vilification of the Police and Military in circumstances which would permit of no defence since all the complaints except one are against persons unknown so that there is no possibility of testing the truth of the allegations.

NAGPUR NEWSPAPER EXAMINES 'COMMUNIQUE'

The *Hitavada*, an influential non-Congress newspaper of Nagpur, made the following editorial comment on the Government *communiqué*:--

NAGPUR, October 18, 1942.

The *communiqué* which the Provincial Government have issued on the allegations against the police and military in the Chimur episode will not, if that had been their object, convince the public. The *communiqué* has to be scanned with an important reservation. We understand that certain ladies who visited the place, including a lady doctor, and Dr Moonje had submitted reports to Government. The copies of the reports are not available to the public. Government have chosen to pick out certain allegations from the reports which they have received and answered them. In fairness to the public, Government ought to permit the publication of the reports of Dr Moonje and the ladies. In all probability, these reports will not see the light of day. With this important reservation that the public do not have before them the reports which have been submitted to Government by non-officials, the *communiqué* can be analysed. Government's main point is that the allegations have not been made on oath. It is true that a statement which is not made on oath or affirmation does not have the same legal validity as one which is made in the ordinary way, but then Government have to remember that no occasion arose for making statements on oath. There was no judicial inquiry for persons to come forward to make statements on oath. If even today, Government order an inquiry, aggrieved persons may come forward to depose on oath about the alleged excesses.

Government's contention is that apart from the resolution of the Chanda Bar Association "four reports have been received, all about four to five weeks after the occurrence of the alleged events; they are grossly discrepant *inter se* in matters of detail and as regards the number of cases of rape and outrage complained of." The delay in making the allegations complained of may probably be due to the fact that the people of Chimur were terror-stricken, after the men in the village had been arrested and the military had arrived to restore order. It has to be remembered that the villagers at Chimur are not as well educated as Government officials and that a friendly atmosphere was necessary in order to enable them to come forward with allegations. From all accounts, there was no such atmosphere in Chimur. Hence we do not attach much importance to the line of argument that the complaints were made weeks after the occurrence.

Government further argue that the Deputy Commissioner was present in Chimur "except for about 27 hours on the 21st and 22nd instant." Was he throughout in the company of the troops? It may be that he was staying at a distance from the troops' camp. Further it is admitted that the Deputy Commissioner was away for 27 hours. Have Government ruled out the possibility of something untoward happening during his absence? Government quote the Deputy Commissioner to prove that no woman had made any allegations to him. It is well to remember that the women of Chimur were largely illiterate and being Indians would have been extremely reluctant to come forward to depose before a person not belonging to their family that they were raped. It is contrary to experience to expect an

Indian woman to admit before a stranger that her honour had been outraged. There are discrepancies in the *communiqué* about the behaviour of troops. On the one hand Government deny that anything like rape took place in the village, but on the other, Government themselves admit that "certain ladies complained to the Deputy Commissioner that some soldiers were trying to enter their houses but they made no allegations of looting or molestation." As we pointed out, few women would have come forward to confess to a stranger though he may be the Deputy Commissioner, that they had been raped. The fact that some allegations were made "and steps were taken to prevent the occurrence of any such incidents" shows that something was going on in Chimur which required correction. Government scout the idea that there were cases of looting and point out that no complaint was made at the time it is alleged to have taken place. They, however, refer to one incident of rooms "with broken photographs, tumblers and gramophone records, a broken door, two or three wooden pillars slightly chipped," and go on to argue that "it is very unlikely that people would have allowed their houses to remain in such an untidy way for as long as a month." But later on in the *communiqué* they almost contradict themselves when they admit "in such circumstances, a certain amount of damage to property and rough-handling was inevitable." Government contend further that "women themselves have admitted that they are unable to identify the assailants." Who are the women who have made the admissions? Nothing is said about their number. As long as Government do not tell us how many women made this admission, the public will not accept their inference. Having quoted one paragraph from this report and that, and expressing their own belief that "the complaints are held to be not proven," Government have declined to order an inquiry into the charges. We are afraid the complacency of the Government will not be shared by the public. We do not suggest that everyone of the charges brought by those on the spot are correct in all respects. Naturally in times of excitement, there is a tendency for exaggeration and over-statement. Assuming that out of twenty cases, fifteen are false or exaggerated, what about the remaining five? Is it possible that respectable non-officials would go out of their way to manufacture a series of thoroughly unfounded charges against the military and the police? It will have to be borne in mind that confessions of rape and molestation will not be made by Indian women ordinarily and if such charges are brought on the basis of statements made, there is a *prima facie* case for investigation. We are as keen as Government that the honour of the armed forces and the police should be protected and we are as solicitous as they that they should be shielded from vilification. If all these allegations are false, the services and the military would only be exonerated by a judicial inquiry. If anything, a judicial inquiry will naturally be inclined to be considerate towards the services who were faced with an unprecedented situation. It is extremely unlikely that any member of the police or the military will be censured by a judicial inquiry, unless a charge is proved to the hilt. If Government are serious in their contention that the police and the military should be protected from vilification they should unhesitatingly order a judicial inquiry because such an inquiry cannot come to any other conclusion except that of the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner if Government's facts are correct. If no inquiry is ordered, the public will be confronted with the denial of Government on the one hand and the belief of respected men and women who visited the spot that there are charges which *prima facie* require searching investigation. The fact that the charges are not discredited in an open judicial inquiry but only

refuted as the result of what is after all a one-sided inquiry of officials, will only strengthen the public suspicion that all was not well in Chimur and that the *communiqué* cannot be relied upon as independent testimony.

DR MOONJE'S REPLY TO GOVERNMENT 'COMMUNIQUE'

Dr B. S. Moonje issued the following statement:—

NAGPUR, October 22, 1942.

Having carefully read the unusually long *communiqué* of the C.P. Government, my impression is that the laboured arguments advanced by the Government to establish that the allegations of excesses against the police and the military are not proven and that, therefore, there is no need to institute a committee of inquiry, are, to say the least, absolutely unconvincing. In view of the pressure of war conditions and the mass movement of civil disobedience, people can understand and appreciate the straight and frank statement, as issued by the Government of Bombay, that they will not tolerate the collection of evidence against the Government servants and the military engaged in suppressing the movement. But when attempts are made by forced arguments to explain away undoubted happenings as has been done by the Government of C.P. and Berar, it lands the Government in an awkward and untenable position. Say, for instance, the Government contention that "there are strong reasons for supposing that the allegations have been put out in order to divert attention from the heinous crimes committed at Chimur." Can this contention reasonably stand? More officials were killed at Ashti than at Chimur and Government buildings were burnt also at Ramatek. Also large numbers of people, including local leaders and other respectable persons, were arrested at all these places; and prospects of some of them to be sentenced to hanging and life-imprisonment stare them in the face equally. Then why was not this trick of falsely concocting foul and shameful allegations of rape and outraging modesty tried also at Ramatek and Ashti where particularly a larger number of Government officials have been killed? In assumed innocence the Government say that these allegations "have not been made on oath or solemn affirmations." Was any opportunity afforded them for the purpose? It is exactly for this purpose that we are suggesting a committee of inquiry, which, unfortunately, has been declined by the Government.

While taking evidence and depositions, the Deputy Commissioner of Nagpur, Mr Layard, and the Deputy Commissioners of Wardha and Chanda and in the latter two places also the Commissioner of the Nagpur Division were with us and we sincerely believe that a *prima facie* case has been made out for the institution of a judicial committee of inquiry. In view of the general atmosphere of terror that was prevailing at the time at Chimur, we cannot hold the ladies and the women responsible or blame them for failing to make their allegations in time, particularly when the menfolk in their household were arrested and locked up in Government custody. Thus the entire responsibility lies on the Government and on none else.

The Government admit that the very first intimation of complaints of rape and looting in Chimur was given by the Bar Association of Chanda in its resolution dated August 22, that is, within two or three days of the happenings; but, instead of congratulating the Bar Association for its vigilance and promptness, they have curtly and irresponsibly dismissed it as circulating rumours, as the allegations of the women and the ladies have been dismissed as concocted falsehoods. As a matter of fact, however, there are ladies whose husbands have been arrested but they have not made any complaints of molestation; while, on the other hand, there are women who have

made such complaints, though none of their relations have been so far arrested.

There was a detachment of Indian troops at Ashti and one of British troops at Chimur; but it appears that the civil officials at Chimur were not able to keep as good control over the troops at Chimur as at Ashti; otherwise, the happenings at Chimur would not have taken place as nothing of the kind happened at Ashti.

Under the circumstances how can the Government hope to convince the people of their innocence or want of responsibility in the matter?

In the end we publicly offer our grateful thanks to H.E. the Governor for his kindness and courtesy in offering us an opportunity to do whatever little service we were able to do to our people at Ramatek, Ashti and Chimur.

FOR PROF. BHANSALI'S LIFE: AN APPEAL

Mr K. M. Munshi wrote in the *Social Welfare*:—

BOMBAY, December 4, 1942.

A man of forty-eight, dark, with a mane resembling Christ's; eyes trustful; a temperament simple as a babe's; a harmlessness which disarms everyone; a body that stands hunger and toil, the fierce sun of Wardha summer and the freezing waters of Himalayan streams; a faith in God that is rock-like; that is Professor Bhansali. He is an M.A. of the Bombay University, an ex-professor of a Bombay college. He travelled all over Europe; and then he gave up the world, walked to Himalayas barefoot, sojourned in the forests of Gir; lived on *nim* leaves; ringed his lips together and was fed through a tube for years; spun endlessly and believed in Bapu. He is a man of religion, who knows no politics and does not care for it; a saint who loves man but is indifferent to the world; an ascetic with the innocence of a child; an angel with the body of a Hatha Yogi; a Muni, to whom silence is joy.

The *communiqué* of the C.P. Government and the statement of Dr Moonje as regards the alleged treatment of women in the village of Chimur (C.P.) stirred this man to his depths. He found in the honour of Indian women a fundamental article of faith. Its sanctity was to him an inalienable part of Hindu culture. So he went to Sjt. Aney at New Delhi and begged him to come to Chimur to inquire into the allegation. The world knows what happened. He started a fast at Sjt. Aney's, desiring as he said "to die at his feet"; was arrested, brought back to Sevagram on November 7, and set free. He took a vow to fast unto death unless he secured an inquiry. He simply could not live, he said, if dishonour of women—the daughters of the race whose womenfolk have preferred fire to dishonour—was allowed to pass unnoticed, without inquiry, without redress. He went to Chimur and started a fast in the temple of Balaji there. An order was served on him to leave Chimur within three hours. He was then arrested, brought to Sevagram, and again released on the 15th.

Prof. Bhansali decided to go back to Chimur. He started on foot on the 19th from Sevagram. That wonderful body of his, under this urge, carried him ninety miles, in spite of his fast without water for days. The police arrested him, brought him back on a stretcher to Sevagram. He started for Chimur again on 25th morning. For 15 days he had touched neither food nor water. I drove from Wardha to meet him; for I knew him for some years; and I wanted to bring him back if I could. I found him in a wayside field where after having walked twelve miles he was resting. A pathetic tenderness was in his eyes. His body was shrunk. The sublime faith with which he was offering himself brought tears to my eyes. He said: "I am

giving up my life so that no woman would suffer dishonour in this land of *Rishis*." He did me the honour of accepting my advice to take water on the way. But I did realize then that man being what he is in the modern world, the only sanction behind a woman's honour was the willingness of the victim and her champions to court death.

As I stood there on the Wardha road, I saw the golden rays of the setting sun lighting up Bansali's Jesus-like mane; saw him walking slowly away from me, leaning on his staff, bent on vindicating a moral right; a lonely traveller on a journey which few have trodden before him. On my way back to Bombay from Nagpur on the 29th, I learned that the authorities had again brought him from Chimur road back to Wardha. I could not help a tear as I thought of this ancient Mother of men, who still lives in her *sadhus*. In silent prayer I offered thanks to the Almighty who has favoured Her with such sons, age after age.

Prof. Bhansali may still secure an inquiry or melt the heart of Sjt. Aney to accompany him to Chimur, or he may die. But I cannot understand why Government persists in denying to itself, on such a grave allegation as the one in this, the elementary duty of holding an inquiry at the hands of a Member of the Government like Sjt. Aney, on whose strength, according to Mr Churchill, British rule in India rests for the moment. Whatever the crimes that were committed by the people in hapless Chimur they are being expiated by the flower of its manhood. Many have been arrested, and tried. Subject to the review of Sir Frederick Pollock of the Nagpur High Court, 20 of them are sentenced to death; 25 to transportation for life; several others to heavy terms of imprisonment and fine. Many more cases are still pending against many of the residents of the village. A heavy fine has been exacted from this village. I will not refer to what was done to the village after these men were arrested. Even now Chimur is not normal. Is not this abundant—too abundant a vindication of Law and Order on that little village? Is it too much to ask the Government of India and the Government of C.P. and Berar to reconsider the position that they have taken up and grant Prof. Bhansali's request, which would strengthen the moral position of the Government?

Few have been grieved at the happenings of the last four months more than I have been. I was and am still a believer in happy Indo-British relations. I cannot think of India's progress as at present apart from Britain. I have felt that this was, in the result, a war of Democracy; that unless the Axis is defeated, Democracy cannot flourish either in India or anywhere else. I therefore feel that humble though I am I have a right to tell the British and their representatives here, both British and Indian, that in neglecting the moral aspect of their attempt to restore order in India, they are introducing elements which will harm Indo-British relations and convert India into a super-Eire. It is excellent to have a giant strength. It is tyrannous to use it as a giant. But it is suicidal to neglect its moral aspect.

This is the fifth time in my life that I have seen such a mood on the part of British authorities in India. During the partition movement, during the Jallianwallabagh days, during Bardoli Satyagraha, during the years 1932-33, the British authorities and Indian patriots saw red. But times changed and Britishers and Indians on every occasion worked together in this country not only as masters and mercenaries, but as friends and colleagues. I know many of my British friends have got into a war mood against Indians as a whole and Congressmen in particular. I invite them to pause and think of the bitterness which such incidents are likely to cause in the future, if Prof. Bhansali dies for a cause which is sacred to every Indian heart.

All that Prof. Bhansali wants is a simple thing which every decent man would be proud to concede; *viz.*, to inquire whether the agents of Government at Chimur have overstepped the limits, not of law, but of human decency. Save the life of this wonderful man, I appeal to every one. I appeal particularly to Britons in this country whose sense of justice is not blurred by panic or vindictiveness; and to my Indian friends like Sjt. Aney on whose moral support the Government of India claims to carry on these activities.

ANOTHER STATEMENT BY PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Matters were not to rest with the lengthy Government *communiqué* and the rejoinders of those in the know. Prof. J. P. Bhansali entered the scene with his importunities and his fast. And the Press would not be easily silenced. There was therefore a fresh *communiqué*, this one even less convincing to the public than its predecessor.

NAGPUR, December 31, 1942.

The criminal cases arising from the murder of Government servants at Chimur on August 16 last have now concluded before the Special Judge and have been reviewed by the Hon. Judge under Section 8 of the Special Criminal Courts Ordinance, 1942. During the pendency of these cases the agitation directed against the conduct of the military and the police at Chimur has continued.

2. In its *communiqué* dated October 16, 1942, the Provincial Government explained its reasons for not appointing a committee of inquiry into the alleged excesses at Chimur. It has now examined the judgments recorded by the Special Judge in the two murder cases. The judgment in the Magistrate's murder case contains the following observations regarding the general position at Chimur.

"There has, in fact, been mass perjury, and, more than that, a conspiracy of silence in this village (Chimur)."

"The case shows that Chimur was for all practical purposes completely united in a conspiracy of silence."

In the police officers' murder case the Judge remarks:

"There has been mass perjury in both these cases (*i.e.*, police officers' cases), as remarked in the other judgment."

These observations have been reinforced by the following observations made by the Hon. Judge in review.

In the Magistrate's murder case he says:

"I do not propose to deal with the defence evidence of *alibi* and the 70 witnesses who have come forward to help the accused as I agree with the learned Special Judge's comment on that evidence. It is clearly of no value."

Again, in the police murder case he says:

"I do not propose to deal with the 73 witnesses for the defence who have come forward to help the accused by giving evidence that is obviously untrue. I agree with what the learned Special Judge has said about this evidence."

3. Further, in the *communiqué* of October 16, reference was made to six complaints of rape. An examination of the judgment shows that in all these cases the women complainants are related to, or connected with, persons involved in the events of August 16. One complaint of rape can be dismissed at once, because the complainant is the sister-in-law of the person affected and that person did not herself come forward. The alleged victim was a servant of a hotel-keeper at Chimur. The hotel-keeper is under sentence of transportation for life and his brother under sentence of death. Another complainant is the daughter of a domestic servant whose father was arrested by the police and who is employed by a person accused in a case under

Section 888 of the Indian Penal Code. The third complainant is the wife of a person who has been sentenced to transportation for life. Her husband's employer has also been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. The fourth complainant is the wife of a *teli*, one of whose relatives was arrested by the police. The husband of the fifth complainant was arrested and subsequently discharged. The sixth complainant is the only one of superior social position and her complaint is in respect of her daughter who has herself made no complaint; two of her sons were arrested and one has been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

4. The Provincial Government has been impressed, in the case of the complaints forwarded to it by private investigators, by their evident readiness to accept blindly and without check the wildest and most sweeping allegations made against the troops by persons interested in those responsible for the crimes of murder and arson committed at Chimur. For example, in the case of one investigator who has supplied Government with the result of his investigations no names were given and no attempt was made by cross-examination or otherwise to check the accuracy of the allegations. The Provincial Government, on the other hand, has based its decision on a careful examination of a large mass of evidence, much of it sworn on oath before a magistrate, tendered by officials and non-officials unconnected with the troops or the police whose conduct has been maligned.

5. The Provincial Government is entirely satisfied that the allegations are wholly untrustworthy and that no case has been made out for constituting a committee of inquiry.

DEMAND FOR INQUIRY INFLUENTIALLY SUPPORTED

Mr A. V. Thakkar, Vice-President of the Servants of India Society, Messrs N. A. Dravid, P. Kodanda Rao, A. D. Mani, and R. S. Gupte, Members of the Servants of India Society, and Diwan Bahadur K. V. Brahma issued the following statement:—

NAGPUR, January 2, 1943.

"Certain recent incidents have again concentrated public attention on the allegations made against the agency employed by Government in putting down disturbances in Chimur. From such information as we have been able to gather we are satisfied that there is a *prima facie* case for a judicial inquiry into the allegations. We are also satisfied that there is a growing demand not only in this province but all over India for an inquiry into the allegations. We have studied the Government *communiqué* on the subject. We are sorry to say that it is unconvincing. At a time when the enemy is knocking at the doors of the eastern front, to put it at the lowest, it is expedient for Government themselves to maintain public morale and retain public confidence. Neither is possible as long as there is widespread resentment among the people that the demand for inquiry has been rejected. We, therefore, respectfully suggest that Government should immediately institute a judicial inquiry into the matter and allay public discontent. An immediate and favourable announcement on the subject may yet avert an ugly situation."

"NOT WORTH THE LABOUR"

The *Hitavada* of Nagpur dealing with the Provincial Government's second *communiqué* on Chimur wrote:—

NAGPUR, January 3, 1942.

The *communiqué* which the Provincial Government have issued on the Chimur episode is to use a mild expression foolish. Nobody is interested in the rehash of the judgment delivered in the Chimur cases and the conclusions which only the Provincial Government can draw from them. The sum and substance of the *communiqué* is that those who have made allegations against the troops are in some way or the

other connected with those implicated in the Chimur cases and the insinuation is there that they had a personal interest in maligning the troops. It is pathetic to see the Provincial Government relying on this insinuation for refuting the allegations. It may be mentioned here that the allegations of rape and molestation were made long before the accused were challaned and we are sure the Provincial Government would not argue that these allegations were manufactured in anticipation of their trial and sentences, a feat of which women in villages are incapable. Much play is made of the fact that in some cases it is not the victims of the alleged molestation who made the complaint but their relatives. Anyone who knows India and its women will realize that few would come forward to confess to being raped or molested and that such confessions, if made at all, would not be made in the presence of officials. It is interesting to note that Government themselves admit that "a person of superior social position made a complaint and her complaint was in respect of her daughter who has herself made no complaint." The Provincial Government reiterate their intention not to hold an inquiry, as they are entirely satisfied that the allegations are wholly untrustworthy. If the allegations are untrustworthy, it will be the easiest thing for Government to have them refuted in a court of inquiry and no inquiring judge would take a perverse view if the allegations are not supported by reliable evidence. But Government shrink from holding such an inquiry. We may mention here that the record of the C.P. Government in holding inquiries till the outbreak of the disturbances in August last has been quite good. They held inquiries in the past at Khandwa, Burhanpur and Jubbulpore when communal riots broke out. It is not as if the C.P. Government are permanent opponents of judicial inquiries. They have held inquiries in the past and the fact that they refuse an inquiry into the allegations regarding Chimur, therefore, strengthens the suspicion that they have a case to hide from the public view. If Government are satisfied that there is no case for inquiry, would they at least release to the Press the report of Dr Moonje on the affair? Dr Moonje is no agitation-monger and he is a friendly critic of Government. Dr Moonje visited Chimur with the Commissioner of the Nagpur Division and his report on the affair would be valuable to the public if Government were to release it to the Press. We are afraid Government have incensed public feeling by issuing a second *communiqué* on the unhappy episode. It has failed in its purpose; it has carried conviction to none and has prodded festering sores. No good has been done by Government parading a hopelessly weak case for refusing an inquiry. It has only hardened public feeling that justice need not be expected in the Chimur affair. We may add, Government might have saved paper and energy by abstaining from issuing a *communiqué* which is not worth the labour spent on it.

MR MUNSHI ON GOVERNMENT'S "IPSE DIXIT"

In a statement Mr K. M. Munshi discussed the C.P. Government's *communiqué*:—

BOMBAY, January 4, 1943.

The *communiqué* of the C.P. Government published in Sunday's papers with regard to the Chimur incidents, by now notorious, bespeaks a self-complacent frame of mind which is difficult to beat. The incidents regarding women, in respect of which an inquiry is asked for, are alleged to have taken place between August 19 and 21, 1942.

The Bar Association of Chanda complained about it on the 22nd of August. Dr Moonje and Mr Ghatate heard the complaints at Chimur on the 26th of August.

Dr Moonje was accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner of Nagpur and the Deputy Commissioner of Wardha.

Several ladies who visited Chimur on the 10th September, 1942, submitted their report to Government setting out the complaints. The Hon'ble Mr M. S. Aney, a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, has also received complaints from several responsible persons, and the whole country is ringing with these allegations.

The C.P. Government has imposed a Press gag on these Chimur incidents from the very beginning. Dr Moonje's first statement was suppressed. All news relating to Chimur have been more or less blacked out. Even to ask for an inquiry has become almost a misdemeanour. The C.P. Government's own *communiqué* issued on the 16th October, 1942, leaves no doubt that the complaints were persistent and proceeded from very responsible quarters. One of the ladies who visited Chimur in those early days, is the wife of an officiating ex-Governor of the Central Provinces. I can easily understand the fears of the C.P. Government in instituting an impartial inquiry, but the reasons given in its Saturday's *communiqué* are to say the least disingenuous. The Special Judge, Mr Wickenden, upon whose judgment reliance is placed, dealt with the incidents connected with the murder of four officers which took place on August 16, 1942, before midday. Neither the judgments nor the evidence in those cases—as I personally know, as I appeared in the cases—therefore possibly relate to these alleged incidents of the 19th after the military surrounded the village. That the C.P. Government should have found an additional ground in the judgments of the Special Judge or the Reviewing High Court Judge which dealt with the offences committed on August 16, 1942, for declining an inquiry into events alleged to have taken place three days later shows the extent to which the C.P. Government is prepared to go in defending an indefensible position. Chimur's has been a tragic case. Apart from the offences committed and the sentences meted out to the offenders, all news about it is stopped in the Press. No one can go there, I am told on good authority, without an inquiry from the Police as to why the visitor has come or without being arrested if he is suspected of coming to know the facts. The people of the place are still under surveillance which makes it impossible for anyone to have any frank conversation with a stranger, however respectable. And taking advantage of the inability of the other side to place its case before the public the C.P. Government has now laid down its *ipse dixit* that all the allegations relating to these incidents are wholly untrustworthy and that no case has been made out for constituting a Committee to inquire.

Either the C.P. Government is too dull to appreciate the consequences of not setting up an inquiry when such allegations are made from responsible quarters, or as is more likely, so self-complacent as to believe that its verdict will be believed by anyone in the country. The country has come to a pretty pass when even in matters of this kind it is not possible to demand or secure an inquiry. It is discreditable to Indians that in such matters they are not able to voice even an effective protest, but it is scarcely any credit to a civilized Government to permit its officers to remain under the cloud which such statements themselves raise. The suggestion that the women of Chimur who complained to Dr Moonje and others have entered into a conspiracy to make allegations of this nature in which they themselves were concerned is outrageous. It is surprising that the C.P. Government should have in its zeal for vindicating its position permitted itself to make it.

"A BLASPHEMY AGAINST WOMANHOOD"

The *Free Press Journal* of Bombay wrote as follows with reference to the second *communiqué* of the C.P. Government on Chimur:—

BOMBAY, January 4, 1943.

The New Year brought a new Honour to Chimur.

On Thursday, the Government of the Central Provinces issued a

special *communiqué* in which they awarded a special distinction to Chimur as the Village of Mass Perjury! Apart from the general honour conferred on the entire village the *communiqué* made also distinguished mention of a few women of the place. There was no immediate provocation for the honour. One thought that the Central Provinces Government were trying hard to forget Chimur. Indeed they have been using their vast powers to make everybody else forget Chimur. But obviously they themselves are not able to forget it. They put up a "Steel and Concrete" *communiqué* on October 16. It was a Maginot Line to hold up the agitators who demanded an inquiry. After that the C.P. Government could have quietly gone to sleep. That they have not been able to do. They find that the Maginot Line has been circumvented. Hence the new *communiqué*—a kind of Weygand Line—a defence in depths.

The October *communiqué* tried to dispose of the complaints in the gross. The New Year *communiqué* tries to dispose of the complaints by defaming the complainants one by one. It purports to give reasons for dismissing the complaints. The *communiqué* is disingenuous in the extreme. It uses a revolting type of argument. It is an attempted rape on Reasoning. This is the stuff. Read it. Says the *communiqué*: "One complaint of rape can be dismissed at once because the complainant is the sister-in-law of the person affected and that person did not herself come forward." What is the meaning of the word 'because" in this sentence? Is the relation of being a "sister-in-law" to a person affected such a risky one? Is the protection of law withdrawn from a person who is a "sister-in-law" to a person affected?

The *communiqué* adds: "The alleged victim was a servant of a hotel-keeper at Chimur. The hotel-keeper is under the sentence of transportation for life and his brother under sentence of death." Do you grasp it, reader? Somebody is under a sentence of death. He has got a brother. That brother keeps a hotel in Chimur. This girl is a servant in that hotel. So when a complaint is made about something done to her it is found to be unbelievable by the C.P. Government! Got it?

Here is the second complaint. Says the *communiqué*: "Another complainant is the daughter of a domestic servant whose father was arrested by the police and who is employed by a person accused in a case under Section 888 of the Indian Penal Code." This girl is not somebody's sister-in-law. She is only a daughter, and she has herself come forward with the complaint. Why is it dismissed? Her father is arrested by the police and he is employed by a person accused under Section 888 of the Indian Penal Code! What a mighty section this 888, I.P.C., should be that when a person is arrested under it his employee's daughter loses the right to be heard when she complains of the most grievous injury of which any woman could complain!

"The third complainant," says the *communiqué*, "is the wife of a person who has been sentenced to transportation for life. Her husband's employer has also been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment." Now, this is not a sister-in-law, not a daughter, but the wife of somebody sentenced to transportation. There are many risks in being a wife to somebody sentenced to transportation for life. Here is an additional hardship. They have no right to make complaints.

"The fourth complainant," goes on the *communiqué*, "is the wife of a Teli, one of whose relatives was arrested by the police." The C.P. Government establishes a new record here. It is not a sister-in-law; it is not a daughter; it is not even a wife. In this case, the complainant is the wife of a Teli. The Teli is not himself sentenced to transportation for life. He is not even arrested by the police. He has many relatives. One of these relatives is arrested by the police. So being wife to a Teli who has a relative who has been arrested by the police

has prevented that woman from getting a hearing on her complaint.

Now for the fifth. The *communiqué* says: "The husband of the fifth complainant was arrested and subsequently discharged." Does this not break fresh ground?

"The sixth complaint," says the *communiqué*, "is the only one of superior social position and her complaint is in respect of her daughter who has herself made no complaint; two of her sons were arrested and one has been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment." Here is a venomous insinuation that because "two of her sons were arrested and one was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment" a mother of superior social position has invented an offence against her own daughter's honour! Can there be an insinuation more vile, more venomous, more slanderous against Motherhood? All the complaints may be true or may not be true. Practically every adult male in Chimur has been arrested. Possibly three out of every four have been sentenced. Could there have been any woman in Chimur who was not the wife, or daughter, or sister-in-law or mother or sister of some one who was arrested, some one who was sentenced? What then is the silly argument? The arrest of the men in the village left the women protectionless. The protection of those who are deprived of their protectors is the duty of the King. Complaints from such helpless women called for extra vigilance in investigating into them. Instead of that their complaints are "dismissed at once."

Further down, the Government deal with complaints received by others who investigated into the incidents. There is some fine legal complaint about lack of cross-examination and sworn statements. If the C.P. Government had given a little thought to this matter they could have realized that these complaints were mostly from timid unlettered villagers. And they did not happen to have copies of the Criminal Procedure Code handy with them, when the incidents they complain of happened, to enable them to present their case in the legal format. Those who drafted the *communiqué* for the C.P. Government have done no service to the masters whom they profess to serve. Without investigation, without inquiry, they have heaped infamy on those who complained of injury. Without thought, without consideration, they have hurled a most heinous insult against the nobility, the majesty and the sanctity of womanhood!' They have blasphemed holy Motherhood itself!

A COMPROMISE

DETAILS OF SETTLEMENT OF CHIMUR EPISODE

A matter of dispute between the Government and the people which threatened to develop into a grave crisis and which is described in the preceding pages was settled as the result of a compromise. While fully vindicating the position of Prof. J. P. Bhansali and his friends and the Press in India it also saved the Government from an awkward public inquiry into serious allegations of misbehaviour against troops. It brought to an end on January 12, 1943, a fierce agitation which started in September 1942. In this the Press as a whole, and particularly the Bombay vernacular Press, played a conspicuous part, details of which are given separately a few pages ahead. The news of the compromise was flashed all over the country by the *Associated Press of India* in the following terms:

NAGPUR, January 12, 1943.

A settlement between Professor Bhansali and the C.P. Government was announced today, the sixty-third day of his fast, by Mr Jayaratnam, Chief Secretary to the C.P. Government, at a Press Conference today. Mr Jayaratnam said the order issued under the Defence of India Rules banning publication of all news about Professor Bhansali was being withdrawn. The Chief Secretary said that following the settlement between Professor Bhansali and the Government of C.P. the former had broken his fast in the afternoon.

The Chief Secretary to the C.P. Government handed the following note marked "Publicity Officer's statement to the Press" to the Press:

"The Government welcome the efforts which have been made to bring about a solution of the difficulties arising from the Chimur incident. There was no intention of attributing any ulterior motive to the women of Chimur generally. The Government attaches and has always attached the greatest importance to the maintenance of discipline among the military and police engaged in restoration of order and considers that respect for the honour of women and their protection from molestation are and shall be the first essential of good discipline."

The Chief Secretary said he had seen letters from Dr Khare to Prof. Bhansali and *vice versa* and, as a result, the Government had withdrawn the order issued on December 12, 1942, which prohibited publication of any matter relating directly or indirectly to Prof. Bhansali or his activities and also prohibited publication or making any reference in the Press to that order.

The Chief Secretary expressed the hope that as a result of the compromise, no agitation would be started for an inquiry into the Chimur incident.

KHARE—BHANSALI LETTERS

The following letters were exchanged on the same day between Dr N. B. Khare and Prof. J. P. Bhansali and released at the Chief Secretary's Press conference:—

From Dr Khare to Prof. Bhansali:

DEAR BHANSALI,

I saw you on January 8 and had a talk with you. I had as a result a full and free discussion with his Excellency about the Chimur incidents. As regards the complaints as to the outrages committed on the women of Chimur the demand for a public inquiry may not be pursued in view of the difficulty of identification after this lapse of time. I am in a position to assure you:

(1) The C.P. Government will issue a *communiqué* to the effect that there was no intention on the part of the Government to attribute any ulterior motive to the women of Chimur generally and that the Governmen' attaches and has always attached the greatest importance to the maintenance of discipline among the military and police engaged in restoration of order and considers that respect for the honour of women and their protection from molestation is and shall be the first essential of good discipline.

(2) The ban on Press relating to the Chimur and Bhansali affairs will be removed.

(3) The *communiqué* or Press Note would simultaneously appear in the Press with the letters.

(4) I understand that there will be no restrictions on visitors to Chimur now, but if there is any they will be removed. I am in a position to assure you that the Hon'ble Mr M. S. Aney will join you in your visit to Chimur and meet people, and the Government will not place any restrictions. If you so desire I have no objection to go with you.

Yours has been a tremendous sacrifice but in view of the above I would request you to break your heroic fast.

Yours sincerely,
N. B. KHARE.

From Prof. Bhansali to Dr Khare:—

DEAR KHARE,

Many thanks for your letter and your efforts. I am glad to find that the Government are willing to issue a *communiqué* as suggested by you and remove the ban on the Press as regards Chimur news and the restrictions on visitors to Chimur. I am also glad that Mr M. S. Aney will be kind enough to come with me to Chimur and meet the people of the village and thus concede my request to him; as a man devoted to religious life, I have always felt that molestation of even a single woman is a crime not only against society, but against God. Now it has been given to me to communicate this feeling to others—maybe in a very small measure. I am, therefore, beholden to God that he made me the instrument of awakening conscience on so vital a question as the honour of women. When I recover my strength I shall be glad to visit Chimur in the company of Mr Aney and yourself. In view of the reasons given by you I agree to drop the demand for an inquiry and break my fast. After I break my fast no restrictions will be placed on my movements or utterances which may be directed to the relief of Chimur or which relate to my fast.

Yours sincerely,
J. P. BHANSALI.

DR KHARE'S STATEMENT

Dr N. B. Khare in a statement thanked all those including his Excellency the Governor of C.P. and Berar for affording facilities in bringing about a happy termination of "the episode which has been agitating the country for the last so many years, namely, Prof. Bhansali's fast." Dr Khare added that his Excellency's attitude had been helpful throughout.

PROF. BHANSALI BREAKS FAST

Prof. Bhansali broke his fast at 4-30 p.m. with a glass of *mosambi* juice offered by Shrimati Jankidevi Bajaj. Hymns from the *Buddha Puran* and the *Gita* were chanted and a Maulvi recited prayers from the Quran.

Among the 300 persons present at the breaking of the fast were the Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon, Messrs Kanu Gandhi,

Chimanlal Shah, Manager of Sevagram Ashram, Kamalnayan Bajaj, Chandrasen Bhansali, Mrs Kishorilal Mushruwala and Doctors Trivedi and Waradpande.

Addressing those assembled, Mr K. M. Munshi, declared: "Bapu's blessings were on this spot where Prof. Bhansali performed the penance. Much as we miss Bapu's guidance at such a critical hour, all concerned have done their best to fulfil what was expected of them. Prof. Bhansali has carried forward the ancient *tapasvi* tradition by vindicating a great principle by his individual penance."

Explaining the implications of the settlement arrived at with the Government, Mr Munshi said that as soon as Prof. Bhansali is fit he will accompany the hon'ble Mr Aney on a tour of Chimur.

Mr Munshi acknowledged the efforts of Dr N. B. Khare in bringing about an honourable settlement. The Government in their *communiqué* had agreed to see that women's honour shall be respected in future. In view of this change of heart and the difficulty of identification of the alleged culprits, the demand for a public inquiry had been given up.

Shrimati Kale explained how she and Dr Khare were drawn to Prof. Bhansali whose cause moved Dr. Khare to intervene, and it was creditable that he succeeded in bringing about an honourable settlement.

Mr Kamalnayan Bajaj expressed gratitude to Prof. Bhansali for selecting his father's (the late Seth Jamnalal Bajaj's) house for the penance. He announced that the house where he fasted would hereafter be named "Bhansali Cottage."

Doctors Trivedi and Waradpande issued the following report:—

"Prof. Bhansali broke his fast at 4-25 p.m. by taking about half an ounce of *mosambi* juice mixed with a dram of glucose. The next few days will show how his system reacts to the nourishment which will have to be given with proper care. With God's grace let us pray and fully hope that Prof. Bhansali will successfully come out of the following critical week or two all the stronger. His pulse is 95 and blood pressure 95-70. In the morning his pulse was 76, respiration 15, temperature 96.2 and blood pressure 63-45."

MR ANEY VISITS CHIMUR

Mr M. S. Aney visited Chimur in the last week of July 1943, in fulfilment of his promise to Prof. Bhansali. The following account is taken from "Hitavada":—

Mr M. S. Aney, who had promised to accompany Prof. Bhansali in January last to Chimur, visited Chimur last week (end of July). At Warora station he was received by Mr Atal, Deputy Commissioner, Chanda, with whom he drove up to Chimur dak bungalow.

Mr Amte, pleader of Warora, introduced two well-to-do, respectable ladies, *viz.*, Shrimati Sitabai Naik, whose husband, Mr Kalyanji Naik, was acquitted in a disturbance case, and Shrimati Dadibai Begde, who afforded protection to several women in August last.

Mr Aney was garlanded on his arrival at Chimur by Prof. Bhansali, Shrimati Shalinibai Kambdi, whose husband was the Sarpanch and was discharged in a murder case but is now in jail for disturbance offences, and others.

Mr Khamankar and Shrimati Tai Kannamwar received Mr Aney at the Charkha Sangh Relief Centre, where about 70 women regularly spin.

Later he was taken by Mr Govindrao Shrigiriwar, ex-President, Warora Municipal Committee, to Mr Kalyanji Naik's house. Shrimati Dadibai Begde also requested Mr Aney to see her house, where she had sheltered some women during the military control of the village. Her husband, who is a rich landlord, is under a sentence of 30 years

in connection with the August 16 disturbances. Shrimati Kambdi and Shrimati Begde were narrating their and other women's woes when Mr Aney, it is reported, remarked: "Things which should not have happened have occurred. Have faith in God. He will not fail to do justice."

Some persons requested Mr Aney to do his best to prevail on the C.P. Government to withdraw the ban on Sant Tukoji Maharaj about his entry into Wardha and Chanda districts.

Mr Aney jocularly asked Prof. Bhansali not to undertake any more fast till Gandhiji is in jail.

While sitting at Prof. Bhansali's place, the Chimur people requested Mr Aney, it is learnt, to make arrangements to reopen the Marathi Middle School at Chimur which is closed since August 16, 1942, and also to arrange for opening a cheap grain shop, as corn is not available. He replied that he would do whatever was possible.

Efforts are being made to organize collection of a general fund to relieve the distressed and the afflicted families.

BHANSALI STAKED HIS ALL—AND WON THE CAUSE

Mr K. M. Munshi wrote in the *Social Welfare*:—

BOMBAY, January 22, 1943.

It was at about 1-30 on the 12th last when Shrimati Anasuyabai Kale, Acharya Valunjkar, some friends and myself motored down to Wardha with the terms of settlement which his Excellency Sir Henry Twynam, Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar, had approved and which Prof. Bhansali, known in Sevagram as Bavaji, had still to accept. General outlines of the proposals had already been approved by him on Sunday the 10th when I had seen him.

It was a piece of sheer accident that professional engagement took me to Nagpur on the 8th. It was another piece of accident that, thanks to the interest taken by Mrs Kale, Dr Khare had gone to Wardha and come away considerably impressed by the fast of Prof. Bhansali on the same day. The third one was that his Excellency was not unwilling to settle this outstanding issue. We went to the Guest House of Seth Jamnalalji and I rushed to the place where Prof. Bhansali was lying. Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj and his mother Shrimati Jankidevi, following the high tradition of service left to them by Seth Jamnalalji, had surrounded him with every care which affectionate solicitude could bestow.

During the last three months that I came into contact with Prof. Bhansali I had acquired an affection for him. Very funny, but there it is—not that sort of affection which one has for a friend, but a kind of mother's love for a baby. For in spite of his forty odd years and his tremendous will, in many ways, he has the innocence and simplicity of a child. If I could, I would have taken him in my arms. There he lay, on the 63rd day of his fast; his body all but a skeleton concealed under a cover; his face beaming with a cheerful smile; his hands put out in welcome. I told him about the negotiations and the terms we had brought. His brain was clear as crystal, the whole vitality of his body being drawn up to his brain. He discussed every word of the letters to be exchanged between Dr Khare and him and which are now before the public. He weighed every word from three points of view: First, whether the vow he had taken was fulfilled; secondly, whether he was doing anything to injure the dignity of Bapu; thirdly, whether in any little measure recurrence of the outrages that had happened in Chimur would be prevented.

Prof. Bhansali is modest and from the very beginning had put forward his claim most reasonably. He wanted public inquiry into the outrages of Chimur but would be quite content if Hon'ble Shri Aney accompanied him to Chimur and both of them heard the tale of woe

which the women there had to tell them together. To his mind this part of his vow was essential. He wanted to establish that even under foreign rule every suffering Indian had a right to tell the tale of his woe to his leaders, and that in denying to the victims of the present repression the right to be heard by Indian public men of tried worth, the bureaucracy was perpetuating the worst feature of a foreign rule. Prof. Bhansali was therefore satisfied by the assurance which Dr Khare had given: that Hon'ble Shri Aney will go with him to Chimur.

It may look a small thing now but the fact remains that under the existing British Rule in India, a public man—Shri Aney—who comes from a village next to Chimur and who now forms part of the Government of India and who could never be charged with want of will, could not go near his people and mingle his tears with them at the tortures inflicted upon them at the behest of our foreign rulers. This ban was lifted; this point therefore was won. On the next point there was no doubt that the settlement became possible only because his Excellency the Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar intervened—I have no doubt, with the consent of the Viceroy—not as a matter of generosity, but as a clear recognition that it was high time that public indignation that had been roused about Chimur might be allayed by a penitent gesture, however belated.

In the two notifications issued, the C.P. Government, carried away by the fury into which British Government had lashed themselves since August 9, said things which should not have been stated in a responsible State document. The Government pooh-poohed those who approached them for justice. They charged the women of Chimur with having concocted the story of rape on themselves. Sense of proportion had returned. The Government was now prepared to make some amends by stating that there was no intention to attribute any ulterior motives to the women of Chimur generally. It also emphasized, no doubt only in words—but what should have been done in action at the end of August last—that the prerequisite of a civilized agency for maintaining law and order is that it should respect both law and morals.

Prof. Bhansali was happy to see that the C.P. Government had at last pledged itself to see that the honour of women shall be safe in the hands of the police and the military. He felt, and I also agreed with him, that if it were possible to obtain Bapu's approval to this settlement it would have been forthcoming; that any way he would not have found fault with us. It was a great moral gain that there was a change of heart, however slight, which led the Government to impose some restrictions on the methods of enforcing law and order with which we have been familiar during the last three months.

The third point was also gained. Public inquiry, when Prof. Bhansali went to Hon'ble Shri Aney, would have been of some use. After about 75 days of that incident it was worse than useless; identification was not possible. Personally I was averse to getting an inquiry at this late stage when our sisters of Chimur would have had to be put to the mental torture of invoking the horrors of the ugly moments of their life and of trying to re-enact them in words before a cold-blooded tribunal. Over the shame of those moments, a curtain had to be dropped. Both the Government and Prof. Bhansali have now happily decided to do so.

Prof. Bhansali then signed the letter. The police party which had encamped in front of Seth Jamnalalji's Guest House, in order to see that he did not die except under their supervision, disappeared. News spread like wild fire in Wardha. Crowds began to come in. Just about that time several women from Chimur came in—the mothers, daughters and the wives of men who in their irrepressible enthusiasm

for freedom did gruesome deeds and broke the laws of the land and over whom hangs the extreme penalty of death. Their personal grief had been forgotten in adoration of Prof. Bhansali who was wooing death so that their wounds may be healed. Between prayers, Prof. Bhansali broke his fast.

A heavy load was off my chest, for Prof. Bhansali had during the last three months honoured me with his confidence. Tears were in my eyes for in that moment—in front of that little outhouse of Seth Jamnalalji's Guest House—I saw that the mighty spirit of Bapu was there, the Master who had made saints out of stones, martyrs out of mere men and heroes out of clay.

As I left that gathering the helplessness of my countrymen came back to me with blinding poignancy. On August 19 Government had done a wrong. Public men sought justice; the Press clamoured for it. The whole country was shaken to its depths. But nothing doing. Prof. Bhansali met an Indian Member of the Viceroy's Council and friends, and urged them to intervene. The reply was: Nothing doing. He went on a fast unto death. News travelled throughout the country. Every heart was stirred. The reply was: Universal Press blackout on Chimur and Bhansali. The Indian Press took up the question. A battle royal began between it and some Provincial Governments.

Sixty days of Prof. Bhansali's fast went unheeded; but for his seasoned constitution he would have collapsed long ago. The bureaucracy was faced with a grim prospect. Prof. Bhansali's death would have led to another all-India wave of indignation; possibly to a chain of such fasts. Then the bureaucracy woke up, and Prof. Bhansali was rescued from the jaws of death by a last-minute act of duty which any Indian Government would have done on the 20th of August 1942, the day after the incident. The measure of our bondage is unbounded. Lord Curzon, for a single outrage by a white soldier in Burma, brought down upon him his Viceregal fist. But we are in 1942.

This Chimur settlement to my mind is a healthy sign. It shows the return of a sense of proportion among the British in this country. I hope I am not mistaken. It fell to my lot in the middle of August last to draw the attention of a distinguished English friend, that struggles like this between this British bureaucracy in India and the Indian people are temporary phases through which Indo-British relations must pass before achieving partnership and that nothing should be done during these phases which would lead to a deeper embitterment between the two peoples than what already exists. A detached point of view is essential. The War of Democracy has to be won, Britain and India have to march hand in hand towards a World Federation of Freedom; but it must be a self-respecting India, not an India in bondage. Every day that passes by without that confidence restored which ought to exist between Britain and Free India delays a consummation which the world devoutly wishes. This Chimur settlement therefore indicates a retracing of step—back to friendship. His Excellency Sir Henry Twynam acted well and wisely.

Bavaji is penniless. With worldliness forsworn, his sole wealth and instrument is his body. With it he resisted almost until the last gasp. Bavaji two months back was unknown. Today he has vindicated the honour of the Indian women. His name will go down to posterity as the man who single-handed vindicated the principle which he spoke of several times during the last sixty days, that molestation of even a single woman is a crime not only against the society but against God. India is the land of *sati*. Millions of women, through ages, have lived and died for their honour in this holy land. Bavaji in his generation fought for it with his life and won.

PRESS COMMENTS

THE "HINDU"

MADRAS, January 14, 1943.

The news that Prof. Bhansali has broken his fast as the result of a satisfactory settlement with the C.P. Government over the Chimur issue will be received with profound relief and thankfulness throughout the country. A man of singular purity of life and indomitable courage, he was resolved to make the ultimate sacrifice to vindicate the honour of womanhood than which nothing has ever been more sacred in Indian eyes. Only a burning faith in the justice of the cause he had espoused and the essential goodness of human nature could have sustained him in the terrible ordeal of a sixty-three days' fast. It is characteristic of the nobility of the man that suffering has bred no bitterness in him and that the predominant feeling in his mind at the moment of triumph is one of humble thankfulness that he should have been instrumental in awakening the public conscience to a great moral issue. So staunch an upholder of the eternal verities is a priceless possession of which any nation may be proud; and all India is indebted in no small measure to all those men of goodwill whose assiduous mediation brought about the happy result of saving his life and, in particular, to Dr Khare and Mr Munshi whose unwearied efforts in this behalf are beyond all praise.

The Government of the Central Provinces may also be congratulated on their recognition, belated and half-hearted though it be, that the interests of justice transcend mere considerations of prestige and that public opinion cannot be rendered powerless by being muzzled. Prof. Bhansali has agreed to give up the demand for a public inquiry presumably because the C.P. Government have wisely given up the untenable attitude they had previously taken up in regard to that demand—questioning as they had done the *bona fides* of the complainants and of the independent investigations made by respectable members of the public and repudiating the allegations as grossly improbable—and have now contented themselves with pointing out that after this lapse of time a public inquiry might not be of much use for bringing the offenders to book. By declaring in the *communiqué* they have issued, that "there was no intention on the part of the Government to attribute any ulterior motive to the women of Chimur generally," the C.P. Government admit the grievous injustice they had done to these much-wronged women by attributing unworthy motives to them in their previous *communiqué*. And it is to be hoped that their affirmation of their resolve to enforce discipline among the forces employed for restoring law and order and particularly to see that women suffer no insult at the hands of these forces will be followed up by practical steps designed to ensure that no room will be given for complaints of the kind which the unfortunate people of Chimur were obliged to make in those dark days of September. The restoration of public confidence in the affected areas will be no easy matter; but with the removal of restrictions on visitors from outside and the mission of goodwill which Mr Aney has undertaken by promising to visit the area in Prof. Bhansali's company we may hope that everything possible will be done to obliterate the bitter memories of the past and restore normal conditions.

The issue raised by Prof. Bhansali's fast was one that far transcended provincial boundaries; and the manner in which it has been settled will, one would fain hope, have a salutary and lasting effect on the attitude of authority throughout the country generally towards the people's right to have their grievances promptly inquired into and to demand that no impediment shall be placed in the way of their ventilating grievances till they are remedied. As part of the settle-

ment the C.P. Government have lifted the ban on the Press relating to Chimur and the Bhansali affair—a ban which should never have been imposed, not only because it offended the first principles of democracy and freedom but also because it constituted a flagrant violation of the agreement that the Government of India had made with the organized Press of the country and which the latter, in the face of many provocations and pin-pricks, had consistently respected. Because the C.P. ban was an intolerable affront, the Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference was compelled to vindicate the self-respect of the Press by recommending a striking protest. That it was thoroughly justified in doing so was demonstrated not only by the fact that the vast number of newspapers in the country—no less than 150 out of 170—adopted the recommendation but also by the fact that the few newspapers which for extraneous reasons were unable to fall in with the suggestion, nevertheless, condemned with one voice the action of the C.P. Government which had provoked retaliation. Now that the C.P. Government have withdrawn the obnoxious orders, the object of the protest has been served and the President of the A.-I.N.E. Conference has therefore announced that it will no longer be operative. Those who, little mindful of the great question of principle involved, have criticized the Press for a decision which inevitably meant some little inconvenience to the public, should have known that it could be no pleasure to the newspapers to place such voluntary restrictions on their own usefulness and that only a paramount sense of duty to the public could have sustained them in their effort to vindicate the right of the public to be kept informed, even during war and consistently with the need for respecting military secrets, of everything that might be of interest or concern to them. The rights of the public and the Press have now been admitted, though tardily, by the C.P. Government and it is to be hoped that in future neither will be lightly called in question by the Government or by any other.

"AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA"

CALCUTTA, January 15, 1943.

All's well, they say, that ends well and the solution of the deadlock that was precipitated by the C.P. Government's order prohibiting publication of news relating to Professor Bhansali, his fast or his activities in connection with the Chimur incident will give general satisfaction. The C.P. Government have done well in enunciating a principle in this connection on which the public can make no compromise. They have, for instance, made it clear that they attach the greatest importance to the maintenance of discipline among the military and the police engaged in the restoration of order. They have assured the public that they consider that respect for the honour of women and their protection from molestation are, and shall be, the first essential of good discipline. We hope that these words so solemnly uttered by the Government would be observed in letter and spirit by all concerned. When we say this we do not associate the troops and policemen generally with activities of a wrongful, subversive and dishonourable character. All that we intend to emphasize is that in these exciting times public servants, whether in civil employ or in the armed forces, should take special care to maintain by their own conduct the highest standards of discipline. It is not enough that they should behave properly; what is necessary is that they should try to set examples which others may well emulate.

As a logical sequel to the compromise reached at Nagpur on the deplorable Chimur episode, Mr K. Srinivasan, President of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, has taken the earliest opportunity to withdraw his directions to the Press imposing a ban on publication of certain categories of news. Thus the relations subsisting between

the Government and the Press in terms of the agreement evolved at Bombay are restored. While thanking the C.P. Government for the efforts made by them, however belated, for the settlement of the dispute, we must all express our gratitude to Professor Bhansali for the services he has rendered to the community generally and to the villagers of Chimur by persuading the C.P. Government to emphasize a principle of conduct on the part of the troops and the policemen to which the public attach very great importance. We hope and trust that the lessons of the Chimur incident will be laid to heart by men in authority at the Centre and in the Provinces.

THE "TRIBUNE"

LAHORE, January 16, 1943.

All the three parties concerned, the Government, the public and the Press, will heave a sigh of relief at the settlement that has just been reached in the Central Provinces between the local Government on the one hand and Professor Bhansali and the Press on the other. The immediate and outstanding results of this settlement are the discontinuance of Professor Bhansali's fast and the consequent saving of a precious human life, and the withdrawal of the C.P. Government's order under the Defence of India Rules which led to the banning of the publication in the Press all over India of news relating to Professor Bhansali or his fast or even any reference to the order, and the consequent discontinuance of the ban imposed by the newspapers themselves on the publication of certain categories of official news. It is not necessary for our present purpose to refer in detail to the circumstances under which Professor Bhansali resorted to his fast. Some idea of those circumstances can be formed from the C.P. Government's own *communiqué*, which formed the basis of the settlement. "There was no intention," says the *communiqué*, "of attributing any ulterior motive to the women of Chimur generally. The Government attaches and has always attached the greatest importance to the maintenance of discipline among the military and police engaged in restoration of order, and considers that respect for the honour of women and their protection from molestation are and shall be the first essential of good discipline."

When one remembers that Professor Bhansali's immediate reaction to this statement was the dropping of his fast, one cannot but regret that it was not made much earlier to save him the necessity of continuing his fast for so long a time as 63 days and thus literally imperilling his life. On the fast itself it is not necessary to say more than has been said already by Dr Khare, ex-Premier of the C.P., to whose intervention the settlement is principally due, and Mr Munshi, ex-Home Minister of Bombay. "Yours," said the former in his letter to Professor Bhansali, "has been a tremendous sacrifice." "Bapu's blessings," said Mr Munshi, while addressing those assembled on the occasion of the breaking of the fast, "were on this spot where Professor Bhansali performed the penance. Professor Bhansali has carried forward the ancient *tapasvi* tradition by vindicating a great principle by his individual penance." Opinion may and does differ regarding the suitability of the method of fast for securing the redress of grievances, but no one can withhold his meed of praise and admiration from a person who resorts to this method and continues it for a period of more than two months for the redress of a grievance which has nothing personal about it. Professor Bhansali's own letter to Dr Khare reveals the noble motive by which he was actuated in what Dr Khare describes with perfect accuracy as his "heroic fast." "I have always felt," he says, "that the molestation of even a single woman is a crime not only against society but against God. Now it has been given to me to communicate this feeling to others—maybe in a very small measure. I am, there-

fore, beholden to God that He has made me the instrument of awakening conscience on so vital a question as the honour of women."

To Professor Bhansali's own position in the eyes of his countrymen the fast has made a tremendous difference, though an utterly unassuming and selfless man like him is not likely to think much of it. Before the fast he was one of the least known men outside his strictly limited sphere of activities. Today, despite the official ban on the publication of news regarding his fast his name is a household word in all parts of India. The C.P. Government has earned the gratitude of the public by its act of humanity in issuing the statement, which enabled such a man to discontinue his fast before it had led to irreparable consequences. We will say one parting word before we take leave of this aspect of the matter. Professor Bhansali did the right thing in dropping his demand for a public inquiry into the complaints as to outrages on women at Chimur in view of "the difficulty of identification after this lapse of time," pointed out by Dr Khare. But the Government should in the interests of that very discipline to which it rightly attaches supreme importance, not only do everything in its power to make a recurrence of such complaints impossible in future, but take such steps as may still be possible to trace the culprits in the present case itself and inflict on them the punishment they deserve.

The second and no less important result of the C.P. Government's *communiqué* is the restoration of the *status quo* in the relations between the Government and the Press. It is impossible to deny that in bringing about this result the Press hartal, in which nearly a hundred prominent newspapers in all parts of the country took part, and the ban imposed by the same newspapers on the publication in their columns of certain categories of official news and the speeches of members of the British Government and the Governments in India, Central or Provincial, had a conspicuous share. Certain newspapers, themselves members both of the Editors' Conference and of the Standing Committee of the Conference, not only did not join in this newspaper protest, but actually described it as futile. After what has happened no one can surely say that the protest has been futile in this particular case. As a matter of fact it is extremely doubtful if but for this united and energetic protest on the part of so many leading newspapers in all parts of India the present settlement would have been arrived at. The connection between the two things is, indeed, plain to the meanest understanding. The Press observed its one-day hartal on the 6th January. Within exactly a week from that date the C.P. Government issued its *communiqué* withdrawing the restrictions on the publication of news regarding the Chimur incident generally and Professor Bhansali's fast in particular, which had led the Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference to take the unusual action it had taken. We are not aware of any recent case, whether in India or elsewhere, in which a united protest on the part of an aggrieved party achieved such speedy success in a matter of this kind. Of course, this speedy success has been possible because the cause for which the Press stood in this case was not only essentially but undeniably just. But, then, it is only for such a cause that so many newspapers in India, whose sense of dignity and responsibility is equalled only by their zeal for public service could have joined in so drastic a form of protest. The C.P. Government not only took an absolutely indefensible step in banning the publication of factual news regarding an incident in which the public was vitally interested, but was actually guilty of a breach of the Delhi Agreement; and other Provincial Governments followed its evil lead. The Press has rendered a service not merely to the public but to the C.P. Government itself by bringing its united pressure to bear upon it so as to facilitate its withdrawing from an utterly untenable position. We can only hope that

the lesson of the incident, which has now been happily terminated, will not be lost either on the Government immediately concerned or on other Governments in India.

THE "LEADER"

ALLAHABAD, January 16, 1943.

We are glad that Professor Bhansali has broken his fast and that a settlement has been arrived at between him and the Central Provinces Government. His demand for an inquiry into a certain affair should have been conceded. The Government argued that the allegations made were baseless. Assuming this to be so, we should have thought that it would have, in the very interests of the persons involved, ordered an enquiry of an impartial nature into the allegations. It appears from the settlement of the Chief Secretary to the Central Provinces Government that the order issued under the Defence of India Rules banning publication of all news about Professor Bhansali was being withdrawn. Such an order should never have been issued and we note now with pleasure that it has been withdrawn. The Press has conducted itself with responsibility in regard to the war. It has accepted many restrictions as inevitable in war-time but co-operation between it and Government cannot be furthered by steps such as the Madras Government took against papers which did not publish the honours list. Exhibition of such petty-mindedness on the part of a Government is at all times regrettable; it is particularly so at the present juncture.

ALL-INDIA PRESS HARTAL

BOYCOTT OF GOVERNMENT NEWS

For a period of one month the Press in India kept up an attitude of vigorous and united protest against the Government's policy regarding Chimur and Prof. Bhansali, particularly the banning of the publication of all news about them. Below is a brief narrative taken from the *Free Press Journal* of Bombay, dated January 14, 1943.

Alarmed at the manner in which Prof. Bhansali's fast had started agitating the public mind, the C.P. Government decided that further mischief could be prevented only by gagging the Press. They sounded the C.P. Press Advisory Committee as to whether the Press would agree to deny all publicity to the fast. But as the Press was not willing to forgo its duty, the C.P. Government on December 12 issued an order under Rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules.

The order was in the following terms:—

In exercise of powers conferred by clause (b) of sub-rule (i) of Rule 41 of the Defence of India Rules, the Government of the Central Provinces is pleased to order that:

(1) No printer, publisher or editor shall make, print or publish in the Central Provinces any document or any matter relating directly or indirectly to

(a) Prof. Bhansali of Sevagram or his activities;

(b) this order or any reference whatever to this order; and

(2) No press in the Central Provinces shall be used for the printing of any such document or matter.

The Central Provinces Government circulated their order to the other provinces and solicited their co-operation in blacking out the fast. The Government of India endorsed the request of the Central Provinces.

On December 15 the Government of Bombay summoned an emergency meeting of the Press Advisory Committee and explained to them the position. The Committee declined to agree to the blackout. That evening the Bombay Government issued an order similar to the C.P. order.

On December 15 the Press Advisory Committee summoned an urgent meeting of all Bombay Editors to protest against the order.

The meeting asked for the immediate withdrawal of the order and as a signal of protest against the gagging order suggested a one-day hartal. The daily Press in Bombay city and province, with the solitary exception of the *Times of India*, suspended publication on Friday, the 18th of December, without disclosing the reason.

Further action was left to the Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference that was meeting that day.

The Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, meeting in Bombay on December 18, 19 and 21, passed the following resolution:—

"As a protest against a recent order passed by certain Provincial Governments, involving a flagrant breach of the agreement reached with the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, the Standing Committee of the A.-I.N.E.C. recommends to all newspapers in India to suspend publication for a day to be fixed and announced by the President.

"It also recommends to them not to publish until the order is withdrawn or otherwise directed by the President: (1) all circu-

lars from Government Houses; (2) New Year Honours List; and (3) all speeches of the members of the British Government, the Government of India and Provincial Governments except portions thereof which contain decisions and announcements."

The circumstances which led to the above decision were stated in a private circular which Mr J. N. Sahni, Secretary of the A.-I.N.E.C., sent to all newspapers in India. Mr Sahni said:—

"Editors in certain provinces may not probably be aware of the circumstances which necessitated this decision. You perhaps know by now that Prof. Bhansali has been on fast for the last 39 days at Wardha. His demand is that an impartial inquiry should be held into the incidents at Chimur in the Central Provinces where it is alleged serious excesses were committed including outrages on women. The Government of the Central Provinces issued an order on all newspapers in the Central Provinces forbidding them to publish any reports about Prof. Bhansali or his fast and a further order that no reference should be made by the papers to the order forbidding publication of news about Prof. Bhansali and his fast. So far as the Standing Committee was aware, similar orders were passed on papers in Bombay and Madras and were likely to be enforced in other provinces as well.

"The Standing Committee in its meeting on Saturday passed a resolution requesting the Government to withdraw both these orders, since they were contrary to the spirit of the Bombay understanding. The Standing Committee agreed to wait till Monday for Government to take its decision. The reply of the Government on Monday was very discouraging. The Standing Committee, consequently, passed the above resolution on Monday.

"As you will see, the two orders mentioned above are not only a flagrant breach of the understanding between Government and the Editors' Conference, but are also in violation of journalistic integrity. It is hence that the Standing Committee unanimously decided on this unprecedented form of protest.

"You will know from the Press the date for the one-day suspension which will be announced by the President. The Standing Committee expects that newspapers throughout the country will co-operate in putting into full operation the terms of the resolution and will stand united irrespective of political views in defending the rights of the Press."

Either through the Defence of India Rules orders or through strict Press advice, Government had succeeded in blacking out all news about the fast in all provinces. In the protracted negotiations that were conducted, the Provincial Governments pointed out the Central Government as responsible for the order and the Central Government said the matter lay with the Provincial Governments. When the negotiations finally failed to move the Government, Mr K. Srinivasan, President of the A.-I.N.E.C., made the following announcement on December 30, 1942:—

"In accordance with the resolution of the Standing Committee of the A.-I.N.E.C., passed at its meetings held in Bombay on the 18th, 19th and 21st December, I have fixed January 6, 1943, for the observance of the hartal throughout India for a day. It is requested that managements abstain from publishing newspapers bearing that date. The co-operation of all newspapers in India is solicited to make the day of protest a success.

"The second part of the resolution will take effect from the 1st of January, 1943, and continue in force until further notice.

"I am reluctantly compelled to give effect to this resolution as all efforts during the past week to persuade the Government of India to intervene have proved futile."

On January 1 the Honours List was blacked out. Over a hundred leading newspapers responded to the call for the one-day hartal. And from January 1, 1943, the black-out of Government news came into force. The Anglo-Indian newspapers failed to implement the recommendations of the Standing Committee.

Angered by the action of the Press, the Madras Government withdrew all Press privileges from the offending papers and also instructed Government departments not to advertise in them.

On hearing of the withdrawal of the ban by the Government of the C.P., Mr K. Srinivasan, President of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, issued the following announcement under date January 13, withdrawing the protest measure adopted by the Press:—

> "With the withdrawal by the C.P. Government of the order issued by them under the Defence of India Rules, dated December 12, 1942, which led to the banning of publications all over India of news relating to Prof. Bhansali or his fast or even any reference to the order, and the announcement of a settlement between Prof. Bhansali and the C.P. Government in regard to his demand for an inquiry into the Chimur incidents, I consider that it is no longer necessary to keep in force the ban recommended by the Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, in their resolution passed at Bombay on December 21, 1942. The resolution was a protest against the flagrant breach, which the C.P. Government's order involved, of the agreement subsisting between the Government of India and the Press.
>
> "In accordance with the direction given in the resolution, I announce that the recommendations made therein, imposing a ban on certain categories of news, now cease to be operative."

On the same day the Madras Government decided to restore to reporters of certain newspapers in the city the facilities to go over to the Secretariat to receive copies of Press *communiqués* and other materials officially released to the Press which stood withdrawn since January 3.

ALL-INDIA NEWSPAPER EDITORS' CONFERENCE

MR S. A. BRELVI'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

MADRAS, January 10, 1944.

Friends,

I tender to you my heart-felt gratitude for electing me President of this Conference. To any individual no honour can be greater than that conferred on him by his own peers. I am, therefore, overwhelmed by the honour that you have done me. This Conference has, during the very brief period of its existence, secured an important place in the public life of the country and has rendered invaluable service to the cause of the freedom of the Press, and, through it, to that of the country and no limit can be placed to the service that it can render to both in future. The responsibility of presiding over the deliberations of this Conference is thus both great and onerous. I cannot discharge that responsibility with any success without your help and co-operation. I give you this assurance, however, that I shall always try my best to deserve them. May I take this opportunity of offering to Mr K. Srinivasan on your behalf as well as my own our deep gratitude for the invaluable contribution that he has made towards building up this Conference and making it the power that it has become today? As our President for three years he has achieved a remarkable record of success and efficiency. I do not know what has contributed most to his success—his amiable personality, his infectious spirit of accommodation, his uncompromising loyalty to principles of his selfless devotion to duty. I can, however, say this with certainty that he has during this period won the love and esteem of all of us.

Since we met last the Indian Press has lost one of its outstanding figures. The late Ramanand Chatterjee was a veteran journalist who waged many a valiant fight on behalf of the Press and contributed much to the growth of its power and influence. Babu Kalinath Ray retired from the editorship of the *Tribune* during the year. Though Babu Kalinath Ray did not take active part in our deliberations, the association of a journalist of his eminence and experience was an asset of immense value to us.

We are all proud that three members of our Conference have courageously and at considerable trouble and risk to themselves vindicated the liberty of the Press. Mr Devadas Gandhi, editor of the *Hindustan Times*, was acquitted by the Privy Council in the Contempt of Court Case filed against him and others in the Allahabad High Court after he had undergone a term of imprisonment in that connection. Mr B. G. Horniman, editor of the *Bombay Sentinel*, added one more to his many and distinguished services to the Press by successfully questioning the validity of the warrant of arrest issued by the Allahabad High Court in the Contempt of Court Case against him. He has secured a ruling from the Bombay High Court that no case for Contempt can be filed by a High Court against a journalist who does not reside within its jurisdiction. How far this ruling will bind other High Courts remains to be seen. But let us hope the judgments in both these cases will bring home to the judiciary the need for the exercise of the utmost care before hauling up editors for Contempt of Court. The Press is as keen as the judiciary to see that there is no interference with the fair and proper administration of justice. But the Press cannot and will not tolerate interference with the exercise of its own legitimate function merely for satisfying the *amour-propre* or upholding the personal prestige of any judge or judges. The law of Contempt of Court requires drastic revision. We demand that it should have the sole object of

ensuring proper administration of justice. We also demand that it should be administered by disinterested judges. Judges, however learned, are human beings and cannot, ordinarily, be expected to dispense justice and nothing but justice in cases in which they are both prosecutors and judges. The recent *Tribune* Contempt of Court judgment is also a landmark in the history of freedom of the Press.

Mr A. D. Mani, editor of the *Hitavada,* had the rare experience of being asked, on pain of prosecution, to violate the professional code of honour by betraying confidence and disclosing the source of his information in regard to the publication of a news item concerning the resignation of Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal. The Defence of India Rules have been abused in various ways for various purposes. But it was left to the Government of the Central Provinces to use them to coerce an Editor to be guilty of unprofessional conduct. It is, however, gratifying that the Government, as a result of the protest of the Press and of the Standing Committee of this Conference, subsequently withdrew the Order against Mr Mani. The Government of India, justifying the Order of the C.P. Government, had issued a *communiqué* in which they recognized the convention that the relations between an Editor and his correspondents were confidential but they were prepared to concede it only to this extent that in all ordinary circumstances it should not be disturbed. To the journalistic profession, however, the matter is one of conscience and admits of no exceptional circumstances warranting a breach of the convention.

Mr Devadas Gandhi, Mr B. G. Horniman and Mr A. D. Mani deserve our congratulations on the courage with which they have vindicated the rights and upheld the traditions of the Press. The security of *Janmabhoomi* of Bombay was forfeited for publishing Dr Syama Prasad's letter to the Governor of Bengal. In forfeiting the security the Government of Bombay acted against the recommendations of the Provincial Advisory Committee. Mr Amritlal Seth, editor of the paper, appealed to the High Court which set aside the Order of forfeiture. Mr Seth also deserves our congratulations on his triumph.

The principal objects of our Conference are (1) to preserve the high traditions and standards of journalism, (2) to safeguard the rights of the Press in general and in particular the freedom of publication of news and comments, and (3) to represent the Press in India in its relations with the public and public institutions and particularly in its relations with Government and to set up Committees which would act as liaison bodies between the Government and the Press as a whole. Have our efforts in carrying out these objects attained any success? Speaking for myself, I have no hesitation in saying that the success so far achieved has exceeded my own expectations. This is not to suggest that the success is very satisfying. It only means that my own forebodings about the experiment of representatives of the Press working with officials to preserve as much of the freedom of the Press as possible have not all, happily, come true. It is idle to pretend that the Press in India is free or can hope to be free so long as our country is not free. To the fetters that have come to us as legacy of decades of bureaucratic rule have been added more galling and stifling ones in the shape of Defence of India Rules and the Press Instructions issued under these Rules. The Press in India has never been free, but it has always been struggling to be free. The consultative machinery, to the establishing of which Government were compelled to agree in 1940 as a result of the united front presented by the Press, irrespective of political differences, offered an opportunity, such as the Press had never had, of carrying on that struggle with greater hope of success than ever before. Whatever success has been, so far, achieved in that struggle has been a negative one. We have not secured positive gains in the shape of enlargement of our freedom, but we have been able to prevent much

harm being done to the Press by bureaucrats many of whom are prone to act arbitrarily and ruthlessly and, not seldom, vindictively. Even this negative gain has not been secured to the same extent in all provinces where the advisory system has been given a fair trial. Some provinces, for instance, have not been as fortunate as Bombay and Madras while in others the consultative machinery has not functioned at all or has functioned most unsatisfactorily. Mr Srinivasan, in his address to the last session of the Conference, claimed that, in spite of many handicaps, he and his colleagues of the Standing Committee had secured protection against hasty and ill-considered action by the Executive against members of the Press generally. The claim was a bold one, but it was fully justified. In fact, the principal cause of whatever success the Conference has achieved has been the team spirit displayed by the members of the Standing Committee in all their deliberations and especially in resisting all attempts to restrict the liberty of the Press. The same team spirit has characterized the work of the Provincial Press Advisory Committees wherever they have worked satisfactorily. In my opinion the greatest good that the Conference and its various Committees have done is the feeling of comradeship which they have fostered among editors throughout the country. The growth of this feeling is an asset of incalculable value as much to the public life of the country as to the Press. It is, thus, no less in the interests of the country than of those of the Press that this Conference should grow in strength. The progress, prosperity and efficiency of the Press largely depend on the success of this Conference. May I appeal to those editors, who have, for some reasons, not yet joined this Conference, to do so and thus help to make it an increasingly potent instrument for securing and enlarging the liberties of the Press and preserving its traditions and standards? I have referred to the feeling of comradeship which this Conference has fostered among its members. It has also engendered a feeling of comparative security among them inasmuch as the advisory system has served as a check—not always an effective one, it is true—against hasty, ill-considered and sometimes vindictive action by the Executive against individual newspapers. I may also claim that the work of this Conference has not been without some effect on officials themselves some of whom, at any rate, have now a better appreciation than they had before of the difficulties as well as the power of the Press.

Thus, surveying the work of our Conference since its inception, we may justifiably feel some satisfaction. Much work, however, still remains to be done. First and foremost we have to see that the consultative machinery functions in all provinces effectively. That it does not so function in some provinces is due not to any lack of desire on the part of editors concerned to utilize it to the utmost, but either to the indifference or ill-concealed hostility of the Provincial Governments who continue to regard it as a nuisance to themselves. The Government of India cannot avoid the responsibility for the failure of these Provincial Governments to give a fair trial to the advisory system. They are a party to a Gentleman's Agreement with this Conference and must carry out their part of the bargain by securing, through the means that are open to them, the desired improvement in the attitude of Provincial Governments. They cannot, as they often do, make provincial autonomy a convenient excuse for inaction. For, whenever it is convenient to themselves they find means, effective and expeditious, to make the Provincial Governments carry out their wishes and instructions. We have seen this being done not only in regard to the present food situation and other matters but even in respect of restrictions on the Press. Thus a series of uncalled-for and drastic restrictions were imposed at the dictation of the Central Government on the Press in all parts of the country regarding news and comments about Gandhiji's

fast. In fact, the conduct of the Government of India themselves has not always been in strict accord with the spirit of the Gentleman's Agreement. The occasions have not been few when, as a result of the measures taken or contemplated by Government, the Agreement would have been wrecked but for the firm manner in which the Standing Committee handled the situation. Even more numerous have been the occasions when the powers of censorship have been abused to suppress political news and views unpalatable and inconvenient to the executive. It is not surprising, therefore, that some Provincial Governments have been encouraged to be recalcitrant in their attitude and have all but destroyed the consultative machinery and that, even where it has functioned, the Provincial Governments on many occasions have ignored the Provincial Press Advisory Committees' unanimous recommendations and have not seldom taken action against newspapers without even consulting the Committees.

The most flagrant misuse of censorship is the ban on the publication, without Press advice, of the writings and speeches of Mr Louis Fischer which, despite the many explanations put forward, is only a clumsy and unworthy attempt to suppress the views of a man who has been a trenchant critic of the policy of the Government regarding the political demands of the people. Censorship was, again, glaringly misused during Gandhiji's fast to prevent the public in India and outside from having a true picture of the situation as it developed in the country. Even the resolution of your Standing Committee regarding Gandhiji's fast did not escape mutilation when it was submitted for Press advice by a news agency. A resolution of the Azad Muslim Board on the political situation and statements issued by Mr C. Rajagopalachari and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru met a similar fate. In all these instances, the action of the Government was indefensible, inspired as it was by a desire to gain political advantage against the people of India. The action taken against the *Hindustan Times* and the order of precensorship served on the *Sind Observer* early last year and a similar order recently served on the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* are some of the glaring instances in which the unanimous recommendations of Provincial Advisory Committees were completely ignored. The *Jugantar* and *Star of India* of Calcutta and the *Janmabhoomi* of Bombay were suppressed for a few days without consulting the Provincial Advisory Committees concerned. It is evident, therefore, that liberty of writing in India will continue to be in constant jeopardy so long as the Government of India do not radically revise their policy towards the Press and such revision will also remain an idle dream so long as the structure of government remains what it is.

Recognizing the limitations arising out of the existing system of government under which the Press in India has to work, this Conference on its part has always displayed a rare spirit of accommodation which, however, has seldom evoked the right response from Government. The outstanding proof of this attitude of the Conference is the resolution passed by it at its last memorable session in Bombay. You are all familiar with the circumstances which necessitated the passing of the resolution. The Press in India was confronted with a great crisis when the Government sought to control, muzzle and humiliate it in a manner familiarized to us by the Nazis and the Fascists. The Conference met the crisis with courage and wisdom. The resolution which it passed embodied, I feel happy to say, a formula which had been previously settled between the Bombay Provincial Press Advisory Committee and the Government of Bombay. The devising of this formula gave proof of the good work that could be done by Government and the Press Advisory Committees working together in a spirit of sincere loyalty to the Delhi Agreement. Through its resolution the Conference declared its uncompromising rejection of pre-censorship of any kind,

demanded freedom for newspapers to publish, without previous scrutiny, objective accounts of incidents connected with the "mass movement" or the disturbances. The Conference, however, considered it necessary that Editors should exercise reasonable restraint in the publication of such accounts and should avoid the publication of anything which might incite the public to subversive activity, convey suggestions or instructions for illegal acts or which was an exaggerated report or unfounded allegation regarding excessive use or misuse of their powers by the Police, the troops and other Government servants or the treatment of and condition of detenus and prisoners or which retarded the restoration of the public sense of security. The Conference also gave proof of its loyalty to the Delhi Agreement by suggesting that the restrictions imposed by Government should be withdrawn and replaced by a ban on the publication, unless released to the Press by Government, of reports, as were of military value to the enemy, of interruptions to roads and railway communications, acts of sabotage, strikes or interruptions of work in factories chiefly engaged in producing war materials.

Before the Bombay Conference was held, a number of newspapers had been suppressed or had suspended publication as a result of the new restrictions or the manner in which they were applied. The most harmful use made of these restrictions was to deny publicity to statements and reports supporting the Indian demand for freedom and legitimate political activity. The Conference made it plain that, even in war-time, the Press could not abdicate its responsibility as the guardian of public interest and of the rights of citizens. It contended that it could not do so specially at a time when the legislatures did not function in most provinces and, owing to penal restrictions, public opinion could not express itself. The Conference was thus actuated by a genuine spirit of compromise. The Conference felt confident that its decision would effectively help to remove the bitterness and resentment that executive high-handedness had caused and lead to the republication of the newspapers that had been suppressed or had suspended publication. Unfortunately the response of the Government to the statesmanlike gesture of the Conference was neither prompt nor adequate. Not only did the Government of India take an unconscionably long time in communicating the Bombay resolution to the Provincial Governments but they also failed to give a lead to these Governments by themselves readily accepting it and implementing it in Delhi province. Thus precious time was wasted and several newspapers did not resume publication until the resolution had been accepted by the Provincial Governments concerned. To the credit of the Sind Government, it may be mentioned that they were the first Government to announce their acceptance of the resolution. When Provincial Governments, with the exception of the Punjab Government, did accept the Bombay resolution, the acceptance was not whole-hearted and, in some cases, was qualified by restrictions and conditions alien to its spirit. Nor were the subsequent actions of both the Central and Provincial Governments always in accord with the spirit of the new arrangement or of the Delhi Agreement. I need not mention how some Provincial Governments took unfair advantage of the Bombay resolution by depriving newspapers of the little liberty they had before the Bombay session of the Conference of ventilating legitimate grievances regarding treatment of prisoners or the use of excessive force by the police.

Government, however, were guilty of the most flagrant breach of the Bombay Agreement when they suppressed all news regarding Prof. Bhansali's fast and imposed draconian restrictions on the publication of news and comments about Gandhiji's fast. Prof. Bhansali was neither a detenu nor a prisoner. As a free citizen he was entitled to undertake a fast. Whatever view one might hold about the wisdom or desirability of such a fast, no civilized Government would be justified in preventing

publication of news or comments about it in the Press—especially in a Press with which Government had entered into a solemn agreement and which, in publishing such news or comments, did not violate that agreement. The most obnoxious feature of the executive high-handedness was that the pains and penalties of the Defence of India Rules were requisitioned to prevent the Press even from informing the public that it had been gagged. This double outrage was naturally resented by the Press and the Standing Committee decided that the situation demanded an effective protest. On its recommendation newspapers throughout the country, with very few exceptions, suspended publication for one day and refrained from publishing the New Year Honours List, all circulars from Government Houses, all speeches of the members of the British Government, the Government of India and of the Provincial Governments except portions thereof which contained decisions and announcements. This demonstration of solidarity was unprecedented in the history of the Indian Press. It had its effect and the Government Orders were soon withdrawn.

The Delhi Agreement and the Bombay resolutions were both, again, unceremoniously jettisoned when on February 10 Gandhiji began his twenty-one days' fast. On the eve of the fast drastic restrictions were imposed on the Press, those issued by the Government of Bombay being particularly irritating. The Government of Bombay also imposed precensorship on all statements emanating from Gandhiji or reports of or reference to such statements, whether direct or indirect, and all reports of interviews or conversations with him or persons detained with him or having access to him. As a result of discussions at an informal meeting of the Standing Committee, the President addressed a letter to the Government of India asking for the withdrawal of the restrictions. He pointed out that, quite apart from the issues raised by the fast, the fact that Gandhiji had undertaken it at an advanced age had raised world-wide interest and in India, among millions of his countrymen, the utmost anxiety let alone sympathy and, that, in the circumstances, it was not fair to impose any special restrictions on the liberty of the Editors to handle the subject according to their discretion. Government, however, paid no heed to this representation as well as to the resolution of the Standing Committee urging the release of Gandhiji to enable him, as a free man, to help in the restoration of peaceful conditions. Stringent censorship was imposed on news and comments, both internal and foreign, regarding Gandhiji's fast. This could only mean that Government did not want that the public in India and outside should know the truth about the situation in this country.

Friends, I have no desire to be unfair to the Government of India and the Provincial Governments. Nor can I let this opportunity pass without referring to the special contribution made by the ex-Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, to the establishment of the consultative machinery and to the tribute, wholly deserved, which he paid to the Press in one of his speeches before leaving this country. The present Viceroy too in one of the interviews he gave to the Press in London before arriving in this country emphasized the important part which the Press plays in the public life of the country. I have also not the slightest hesitation in acknowledging that some officials of the Government of India and certain Provincial Governments have endeavoured to keep alive the consultative machinery for ordinary purposes. Our grievance, however, is that whenever it has suited them they have shown scant respect to the spirit of the Delhi Agreement. Some of them, again, have contended that there are no statutory restrictions against the Press and that editorial comment has been free. The question, however, is not so much as to how many statutory restrictions there are. The fact is that whenever Government want, under the convenient Defence of India Rules they promulgate restrictions on the Press,

which though of a temporary character are no less indefensible encroachments on our liberty. As regards freedom of comment the order served by the Government of Bombay regarding comments on Gandhiji's fast and the recent actions taken against the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* are an eloquent proof of the fact that comment is free only during the pleasure of the Government. If the spirit of the Delhi Agreement is to be kept alive, our right to consultation in regard to any restrictions that may be contemplated must be recognized in practice. In cases of special emergency, it may not always be possible for Government to do so. But in such cases, Government must, at the earliest possible opportunity, place the restrictions imposed for consideration before us and amend or rescind them as may be recommended.

The Press, as a whole, has remained loyal to the Conference and to the agreements with Government made by it and the Standing Committee. Provincial Committees and the Central Press Advisory Committee have not hesitated to take erring newspapers to task and even to agree to the imposition of drastic penalties in proved cases of default. This is a record of which we may well be proud. Does the other party to the Gentleman's Agreement present such a record? In fairness to some Provincial Governments I must admit that they have, on the whole, given an honest trial to the advisory system. Nevertheless it is also true of these and other Provincial Governments and also of the Government of India that agreements have been made by them only to be violated whenever it suited them. Unanimous recommendations of Provincial Committees have not seldom been rejected. On the untenable plea of Provincial autonomy the Government of India have permitted certain Provincial Governments to go counter to policies accepted by themselves. Powers of censorship have been misused to suppress legitimate expression of political opinion in defiance of the Delhi Agreement. However, we are not dispirited by our bitter experience and we shall not be deterred by it from carrying on our struggle for broadening the basis of our freedom. Since we held our last session in Bombay the situation in the country has changed considerably. The Bombay resolution was passed to meet special circumstances created by the disturbances. The special circumstances having ceased to exist, a revision of our existing arrangements with the Government is essential. The Press has no desire to impede war efforts. That is the basis of the Delhi Agreement. It is also the basis of the Delhi Agreement that the Press will not be a party to the suppression of legitimate political activities. There is nothing in the present political situation in the country to warrant any restrictions on the Press except those necessitated for purely military considerations. On the contrary the situation demands that the Press should be absolutely unfettered to ventilate legitimate grievances regarding, for instance, the treatment of prisoners and detenus, especially as unfair advantage has been taken of the Bombay resolution by some Provincial Governments to prevent this being done. Sir Sultan Ahmed, Information Member of the Government of India, addressing a meeting of the Standing Committee in July last year, claimed that the restrictions on the Press in the country were not greater than—indeed, in his opinion, were much less—in some countries, at any rate during the time of war. The history of the struggle that this Conference has carried on during the last three years and more with the Government is a sufficient commentary on this claim. That history is the history of reiterated and not seldom unsuccessful demands that the consultative machinery should be given an honest trial in every province, that the spirit of the Delhi Agreement should always be scrupulously adhered to by the Central and Provincial Governments and that the powers under the Defence of India Rules should not be misused to suppress news and

views unpalatable to them. The Information Member has established a Publicity Advisory Committee. The Standing Committee at its November session rescinded its earlier decision and dissociated itself as a body from this Committee.

The Chairman of the *Associated Press of America* recently proposed that the Peace Conference, when it meets, should guarantee freedom of the Press throughout the world, that it should also guarantee freedom of agencies to make international exchange of news, equal accessibility to all official news and transmission facilities and the prohibition of biased propaganda in any news service. These are excellent proposals and made none too soon. Mr Sumner Welles, former Under-Secretary of State of the U.S. Government, writing on them in the New York *Herald-Tribune* says:

> "When there is born a popular conviction that any nation which refuses its people the right freely to worship, freely to express themselves—within the limits which public security requires—and freedom to obtain accurate knowledge of what transpires both within and without their boundaries, is a cause of danger to all other people, just so soon will these three freedoms be for all time established as a mighty bulwark to the future peace of the human race."
>
> "For that reason," Mr Welles concludes, "the editors and publishers of the United States are performing an all-important service for their country and for all countries in this task."

Friends, it is not necessary for me to add anything to what Mr Sumner Welles says. I have no doubt there is not one amongst you who will not wholeheartedly endorse the proposal of the Chairman of *the Associated Press* of America. May I, on your behalf, say that we, editors of India, fully associate ourselves with the editors and publishers of the United States in the move they made—with this addendum that when the Peace Conference guaranteed freedom of the Press and other freedoms to all nations of the world, the guarantee of India should not be on papr alone.

The year that has just ended witnessed a food crisis of unprecedented character in many parts of India, particularly in Bengal. The tragedy of Bengal has had few parallels in the history of human suffering. It is unfortunate that, in the beginning, under the convenient plea of war necessity, attempts were made to prevent the Press in India from publishing the whole truth about Bengal and the world outside India from getting true and objective accounts of the situation in this country. The Press, however, did its duty courageously by successfully appealing to the heart and conscience of India and helped to bring home to the people and Government of India the extent of the havoc wrought by starving and to secure prompt relief and was thus instrumental in saving thousands of human lives.

The first object of our Conference is to preserve the high traditions and standards of journalism. We cannot secure this object without maintaining our freedom and naturally, in the present condition of our country, our efforts have hitherto chiefly been directed towards removing the obstacles in our path. But there are also other equally important things to be done if we wish to succeed in preserving the high traditions and standards of journalism. These traditions and standards are created and maintained by the men who work to make the Press efficient as well as free. It is these men who have in their power to raise or to lower them. It is clear that if our traditions and standards are to be preserved at the highest levels, the Press must continually attract to its service men who, in their mental and moral equipment, represent the best that our country produces. The Press cannot attract such men to its service unless it makes it worth their while to work for it. At

present, with few exceptions, newspapers in India cannot be said to offer such attraction either in salaries or conditions of work. The average working journalist is paid a very meagre salary and this, added to the absence of any scheme of pension or Provident Fund, makes his life one of perpetual anxiety. If, in spite of all this, journalism attracts a number of men whose peers it is difficult to find in any other profession, it is because they consider it not as a career but as a mission in life or find that newspaper work offers them the satisfaction of heart and mind which they cannot find elsewhere. In the interests of journalism, the need for the enforcement of minimum standards of payment and conditions of work for journalists, thus becomes paramount. The question arises as to who is to enforce these standards. Primarily the journalists themselves must help themselves and, by organizing a powerful trade union of their own, as in Britain, effectively protect their rights and interests. Final decisions, naturally, rest with proprietors who hold the purse-strings. The Indian and Eastern Newspapers' Society and the Indian Languages Newspapers' Association can and should give a helpful lead to proprietors in this connection. But Editors, to whom journalists working under them look for guidance and protection, cannot shirk their responsibility. Ours is a powerful and influential organization of Editors and we are in a happy and advantageous position in so far as we count among ourselves a considerable number of editor-proprietors and managing-editors. Any recommendations that we may make about improving the economic status and working conditions of journalists will have the merit of being constructive and well-balanced and I have no doubt will be treated with respect by the proprietors. These are the days of Charters. Why should not there be a Journalists' Charter? Who can be in a better position to formulate it than a Conference of Editors and what can be a more propitious time than the present when the newspaper industry is financially in a stronger position than ever before to give a new and fair deal to the working journalists who constitute its back-bone?

There cannot be freedom of the Press under a totalitarian regime. If today the Press in India is not free as is the Press in Britain or America, the reason must be found in the totalitarian character of the present Government of India. No organization could be more vitally interested in the establishment of true democracy in this country than is this Conference. For, we realize that only in the atmosphere of tolerance, fairplay and compromise which democracy creates can a free Press exist. Free Press means free discussion which is like breath of life to democracy. Thus a free Press is as essential to true democracy as true democracy is to a free Press. I submit, therefore, that the ending of the present political deadlock and the establishment of a truly popular Government is as urgent from our point of view as it may be from any other. I may, however, be allowed to add that political freedom in India will not necessarily mean the establishment of true democracy. We have, therefore, to guard against the danger of a totalitarian regime taking root in a free India. Vitally interested as the Press will always be in asserting and preserving its freedom, it will have a great part to play in the shaping of the future constitution of India. And as the representative organization of the Press, this Conference, I feel confident, will grow from strength to strength and will have increasing opportunities of serving the cause of democracy in this country as well as of the freedom of the Press.

PART VI

- GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO GENERALISSIMO
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- QUOTATIONS FROM MAHATMA GANDHI
- MARSHAL SMUTS ON GANDHIJI
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GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO GENERALISSIMO

"I SHALL TAKE NO HASTY ACTION"

NEW DELHI, August 15, 1942.

The following is the text of the personal letter to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese Generalissimo, written by Mahatma Gandhi on the eve of the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay in August 1942, explaining the implications of his policy:—

DEAR GENERALISSIMO,

I can never forget the five hours' close contact I had with you and your noble wife in Calcutta. I had always felt drawn towards you in your fight for freedom, and that contact and our conversation brought China and her problems still nearer to me. Long ago, between 1905 and 1913, when I was in South Africa, I was in constant touch with the small Chinese colony in Johannesburg. I knew them first as clients and then as comrades in the Indian passive resistance struggle in South Africa. I came in touch with them in Mauritius also. I learnt then to admire their thrift, industry, resourcefulness and internal unity. Later in India I had a very fine Chinese friend living with me for a few years and we all learnt to like him.

I have thus felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend, Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love of China is only excelled, if at all, by his love of his own country, has kept us in intimate touch with the developments of the Chinese struggle.

Because of this feeling I have towards China and my earnest desire that our two great countries should come closer to one another and co-operate to their mutual advantage, I am anxious to explain to you that my appeal to the British power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle. India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and must resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom. That problem does not arise before me as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom in this way, and a Japanese domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to the other country and to world peace. That domination must, therefore, be prevented, and I should like India to play her natural and rightful part in this.

I feel India cannot do so while she is in bondage. India has been a helpless witness of the withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma. We must learn the lesson from these tragic events and prevent by all means at our disposal a repetition of what befell these unfortunate countries. But unless we are free, we can do nothing to prevent it, and the same process might well occur again, crippling India and China disastrously. I do not want a repetition of this tragic tale of woe.

Our proffered help has repeatedly been rejected by the British Government, and the recent failure of the Cripps mission has left a deep wound which is still running. Out of that anguish has come the cry for immediate withdrawal of British power so that India can look after herself and help China to the best of her ability.

I have told you of my faith in non-violence and of my belief in the effectiveness of this method if the whole nation could turn to it. That faith in it is as firm as ever. But I realize that India today as a whole has not that faith and belief, and the Government in free

India would be formed from the various elements composing the nation.

Today the whole of India is impotent and feels frustrated. The Indian Army consists largely of people who have joined up because of economic pressure. They have no feeling of a cause to fight for, and in no sense are they a national army. Those of us who would fight for a cause, for India and China, with armed forces or with non-violence, cannot, under the foreign heel, function as they want to. And yet our people know for certain that India free can play even a decisive part not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf of China and world peace. Many, like me, feel that it is not proper or manly to remain in this helpless state and allow events to overwhelm us when a way to effective action can be opened to us. They feel, therefore, that every possible effort should be made to ensure independence and that freedom of action which is so urgently needed. This is the origin of my appeal to the British Power to end immediately the unnatural connection between Britain and India.

Unless we make that effort, there is grave danger of public feeling in India going into wrong and harmful channels. There is every likelihood of subterranean sympathy for Japan growing simply in order to weaken and oust British authority in India. This feeling may take the place of robust confidence in our ability never to look to outsiders for help in winning our freedom. We have to learn self-reliance and develop the strength to work out our own salvation. This is only possible if we make a determined effort to free ourselves from bondage. That freedom has become a present necessity to enable us to take our due place among the free nations of the world.

To make it perfectly clear that we want to prevent in every way Japanese aggression, I would personally agree, and I am sure the Government of free India would agree, that the Allied Powers might, under treaty with us, keep their armed forces in India and use the country as a base for operations against the threatened Japanese attack.

I need hardly give you my assurance that, as the author of the new move in India, I shall take no hasty action. And whatever action I may recommend will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China. I am trying to enlist world opinion in favour of a proposition which to me appears self-proved and which must lead to the strengthening of India's and China's defence. I am also educating public opinion in India and conferring with my colleagues. Needless to say, any movement against the British Government with which I may be connected will be essentially non-violent. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority. But if in the vindication of the freedom, which has become an immediate desideratum, this becomes inevitable, I shall not hesitate to run any risk, however great.

Very soon you will have completed five years of war against Japanese aggression and invasion and all the sorrow and misery that these have brought to China. My heart goes out to the people of China in deep sympathy and in admiration for their heroic struggle and endless sacrifices in the cause of their country's freedom and integrity against tremendous odds. I am convinced that this heroism and sacrifice cannot be in vain; they must bear fruit. To you, to Madame Chiang and to the great people of China, I send my earnest and sincere wishes of your success. I look forward to the day when a free India and a free China will co-operate together in friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world.

In anticipation of your permission, I am taking the liberty of publishing this letter in *Harijan*.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI.

TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

The following article addressed to Americans was written by Mahatma Gandhi on August 3 and published in 'Harijan' on August 9, 1942:—

I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim 'Truth is God' instead of the usual one 'God is Truth.' That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being. With this truth as witness between you and me, I assert that I would not have asked my country to invite Great Britain to withdraw her rule over India, irrespective of any demand to the contrary, if I had not seen at once that for the sake of Great Britain and the Allied cause it was necessary for Britain boldly to perform the duty of freeing India from bondage.

By that supreme act of justice Britain would have taken away all cause for the seething discontent of India. She will turn the growing ill-will into good-will. I submit that it is worth all the battleships and airships that your wonder-working engineers and financial resources can produce.

I know that interested propaganda has filled your ears and eyes with distorted visions of the Congress position. I have been painted as a hypocrite and enemy of Britain under disguise. My demonstrable spirit of accommodation has been described as my inconsistency, proving me to be an utterly unreliable man. I am not going to burden this letter with proof in support of my assertions. If the credit I have enjoyed in America will not stand me in good stead, nothing I may argue in self-defence will carry conviction.

You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot therefore disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a grievous wrong to the Allied cause if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time. Just think of it. Is there anything wrong in the Congress demanding unconditional recognition of India's independence? It is being said: 'But this is not the time.' We say 'this is the psychological moment for that recognition. For then and then only can there be irresistible opposition to Japanese aggression. It is of immense value to the Allied cause if it is also of equal value to India.' The Congress has anticipated and provided for every possible difficulty in the way of recognition. I want you to look upon the immediate recognition of India's independence as a war measure of first class magnitude.

M. K. GANDHI.

QUOTATIONS FROM MAHATMA GANDHI

The following extracts from Mahatma Gandhi's statements and writings during April-June 1942, speak for themselves:—

PRICE OF FOREIGN AID

Question: If the Japanese really mean what they say and are willing to help to free India from the British yoke, why should we not willingly accept their help?

Answer: It is folly to suppose that aggressors can ever be benefactors. The Japanese may free India from the British yoke but only to put in their own instead. I have always maintained that we should not seek any other Power's help to free India from the British yoke. That would not be a non-violent approach. We should have to pay a heavy price, if we ever consented to take foreign aid as against the British.

—*Harijan,* April 26, 1942.

I do not want to help the Japanese—not even for freeing India. India during the past fifty or more years of her struggle for freedom has learnt the lesson of patriotism and of not bowing to *any* foreign power.

—*Harijan,* June 14, 1942.

IF THE JAPS COME

Question: (1) If the Japs come, how are we to resist them non-violently? (2) What are we to do if we fall into their hands?

Answer: (1) These questions come from Andhradesh where the people rightly or wrongly feel that the attack is imminent. My answer has already been given in these columns. Neither food nor shelter is to be given nor are any dealings to be established with them. They should be made to feel that they are not wanted. But of course things are not going to happen quite so smoothly as the question implies. It is a superstition to think that they will come as friendlies. No attacking party has ever done so. It spreads fire and brimstone among the populace. It forces things from people. If the people cannot resist fierce attack and are afraid of death, they should evacuate the infested place in order to deny compulsory services to the enemy.

(2) If unfortunately some people are captured or fall into the enemy's hands, they are likely to be shot if they do not obey orders, *e.g.,* render forced labour. If the captives face death cheerfully, their task is done. They have saved their own and their country's honour.

—*Harijan,* June 14, 1942.

NO EXCHANGE

Question: You do not hear the radio messages. I do most assiduously. They interpret your writings as if your leanings were in favour of the Axis Powers and you had now veered round to Subhas Babu's views about receiving outside help to overthrow British rule. I would like you to clear your position in this matter. Misinterpretation of your known views has reached a dangerous point.

Answer: I am glad you have asked the question. I have no desire whatsoever to woo any Power to help India in her endeavour to free herself from the foreign yoke. I have no desire to exchange the British for any other rule. Better the enemy I know than the one I do not. I have never attached the slightest importance or weight to the friendly professions of the Axis Powers. If they come to India they will come not as deliverers but as sharers in the spoil. There

can therefore be no question of my approval of Subhas Babu's policy. The old difference of opinion between us persists.

—*Harijan*, June 21, 1942.

INDIA TO BE DEFENDED

There was obviously a gap in my first writing. I filled it in as soon as it was discovered by one of my numerous interviewers. Non-violence demands the strictest honesty, cost what it may. The public have therefore to suffer my weakness, if weakness it may be called. I could not be guilty of asking the Allies to take a step which would involve certain defeat. I could not guarantee fool-proof non-violent action to keep the Japanese at bay. Abrupt withdrawal of the Allied troops might result in Japan's occupation of India and China's sure fall. I had not the remotest idea of any such catastrophe resulting from my action. Therefore, I feel that if, in spite of the acceptance of my proposals, it is deemed necessary by the Allies to remain in India to prevent Japanese occupation, they should do so, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the National Government that may be set up after the British withdrawal.

—*Harijan*, June 28, 1942.

REMAINING AS FRIENDS

It has been pointed out that not to consent to the Allied troops remaining in India during the period of the war is to hand over India and China to Japan and to ensure the defeat of the Allied Powers. This could never have been contemplated by me. The only answer, therefore, to give was to suffer the presence of troops but under circumstances the reverse of the existing. They will remain under permission of Free India, and not at all in the role of masters but of friends.

—*Harijan*, July 5, 1942.

SYMPATHY WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA

Question: Why should not the Congress declare that as long as India is herself in bondage, she can be neither a friend nor an enemy of any country? What is the value of her sympathies with China, Russia, etc., when she has no freedom to assist them in her own way? Has Russia thought of India?

Answer: You are right. India's sympathy can give no effective help, as her enmity can do no harm to any person or nation so long as India is herself not free. Nevertheless, Pandit Jawaharlal with his international outlook and generosity has accustomed us to express our sympathy to nations in distress without expectation of like return. We lose nothing by expressing sympathy even though we realize that it can cut no ice. If Russia has no thought of India today, in the long run she is bound to recognize the utterly unselfish character of our sympathy. It should not be forgotten that sympathy without ability to render effective help has its own moral value. We receive with appreciation sympathy from those who we know are unable to render us effective help in our struggle.

—*Harijan*, July 26, 1942.

WARNING TO JAPANESE

Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of Free India's willingness to let the Allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm the Allied cause and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that if you cherish any idea and will carry it out, we will not fail in resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right

direction and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots.

The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to no appeal but to the sword. How I wish that you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart! Anyway I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature.

—*Harijan*, July 26, 1942.

MEANING OF WITHDRAWAL

Question: What is the meaning of your appeal to the British Power to withdraw from India? You have written much recently on the subject. But there seems to be confusion in the public mind about your meaning.

Answer: So far as my own opinion is concerned, British authority should end completely irrespective of the wishes or demands of various parties. But I would recognize their own military necessity. They need to remain in India for preventing Japanese occupation. That prevention is common cause between them and us. It may be necessary for the sake also of China. Therefore, I would tolerate their presence in India not in any sense as rulers but as allies of free India. This of course assumes that after the British declaration of withdrawal there will be a stable government established in India. Immediately the hindrance in the shape of a foreign power is altogether removed, the union of parties should be an easy matter. The terms on which the Allied Powers may operate will be purely for the Government of the free State to determine. The existing parties will have dissolved into the National Government. If they survive they will do so for party purposes and not for dealings with the external world.

—*Harijan*, June 21, 1942.

WHAT ABOUT NON-VIOLENCE?

Question: But what about your non-violence? To what extent will you carry out your policy after freedom is gained?

Answer: The question hardly arises. I am using the first personal pronoun for brevity, but I am trying to represent the spirit of India as I conceive it. It is and will be a mixture. What policy the National Government will adopt, I cannot say. I may not even survive it much as I would love to. If I do, I would advise the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible, and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order. I expect that with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the Government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character. I shall certainly hope that all the effort for the last twenty years to show the efficacy of non-violence as a political force will not have gone in vain and a strong party representing true non-violence will exist in the country. In every case a free India in alliance with the Allied Powers must be of great help to their cause, whereas India held in bondage as she is today must be a drag upon the war-chariot and may prove a source of real danger at the most critical moment.

—*Harijan*, June 21, 1942.

"A DEAD WEIGHT TO ALLIES"

The following is taken from an account of an interview which Mr Preston Grover of the 'Associated Press' of America had with Mahatma Gandhi at Sevagram:—

Question: "What specific things would be done by India to save China" asked Mr Grover, "if India is declared independent?"

Answer: "Great things, I can say at once, though I may not be able to specify them today," said Gandhiji. "For I do not know what government we shall have. We have various political organizations here which I expect would be able to work out a proper national solution. Just now they are not solid parties, they are often acted upon by the British power, they look up to it and its frown or favour means much to them. The whole atmosphere is corrupt and rotten. Who can foresee the possibilities of a corpse coming to life? At present India is a dead weight to the Allies."

Question: "By dead weight you mean a menace to Britain and to American interests here?"

Answer: "I do. It is a menace in that you never know what sullen India will do at a given moment."

Question: "No. But I want to make myself sure that if genuine pressure was brought to bear on Britain by America, there would be solid support from yourself."

Answer: "Myself? I do not count—with the weight of 73 years on my shoulders. But you get the co-operation—whatever it can give willingly—of a free and mighty nation. My co-operation is of course there. I exercise what influence I can by my writings from week to week. But India's is an infinitely greater influence. Today because of widespread discontent there is not that active hostility to Japanese advance. The moment we are free, we are transformed into a nation prizing its liberty and defending it with all its might and therefore helping the Allied cause."

Question: "May I concretely ask—will the difference be the difference that there is between what Burma did and what, say, Russia is doing?" said Mr Grover.

Answer: "You might put it that way. They might have given Burma independence after separating from India. But they did nothing of the kind. They stuck to the same old policy of exploiting her. There was little co-operation from Burmans; on the contrary there was hostility or inertia. They fought neither for their own cause nor for the Allied cause. Now take a possible contingency. If the Japanese compel the Allies to retire from India to a safer base, I cannot say today that the whole of India will be up in arms against the Japanese. I have a fear that they may degrade themselves as some Burmans did. I want India to oppose Japan to a man. If India was free she would do it, it would be a new experience to her, in twenty-four hours her mind would be changed. All parties would then act as one man. If this live independence is declared today, I have no doubt, India becomes a powerful ally."

Mr Grover raised the question of communal disunion as a handicap, and himself added that before the American Independence there was not much unity in the States.

Answer: "I can only say that as soon as the vicious influence of the third party is withdrawn, the parties will be face to face with reality and close up ranks," said Gandhiji. "Ten to one, my conviction is that the communal quarrels will disappear as soon as the British Power that keeps us apart disappears."

—*Harijan*, June 21, 1942.

REPLY TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

In an interview by a representative of the 'United Press' of London regarding Sir Stafford Cripps's statement published in the Press, Gandhiji said:—

"I have read Sir Stafford Cripps's statement to the *United Press*

representative in London. It is not conducive to the proper understanding between different parties if ascertainable facts are not admitted by all. Sir Stafford knows that I was disinclined to proceed to New Delhi. Having gone there, I intended to return the same day that I reached there. But Maulana Saheb would not let me go. I wish that I could have induced the Working Committee to take up its stand on pure non-violence. But it did not and could not. With it, rightly, politics were all important and it could not, not having the conviction, allow its deliberations to be affected by the issue of non-violence. The deliberations, therefore, of the Working Committee at New Delhi were carried on without any interference or guidance on my part. Therefore, the negotiations had nothing to do at any stage, with the question of non-violence. I would not have brought out this fact, if it was not relevant to a calm consideration of the situation that faces British and Indian statesmen.

"Nor do I like Sir Stafford's description of my appeal for withdrawal of the British power as a walk-out. The appeal has been made in no offensive mood. It is the friendliest thing that I could do. It is conceived in the interest of the Allied cause. I have made it in a purely non-violent spirit and as a non-violent step. But this is merely personal to me. It is necessary to remember in considering my proposal that it is essentially a non-violent gesture. Such non-violence as India has or may have becomes impotent without the withdrawal of the British power—even as that part of India which will put up an armed fight becomes impotent. The step that I have conceived overcomes all difficulties, shuts all controversy about violence and non-violence and immediately frees India to offer her best help to the Allied cause and more especially to China which is in imminent danger. I am convinced that the independence of India, which the withdrawal of the British power involves, would ensure China's freedom and put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis."

—*Harijan*, June 28, 1942.

MARSHAL SMUTS ON GANDHIJI

CHARGE OF PRO-JAPANESE SYMPATHY REFUTED

LONDON, November 13, 1942.

Answering Indian Pressmen at a Press conference today, Field-Marshal Smuts said:—

It is sheer nonsense to talk of Mahatma Gandhi as a "Fifth Columnist." He is a great man. He is one of the great men of the world and he is the last person to be placed in that category. He is dominated by high spiritual ideals. Whether these ideals are always practicable in our difficult world is another question.

M.P. SAYS INDIA NOT PRO-JAPANESE

MADRAS, September 27, 1943.

"I have not found any pro-Japanese feeling anywhere in my tour of India so far. The people of India are on the other hand determined to further the war effort," observed Wing-Commander Grant-Ferris, Conservative Member of Parliament, who is on a visit to India, in a talk with Pressmen. He was convinced that India was pro-democratic and anti-Axis.

PANDIT NEHRU ON CONGRESS DEMAND

BOMBAY, August 5, 1942.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a statement to the *Manchester Guardian*, whose correspondent asked him, "Would free India contemplate making separate peace with Japan on the basis of their withdrawal from China and guaranteeing no aggression on India?" said: "When we talk of free India becoming an ally of the United Nations it is obvious that we mean that we should be partners with them in this war. Indeed the last meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha adopted a resolution which definitely stated that the Congress proposal for withdrawal from India was not meant to embarrass Britain or other Allied Powers in their prosecution of the war or in any way to encourage aggression against India or to increase the pressure against China by the Japanese or other Axis Powers. There can be no question then of a separate peace or arrangement by anyone in the country, leaving our Allies in the lurch."

Pandit Nehru was then reminded of the recent United Nations' Pact to which India was a party resolving against separate peace by the signatories appended on behalf of the present Government of India to that pact.

"A free India means that Britain has completely shed her imperialism," replied Pandit Nehru, "and that the United Nations stand for ending colonial domination. India must work heart and soul with those United Nations to defeat all the aggressors, and bring triumph to the cause of freedom as represented by the United Nations. In such circumstances, it will be a betrayal to leave that cause and the company of the United Nations by separate and opportunist arrangements with any country. India of course is anxious to see complete freedom in all the Asiatic countries, including Burma, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, Iran and Iraq. Japan must be compelled to leave such of these countries as she had occupied, but this must not lead to other Colonial Powers taking possession of them."

NO CHARGES OF PRO-JAPANESE SYMPATHY

LONDON, May 27, 1943.

The Secretary of State for India, Mr Amery, stated in the Commons today that the Government of India have no intention of stag-

ing a trial of Mr Gandhi and other detained Congress leaders.

Mr Amery was replying to Mr Sorensen who asked whether any response has been made to the recent plea of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other non-Congress leaders that Mr Gandhi and his colleagues should appear before a judicial tribunal to enable them to refute the allegations of pro-Japanese sympathy and other charges contained in a White Paper. Mr Amery added that the Government of India's statement republished in a White Paper made no charges of pro-Japanese sympathy.

QUESTIONS IN COUNCIL OF STATE

NEW DELHI, August 3, 1943.

To a question from Raja Yuveraj Dutta Singh in the Council of State today as to "(a) why the Government of India have no intention of staging a trial of Mr Gandhi and other detained Congress leaders to use Mr Amery's words in the House of Commons on May 27 last, and (b) when do Government propose to disclose all the information in the possession of Government and the 'large volume of evidence which it is undesirable to publish at present' as stated by Sir R. Tottenham, Additional Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department, in his preface to the booklet *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, 1942-43," Mr E. Conran-Smith, Home Secretary, replied: "Sir, the question answered by the Secretary of State in Parliament on May 27 related specifically to charges which were alleged, but as the Secretary of State pointed out, were wrongly alleged to have been made in the White Paper.

"The Government of India must of course at all times be free to take against any person such action as is warranted by the law. I am not prepared to make any further statement regarding their present intentions in this respect or in reply to part (b) of the question."

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: Is the Honourable Member aware that the Viceroy in the course of one of his letters to Mahatma Gandhi which was published last year did refer to a public trial which Mahatma Gandhi and his associates must be prepared to face?

Mr E. Conran-Smith: I am aware, Sir, of the reference made. But his Excellency's letter to Mr Gandhi gave no indication of the manner in which Congress would be placed on their defence before the world or of the intentions of Government in that regard.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: Am I to understand that their intention to try these people is still there?

Mr E. Conran-Smith: I have already answered that I am not prepared to say anything further about Government's intention in this matter.

GANDHIJI'S LETTER OF SEPTEMBER 23

EFFORTS TO SUPPRESS AND BELITTLE IT

It has been very strongly felt in this country and abroad that in paying no attention to Mahatma Gandhi's letter from detention, dated September 23, 1942, addressed to the Home Secretary, Government of India, and in not sharing it with the public, the Government laid itself open to the charge of deliberate suppression. That letter was written when Mahatma Gandhi learnt, through newspapers, of the violent disturbances that had taken place after his arrest. In it he reiterated his faith in non-violence and pleaded for the exploring of "ways and means of conciliation." The letter was obviously treated with contempt.

LONDON, June 24, 1943.

The Secretary of State for India, Mr Amery, dealt in the House of Commons today with an assertion by Mr Sorensen that a letter* from Mr Gandhi to the Viceroy on September 23, 1942, condemning violence was omitted from the published correspondence.

Mr Sorensen asked why no reference was made either by the Viceroy or the Secretary of State for India to the existence of this letter.

Mr Amery said: "Mr Sorensen is under a misapprehension. The only letter received from Mr Gandhi during September was addressed not to the Viceroy but to the Secretary of the Home Department of the Government of India. This was dated September 23, and was so described in the material given to the Press in India. It was referred to in Mr Gandhi's letter of January 19—though incorrectly—as the letter of September 21, and was consequently so described in the correspondence given to the Press in London. While referring to the 'reported deplorable destruction' that had taken place, Mr Gandhi claimed that responsibility for it rested with Government and not with the Congress Party, and did not categorically condemn acts of violence."

Mr Sorensen said that Mr Rajagopalachari had specifically stated that the letter was sent by Mr Gandhi condemning these acts of violence. He asked if this was known to the Viceroy, why nothing was said about it at the time when Mr Gandhi was being criticized for not expressing an opinion on these acts of violence.

Mr Amery: "No. Either Mr Sorensen or Mr Rajagopalachari has been misled, however unwittingly, by the slip of Mr Gandhi's pen."

MR RAJAGOPALACHARI DEFENDS GANDHIJI

In connection with the above, the following comment appeared in the "Hindustan Times," New Delhi, dated June 26, 1943:—

The question of Mr Sorensen in Parliament raised a first-class political issue in connection with Mahatma Gandhi's detention, but as usual Mr Amery has tried cleverly and mischievously to evade it.

The fact is that neither Mr Sorensen nor Mr Rajagopalachari "has been misled," as the Secretary of State sought to make out in his answer, but Mr Amery himself has tried to mislead the House.

It is a matter of no consequence whether Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the Home Secretary is dated September 23 or 21. If Mahatma Gandhi mentioned it as "September 21" in one of his letters, Mr Amery cannot forget that the India Office was equally responsible for the mistake, for he himself says that it was "so described in the corres-

* See page 117.

pondence given to the Press in London." The date does not matter for what is really of importance is that there is such a letter and that it was wantonly suppressed in September last. It is also clear from Mr Sorensen's question that this all-important letter has not received the publicity in London which it calls for.

In referring to this letter as he did, Mr Amery has been clearly unfair to Mahatma Gandhi. Mr Amery is reported to have said that "while referring to the reported deplorable destruction that had taken place, Mr Gandhi claimed that responsibility for it rested with the Government and not with the Congress Party, and did not categorically condemn acts of violence."

This is the exact opposite of what happened. In his letter of September 23, Mahatma Gandhi clearly stated: "In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent." In other letters also, he declared himself "as confirmed a believer in non-violence" as he has ever been. In fact, Lord Linlithgow himself in his letter of January 25 wrote to Mahatma Gandhi: "I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past." How then can Mr Amery say that Mahatma Gandhi did not categorically condemn acts of violence?

There was another issue, even more important, implied in Mr Sorensen's question. For months after Mahatma Gandhi's arrest in August last, a deliberate campaign was carried on against Mahatma Gandhi in Europe and America accusing him of not coming forward to condemn acts of violence—though he knew from the newspapers supplied to him of all that was going on in the country. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that it was only after some weeks that Mahatma Gandhi was supplied with newspapers. Anyway, here was this letter of September 23 in which he had unequivocally expressed himself against violence. Why was it not published then? Why was no information about it given to the public in this country or in England and the United States? Mr Amery has not answered this question.

The importance of this letter may be seen from the fact that in their cable to Mr Churchill and the Secretary of State on February 21, 1943, Sir T. B. Sapru and other leaders assembled in New Delhi at the Leaders' Conference said:—

"We are convinced that the terms of his letter of September 23 recently published by the Government amount to an unequivocal disapproval on behalf of himself and the Congress of all acts of violence."

At a Press conference the next day in New Delhi, Sir Tej Bahadur asked why the Government did not publish at that time this letter of September 23, and said:—

"Had that letter been published at that time, the public would have realized that the Mahatma's loyalty to the doctrine of non-violence was as strong as before, and it would have strengthened the hands of men like Mr Rajagopalachari in telling the public that those who were creating the disturbances were doing an injustice to the Mahatma's whole life."

In a statement on March 8, Mr C. Rajagopalachari said:—

"Ever since the Gandhi-Linlithgow correspondence was published on February 10, one outstanding fact that has transpired in that correspondence has given cause for much puzzlement. No explanation has yet been tendered by the official world. Gandhiji's disapproval of the acts of sabotage and violence that followed his arrest was explicitly expressed in his letter to the Government of India, dated September 23, 1942. Had this letter, or the substance of it, been published at the time, it would have effectively stopped the exploitation of his name

as well as of the Congress by those who carried on and encouraged these acts. The suppression of this letter gives rise to the feeling that once the situation was thought by the Government to be in hand, they preferred repression to being under any obligation to Gandhiji. The battle between sabotage and repression was permitted to go on, so to say, in complete darkness as to Gandhiji's views. Those who felt that secret organization and destruction of public property could not possibly have been advised by Gandhiji and who deplored the progress of repression have a right to complain that Gandhiji's letter to the Government of India in September last should have been suppressed.

"The Viceroy, when he saw me in November, deplored the absence of any condemnation of these happenings on Gandhiji's part, though he (Gandhiji) had newspapers. On November 12, after my request was refused by the Viceroy, I said to the Press at New Delhi: 'If I had thought that there was the slightest chance of the present disturbances being encouraged by the fact of my visit, I would not have thought of asking for permission for the visit. My views are so clear and so well known that I hoped that even the fact of my visit would discourage the disturbances and automatically switch the mind of the people engaged in the disturbances to the result of my talks, and it is therefore, in my opinion, most unfortunate that the Viceroy had decided to refuse the chance of a settlement.' The next day, in another statement, I said to the Press that it was unfair to expect Gandhiji from inside the prison to express an opinion on what is happening without being asked by any one, and that it was one of the things I had intended to elicit from Gandhiji if I had been permitted to see him. Little did I know when I made these statements on November 12 and 13 that the Viceroy had this letter of September 23 from Gandhiji in his hands all the time. Even if the Viceroy had grounds to be dissatisfied with the letter on account of its other contents and deficiencies, if he had told me something about the letter, many innocent people could have been saved from much suffering.

"When I saw Gandhiji during his fast on February 26 and the following days, I had opportunities to discuss these questions of sabotage and violence with him. His disapproval was complete and he said that no one was justified in conducting or encouraging such activities in his name or in the name of the Congress. He shared my grief that his letters to the Viceroy and the Government of India on the subject had not been at once published and were suppressed for such a long time."

It may be mentioned now that when Mr Rajagopalachari interviewed the Viceroy in November, the Viceroy is understood to have expressed surprise to Mr Rajagopalachari that he had not heard from Gandhiji on the question of the disturbances, whereas the letter of September 23 had always been there. The distinction is that that letter had been addressed to the Secretary to the Government of India—a distinction, though, without a difference. Indeed it is deducible that but for the fact that Gandhiji in his letter of January 19, 1943, expressly referred to the letter of September 23, 1942, it would probably still have continued to remain suppressed. When eventually it was published it was given secondary place among the documents released, and but for the emphasis placed upon it by men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr C. Rajagopalachari it might still have gone unnoticed.

MENTION OF SEPTEMBER 23 LETTER AVOIDED

NEW YORK, June 30, 1943.

The Viceroy-Gandhi correspondence was not released to the Press here either by British Information Services of New York or by any other agency in Washington. British Information Services received a

digest of the correspondence from London marked "For Information," saying that Mahatma Gandhi had agreed to the publication of his letter dated December 31, 1942, and January 19, 1943, but it did not mention the September 23 letter.

The Government of India's Information Office in Washington issued the India Government's 1,200-word New Delhi release, but that too did not mention the September 23 letter.

BRITISH PUBLIC KEPT IGNORANT

LONDON, June 30, 1943.

In a Press interview regarding the *Hindustan Times* comment on the recent reply given in the House of Commons by Mr Amery, Mr Sorensen, M.P., said: "Until I asked my question in the Commons, and even now, it has not been made quite clear by the Government that Mr Gandhi had condemned acts of violence. I think it quite unfair of the Government of India and the British Government not to have made this quite clear."

Investigation here reveals that the letter was not released to the English Press when the Viceroy-Gandhi correspondence was published in February last, and the general public in England have remained entirely in the dark regarding its contents.

MACHINE-GUNNING FROM THE AIR

QUESTION AND ANSWER IN COUNCIL OF STATE

The fact that the measures taken by British authorities in India to quell the disturbances of 1942 included machine-gunning from the air and whipping drew wide attention outside India, and the matter was also brought up repeatedly in the House of Commons. The Secretary of State for India, Mr L. S. Amery, however, defended both measures and on one occasion at least was also cheered by a section of the House, when he referred to machine-gunning from the air. Against this cheering there was a protest from another section of the House. The fact of this cheering was not reported at the time in India, but eventually when the news came through, many a resentful comment appeared in Indian newspapers.

NEW DELHI, September 25, 1942.

"Have mobs been machine-gunned from the air anywhere and, if so, where?" asked Pandit H. N. Kunzru in the Council of State today.

Deputy Commander-in-Chief General Sir Alan Hartley's written reply said: "Yes, at the following five places: —

"On the railway near Girak in Patna district, about 12 miles south of Bihar Sharif; on the railway line Bhagalpur to Sahibganj in Bhagalpur district, about 15 miles south of Kursela; near Ranaghat, some 16 miles south of Krishnagar in Nadia district; at a railway halt between Pasraha and Mahesh Khunt in Monghyr District on the line from Hajipur to Katihar; and two or three miles south of Talchar city in Talchar State."

CHEERING IN COMMONS PROVOKES CRITICISM

The following is taken from the official record of the proceedings of the House of Commons: —

Mr Sorensen: Is not the rt. hon. gentleman aware of the justifiable condemnation of the air-gunning of turbulent crowds which has taken place in parts of Europe, and that if aeroplanes were used to quieten crowds in this country, there would be wholesale resentment in all parts of this House? In view of that, will he see that this form of—(*Interruption*).

Mr Sloan: On a point of Order, Mr Speaker. Cannot you restrain Members from cheering when there is mention of bombing of Indian civilians?

Mr Speaker: I have not heard anything of that kind the hon. Member mentions.

The *New Republic* of New York commenting editorially in its issue of October 12, on the incident in the House of Commons, wrote: "During a debate on India in the House of Commons a few days ago, the statement was made that 'in an effort to keep order Hindu mobs were being machine-gunned from aeroplanes.' Thereupon Conservative Members cheered....The Speaker was asked to restrain the Members, but said he was unable to intervene."

The paper proceeds: "We know that the entire House of Commons should not be held responsible for the actions of a few Members. We know, too, that many thousands of people in Great Britain want justice for India. Nevertheless, any American holding the belief that we are fighting this war for democracy and its regeneration can feel only shame and anger that even a few members of the ruling body of Great Britain can cheer, and go on cheering, at the news that aeroplanes

are being used to machine-gun to death people whose only crime is that they want to be free."

WHIPPING

Mr Amery gave in the Commons in response to questions an account of 'the whipping order' issued in India.

Mr Amery said: "In India the penalty of whipping or rather caning it is administered by a light rattan cane and not by a 'cat'—has long been authorized, as in this country, for such crimes as robbery with violence. Nine years ago during serious communal disorders in Bombay, its use was extended by that province to the offence of rioting, and early this year, the Penalties (Enhancement) Ordinance issued as an emergency measure by the Governor-General enabled any province to adopt whipping as penalty for rioting and crimes of bodily violence, arson or sabotage. The experience in Bombay and elsewhere has proved of high deterrent value of penalty to the hooligan type of offender. Actually it has not been used at all during the recent disorders in Bombay or Madras or several other provinces and in two or three provinces where its application has been necessary to check extreme seriousness of attacks on life and property, its use has in fact been confined within very strict limits. I see no reason to interfere with the discretion of the India authorities in this matter."

Answering another question, Mr Amery said: "I do not consider publication of a White Paper necessary at present. The Defence of India Rules under which the arrests were made and the enactment relating to whipping and imposition of collective fines have of course been published in India and copies are available here."

FUNCTIONS OF VICEROY'S COUNCIL

NO ADVICE TENDERED UNASKED

The following is a report of questions and answers in the Council of State on September 23, 1942, relating to the functions of the Viceroy's Executive Council:—

To a question by Mr P. N. Sapru whether Government would state if they proposed (a) to reopen negotiations for the formation of a Provisional Composite Government at the Centre with Indian political parties and (b) to lift the ban on Congress organizations, Sir Mahomed Usman, Leader of the House, replied: (a) This is a matter primarily for His Excellency the Governor-General and His Majesty's Government, rather than the Government of India. I would remind the Honourable Member of repeated statements made on behalf of His Majesty's Government, renewed so late as September 10 by the Prime Minister, that the broad principles of the Declaration which formed the basis of Sir Stafford Cripps's mission to India must be taken as representing the settled policy of the British Crown and Parliament, and that these principles stand in their full scope and integrity. (b) No.

Mr P. N. Sapru: Am I to understand that the sole responsibility for advising His Majesty's Government as regards the nature of the constitution that should be worked in the interim period rests exclusively with the Governor-General and that the Governor-General-in-Council has no voice whatever in regard to this matter? Is that the position which the Indian Members of the Council have accepted?

Sir Mahomed Usman: If the Governor-General consults his Executive Council, he gets its opinion.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: Are you at liberty or not to initiate discussion on a subject? Is the Government of India competent to consider proposals relating to constitutional changes or the character of the interim Government or not?

Sir Mahomed Usman: If the subject is brought before the Executive Council by His Excellency the Viceroy.

To another question by Pandit Kunzru, if the Members of the Executive Council could bring up such a subject, Sir Mahomed replied that he had nothing to add.

SIR CHIMANLAL SETALVAD PROTESTS

Sir Chimanlal H. Setalvad issued the following statement from Bombay on September 25, 1942:—

Some utterances of some of the Members of the expanded Executive Council of the Governor-General make very sorry reading. If Sir Mahomed Usman's description of the relations between the Executive Council and the Governor-General and the limitation that the Council can tender advice only if it is asked for are correct, the whole object and utility of the expanded Council supposed to consist of able and independent Indians, though they may not be representing particular parties, are frustrated. The country certainly expected that Indians accepting seats on the Council would take courage to tender advice to the Governor-General on vital matters like the present political deadlock and not wait till they are asked to give such advice. I wonder if persons like Sir Sultan Ahmed, Sir Homi Mody, Dr Ambedkar and Mr Aney accept the limitation on the right to advise as laid down by Sir Mahomed Usman. If the expansion of the Council was made in order to secure the nearest approach possible to a National Government with a representative character, the public are entitled to know whether and how far those who have joined the expanded Council are, in discharg-

ing their duties of office, making the nearest approach to representative government.

LIMITATIONS OF MEMBERS OF VICEROY'S COUNCIL

BOMBAY, December 8, 1942.

Mr Nalini Ranjan Sarker, Commerce Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, replying to a representation of the Indian Merchants' Chamber, Bombay, said:—

"....In the first place, we are guided in all our activities by the Government of India Act. In the second place, the present members of the Council are drawn not from a single party, but from different sections of the political life of the country and although each one of us is anxious for a political settlement, each acts according to his own outlook and lights. Further, a satisfactory settlement can only be evolved on agreement between the major Indian parties, on the one hand, and the British Government on the other. The scope therefore that is left to us to help evolve a solution is very limited. But within this limited sphere, we are doing all that lies within our power and in our own way to accelerate the progress towards our common objective. What we are doing cannot obviously reach public ears, out let me assure you that nobody would be happier than myself when our desired goal will be reached or prouder than myself when we shall be in a position to hand over very much larger powers than we exercise today to the accredited representatives of the people."

LORD WAVELL'S POLITICAL SPEECH

FIRM 'NO' TO DEMAND FOR RELEASE

Addressing a joint session of the Central Legislature at the budget session, the new Viceroy, Lord Wavell, gave his views on the political situation in India for the first time after assuming office:—

NEW DELHI, February 17, 1944.

It has been the practice of Viceroys to address the Legislature at the first opportunity after taking office. Hitherto it has happened that the earliest opportunity has been about six months after the Viceroy's arrival. For myself, as you know, the first opportunity occurred within so short a time that I felt obliged to postpone the occasion. I have now spent some four very busy months in my post; and am prepared to offer you such views and guidance as I can, at this momentous stage of India's history. You need not regard them as final views. I always look forward to making fresh contacts and gaining fresh knowledge. But they indicate certain principles on which action for the progress of India must, I consider, be based. . . .

Unless and until some other form of Government can be established with general consent, the present Government of India, mainly an Indian Government, will continue to carry out to the best of its ability—and I am satisfied that it is a very good ability—the primary purposes of any government—the maintenance of law and order, the duties of internal administration, and the preparation for the work ahead at the end of the war. The winning of this war is our first task, but it must not exclude preparation for the future.... The present Government means to prepare the way for India's post-war development with all earnestness of spirit and with all resources, official and non-official, which it can enlist. . . .

We welcome constructive suggestions; and my Government is examining with interest the plan recently propounded by seven prominent business men. The views of the authors of this plan on the objects to be achieved are in principle the same as those of my Government—we must work for a substantial increase in standards of living and social welfare. We may on examination differ on the methods to be employed, their relative importance in the plan as a whole, the part to be played by the State and by private enterprise, and the financial practicability of development on the scale contemplated within the time suggested by the authors; but our aim is similar and we welcome any sincere contribution to the problem that sets people thinking and makes them realize both the possibilities and the pitfalls ahead of us....

It is more difficult at present to plan India's political future in any detail. I can state to you what I know is the point of view of practically the whole of the British people, of His Majesty's present Government, and, I am confident, of any future Government of the United Kingdom. It is their genuine desire to see India a prosperous country, a united country, enjoying complete and unqualified self-government as a willing partner of the British Commonwealth. That last desire is not prompted by any sense of imperialism or wish for domination but by a real belief that in such association India can best find security and help in the testing years ahead, and that peace in the East can so be best assured.

I am absolutely convinced not only that the above represents the genuine desire of the British people, but that they wish to see an early realization of it. It is qualified only at present by an absolute determination to let nothing stand in the way of the earliest possible

defeat of Germany and Japan; and by a resolve to see that in the solution of the constitutional problem full account is taken of the interests of those who have loyally supported us in this war and at all other times—the soldiers who have served the common cause; the people who have worked with us; the Rulers and populations of the States to whom we are pledged; the minorities who have trusted us to see that they get a fair deal. We are bound in justice, in honour, in the interests of progress, to hand over India to Indian rule, which can maintain the peace and order and progress which we have endeavoured to establish. I believe that we should take some risk to further this; but until the two main Indian parties at least can come to terms, I do not see any immediate hope of progress.

The Cripps offer was a bold and generous offer and gave India a great opportunity to progress towards solution of her problems. Be well assured that it was not made in any panic. I can say that with certainty; I was Commander-in-Chief at the time and in a position to know that there was no panic in the councils of those in authority, either in India or in the United Kingdom. We are not a people who panic easily in the face of danger. The offer was made in the hope that when war had come so close to India and threatened its national life, it might arouse, as in other countries, a spirit of unity and co-operation that would have overridden political differences in the hour of danger. That hope was not fulfilled. There is no profit in recriminations about the reasons for the rejection of the Cripps offer. But since that offer, as has been stated more than once by His Majesty's Government, is still open, it may be well to restate it here. Nearly two years have passed since the Cripps draft declaration was made public, but it stands forth today as the solemn pledge of His Majesty's Government that India shall have full control of her own destiny among the nations of the Commonwealth and of the world. It declared in unmistakable terms that India should have the same status as the Dominions or the United Kingdom itself under a constitution of her own devising. It also embodied a constructive suggestion by His Majesty's Government to aid India in the attainment of the status. Proposals were made for setting up a constitution-making body, representative both of British India and of the Indian States; and His Majesty's Government undertook to accept and implement the constitution framed by this body, subject to two conditions. First, the declaration recognized the right of a province not to accede to the Indian Union. Such provinces could either retain their present constitutional position; or if they so desired, His Majesty's Government would agree with them upon a new constitution giving them the same status as the new Indian Union itself. Second, the declaration made provision for the signing of a treaty between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body to provide for matters arising out of the transfer of power, including protection for racial and religious minorities. It was made clear beyond all doubt that this treaty would not impose any restrictions upon the power of the Indian Union to decide in the future its relationship with the other States of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The Cripps offer was an offer to India of full self-government, of the right to frame her own constitution, and even of the right, if she so desired, to sever her partnership with the British Commonwealth. Because of the military situation—which still obtains—it was provided that, pending the framing of the future constitution, the direction of defence should remain the responsibility of His Majesty's Government, but it was contemplated that Indian leaders should be associated not only with the Government of their country—under the

existing constitution necessarily, till a new constitution was framed and accepted—but with the counsels of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations.

The offer of co-operation in the Government on this basis by the leaders of Indian opinion is still open, to those who have a genuine desire to further the prosecution of the war and the welfare of India. But the demand for the release of those leaders who are in detention is an utterly barren one until there is some sign on their part of willingness to co-operate. It needs no consultation with any one or anything but his own conscience for any one of those under detention to decide whether he will withdraw from the Quit India resolution and the policy which had such tragic consequences, and will co-operate in the great tasks ahead.

Not the least of those tasks is the preliminary examination of the constitutional problems of India by an authoritative body of Indians. We should be ready to give this body every assistance it might desire in carrying out its task. For the present the Government of the country must continue to be a joint British and Indian affair—with the ultimate responsibility still remaining with the British Parliament, though it is exercised through a predominantly Indian Executive—until it can be transferred to a fresh constitution. But the framing of that future constitution is essentially and properly an Indian responsibility. Until they can agree on its form, the transfer of power cannot be made. We offered a suggestion in the Cripps proposals, which may or may not have been suitable. If Indians can devise a method which will produce agreement more readily, so much the better. If I may offer a personal opinion, born of some experience, the smaller the body which discusses a difficult and controversial problem, the more likely it is that a profitable solution will emerge.

On the main problem of Indian unity, the difference between Hindu and Muslim, I can only say this. You cannot alter geography. From the point of view of defence, of relations with the outside world, of many internal and external economic problems, India is a natural unit. What arrangements you decide to make for the two great communities and certain other important minorities, as well as the Indian States, to live within that unit and to make the best use of its wealth and opportunities, is for Indians to decide. That two communities and even two nations can make arrangements to live together in spite of differing cultures or religions, history provides many examples. The solutions of the problem have varied. England and Scotland, after centuries of strife, arrived at an absolute union; in Canada, the British and French elements reached a Federal agreement which operates satisfactorily; the French, Italian and German elements in Switzerland agreed on a different form of Federation. In all the above there were religious as well as racial differences. In the United States many elements, racial and religious, have been fused into one great nation with a Federal structure, after the bitter experience of a disastrous Civil War. In Ireland the conflicting elements have so far failed to unite, and Ireland has a sort of Pakistan, though the analogy is of course only relative. The Soviet Union in Russia seems to have devised a new modification of its already flexible system, which will also no doubt repay careful study. These examples are before India for her constitutionalists to study. It is for her to say which will most nearly fulfil her own needs. But no man can alter geography.

I have spoken to you frankly and bluntly as I have been taught to speak, as a soldier. Let me re-state the main principles which guide me in my heavy task and responsibility. Our primary object,

overriding all others, must be not merely to make certain of winning the war—the United Nations have already done that, by endurance through adversities, by sacrifice of comforts, by unity of spirit, by unremitting hard work—but to win it as speedily as possible, and with the least draft on future prosperity. That is a great administrative task. The second task is to prepare for the future, economically and politically.

We cannot settle the future of this country without the full co-operation of the British and Indian peoples and the co-operation within the Indian people of Hindus, Muslims and other minority groups and of the Indian States.

I am conscious of the co-operation of many elements in this country—the eminent and patriotic Indians of my Executive Council and of Provincial Governments; the fighting forces of India, the largest forces ever raised in history by voluntary enlistment; the leaders and workers of industry who have made such a contribution to the war; the Rulers of Indian States. All these place India first in their thoughts and aims, but they have a practical view of the necessity for co-operation to realize progress. There is an important element which stands aloof; I recognize how much ability and high-mindedness it contains; but I deplore its present policy and methods as barren and unpractical. I should like to have the co-operation of this element in solving the present and the future problems of India. If its leaders feel that they cannot consent to take part in the present government of India, they may still be able to assist in considering future problems. But I see no reason to release those responsible for the declaration of August 8, 1942, until I am convinced that the policy of non-co-operation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn—not in sackcloth and ashes, that helps no one—but in recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy.

During the last three months, I have visited seven out of eleven main provinces of British India and two Indian States. I am setting out tomorrow to visit two more provinces. I have seen something of the rural life as well as of the towns. I wonder whether, in considering India's economic and political problems, we always remember how much of India is countryside and how little urban, how many live in villages and how few, comparatively, in towns. I am impressed everywhere by the work which is being done for the betterment of India both by officials and non-officials. India has a very small official administration for its size, but it has very fine services; the way in which they have stood up to the additional strain and work thrown on them by the war has been admirable. There are also a very large number of non-official bodies and persons who are doing great work for India. There is much goodwill and wisdom in India if we can harness it to a common purpose.

I have no desire to make invidious comparisons, but I do feel it worth while to point out that Coalition government by Indians for Indians is not an impossible ideal. It is being carried out at the Centre without friction; it has been carried on for nearly seven years with conspicuous success in the Punjab. Thanks to the leadership of men of good sense, goodwill, and good courage, the affairs of that Province have prospered with the minimum of communal friction; they have administered their Province in the interests of the Province, but also with regard to the interests of India and of the war effort of the United Nations, to which the Punjab has made so striking a contribution. I will make bold enough to say that had all provinces worked the 1935 Act in the same spirit and with the same efficiency India would now be very close to complete self-government.

We have come a long way together up the steep and difficult mountain at the summit of which lies complete Indian self-government. We are almost within sight of the top, but as with most mountain climbs that are worth doing, the final cliffs are the steepest and most baffling of all. At such a time it is doubly necessary to test each hand-hold and foot-hold, to cut adequate steps in slippery ice, so that the whole party, roped together, may not fall back in ruin. It is not the moment that prudent mountaineers choose to unrope, to dismiss their guides, and after violent dispute to take separate routes towards different peaks. We must go on together; we cannot halt too long at the heights which we have reached, and we cannot with honour or safety turn back. We may have to pause to reconnoitre or cut steps, but we must endeavour to go on climbing, even though the rate may seem slow to impatient watchers or to the climbers themselves.

Finally, we must keep in mind the splendour of the view that lies before us when the summit is reached—the prospect of an India at peace within herself, a partner in our great Commonwealth of Nations, the mother of a great people, a shield for peace in the East, busy and prosperous, yet with leisure to develop the thought and poetry and art which are the real salt of life and of which India has already contributed much to the world. Not an immediate vision, but I do not think it unattainable if we work together with patience, good sense and goodwill.

I believe firmly in the future of India, I am a sincere friend of India and should like to help her to political advance, but my military training has made me quite certain that no objective is ever gained without the fullest measure of co-operation from all concerned.

VICEROY'S ADDRESS AT ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS

Addressing the annual meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, Calcutta, Lord Wavell said:—

CALCUTTA, December 20, 1943.

I have attempted to review for you the progress of the war and the policy of the Government of India on our immediate economic problems; and to place before you some ideas on post-war reconstruction. I have said nothing of the constitutional or political problems of India, not because they are not constantly in my mind; not because I have not the fullest sympathy with the aspirations of India towards self-government; not because I consider political progress impossible during the course of the war—any more than I believe that the end of the war will by itself provide an immediate solution of the deadlock—but because I do not believe that I can make their solution any easier by talking about them just at present.

For the time I must concentrate on the job of work we have to do. The winning of the war, the organization of the economic home front, and the preparations for peace call for the use of all the resources India has in determination, energy, and intelligence. I welcome co-operation from anyone and anybody who can assist me in these great problems on which the future of India depends.

While I do not believe that political differences can be solved by administrative action, I believe that if we can co-operate now in the achievement of the great administrative aims which should be common to all parties when the country is in peril, we shall do much to produce conditions in which the solution of the political deadlock will be possible.

A MOST DISAPPOINTING SPEECH

SIR TEJ CRITICIZES VICEROY'S SPEECH

In a statement criticizing the Viceroy's address to the Central Legislature, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru said:—

ALLAHABAD, February 20, 1944.

The ground for the much-awaited speech of the Viceroy had already been prepared by the speech of the Home Member delivered a few days earlier. It is difficult to believe that the Home Member and the Viceroy could have taken the line that they have without previous reference to Mr Amery and possibly to Mr Churchill. The one difference between the two speeches is that the Home Member's speech was aggressive in its tone and showed little respect for Indian politicians, whereas the Viceroy's speech was more courteous and less aggressive but in substance both the speeches come to the thing—once again the considered policy of His Majesty's Government has been reaffirmed and we have been told to hold our souls in patience until the conclusion of the war.

The Cripps offer is said to be still open and we are assured that it was not made in any panic but that it was made in the hope that when the war had come so close to India and threatened its national life, it might arouse, as in other countries, a spirit of unity and co-operation that would have over-ridden political differences in the hour of danger. Two years have elapsed since the offer was made but what is the position now? Section 93 rule still prevails in five provinces. The legislatures are in a state of suspended animation. Taxes are raised or huge sums of money spent without the public or the elected members having any voice. There is no one to interrogate Government. Immense powers have been taken by the executive. The High Courts, which alone could test the propriety of executive action, find themselves practically paralyzed. Two Chief Justices have in recent weeks raised their voice against improper interference in their sphere. The right of *habeas corpus* is practically gone for the time being. Advisory judicial committees on English model have been ruled out and we are expected to be grateful for the new machinery which is going to be set up. Is this the way to create unity and co-operation? Assuming that it was a mistake on the part of Congressmen to have rejected the Cripps offer—and no one regretted it more than I did that the Cripps episode should have so abruptly ended in 1942—why should the rest of the country be penalized and deprived of its ordinary political and civic rights? Perhaps it may produce a favourable impression abroad, and particularly in America, to repeat once again that the Cripps offer is still open and that it is only our cussedness which stands between us and our goal. But what is the impression which an attitude like this is going to produce on the people of this country?

We have been once again told that we must unite, but how are we to unite unless the means of uniting and reconsidering the whole situation are placed at our disposal? The Congress leaders will not be released until they recant the resolution of August 1942. 'I see no reason,' says the Viceroy, 'to release those responsible for the declaration of August 8, 1942, until I am convinced that the policy of non-co-operation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn—not in sackcloth and ashes, that helps no one—but in recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy.' If they are not to be released, how long are they going to be kept in detention without trial? Is the trial ruled out because it will cause much excitement? Is their continued detention causing less excitement or making people more contented? If it is

recognized that there is an important element which stands aloof and that there is much ability and high-mindedness among those who are behind the bars, then why should those people not be given the freedom to discuss collectively the situation and arrive at a joint decision when the declaration of August 1942 was a joint decision? The fact of the matter seems to be that Government think that they cannot afford to take any risk by releasing them and giving them a free opportunity to reconsider the whole situation and to come to a settlement with others. It is neither wisdom nor statesmanship to demand from individual leaders that they should in their individual capacity confess their guilt and thus secure freedom. Mahatma Gandhi has already affirmed in his letter to Lord Linlithgow in September 1942 his strict adherence to the doctrine of non-violence and the question of his or his colleagues' responsibility for acts of sabotage has yet to be determined by an independent tribunal. The consequence of their continued detention without trial must be a perpetuation of dissatisfaction in the country and a feeling that Government are shirking the consequences of an open and impartial trial. Already justice has received many rude shocks and the average man is not prepared to treat executive pronouncements regarding guilt as equivalent to judicial pronouncements by independent judges.

Recent by-elections in England in which candidates supported by Government or Conservative Party have lost heavily ought to be a warning to Mr Churchill and Mr Amery, but I wonder whether the true state of things in India and the extent of depth of dissatisfaction and discontent is known, or allowed to be known, to the British electorate or the House of Commons.

One thing seems to emerge from the Viceroy's speech and that is that the number of 'eminent and patriotic Indians' in the Executive Council is not going to be increased, but frankly speaking even if the whole Council is Indianized it would not alter the situation. To my mind it is not the question of number of Indians in the Cabinet which matters but what does matter is the power which they wield, the freedom of action which they enjoy and the amount of influence which they exercise with their own countrymen. In that respect the Government of India are totally bankrupt. Another thing which emerges from that speech is that so far as the provinces are concerned they must continue to be autocratically ruled by Governors who are answerable to no one in this country excepting to the Viceroy and thus to the Secretary of State, but as the Home Member said not many days ago he is satisfied by looking up his dictionary for the meaning of 'deadlock' that there is no deadlock. If there is no deadlock then why all these long speeches? In short the view that I take of the Viceroy's speech is that it is in some respects a most disappointing speech.

What emerges from the Viceroy's speech is one of a negative character at its best and will make the task of Indian reconciliation and Indian unity for the purpose of evolving an agreed constitution still more difficult. It is regrettable that the biographer of Lord Allenby, who has written so approvingly of his work in Egypt, has adopted this attitude. The tone of the speech may be courteous and inoffensive, but it is not calculated to inspire hope, to remove differences, or to encourage people. If ever there was the need for an independent body of British politicians or parliamentary delegation to come out to India to see things for themselves it is now. I doubt very much whether any Indian delegation will be allowed to proceed to England unless it be a delegation selected by the 'eminent and patriotic Indians' in the Executive Council and approved by the still more eminent Secretary of State for India.

NO VISIBLE CHANGE IN POLICY

PRESS COMMENTS ON VICEROY'S ADDRESS

The Viceroy's speech was criticized by most sections of the Press as utterly barren and lacking in vision. The following are extracts from some of the editorial comments:—

THE "FREE PRESS JOURNAL"

BOMBAY, February 19, 1944.

Lord Wavell has delivered his great political oration. Five months he has taken to study the situation. He has then spoken. His speech shows that all his study has been a waste of energy and that all his waiting has been a waste of time. It is hard empire-steel, cold, inflexible and cruel-edged, nothing velvety about it.

In spirit it is an arrogant and challenging reaffirmation of British power in India.

The gates of Aga Khan Palace, it says, are locked with British lock and no Indian key could open it.

There has been a fond belief entertained by some people in this country that the Britisher is responsive to the appeals of the democratic instinct and that if he found that overwhelming sections of the population were in favour of a particular course of action he would conform to it gamely.

To them Lord Wavell has shown what respect the Britisher has for democratic ideals, practices, and usages in the empire under his rule.

Where does "conscience" come into the Quit India cry? That cry has become part of the permanent political creed in this country. There might be differences in regard to the policies for implementing that demand—both in the matter of time and means. But quit Britishers must if India is to know peace.

THE "BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

BOMBAY, February 19, 1944.

The gist of Lord Wavell's speech being the unmitigated continuance of British imperialism in India at present with vague promises for the future, imperialists and imperialist papers, particularly those in Britain, naturally support the speech while nationalists in India as naturally condemn it. As the freedom of Congress leaders is indispensable for any review of the present position, even moderates like Sir Chimanlal Setalvad deplore the Viceroy's obstinacy in denying them even that freedom. Pointing out that " it is only by discussion and consulting amongst themselves that a change of attitude is possible," he adds that "the sneer underlying the statement that the Congress leaders should consult their own conscience is not helpful." Lord Wavell will realize soon enough that such sneers, besides being grossly unfair, will help him in no way and only hinder his work. If he thinks that, if Gandhiji and the Working Committee members continue to be isolated, either of the two may surrender, he is woefully mistaken.

THE "DAWN"

NEW DELHI, February 18, 1944.

We discern in it definite opposition to the Muslim stand that except on the basis of partition which really is no atrocity, there could be no final charter of freedom for Hindus and Muslims....As a matter of fact, this drawing in of geography without reference to his-

tory and psychology is a poor compliment to Lord Wavell's gift of statesmanship. His speech closed with the information that "my military training has made me quite certain that no objective is ever gained without the fullest measure of co-operation from all concerned." Military training is not particularly necessary to arrive at the conclusion that people should co-operate for attaining the best results. Any factory owner or company promoter would testify to as much without being a Field-Marshal.

About the Viceroy's discourse on internal problems like poverty, famine, illiteracy, high mortality and other accompaniments of British rule it is hardly necessary to criticize; they are with us as the progressive legacy of servitude. Departmental heads supply condensed reports of their achievements and anticipations and they are pieced together for ceremonious speeches. There is no point in discussing the future when the present is equivalent to a condition of instability, inefficiency and public reproach....Lord Wavell paid a tribute to the "eminent and patriotic Indians" forming a majority in his Cabinet. But that kind of plea is outmoded when we know that what counts is not number but weight.

Lord Wavell's speech can be described only as a fatherly lecture or Convocation Address without the cue of a change of heart for which omission India will have to pay dearly in terms of men and money. The deadweight remains and the prosecution of the war is rendered costlier for all members of the Forces that make the South-East Asia base in India.

THE "TRIBUNE"

LAHORE, FEBRUARY 18, 1944

The crux of the present situation is that a Government which is strongly entrenched, not because of the popular support it commands but because of its armed might thinks it can ask for conditions impossible of fulfilment as preliminary to the transfer of power and thus enjoy perpetual power itself, with the pretence of being ever ready to do the right thing at the right moment. That way lies frustration, disappointment and non-co-operation, and not fruitful co-operation for which the Viceroy pleads. It is becoming more and more difficult to avoid the impression that with the Congress leaders in prison and the back of the political movement broken—as the Maxwells and Tottenhams think—the Government are feeling that it is best to go on as they are, instead of releasing the Congress leaders and inviting trouble. It is an opportunist policy which may pay good dividends immediately, but at what cost? The dividends are coming not out of profits but out of capital and the danger of the capital being completely wiped out does not trouble speculators ready to mortgage the future for the present.

THE "STAR OF INDIA"

CALCUTTA, February 18, 1944.

We always suspected the present Viceroy of a literary ability somewhat unusual in a soldier. His speech to a combined sitting of both Houses of the Indian Legislature confirms our suspicion. Lord Wavell found in his literary ability a means of pronouncing a number of equivocations which leave us somewhat cold....But there are many in this country who will not fail to rejoice over the sentence, which he repeated twice, that "we cannot alter geography."

On our part we would not hasten to interpret Lord Wavell's reference to the unalterability of geography as necessarily directed against the idea of Pakistan, for the simple reason that Pakistan does in no way seek to alter geography.

With regard to the other parts of his speech we have not much to say. His concern for the people, specially the underdog, has appeared

not only from his utterances but also from some of his earliest actions. But his faith in the "eminent and patriotic Indians" of his Executive Council seems to err a little on the side of abundance. Their eminence cannot be gainsaid for the simple reason that they are members of his Excellency's Executive Council. But about their patriotism the less said the better.

THE "SEARCHLIGHT"

PATNA, FEBRUARY 19, 1944.

In plain and simple language, free from all ambiguity, Lord Wavell has told the Indian people that there is nothing doing at all by way of settling the political problems of India so long as the war is on, and the Congress leaders will not be released till they have withdrawn the 'Quit India' resolution. The demand for their release would remain barren, said the noble Lord, so long as he was not convinced that the policy of non-co-operation had been withdrawn "in recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy." And that recognition and "the willingness to co-operate with the British Government," he would like to extort from the leaders by detaining them indefinitely in jails, for he does not recognize the need, on their part for any consultation or study of the situation with each other, as if the withdrawal of the Congress resolution or the change of the Congress decision is their own individual concern and, therefore, they can act separately and in their individual capacity.

India wants a Government based on the will of the Indian people, but the British Government would not part with power. This has made the people bitter, sullen and discontented. And with such a discontented India Lord Wavell wants to win the war and build the future! He may win the war, but he cannot expect to win peace and prosperity in the land by the methods he proposes to follow. And even for winning the war, he ought to know as a General that goodwill and voluntary co-operation is as valuable an asset as military equipment..

THE "PIONEER"

LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 19, 1944.

Blessed is he that expecteth nothing for he shall not be disappointed—a Beatitude that may well have been added to those appearing in the New Testament. But Lord Wavell encouraged us to expect something. Now he has falsified our hopes and must bear the responsibility for our disappointment. While there will be general agreement with the interpretation of his own and his Government's responsibilities there will be millions who must ask whether they could not be adequately discharged along with simultaneous efforts to resolve the political deadlock. Is the least deviation from a rigid *non possumus* out of the question?

THE "HINDU"

MADRAS, February 19, 1944.

Neither Lord Wavell's attempt to confer the badge of legitimacy on the Government by calling it a 'mainly Indian Government' nor his giving it a good 'chit' for ability will alter the fact that the Government of India today has proved a woeful failure even in the discharge of those limited duties which are implicit in the conception of "the police State." The stark destitution in Bengal and other large areas and the unprecedented depression of the standard of living of the masses against a background of terrific inflation are intractable evidences of administrative incompetence which no sophistry can explain away. But even more questionable is the Viceroy's assumptions that any Government,

functioning at the present moment, may rest complacently content in the discharge of 'police' functions merely. Lord Wavell's whole conception of the relative importance of British and Indian leadership is so topsy-turvey that it seems to us as futile to think that a new understanding will result from the logical pursuit of the Government's present policy as to expect figs to grow on thistles. But neither the Viceroy nor any other high authority has so far made it clear what exactly they are objecting to so violently in the August Resolution. Lord Wavell seems to suggest that the thing he cannot swallow is the 'Quit India' demand. But if, as he has vigorously affirmed, Britain faithfully stands by the Cripps offer which is itself an elaborate declaration that Britain will quit after a particular date —the winning of the war—and after a particular event—the evolution of an agreed constitution—why should 'Quit India' infuriate the British Government in this fashion? Lord Wavell must realize that the longer these leaders are kept in jail the more difficult is the task of Britain going to be when peace comes, not to mention the scarcely less important consideration that the Government's intransigence is really helping the Axis.

THE "STATESMAN"

CALCUTTA, February 19, 1944.

Lord Wavell has not allowed himself to be hustled into decisions about Indian politics. He spoke courteously about India's imprisoned Congressmen, recognizing their ability and high-mindedness, asking for their collaboration. He did not call them pro-Japanese. He does not want their repentance in sack-cloth and ashes. But he dropped one vividly illuminating remark—the Cripps offer to India of 1942, which stands, was not made in any panic. The Viceroy has left the way open and wonderfully easy. All persons of goodwill should hope that it will be taken, for the Congress holds high place in the affections of India's people, and its absence from affairs leaves an unfillable gap. But until the path towards renewed co-operation is trodden unmistakably, it would be administrative folly of the first order to release, amidst the hazards of war, men whose willingness now to help in winning it remains so questionable and who were responsible for so much dangerous hindrance two years ago.

Among the many other big matters dealt with by the Viceroy was India's indivisibility. He used a striking phrase. "No man can alter geography," adding that from the point of view of defence, of relations with the outside world, of many internal and external problems, this country is a natural unit. That will not please the Muslim League but we find it as realistic and right as the decision to retain Congressmen in jail. We have made no secret of our view that in its present form the Pakistan plan is retrograde, anachronistic and economically unworkable.

THE "LEADER"

ALLAHABAD, February 19, 1944.

There are indications in the speech that his Excellency thinks that the political problem can wait if social and economic questions are tackled in a serious manner by the Government. The effort to create a loyalty front by this method will fail as good government can never be an effective substitute for self-government. It is not possible to repress a people's desire for self-expression but even in the economic field it should be obvious to any casual reader of his Excellency's speech that Lord Wavell's is sceptical of the feasibility of the 'programme of industrialization which has been put forward by certain eminent Indian industrialists and that his

Government thinks in terms of a predominantly agricultural economy with such industrialization as the war may have made inevitable for this country. The divergence of views between the Government and people regarding economic issues is thus not less wide than that in the political field.

THE "TIMES OF INDIA"

BOMBAY, February 19, 1944.

Few people will be surprised at the Viceroy's approach to the current and future political problems of India. Likewise few people can quarrel with the eminently sound reasoning of his Excellency, who has done well to dispel doubts and suspicions regarding the Cripps offer and to reaffirm authoritatively that it is still open to those who genuinely desire to further the prosecution of the war and the welfare of India. Concerning the demand for the release of the Congress leaders, the Viceroy appears to be willing to remove them from detention, but on one vital condition, namely, that he should be satisfied that "the policy of non-co-operation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn—not in sack-cloth and ashes, that helps no one—but in the recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy." This proves clearly that Government have no desire to humiliate the Congress, as has been suggested in certain quarters, but merely want an assurance from the party leaders that the spirit underlying the "Quit India" resolution has been abandoned and that for the future there will be wholehearted co-operation in the prosecution of the war.

THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES"

NEW DELHI, February 18, 1944.

Lord Wavell's first address to the Central Legislature reads like an open confession of failure. So utterly barren and purposeless is it in spirit that instead of finding a solution for the political deadlock, it leaves the problem worse than it was. And the tragedy of it is that Lord Wavell has dashed the hopes which he himself assiduously helped to raise. In more than one speech in London, he referred to the importance and urgency of the political question. In his speech at the Pilgrim luncheon, he went out of his way to mention: ". . . . there is the political advancement of India which to many people appears the most important problem of all. I can say no more on this than that I fully realize the great weight of opinion, both here and in India, in favour of loosening as early as possible the present deadlock and also the difficulty of doing so." Soon after his arrival in India, Lord Wavell addressed a message to the Central Legislature in which he said that as he had been only three weeks in office, he had not studied the Indian situation sufficiently to enable him to deliver the customary address to the Central Legislature. Speaking at Calcutta a month later, he observed somewhat cryptically: "I have said nothing on the constitutional or political problems of India, not because I have not the fullest sympathy with the aspirations of India towards self-government, not because I consider political progress impossible during the course of the war—any more than I believe that the end of the war will by itself provide an immediate solution of the deadlock—but because I do not believe that I can make their solution any easier by talking about them just at present." If these repeated declarations, couched in language which undoubtedly was designed to raise hopes, led to expectations in certain quarters that the new Viceroy was engaged in thinking out some new plan for undoing the blunders of his predecessor, Lord Wavell cannot blame the public for it. But now, within less than two months, the new Viceroy comes forward with the confession that the Linlithgow policy, with all its tragic results on the political atmosphere

of the country, is to continue. The British and Indian publics have been duped. That, at any rate, must be the verdict of those who entertained expectations. For, could not Lord Wavell have said on all the three occasions referred to above the things he has said now? Would that after all not have been ever so much more "soldier" like?

The Viceroy holds out vague hopes of a move on if political parties will get together and discuss and agree upon an alternative to the present Government—able as it is. He also suggests that for any talks to be successful the number of those participating in them should be small. He reminds us that geography is irrevocable. But what contribution does his Lordship offer to make to the exploration which he advises others to take up? None. The vicious circle thus gains a new lease of life by the Viceroy's barren address.

THE "INDIAN EXPRESS"

MADRAS, February 19, 1944.

His immediate audience was the denuded and effete Houses of the Central Legislature, typical of the time and the mood of India today. But there can be no doubt that as Lord Wavell uttered the oft-repeated old platitudes and evasions, he must have been acutely aware of the sullen and defiant eyes of the whole nation watching him keenly. And yet he did not swerve an iota from the implacable path of negation and futility which his august predecessors had so often before trodden in vain. Let none—not even the incorrigibly gullible—hug any more, the illusion that Lord Wavell has the slightest freedom to deal with the Indian situation, in response to any exigency whatsoever, for the duration of the war. What has now finally burst is the thin bubble, not of hope but of illusion, which somehow had succeeded in floating on the troubled political horizon even after Lord Wavell's Calcutta speech.

Lord Wavell demands co-operation. Co-operation with whom and on what basis? Does he mean co-operation with the present irresponsible and adamantine bureaucracy which daily tramples under foot every fundamental civil liberty and common right of the citizen, and chokes every authentic voice demanding India's freedom?

THE "NATIONAL CALL"

NEW DELHI, February 18, 1944.

It would not be enough to say that the speech of His Excellency Lord Wavell to the Central Legislature is disappointing. It is worse! Lord Wavell claims to be a soldier and he likes frankness. We would therefore be frank with him, and tell him that His Excellency has only turned the sense of utter frustration left by his predecessor, into despair. He has made the deadlock doubly dead.

He has referred to the Cripps offer and reiterated it. But His Excellency forgets that the self-government of which he has spoken, was promised to India not during the present war, but by His Majesty's Government in the third year of the last war in almost precisely the same words as have now been employed by him. If Lord Wavell thinks that by merely repeating a pledge that was made quarter of a century ago and broken with the first dawn of peace, he could rouse popular enthusiasm or enlist the support and sympathy of politically conscious elements in the country, he is either playing with Indian sentiments or has been badly briefed by his advisers.

One cannot help feeling amazed at the flattering references made by Lord Wavell to his Indian colleagues in the Executive Council. Even more amazing is the complacency of His Excellency regarding the existing political and economic situation. To characterize a set of political orphans collected from the back-waters of public life, eminent,

is to insult the English language. They represent neither a political party nor a political view-point, nor even do they represent the better intelligence of political India. They are looked upon by the average man as convenient henchmen and tools of the bureaucracy.

THE "AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA"

CALCUTTA, February 19, 1944.

It should not have taken Lord Wavell four long months to study the Indian situation for the speech he has made at the joint session of the Indian Legislature. He has said nothing new or even striking on any of the problems he has touched. One expected something better from the biographer of Lord Allenby but one has to confess with regret that the Viceroy has given little evidence of the possession of qualities he has justly admired in his hero—statesmanship and firmness informed by that statesmanship. There is absolutely no sign of a new approach to the foremost problem of India which is political. To the Viceroy that problem is as good as non-existent. One seeks in vain in His Exlellency's speech for the recognition that economic problems could not be satisfactorily solved in a country seething with political discontent. He will not release the Congress leaders from prison. He does not think it necessary that they should have consultation among themselves or with leaders of other parties. All that they have to do is to make individual declaration that the Congress resolution of August 8, 1942, has been withdrawn and that they were prepared to extend their co-operation to the Government on the latter's terms. He has reiterated the Cripps formula without regard to the fact that the world during the last two years has not been static. It has been recognized by not a few of the leaders of thought in Allied countries that the political problems could not be left in cold storage to be tackled after the war but that they required immediate attention and solution. In the midst of a life-and-death struggle Russia has launched a bold experiment in the direction of expanding the bounds of freedom. But to the present custodians of the British imperial system it is the winning of the victory that matters and not the winning of the peace.

THE "HINDUSTAN STANDARD"

CALCUTTA, February 19, 1944.

The policy of His Majesty's Government towards India has got two facets which are alternately presented to the peoples of our country, as convenience dictates. When general propositions are concerned, that is, propositions which are couched in general terms and are not intended to be applied for the solution of any immediate problem, the facet radiates noble sentiments and high purposes. As soon, however, as any concrete problem affecting the political aspirations of India presents itself and calls for immediate action, the other facet is at once turned to us which directly and without equivocation contradicts all the noble sentiments and high purposes emanating from the other facet. It is on this twin policy of hope and despair, of encouragement and frustration, of promises and disappointments, alternating with each other, that the mighty superstructure of the British Government in India is based.

THE "SIND OBSERVER"

KARACHI, February 18, 1944.

The magician has not produced even a single live rabbit from his mental bag or hat. What he produced were only dead animals which have ceased to attract attention, interest or discussion in this country. It should not have taken five months for His Excellency the Viceroy to make such a speech to the Assembly. He crossed the t's and dotted

the i's of the last speech of Lord Linlithgow to the self-same Central Legislature. It means, whatever his own personal and generous inclinations, he cannot cross the line drawn for him by Mr Churchill and Mr Amery while appointing him as the Viceroy.

Will Lord Wavell explain why India is so backward all the time in spite of the words of praise and self-satisfaction which British politicians like Mr Amery and Lord Halifax utter to themselves and others and thus apply balm to their uneasy consciences! When the economic conditions of the country are still as deplorable as are pointed out by Lord Wavell after nearly two centuries of British rule who is responsible for them? Not the people and their leaders, who are excluded from responsible participation in the Government of the country, but those who had the destiny of the country in their hands and who take their orders from the British Government and not from the people of India.

THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"

MANCHESTER, February 19, 1944.

The *Manchester Guardian*, in a lengthy editorial, urges the Indian Government to persevere in its attempts to find a solution in India. "Lord Wavell's speech to the Indian Legislature was conciliatory and to a certain extent helpful. It is of no use to say that until the two main parties agree together, nothing further can be done by the Indian Government. The proof is that after an interval something further always is done, the reason being that it is part of the burden of Government so long as it is still there to go on trying to help India to find her own peace and that we cannot stultify ourselves by adopting a negative policy on which the Indian Government has sometimes been too ready to fall back. It is a hopeful sign that Lord Wavell is of a practical and, as we hope, a persevering mind. He stated adequately the ideal of the British people and Government—their genuine desire to see India a prosperous country, a united country enjoying complete and unqualified self-government as a willing partner of the British Commonwealth.

"But how does India stand today? The Muslim League holds aloof. The Congress is openly hostile with its leaders in prison. Reports agree that there is a general and sharp distrust of this country, of its intentions, of its supposed complacency towards Indian divisions as being calculated to perpetuate our rule. We have to combat this distrust which is in the heart of our difficulties by practical political measures of goodwill. It is clearly not possible for us simply to quit and leave India to herself unless there is an agreement among her own people.

"Lord Wavell said that the Congress leaders must abandon their policy of non-co-operation and obstruction but 'not in sack-cloth and ashes—that helps no one.' There may here be the germ of a solution. The Moderates recently urged that the Congress leaders should agree to treat their mass disobedience resolution as a dead letter with the inference that the Government should accept this as adequate renunciation. Would it not at least be possible for the Government now to allow representatives of other Indian groups to meet the Congress leaders in prison in order to find out what the prospects are?

"As long as the Government will not do even this, it will be suspected of insisting on a 'sackcloth and ashes' repudiation and of being satisfied with things as they are. But Lord Wavell had something also to say regarding the immediate measures. There will be no constitution for India without an immense amount of work on the fabric by the Indians themselves. There should, therefore, be

an 'authoritative body' of Indians to study the subject and the Government would give it 'every assistance it might desire' in its task. Why should not the Government go farther and get some of the most distinguished Indians from all available groups to start on this great task, members being added as soon as the Congress and any other bodies at present non-co-operating agreed to take part?"

THE LONDON "TIMES"

LONDON, February 18, 1944.

There can be no doubt at all that Lord Wavell looks to the ultimate satisfaction of Indian constitutional aims as the goal of the mission entrusted to him. Victory ranks first, as it must. Without victory every hope must be frustrated and present failures turned to lasting catastrophe. But the next main move in the political field is not within the Viceroy's power alone. The immense project of a wholly free constitution resting firmly and permanently upon the consent of principal communities in a united India demands, and must win, the co-operation of all parties. That is the task ahead and it was not surprising that Lord Wavell should have found himself unable to announce yesterday any outstanding developments of policy in this field.

Today perhaps the doubt—though equally groundless and unjust—is whether the Cripps plan still has the same convinced support from the people set on the high road to victory and the very intensity of the deadlock between parties now puts too negative a construction upon the British pledge to leave the future to Indians themselves. It may well be that the responsibility which Britain carries in India and desires to hand over to a fully self-governing sub-continent will yet entail a new effort on the British part to elicit the elements of a fundamental political compromise. The time for that has not come yet. But Lord Wavell took one step forward yesterday in expressing approval—for the first time from an official quarter—of the plan for preliminary examination of the constitutional problem by an authoritative body of Indians such as might furnish the groundwork for a constituent assembly when it becomes practicable to elect one. His expressed desire to give such an exploratory committee every assistance it may require is to be regarded as an earnest of his purpose to take other steps when practicable.

THE "ECONOMIST"

The *Economist* commenting on Lord Wavell's speech criticizes it as a repetition of older speeches of lesser men and "the only hint of fresh policy was the straight-forward appeal to Congress members to accompany their demand for release of their leaders from detention with some practical proposals for Indian agreement." The periodical describes the occasion as of no little importance though it might well have been made dramatic.

Remarking that the issue now has been narrowed to a single point, it says: "Many Indians in the Congress and outside claim that the Congress co-operation would now automatically follow the release of leaders. Lord Wavell and behind him the British Government say that some assurance of co-operation must precede such a release. The Indian reply is that to ask this is in effect to ask Mr Gandhi and his colleagues to convict themselves out of their own mouths; and that once released they would do of their own accord, if only for political reasons, what they would not do under compulsion."

It adds that it is now up to Parliament and British public opinion to decide whether it is better to take the risk of release in the hope that the new mood of Indians would at once press their leaders to go forward in order to keep their lead, or play a waiting game. The

article ends: "So long as Lord Wavell, a soldier, has the choice, he probably has no alternative—and so his chance of political greatness ebbs away."

THE "GLASGOW HERALD"

In logic there is no answer to the Viceroy's statement of the miserable dilemma; yet it is certain that as the vast panorama of Asia unrolls, some settlement in India will have to be reached. Military and economic realities demand it and the Government cannot be blind to one consideration that is now of very great importance. The world has come to look upon India as the supreme test of British statesmanship. Nearly two years have passed since the Cripps Mission, and we have not seen any new effort to find another approach. The Government hitherto have not been favourable to conferences between Indian leaders themselves.

"Lord Wavell now has made so forthright a declaration of principle and purpose that the question may well be asked whether he could not by a fresh tactic of challenge compel them to meet round the table."

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