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INDIA

TODAY AND TOMORROW

INDIA

TODAY AND TOMORROW

by

Margarita Barns

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TO

MY MOTHER ~~INDIA~~

PREFACE

AFTER a chequered history, India is now entering the most critical era of all. The Federal Constitution, which has been designed to bring the States and British India into harmonious relationship, will, for the first time, introduce a unitary government for the entire continent.

Upon the peaceful development of India depends the continued existence of the British Commonwealth, and it is desirable, therefore, that every citizen of that Commonwealth should do all that lies in his or her power to understand the nature of the experiment.

In the pages that follow I have tried to sift and correlate the experiences derived from some ten years of close contact with Indian affairs. They were written, at first, entirely for my own satisfaction. I was in Bombay and there was a fortnight to spare before I was due to sail for England. It was a period of acute distress, for a journalistic endeavour with which I had been associated had ended in failure—ignominious failure. I began to ask myself what was the sum total of my experiences, and, in doing so, I recorded some of them on paper. By the time I had reached London my notes were completed, and, except for the addition of a few minor facts—necessary to bring them up to date—they are as they were written in those four weeks.

In recounting some of my experiences and conclusions, I do so in the hope that that vast problem which is India will be seen in more human terms than are suggested by many works on the subject or by prosaic Blue books and formal clauses of Acts of Parliament. I have in mind

the reader who desires a general picture of the problem. Continuing the analogy of the artist, may I say that I have taken a large canvas, outlined my subjects first, and later attempted to define and explain them. The circumstances of my journalistic work compelled me to see issues through Indian eyes, as it were, and it is my hope that the pages which follow will provide a background for the period of constitutional, social, and economic change into which India is about to enter.

So far as possible I have omitted facts which are either generally known or are to be found in other books. For this reason I have not given a separate chapter to the Indian States, but have referred to them, as occasion demanded, as integral parts of a politically unified India, notwithstanding the limitations on this unity.

Although I was closely connected with the work of the Burma Round Table Conference, I have not referred to Burma, hitherto administered as part of the Indian Empire, as she is, in future, to be governed by a constitution of her own.

Whatever may be the merits or defects of the new Indian Constitution, little is now to be gained by a detailed discussion of them. The main thing is to understand the problems, and, if possible, rectify the shortcomings as they become patent. No Act could have satisfied all the claims of the various communities and interests, and it is inevitable, therefore, that the objections are many. At the same time it remains to be seen whether what are now regarded as iniquitous limitations on the powers of the Ministries will not, in future, be looked upon as necessary safeguards. Their operation will be largely dependent on the Ministries themselves.

Perspective is a matter of standpoint, and, in order to paint the picture as one saw it, it has been necessary to allude to personal experiences and reactions which one might have preferred to omit. If in the attempt to be frank I have caused offence or embarrassment to anyone, I hope I will be forgiven in the interest of the larger object in view—a sketch of the varied, and often conflicting currents, which make up the India of Today and their effect on the India of Tomorrow.

To all my friends in India and England who have, over several years, contributed towards my picture I offer my profound thanks. Especially I would like to thank those who came to my aid by their affection and in material ways during the days in India when I was absolutely without money. They would prefer to remain unnamed, but I can never repay what they gave to me in days of acute stress. My only hope is that I will be able to serve the cause they one and all have at heart—the supplanting of material by human values.

M. D. B.

LONDON
1936

CONTENTS

Part I

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PREFACE	9
I	INTRODUCTION	19
II	THE PROBLEM	24
III	FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE	31
IV	THE CONFERENCE AT WORK	40
V	SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE	58
VI	WITH MR. GANDHI	75
VII	THE CONFERENCE ENDS	90
VIII	EXPERIMENT IN JOURNALISM	100
IX	THIRD ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE	106
X	JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE	122

Part II

XI	IN INDIA	131
XII	MR. GANDHI AGAIN	138
XIII	INDIA AT WORK	143
XIV	CONGRESS MEETS IN BOMBAY	152
XV	INDIA AT THE POLLS	164
XVI	PLAINTIFFS AND DEFENDANTS	171
XVII	A FRESH ATTEMPT	183

Part III

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVIII	THE WOMEN OF INDIA	193
XIX	YOUTH	202
XX	THE PEASANT	214
XXI	THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER	221
XXII	THE PRESS	226
XXIII	THE CINEMA	242
XXIV	THE RADIO	250
XXV	THE BRITISH IN INDIA	254
XXVI	THE "FOREIGNER" IN INDIA	265
XXVII	LEGISLATORS OF THE FUTURE	269
XXVIII	THE FUTURE	288
	INDEX	293

ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
OPENING OF FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE	32
SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU	48
SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE	64
MAHATMA GANDHI IN LANCASHIRE	80
MR. SRINIVASA SASTRI	96
SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS	112
MR. MAHOMED ALI JINNAH	128
SIR PHIROZE SETHNA	128
MR. N. M. JOSHI AND PANDIT H. N. KUNZRU	144
MAHATMA GANDHI ANNOUNCING DECISION TO RETIRE FROM CONGRESS	144
KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN AND BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD	160
MAHATMA GANDHI SPEAKING TO MR. C. RAJGOPALACHARI	160
PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA	176
MIRABEN (MISS MADELINE SLADE)	176
WOMEN'S SECTION AT INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	208
INTER-COMMUNITY DINNER	224
SOME CONGRESS LEADERS	240
MR. BHULABHAI DESAI	272
PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU	288

Part I

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

INDIA—what visions are conjured up by the very mention of her name! And what a diversity of visions there are. They may be of a land to be served or they may be of a land to be exploited; or possibly of just a playground for jaded pleasure seekers of the West.

More often than not chance alone is the determining factor of the standpoint which is taken. The son of the rich London merchant will not see in focus with the Oxford educated, but more detached, English Civil Servant, and much less, no doubt, with the medical missionary from Huddersfield. Yet the number of English people who go to India with links already established is not so large as is often thought. In other words, by far the greater number are drawn from commerce and the professions quite by chance, and if they do not approach the land of their abode with open minds, it is the result of a bias which has been inculcated rather than the outcome of experience.

My connection with India was as fortuitous as that of the cashier who is sent by his bank, or of the newly qualified doctor who is attracted by the prospects of the Indian Medical Service, or of the missionary who has come under the spell of some returned worker. Let me explain how it arose.

The post-war student world, to which I belonged, was a world which believed that the millennium was near at hand when it sang "England, Arise! The long, long night

is over," Blake's *Jerusalem*, or "These things shall be; a loftier race than e'er the world hath known shall rise." The Armistice, and the promise of a fresh start which it brought, gave an impetus to every kind of "movement" and "cause" the wit of man—and woman—could initiate. One might have been a Socialist (in which event one sang the *Red Flag* or the *Internationale*), a Fruitarian, a Vegetarian, a Birth-Controller, an Anti-Vivisectionist, a Social Credit-ite, a Communist—or even a Neo-Vitalist. Religion in its more modern phases of Theosophy, Christian Science, and World Brotherhoods found as many adherents as the political and social movements. Youth was ready for a "lead" and the leaders were many.

When Bertrand Russell (now Earl Russell) went to live in Chelsea I had already read most of his books, and it was perhaps natural that when he was selected the candidate for the Labour Party for the Parliamentary Election the contest found me working in his committee rooms. These were in the basement of his house in Sydney Street. What a strange collection of people we were! There were "intellectuals" from the Fabian Society, "lesser intellectuals" from the Labour and Communist Parties, ardent Sinn Feiner Roman Catholics (who later had to part company from their Communist colleagues on the Birth-Control issue), rough and hearty Trade Unionists who supplied the Labour background of the constituency, artists of various kinds who had a grievance against the existing economic order but who knew precious little about the theory of Socialism, and the usual number of dilettantes who collect around any outstanding personality.

Sir Samuel Hoare was the Tory candidate, and, as was to be expected in so conservative a district as Chelsea, he was re-elected with ease. Notwithstanding his defeat, Bertrand Russell continued to be associated with local radical politics and became a member of the Executive Committee of the Chelsea Independent Labour Party of which I, and my future husband, were also members. At that time I was about eighteen and still susceptible to those deep and lasting impressions one derives in adolescence. I am referring to these days, although they have strictly no bearing on the pages which follow, because it was during this formative period that my mind began to take shape on certain issues.

One day, describing his experiences in China, Bertrand Russell told us that it was his view that the future world conflict would not resolve itself into a clash between Communist Russia and the United States of America (which was the popular contention of the early 1920's) but between the "coloured" peoples of the East, led by Japan, and the West. As I recall it, I recollect Russell's emphasis on the "colour" aspect and the deep impression it created on my mind. Up till then I had shared the normal attitude towards "coloured" students—that is to say, the attitude or prejudice which is born of fear of something that is strange. It had not gone deeper than that, and, no doubt, was the result of the same emotion which, according to my mother, made me as a baby cry for three days when I first saw a coalman with his dust-covered face. No attempt had been made to rationalize the attitude until Russell's forecast forced me to analyse the fundamental economic causes underlying racial prejudice. Such prejudice seemed to me

wholly wrong and I felt it was something which should be resisted.

Another early impression, it is hoped, will be permitted. The occasion was a gathering of the younger members of the Fabian Society. Bernard Shaw was the lecturer. The point he rammed home to his eager, impatient, youthful audience was the futility of thinking that any solid work could be achieved by the old-style propaganda.

"The days of tub thumping at the street corner have gone for ever," he said. "Your predecessors did all that. Your job is to get into your professions—medicine, academic work, art, journalism—live your faith, excel at your work, and then proclaim your socialism."

The chapters that follow are an attempt to describe part of an effort of ten years and more along these lines. Judged from the materialistic standpoint, the effort has ended in failure. Judged from the standard of human values and understanding, not one iota of energy, I believe, has been wasted.

For the purposes of correct perspective, it is necessary to make it clear that I have never identified myself with India or "gone native," as our imperialistic friends would phrase it. I would yield to none in legitimate pride of ancestry; nor, however, would I deny that pride to those of another race. What I have attempted in my work is the building of a bridge between India and England based on co-operation, trust, friendship, and hard work. I am writing these pages to try and ascertain for myself exactly where I have arrived after many years of effort in this direction: years, no doubt, during which I have made many blunders, formed hasty judgments, and committed, in short, all the sins of youth. But, looking back,

I can honestly say that the intention was single minded and was carried out with all the verve of a crusader. A little less of this spirit would, perhaps, have softened many of the later disappointments, and I cannot help recalling it with some amusement, a little pity, but—above all—a gladness that circumstances permitted me the experiences that came my way.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROBLEM

THE Theosophical Movement, under the guidance of Dr. Annie Besant, had a greater influence in introducing the problem of India to the people of Europe and America than that of the various Missionary Societies or any of the specialist writers on the subject. Renaissant India will one day acknowledge with greater emphasis than she does at present the very great work of Dr. Besant in her efforts to bring together Indians and peoples of other nationalities as human beings on a common footing. That this movement attracted those of a mystical turn of mind was perhaps its undoing as a binding link between the two peoples; but there is no gainsaying that it provided the foundation for a wider fellowship between peoples of different creeds and race, and to the dynamic personality of Dr. Besant must be given the chief credit.

When I first saw her she was holding a vast Queen's Hall audience spellbound by her oratory. Dressed in gleaming white, which set off her short white hair, the "Chief," as she was affectionately known among Theosophists, could not have been called a prepossessing figure. Her magnetic power, it seemed to me, lay in her facility for cadent sentences which rose and fell like waves caressing the sea shore.

A purely emotional appeal could have been expected to attract a majority of women. But there was something rugged, masculine about this elderly lady which brought men in their hundreds to her meetings. Possessing, as I

do, sceptism of all so-called mystic cults, I could never have been attracted by Theosophy or its offshoots. Yet it was a delight to hear this woman of strong convictions, abundant energy, uncanny insight, almost mesmerizing her audience by her eloquence. Good women speakers are rare, but Dr. Besant had the technique of the platform at her finger-tips. As I came to know more of her, I saw that much of her work was carried out by imperious and autocratic methods. As I came to know more of India, I saw that often one is driven to the conclusion that those are the only methods if one is to get anything done.

About 1924 my husband had already turned from his previous work to assist Major Graham Pole, a former Treasurer of the Theosophical Society, in his work with the British Committee on Indian Affairs. This organization was formed to provide a liaison between British and Indian politicians. At one time it had on its committee Parliamentary representatives of all three political parties as well as people connected with certain high officials in India. The work necessitated the maintenance of close contacts with India, through the Press and correspondence, as well as the formulation of questions to be asked in Parliament. During India debates, speeches were compiled *in extenso* and Members of Parliament were "coached up," as it were, in the subject. The organization was entirely independent of the Theosophical Society, although Dr. Besant, naturally, took a very friendly interest in it.

It was during Major Graham Pole's visit to India in 1927 that Dr. Besant conveyed a suggestion that was to form the basis of our work for the next several years.

The Indian Press, in the vanguard of the nation's hostility to the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms, was chafing against the circumscribed limits within which it had to work. One of these limitations was the fact that there existed only one source of news, a non-Indian (British) news agency for world news, and an allied company in India for internal news. The fact that both these companies were receiving heavy payments from the Government in return for certain services greatly detracted from the popular confidence in their impartiality; a very natural reaction.

In order to meet such a situation, a number of leading Indian business magnates had become directors of a company to promote an independent internal news agency, and the proposition conveyed by Dr. Besant was that we should act as the London Correspondents of that concern.

The proposal had many attractions, for was it not a practical method of putting into action the course upon which one had already decided in theory? We were very happy to accept the suggestion.

The work was actually begun in 1927, but was to be broken off after a short time due to the intervention of the kind of misunderstanding which can so easily occur when negotiations have to be conducted between parties six thousand miles apart. It should be mentioned that we were doing the work in an honorary capacity, the Company meeting the out-of-pocket expenses only.

Two years later the conductors of the Company again found themselves in want of a London representative, and, after receiving cables from India urging me to undertake the work, I agreed to do so. It is often very

fortunate that we cannot see ahead, for had I been able to do so I would not have accepted the proposal.

From the very first days of the renewal of the contact, we received the maximum assistance from the Press Departments of the India Office and the Foreign Office, notwithstanding the critical political conditions which were prevailing in India at that time. It was a period of Press Ordinances and frequent suspension of publication by newspapers—making the running of a news agency a very precarious undertaking.

There was one constant factor during the whole endeavour; the nightmare of uncertain and, sometimes, non-existent finances. I remember one occasion when we had spent all our own available resources on cable tolls. We were sensitive about the matter and did not like to mention it to friends who might conceivably have come forward to help. By a coincidence, our friend Mr. C. F. Andrews, sensed the situation, and, before there was a break of even one day in the service, he produced £12, which enabled us to carry on for a week or two until remittances were made from the Company in India. We knew much of the financial hazards of the *Daily Herald*, with which Major Graham Pole and Mr. George Lansbury were connected, and in course of time became almost inured to an atmosphere of perpetual jeopardy.

Most of the news we sent had a direct bearing on the Indian constitutional position. The Simon Commission was then engaged in its inquiries and India was, naturally, deeply interested in anything that happened "behind the scenes" and the prospects of any developments. There was a wide field which was not being covered by the other service, although our existence did have the effect

of making that organization cover items which it might not have ordinarily reported. There was no particular policy behind the news that was sent. We aimed at including as many items relating to India as possible in a purely objective manner. The interpretation of the news was entirely an editorial function, we felt, which did not come within our province, although British news was supplemented by special explanatory articles.

At this time the second Labour Government was in office. Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the Secretary of State for India, was making the preliminary preparations for the calling of the first Round Table Conference. On the one side were the Tories, suspicious of the slightest move which they might not be able to rectify once they returned to office. On the other side, 6,000 miles away, were the Indian moderate leaders for the most part hesitant regarding the attitude they should take to such a Conference.

The Indian Press for which we were catering was largely under the influence of the Congress, and therefore hostile to the Round Table proposal. This is not the place to describe the many anxious letters that passed between certain of the Indian Liberals and their friends in England who were desirous of the success of the Conference. It is sufficient to say, in passing, that our connection with the Labour Party and the extreme attitude taken by Nationalist India often placed us in a position of considerable embarrassment.

Once on a voyage to Africa I met one of our most distinguished physicists—a man of cool, level-headed judgment whose days had been spent in the study of seemingly minute problems. We were discussing the rise

of the era of Dictatorships and the difficulty of the definition of "progress." He turned to me and said: "You know, I am beginning to think that one ought to be born a fanatic if one is to get anything done. Nobody listens to the balanced man. The world wants panaceas."

The Indian problem has been the subject of as many panaceas as any other world problem: the high Tories who would govern with a rod of iron; the sentimentalists who would leave the greater part of the problem to Providence; the Left-Wing politicians who would abolish exploitation but are not clear about an alternative economic structure; the mystics who, having found personal solace in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads*, regard the matter as a purely spiritual problem; and the vested interests which are only concerned with the conservation of those interests.

The problem, as I see it, is the problem of a very large section of the world struggling for self-expression, but governed by factors of ignorance, greed, bitter rivalries; indeed, of a variety of complexes which are the aggregate result of historical facts.

This struggle is at present vaguely visualized in terms of India versus Britain. But it is also the main basis of the communal spirit in that this spirit springs from the desire of the leaders of the various communities to grasp as much political, and consequently economic, power as possible for their own people. These leaders look to Europe, and they see little practical example of the precept which is always being preached at them—that they should live together in harmonious brotherhood. They see that physical force, bloodshed, have been decisive factors in some of the most important countries.

Can it be denied that the aggressive nationalism and the militant spirit which is abroad in Europe today has done much to retard the communities in India in the effort of reconciliation?

More fundamentally, the struggle is the struggle of the individual for existence at a standard which, consciously or unconsciously, he considers appropriate to the demands of his body and mind. Basically, therefore, it is the same as that of the rest of the world. Hitherto, however, India has for the most part been governed by a system of philosophy which taught acceptance of things as they are. Today all that is changing. From the practitioners of an attitude of passive resignation, the people are becoming combatants in a war for rights which they had not previously believed existed.

How will the future governors of India deal with this situation? Will they be drawn towards theories of democratic government or towards theories of authoritarian government? To form an opinion of the possibilities which lie in the struggle ahead it is necessary to refer to the factors governing the present position in India—the character of the people, their attitude to life, and the constitutional developments of the immediate past.

CHAPTER THREE

FIRST ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

1930–1931

IT is not necessssy to survey the background of the first Round Table Conference beyond recalling that it was the result of the realization in Downing Street that the Indian boycott of the Simon Commission was effective and that no constitution based on recommendations made by Sir John Simon would ever be accepted by India—at least at that moment. In addition to the many problems with which it was confronted at home, the Labour Government was faced with a "Civil Disobedience" movement in India. Anxious to justify its previously expressed intentions, it cast about to evolve a formula which would break the tension between the two countries.

The Labour Party's policy was, and is, a curious compound. It was influenced by an Advisory Committee which included two solicitors with Indian experience, Major Graham Pole and Mr. H. S. L. Polak; Mr. George Lansbury representing believers in self-determination for all oppressed peoples; scholars like Mr. G. T. Garratt and Mr. Leonard Woolf; a former Indian Civil Servant such as Sir John Maynard; and Trade Unionists and Labour politicians as zealous in holding the working class of India "in trust" against the Indian capitalist as any high Tory.

These various attitudes do not permit of a clear-cut policy. Indeed, Mr. George Lansbury has more than once declared in the House of Commons that if the Indian

masses are to be exploited, then he would rather see them exploited by Indian capitalists. It is not suggested that the Trade Unionists who held the contrary view did not do so in all sincerity. The history of the next few years may confirm them in their belief. After all, under the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms and the system of dyarchy, many grievances were righted by their ventilation in the House of Commons. Under a self-governing constitution (for the purposes of the argument the limitations of this constitution can be set aside) which will be worked by representatives of the various vested interests, it is conceivable that the masses will receive much scantier attention than they did under the old constitution. Mr. Josiah Wedgwood, M.P., indeed, is convinced of the fact and gave it as his reason for the original constitution which he devised whereby certain members of the House of Commons would sit in the Indian Legislature and certain members of the latter body would, in exchange, sit in the House of Commons.

The idea of a Round Table Conference was, therefore, born out of much confusion of thought. At the best, it was felt, it might terminate the extreme unrest in India, and, at the worst, would at least provide a sifting chamber for all the contradictory views. The Conservative Party was extremely suspicious of the proposal, but in course of time realized that there was something to be said for providing an opportunity for the Indian politicians "to let off steam." Having propounded the idea, the problem was to get the appropriate "representatives" to attend the Conference. This part of the work was left to the Government of India, subject, of course, to the approval of the India Office.

Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, and Mr. Vithalbhai Patel were adamant that the Congress could not be represented at such a Conference unless it were assured beforehand that it would discuss a Dominion Status constitution for India. Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy, pointed out that the Conference was to be set up by Parliament and that it would not be possible for him to anticipate Parliament's decisions. Appeals of all kinds were made to the Congress leaders, but they refused to attend. I subsequently gathered from Mr. Vithalbai Patel (a President of the Indian Legislative Assembly who has since died) that he favoured attendance at the Conference and that it was Mr. Gandhi who stood in the way.

In the end, the Government of India nominated over seventy representatives from India and Burma, selected on a communal and territorial basis. This number included ten Princes.

From the very beginning the members of the Conference showed signs of a consciousness of the weakness of their position; they were not negotiators and had no delegated power. This attitude was very largely induced by the Indian Press, which every day repeated the contention that the members of the Conference did not represent the people of India. Taking *people* to mean *politicians*, the contention did not state the whole case, for, apart from the Indian National Congress, the Conference represented every phase of Indian political life. True, many of the nominees were what is commonly called "creatures of the Government," but in a country where there has never been anything like democracy their inclusion was inevitable.

A number of the leading members of the Conference

were already known in England, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, Mr. N. M. Joshi, the Aga Khan, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and others.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has since been appointed a member of the Privy Council and may well become India's first Prime Minister. Although he has been Law Member of the Government of India, he is not a barrister-at-law. He made his reputation as an Advocate of the Allahabad High Court. Without the permission of the Chief Justice, therefore, he is not entitled to practise in any of the Presidency High Courts. Notwithstanding this, he has an India-wide reputation as a sound and brilliant constitutional lawyer. These facts are mentioned at this stage because, for reasons which have their origin in the educational system, an exaggerated importance is placed in India on paper degrees and qualifications. Often Indian representatives at the Conference who wanted to criticize Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would refer to the fact that he had not been called to the Bar, and it took me some time to grasp the relevance or significance of the reference.

The Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri has been called India's Ambassador and golden-voiced orator. Starting life as a village schoolmaster, he rose to the position of representative of the Government of India in South Africa. The Indians in that country, to the number of some 180,000, suffered, and still suffer, from considerable disabilities and, coming some years after Mr. Gandhi's work in the Union, Sastri's influence went a long way in removing much of the blind racial prejudice. The removal of the underlying economic causes of racial discrimination is not, of course, within the power of any one man; it is part and parcel of the economic structure.

Sastri is not likely to re-enter public life from the seclusion of the Annamalai University where he is now Vice-Chancellor, but his grace, eloquence, and distinction have gained more for his country than can be adequately gauged at this stage of India's development.

The Servants of India Society, of which Mr. Sastri was the President for many years, has also given Mr. N. M. Joshi to Indian public life. Mr. Joshi is one of the most significant personalities on the Indian political stage. Brahmin by birth, he has devoted his life to the championship of the underdog and is one of the founders of the Trade Union Movement in India. Possessing a delightful sense of humour—a quality rare amongst his countrymen—Mr. Joshi is most remarkable for his tenacity of purpose. Whether it is at his frequent attendances at the meetings of the International Labour Office at Geneva, his career in the Indian Legislative Assembly, or his record of work at the Round Table Conferences, Mr. Joshi stands out as a man who is guided solely by principle. Denounced by his Moderate colleagues for his belief in the ultimate desirability of universal suffrage, he is also assailed from the Left for his moderation. Mr. Joshi's rugged doggedness is not of the kind, though, that will rush others into hardship for the sake of mere stubbornness. He will compromise over a strike if he sees that its continuance will only bring greater suffering to the men. Although he has been a nominated member of the Assembly—meaning that he owes his seat to the Government—since the inception of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, Mr. Joshi invariably votes on the popular side. India is in urgent need of more leaders of his calibre.

Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar had already been the Law

Member of the Government of Madras when he came to the Round Table Conference; he subsequently became the Acting Law Member of the Government of India and is now Dewan of the advanced State of Travancore. Edwin Montagu, when Secretary of State for India, described him as "very, very, very able." Ramaswami Aiyar is more than able, he is brilliant, polished as a diamond—with as many facets. Even in India, where subtlety is admired, his versatility is too excessive to gain him popular affection or admiration. Extraordinarily well read, he is at ease in any society, but especially amongst Europeans. Perhaps his early close associations with Dr. Annie Besant and the Theosophical Group taught him much that Indians do not generally understand of English psychology. More will be heard of "C.P.", as he is familiarly known, under the coming Reforms.

The Aga Khan needs no description. His place in the imperialistic scheme of things, as leader of the Ismaili Mohammedans with a large following in India and East Africa, is well known. There is a movement afoot to confer on him the status of a Ruling Prince with territory over which he would have partial jurisdiction, but it is doubtful whether the proposal will ever materialize. The Aga Khan possesses much more shrewdness than his interest in horse-flesh would seem to suggest. He might be said to epitomize in his person the anomalies that make up India—the medievalism that masquerades under the name of spirituality and the sophistication that is the result of the impact of the Western world.

Sir Phiroze Sethna, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Mr. M. R. Jayakar (the two latter barristers), the Maharajah of

Bikaner, Sir Kailas (then Colonel) Haksar of Gwalior, Sir Akbar Hydari of Hyderabad and Sir Mirza Ismail of Mysore were among the representatives who made deep impressions on the British delegates.

As the more Congress-minded business men had refused to accept invitations to the Conference, Sir Phiroze Sethna, a member of the Council of State, who was then chairman of the company for which I was working, was the virtual leader of the commercial representatives. He is as near an Englishman in his manner as any non-Englishman might be expected to be. Incisive, outspoken, precise in financial dealings, amazingly energetic, this Parsee knight reminds one of an Elizabethan courtier. His portrait is to be seen in the House of Commons, as Sir William Rothenstein took him for his model of the Prime Minister in the mural painting depicting the embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of Jehangir.

My friend, Kelen, the distinguished Hungarian caricaturist, has a way of visualizing his subjects in the form of a bird or an animal. Mr. Jinnah reminded him of an eagle. The symbolization is apt. But lest the comparison be thought to be uncomplimentary to the Moslem leader, I hasten to add that it is only true in the sense that Mr. Jinnah has an extraordinary facility for pouncing on the crux of an argument. He is practical, has no taste for metaphysical dissertations, and has a character of unimpeachable integrity. Jinnah's great handicap is that he is inclined to be "precious." Elegant, a man of taste, a man who knows his own worth, he has difficulty in unbending. This is largely the result of diffidence and not of any consciousness of superiority. I remember an India Office official referring in unsympathetic terms to

Jinnah's "*But, my deah fellah!*" and I realized that he had been completely misunderstood.

As a result of these characteristics, Mr. Jinnah has been an outstanding figure in the Legislative Assembly but a failure as a leader. His party—the Independent Party—often divides against itself. But for tactical skill, for devotion to the real interests of his country, for judgment based on reason and not on emotion, Mr. Jinnah has no superior. He has declined both office and title.

Sir Kailas Haksar is a Kashmiri Brahmin, suave and polished. He is as much at home discussing Oriental and Occidental art, reciting Persian poetry, or analysing world political developments with European statesmen as he is in his Ministerial Councils in Gwalior. Fair and tall, he is a model of courtliness.

These, then, were some of the men who came to London to discuss the future constitution of India. Mr. Wedgwood Benn, almost over-anxious, had had too great an experience as a Parliamentarian and too little experience of the wider world to enable him to set about his task with equanimity. Surrounded by India Office and Government of India officials on the one side, and friends who were the interpreters of the Indian attitude on the other, he gave the impression of a man who did not know his own mind. His lack of knowledge of India was, of course, not unique in a Secretary of State (Lord Birkenhead was in a similar position). Indeed, it was stressed as an advantage in some quarters in that it was spoken of as evidence of his openness of mind on the subject. All the same, unless the conversation were an entirely one-sided affair, the Indian delegates often developed unfavourable opinions when they spoke to British Ministers, some of

whom showed deplorable lack of knowledge of India. Unlike some of his colleagues, though, Mr. Wedgwood Benn gave the impression of considerable keenness and a desire to do all that might secure a solution of the problem which would be satisfactory to all parties.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Sankey, were the other members of the Government on whom the main burden of the Conference fell. Mr. MacDonald was, of course, largely preoccupied with other Cabinet problems and his temper was, in consequence, sometimes too over-taxed for him to do justice to the work of the Conference. He seemed to alternate between a desire to forget his own previous conclusions on the Indian question and a tendency to treat the Indian representatives as though they were schoolboys. His own Party, then the Labour Party, had, though, often accused him of the same attitude, and it was nothing new. But whereas the Labour Party was in a position to express itself, the hypersensitive Indians were in no such position. As a result, they became much more partial to Lord Sankey, whose apparently effortless manner gave the impression of complete frankness. Lord Sankey lost this position of esteem, however—for no other reason than his anxiety to face facts—as the number of conferences increased.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONFERENCE AT WORK

FROM the early days of the Conference one derived four main impressions of the Indian representatives at work which are as true today as they were then. In the first place, one could not but be struck by the individual brilliance of many of them, but this was largely offset by their collective ineffectualness. Thirdly, one was always aware of a sense of futility which pervaded their efforts, and fourthly—perhaps arising from the third factor—of their frequently amazing irresponsibility.

It is not my intention to attempt a detailed survey of the work of the Conference, but rather to outline the forces, many of them psychological, which governed its development. Amongst the delegates, and including those already mentioned, were some who compared favourably, as individuals, with any British, European, or American statesmen. British Ministers have been known to attend International Conferences and not know the geography of the country they were discussing. Not one of the representatives mentioned would have been guilty of such a *faux pas*.

Some were men who by hard work and merit had achieved considerable distinction in their own country. But it is a country which, before the British conquest, knew the might of the Moghuls, the prowess of the Rajputs, the daring of the Mahrattas. It is a country which, by force of circumstances, has been driven back

on its past. Dreams of the past on the part of the communal leaders are the basis of the communal spirit. A by-product is the endeavour to acquire as much power as possible for one's own community, whether it be by appointments in public and private service, in industry, in banking, in the professions. Such a spirit, naturally, militates against concerted action and discipline.

But the delegates were also handicapped by a lack of knowledge of the technique of public life. Perhaps the essential egoism of Hinduism is at the bottom of the extreme individualism one finds amongst Hindus. Certainly a non-Indian is astonished when he or she sees the conduct of many an Indian discussion or assembly. Action by majority vote may not always produce the right decision, but it is a *modus operandi*. His own individual opinion is so sacred to an Indian, that if it is not accepted he will often "walk out" of an assembly and decline to give any further co-operation rather than bide his time until he is successful in converting his colleagues to his point of view. Naturally, such an attitude leads to repeated stalemates and lost opportunities.

But the argument needs further qualification. The nominees to the Conference were very like a number of people who have been asked to divide a cake amongst themselves. The first question they would ask would be what size the cake was going to be. But nobody knew what kind of cake—or constitution—was eventually going to be evolved by the Conference. There were some who were sanguine and some who were pessimistic. Claims were staked high in the knowledge that they could always be reduced but hardly increased. Sometimes the results were ludicrous. Representatives maintained their

positions, repeated their pieces, as it were, *ad nauseam*; so much so that anyone who had the task I had could repeat all the arguments on every side like a parrot in a very short time. At times it became wearisome, almost beyond endurance, to hear over and over again figures of population percentages, of the franchise strength, of the defence forces, and so on. It never led anywhere.

One was conscious that the Indian members had a sense of futility in all that they did. The attitude was understandable. In spite of the awakening taking place, India was still being influenced by the Hindu doctrine of *Karma* (destiny) and the Mohammedan doctrine of *Kismet* (fate). Added to this was the knowledge that the Indian National Congress was at home pursuing a bitter non-co-operation struggle and that anything which materialized at the Conference was not likely to be endorsed when the delegates returned to India. So persistent were the reminders that they were not the elected representatives of the people that they began to feel that they really had no sanction for the work they were undertaking.

This fear was somewhat exaggerated for two reasons. Short of sending the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly *en bloc*, it is difficult to see how the personnel of any conference could have been elected. Even then the Congress and its sympathizers would have been omitted, for they had boycotted the Legislatures. The second reason was the knowledge that Congress was not likely to be able to put up a workable alternative to any constitution which might be devised by the Conference that would have been acceptable to all parties.

Absence of popular support had, however, divested

the delegates of any sense of leadership they might have at one time possessed, and they were not prepared to return to India and accept full responsibility for a *fait accompli*. At the same time they felt that the British parties were not being very helpful, for, if they were to return to seek support for any constitution, it would have to go much further, they declared, than anything that seemed at that moment to be likely.

Above all, most of the delegates were not clear in their own minds in which direction their self-interests would best be served. While the blank wall of the British constitutional machine, with which they were so often confronted in India, at times seemed worth demolition at any price, they had also to take into account the strength of the popular movement. So great was the force of that movement that traders had been ruined, runs on banks instigated, houses and business firms picketed, mock funeral ceremonies in derision of these leaders organized, and on many days business brought to a complete standstill. It was mob rule with all the pathos, tragedy, and heroism of such movements. Not all the leaders were scrupulous; many, indeed, gained financially by the loss of others. I do not think that this fact should be allowed to detract from the value of the many acts of self-sacrifice which Mr. Gandhi's leadership was able to evoke from people who had for the most part hitherto shrunk from any kind of physical discomfort and pain. After all, the Indian National Movement is not the only movement of its kind where opportunists have pounced down and made capital out of the situation. It is mentioned to illustrate the dilemma in which the delegates found themselves. Practically all of them,

whether business men, lawyers, members of Legislatures, depended for their continued success on a measure of public support.

The Press in India is in two sections. What is known as the Anglo-Indian Press is European-controlled and the Indian Press is, of course, Indian-controlled. Coming constitutional changes are rapidly having the effect of narrowing the gulf between the two, but at the time of the First Round Table Conference there was a wide divergence of attitude. Delegates were as nervous of being praised by the Anglo-Indian Press as they were gratified at being omitted from the often vituperative criticism of the Indian Press. There were no "moderate" Indian papers in that they all supported the popular viewpoint which was that of an emotional nationalism. Thus the delegates were under some compulsion not to take responsibility for anything which would expose them to the obloquy of the Press. "When in doubt, do nothing" almost became their motto.

With an Executive not responsible to the Legislature and a Legislature not responsible to the people, it is almost platitudinous to say that one cannot expect a sense of responsibility; but it is true enough. No one who worked within the Labour Party before the first Labour Government and then after 1924 could dispute the change in mentality which came over the Party as a result of the brief experience of office. Statements were weighed and analysed before delivery in the knowledge that the undertakings of Government and Opposition alike were solemn pledges. One has only to compare the early writings of Ramsay MacDonald, Philip Snowden, the late Arthur Henderson, to name a few of the Labour

leaders who rose to high office, with their later utterances, to verify the result of responsibility. The position of the Indian leaders is analogous—except that they are now only on the threshold of the stage of responsibility.

Sometimes one's breath was taken away by the loose and unconfirmed statements one delegate would make about another. In a different category, but no less irresponsible, was the delegate who, instead of attending an urgent meeting of the Minorities Sub-Committee, went to the Christmas pantomime at the Lyceum because he had booked his seat. Another delegate read hardly any of the Minutes of the various Committees and Sub-Committees, saying that he was saving them all up to read on the return voyage to India!

All these reasons taken together perhaps made it too much to expect that the delegation as a whole would work in anything approaching a cohesive manner. They did not even have a central secretariat—unconnected with official contacts. While the Government was served by officials who had spent all their careers in the study of the subject and who had the facts and figures at their finger-tips, the Indian delegates were only able to make use of the services of one or two private secretaries attached to certain delegates. The result was frequent confusion and the dissipation of much talent. Private individuals were often pressed into service. Many nights I found myself working till the early hours—and then having to pay the postage—on communications that had nothing to do with my work at all! This, again, was an aspect of the technique of public life with which the delegates were not conversant.

Similarly, their attitude towards the Press was quite

unrelated to modern conference methods. Not once was any meeting of the Press, British and Foreign, called by the delegation. Their speeches were, of course, reported by the Publicity Department of the Conference which was run by the Information Officers of the India Office and Downing Street. But there were numerous occasions when the British, Foreign, and Indian Press sought enlightenment from the delegates, and they could only do so by hanging around, often receiving scant courtesy. How different was the attitude of other delegations at Geneva, at the Naval Conference, at the World Economic Conference! It was really a matter of ignorance, and although the suggestion was often made that the Indian members of the Conference should be available to the Press at specific times, nothing came of the suggestion.

Of the three sections of the Press, British, Foreign, and Indian, the representatives of American and European news organizations were of most interest to the delegates. They suspected most members of the British Press, and, unfortunately, the usual inferiority complex that the average Indian has regarding anything Indian, applied with some force to their attitude towards the Indian Press. There were, of course, reasons for this into which it will be necessary to inquire later. All the same, this indifference to what should have been one of their closest interests reacted on the delegates in a way they should have foreseen.

I had my own difficulties. By that time I should have been inured to the suggestion that I was a Government Agent, but I was not. The game of finding the motive is a favourite game in a country where there is much leisure and little intellectual activity. At the same time

it must not be forgotten that the elaborate system of espionage which the C.I.D. in India has considered necessary for the protection of what it considers Government interests has given rise, and not without justification, to an enormous range of suspicion. This has been increased when former employees of the secret service have openly recanted. Sometimes the suggestion would be conveyed to me second hand, and on other occasions delegates would ask me point blank if I were connected with the Government. I never knew whether to deny the insinuation with some emphasis or to dismiss it with a smile. Sometimes I would make some jocular reply which would gradually come back to me as evidence of admission of the truth of the allegation!

The unfamiliarity of some of the less sophisticated delegates with European ideas of etiquette also frequently caused me considerable embarrassment. When such blunders were committed in a private house I was able to pass them off and even sometimes mustered the courage to point them out. But I must confess to having been inwardly terribly disconcerted when such *faux pas* happened in public—as, for example, when a delegate persisted in blowing his nose in his table napkin during a formal dinner.

Of a delightful character is my recollection of being taken to tea at Rumpelmayer's by an elderly delegate. We walked across from St. James's Palace into the once very fashionable tea-rooms, still then showing some signs of their old splendour. My friend went to the counter to choose the cakes. He returned with about eight, and, to my surprise and amusement, began dividing them all into two and then gave me one half of each cake. "Some-

how," he said, "one never knows which one to select if one is offered a choice, so we shall each have the same as the other!"

In this connection I am reminded of a luncheon party which took place in Bombay some years later. The occasion was the departure of a prominent man in the Press world who was about to make his first journey to England. A colleague, anxious to speed his friend on his way, arranged a luncheon party at the Taj Mahal Hotel, where I happened to be staying.

The party was representative of the chief Indian newspapers in Bombay and I was also invited. Most of the guests wore Indian dress, some with turbans or other headgear, some with caste marks. Some of them were also quite indifferent to the necessary repairs which the rents in their apparel demanded.

Now the hotel had a regulation that "bare legs" were not permissible in the main part of the restaurant. This was a delicate way of indicating that Indian costume, if it included the *dhoti*, should not be worn. (In fairness I must add that there were occasions when Europeans in shorts were also reminded of the rule.) This is to indicate that I had quite naturally assumed that the luncheon would be in a separate room.

By the time that all the guests had assembled in the lounge we were the centre of interest of all the Europeans present, the more so as the host was nearly an hour late. I saw the *mâitre d'hôtel* hovering in the background and watched the effect of the gradual realization that *this* was the party for whom the most prominent table in the centre of the restaurant had been prepared! It was too late to make any other arrangement, and, after many

parleys behind the scenes, the announcement was made that lunch was ready.

As we trooped to our places every pair of eyes seemed to be fixed on us. Had we been the suite of a Maharajah hardly anyone would have stared (once he had satisfied himself that there was no fresh visitor from Paris in the entourage!). But we were quite different. This was obviously a party of working people—as, indeed, we all were—and *that* was very different.

Of all those present perhaps only two or three had ever been accustomed to sitting up to a table for meals. As they took their chairs, and left a space of a foot or more between them and the table, I could see that the lunch was going to be a torture for those who "knew better" no less than for those who did not. It was an age before the meal even started on its way, for none of my fellow guests was able to answer the Goan waiter's query *hors d'œuvres* or *potage?* How could they know what that meant? In desperation, most of them capitulated by assenting to everything that the waiters suggested. Accustomed, as they were, to having everything laid before them on one dish, they had no idea that this assent entailed a rapid succession of plates.

Above all the bewildering clatter, trying not to look embarrassed, I endeavoured to open up several avenues of conversation. I didn't succeed, for most of those present were much too tensely occupied trying to negotiate the cutlery and the many mysterious dishes placed before them. Knives and forks became interchangeable. In course of time, scraps of bread, table napkins, and numerous peas (which just would *not* stay on the knives) began to litter the floor.

Those around began to titter. You could not blame anyone. Looked at objectively, it *was* a very funny sight; the incongruous is ever so. I cannot pretend that I felt unconcerned. Yet the habits to which this party were accustomed were the customs (with variations, of course) of over 350,000,000 people. The European population in India, on the other hand, is only about ·04% of the total population. How simple it is to talk of social contacts, yet how many difficulties there are in actual practice.

While mentioning these incidents it must not be forgotten that English people have many habits which are utterly obnoxious to Indians, and that the Indian delegates had to endure the results of ignorance on the part of many English people. Yet in any attempt to bring the two races together, there must be an approximation in the etiquette which is observed, if one or the other is not to be frightened off. There was the instance of a certain Indian delegate who had acted as the Governor of a Province being asked at an official function whether he understood any English! Then, again, some people would shout at the delegates in a most irritating way in the belief that they would thereby understand English (which many of them spoke much better than English people) with greater ease. I am reminded of an amusing story of a well-known barrister of Allahabad who happens to speak English with very considerable grace and charm. When in England, people used to comment on his fluency and used to ask whether there were others in India who were similarly gifted. His modesty, perhaps it was, led him to reply something like: "Oh! my dear Madam, there are millions in India who speak much better than

I"—which was, of course, a gross exaggeration. Anyway, he repeated the answer so often on successive visits that it became automatic. One day in his own Province, he happened to be dining with the Governor. There was a large dinner party and the hostess remarked on the charming English of Mr. So-and-So. "Oh! my dear Madam," he replied, "there are millions and millions in India who speak much better than I!" Then he realized that he had spoken like a parrot.

On the social side, private individuals and public institutions vied with each other in their efforts to fête the visitors who reciprocated the hospitality with equal opulence. It was not every year that whole floors in hotels were commandeered by Maharajahs and the catering trade had a busy time. It was not always free from anxiety, for the lavishness of some of the hospitality sometimes made them wonder from where the money was coming. But with the closure of a school or hospital and the postponement of some plans for benefiting the people, States' finances were adjusted. When the Conference was over, one heard stories of jewellers and others who had not received payment for goods supplied and services rendered, but the reports did not interest me to the extent of trying to verify them.

The main work of the Conference fell to the Federal Structure Sub-Committee which was appointed after the discovery (which some suspected was not exactly spontaneous) that the Indian States would be prepared to support British India in her demand for a responsible government if the States were partners in an All-India Federation.

Other important Sub-Committees were those dealing

with the questions of Minorities, Defence, Burma, the Services, and the Franchise.

After the ceremonial opening of the Conference by his Majesty, King George V, in the House of Lords, the various Committees and the main body settled down to work in St. James's Palace. The proceedings were not open to the Press, who were accommodated in a hall below the Conference chamber. At the end of a session the Press Officers would give out an official report of the gist of the proceedings, and, more often than not, answer questions. This kind of copy was, of course, made available to all the journalists present—British, foreign, and Indian—and except as a skeleton on which to base one's work, was of little value, as it was imperative to supplement it.

In addition there were so many private meetings in the search for formulae which would enable the delegates, representing many and sometimes conflicting interests, to put up a "united front," that intensive "lobby" work became necessary.

Only those who had actually to do this work can ever fully appreciate what it meant. Accustomed as they were to rising at the early hours usual in India, the delegates would give one appointments at seven and eight o'clock in the morning. We were in the winter, and it was no light thing to have to leave one's home soon after six o'clock in the morning, and, very often, only be rewarded by what one would subsequently discover was what the delegate had *wished* he had said rather than what he had *actually* said. Of all the difficulties confronting the journalist, this was the greatest—the difficulty of getting a really objective report of what had in reality transpired at these

private meetings. Sometimes the reports were so divergent that it was impossible to derive any coherent impression, much less relay a cogent account. In course of time one came to know one's men, as it were, those whose imagination got the better of them and those who could be relied upon to give a relatively accurate and succinct report.

It was, of course, on the communal question that most of these meetings took place, since without the prior settlement of this problem it seemed impossible to proceed with the larger constitutional issue. Stated briefly, the communal question centred round the anxiety of the Mohammedans (who in India number over eighty million) to secure for themselves adequate representation in the future Government of India. The majority of them were in favour of the continuation of the practice, initiated by the Morley–Minto Reforms, of separate electorates; that is to say, the Mohammedans were to vote in separate electorates and their choice would be restricted to Mohammedan candidates. In addition, they wanted to secure by statute a one-third representation for their community in the Central Government and statutory majorities in those Provinces where they represented the majority population.

The Hindus were opposed to this system, as they contended that its effect was to produce extremists (communally speaking) and to cause communalism to permeate through all walks of life where there was an element of competition. Instead of preferment on a basis of merit, communal electorates, they said, put a premium on community. They were willing to agree to the statutory reservation, or the earmarking, of a definite number

of seats for each community, but, they stated, the candidates selected must be elected by all communities; only thus would they encourage politicians of moderate communal views. They further claimed that joint electorates would give the Mohammedans a voice in the selection of candidates in those Provinces where they were in such a small minority that they could never hope to become the majority or form the Government.

The Mohammedans were not convinced. They stated that while the arguments were attractive in theory, in practice they might redound to the disadvantage of their community, since it would be possible for the Hindus by their overwhelming numbers to secure the election of "men of straw"; men who were nominally Moslem but who might not really represent the community. As for the voice in the selection of candidates in the minority Provinces, they felt that their influence, in practice, would not amount to anything, since they might be "played off" against the other minorities, and that it would be much more satisfactory to have a direct representative of their own.

In spite of the divergence of viewpoint, many attempts were made to bridge the gulf on the basis of joint electorates. The Hindus were disunited and woolly—taking this attitude one day and another the next. Fundamentally, the Hindu leaders were unwilling to commit themselves (and answer for their actions in India) before they knew what kind of constitution was going to emerge from the Conference. Instead of admitting this, they participated in the elaborate farce of the hunt for the formula, asserting all the while that the Mohammedan demands were stiffening and thus making their positions intolerable.

Sagacity demanded that they should have asked to be excused from further negotiations. By keeping up the pretence, they not only exacerbated Mohammedan feelings, but caused fissures in their own camp which became painfully obvious as time wore on.

The Mohammedans, on the other hand, acted as one man. I now know that they had many differences of opinion internally as to policy, but not a single word of this ever escaped from their delegation. As individuals they may not have had the same intellectual calibre as the Hindus (although I think that this is an over-worked and not very true contention; the difference being not so much in the *capacity* as in the *opportunity*), but they had the ability for team work which goes further than any amount of isolated brilliance.

Sometimes the discussions reached an almost unbelievably low level of recrimination. I remember an occasion when I was asked to see a certain Hindu leader. He had developed fever as a result of an acrimonious dispute the previous night and was lying with ice-bags on his forehead. As he described what had taken place and said that he could not possibly accept the formula propounded by a certain Mohammedan leader because he had only matriculated whereas he—the speaker—was a graduate, one began to feel that the dispute bore no relation whatsoever to the wider issue of the welfare of India as a whole.

Reality or no reality about the discussions, the Press had to follow them from minute to minute. For hours we would wait in the fog, walking up and down St. James's Street, if the talks happened to be informal. When they were part of the proceedings we would wait

in the Palace, often till past midnight, some of us falling to sleep from sheer exhaustion but never able to leave the field of work. I remember one night when the Press Officers tried to assist us by suggesting to the Indian leaders that they should arrange to give us an announcement at the conclusion of a certain important informal meeting. The venue was the Ritz Hotel, and, according to the arrangement, members of the Press began to assemble there at eleven o'clock—in the night, of course. There was nobody to receive us, and, as midnight drew on, we availed ourselves of the hotel's wine and spirit cellar if, for no other reason, than that otherwise we would have fallen asleep. One o'clock came and we were still without news. At about one-thirty the delegates began to emerge from their meeting. They looked at us with some surprise and calmly said that there was *no statement* to make. Having by then acquired a certain sense of resignation, we went home to be on duty again in a few hours, but with the conviction that the communal problem was never going to be settled that way. One felt that whatever some of the Hindu leaders might say, there was no reality about the problem and that the only way to put an end to it was for the majority community to concede the claims of the minority with as much speed and grace as possible.

The Federal Structure Sub-Committee took on a fresh complexion when the ex-Viceroy, Lord Reading, indicated that he would support the proposal for a responsible Central Government based on a Federation of the British Indian Provinces and the Indian States, subject to certain important reservations or safeguards. From that day Federation was a foregone conclusion,

and subsequent discussions were devoted to the elucidation of the views of the various States—how far they were prepared to surrender their sovereignty in the cause of a unified Government.

Most of the British Indian delegates had already committed themselves to Federation without waiting to see the extent to which the States were willing to come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. Many of them professed disappointment when, in course of time, it became apparent that the States were prepared to surrender very little and that while they would be able to influence the direction of affairs in British India, the representatives of the latter would have nothing more than an oblique influence on the States' affairs.

The fact was that the British Indian delegates were so anxious to take back to India a formula which would include the words "responsible government" that they hardly thought of the consequences of their rash action. Once they had accepted the formula, they could not withdraw. The States, on the other hand, made it clear that there were numerous aspects of the proposed constitution which required elucidation and further discussion, and it became obvious that these matters could not be settled there and then, and that a further conference was inevitable.

Moreover, the Indian National Congress was still pursuing its policy of complete hostility to the Government and to the Round Table delegates. The plan of campaign now before the latter was to try and get Mr. Gandhi to look at the proposals which had been made by the Conference—All-India Federation, Responsible Central Government, Safeguards.

CHAPTER FIVE

SECOND ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

1931

EVERYONE interested in India knows the history of the "Gandhi–Irwin Pact" which was the prelude to Mr. Gandhi's attendance at the second Round Table Conference in September 1931. The more die-hard Tories detested it, but the shrewder Conservatives, led by Mr. Baldwin, saw the possibilities inherent in a visit to England by Mr. Gandhi.

The Mahatma sailed on August 29th on the s.s. *Rajputana* with the good wishes of nearly all his countrymen, for, if they did not agree with him politically, they did admire his courage and even audacity. He was greeted by delegations of Indians at all the ports of call. At Port Said a delegation presented him with an address and some costly gifts. The former was interesting for it recalled that "The ancient land of the Nile has had cultural relations with our Mother Country. Since the very dawn of history, in cities like Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said, Indian houses traded in wares exported from the Mother Country, long before railways or steamships were invented. The ancient University of Alazar at Cairo attracted the best students of Islam from India. It is here that the East truly meets the West, and on your way from East to West we tender you our respectful greetings. Non-violence is the need of the world. The whole of the Egyptian nation has the deepest sympathies

for the cause you represent and the greatest admiration for your personality."

Mr. Gandhi's arrival in England, after an interval of seventeen years, had already been heralded by the most fantastic stories regarding his habits, the goat he was stated to be bringing, and other alleged personal idiosyncracies—most of which were the products of imaginations run riot as the result of no real news. I went to Folkestone to meet him, but it had been raining from early morning and the car skidded just as we were entering the town; the result was that I did not see the Indian leader until we had returned to London. Owing to the great crush of sightseers at Folkestone, police precautions were necessary, and only those with special permits, which had been previously issued by the authorities, were allowed in the vicinity of the harbour.

The Mahatma's admirers and well-wishers had arranged a public meeting of welcome at the Friends' Meeting House in Euston Road—a meeting place which later became popular with the Conservative Party. Notwithstanding the steady downpour of rain, thousands of people thronged the hall, the entrances, and the approaches, anxious to get a glimpse of the man about whom they had heard so much.

Laurence Housman, the poet, presided. I now know the Mahatma much better and am better able to judge the quality of his hold on others, but my first impression of him was one of decided disappointment. He and his party—Miraben (Miss Madeline Slade), his son, Devadas, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (the leader of the Hindus), and two secretaries were garlanded and then took the platform. Anyone who has

attended a public meeting in India knows how desultory this latter act can be. It has the same effect on an audience as a hitch in the drawing up of the curtain in a theatre. After some shuffling about, the meeting got going, Mr. Housman describing his chairmanship of the meeting as "the greatest honour in his life."

Everyone wanted to hear the Mahatma, and there was an unbroken silence when he began his reply to the speech of welcome. "Forgive me," he said, "for my inability to speak to you standing," and he then proceeded to address the meeting seated. I can remember Sarah Bernhardt holding an audience while she played her part in a bath chair, but it is difficult to imagine a political leader inspiring a meeting without being able to rise to address it. As I watched the faces of the audience, I was sure that 90 per cent of the non-Indians were wondering to themselves what was the quality which had endeared this quiet-voiced, mystic-cum-politician to millions and millions of people. I subsequently heard him address Indian audiences—notably the Indian National Congress of 1934 in Bombay—and his manner was the same; persuasive, pleading, arguing, never declamatory. He will talk to a crowd of hundreds of thousands as if he were addressing a drawing-room meeting; he will smile in that intimate way called for in private conversation; he will leave an impression of the sweetest of sweet reasonableness. At worst, people will think that some of his ideas are the ideas of a crank, but they would never guess, from his mild manner, that he has the capacity to fire thousands of his countrymen to deeds of considerable self-sacrifice.

"You have given me the most flattering and the most

embarrassing of welcomes," he declared. "Let me convey to you what the Indian National Congress, whose representative I am, stands for. The Congress wants unadulterated freedom for the dumb and semi-starved millions of India." The audience applauded this statement, but they could not have felt it to be very explicit.

Yes, I was disappointed at the first meeting. The main consolation was a cable from India the following day (Sunday) indicating that ours was the only report of the meeting which had reached India in time for publication in the morning papers. We organized this by keeping someone on the telephone to the Cable Company throughout the meeting and supplying him, page by page, with the report as the speeches were delivered.

The next day Mr. Gandhi broadcast to the people of America for half an hour from his apartments at Kingsley Hall in the East End of London. Although the suggestion was made, the speech was not relayed through the British Stations. Much amusement was caused in the Mahatma's circle by the report which was received from America to the effect that the address was heard very clearly and that his American listeners were surprised at the excellence of his English!

Mr. Gandhi alone represented the Indian National Congress at the second Round Table Conference. The Government had offered to provide a number of places for his nominees, but so impossible had been the task of attempting to resolve the many claims to accompany him, that the Mahatma decided to be the sole delegate. At the time one was inclined to doubt the wisdom of this decision, but closer contact with the situation leads one to see virtue in the line that was taken. What is less

understandable is why the Congress refused to attend the first Round Table Conference when the "slate was clean"—to use Lord Sankey's phrase—and yet agreed to attend the second Conference when the slate had been written on. It may be that they had over-estimated the strength of the mass movement which had been initiated in March 1930—both the depth of its appeal in India and its effect on official opinion in England. They had spent much effort in the civil disobedience movement and so far from a guarantee that they would discuss a "Dominion Status Constitution," which was what they insisted on at the time the first conference was proposed, they now committed themselves to Federation, central responsibility, and safeguards. This was, however, neither the first time nor the last time that Mr. Gandhi had acted in such a way.

In addition to Mr. Gandhi, the Conference personnel was enlarged by several other rich personalities. There was Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, poetess, politician, walking encyclopaedia on everyone's affairs, combining the shrewdness of her years with the vivacity of a young girl. Almost more than any other Indian politician, Mrs. Naidu has the qualities which appeal to English people. While she can laugh at others (not without a pinch of malice), she can also convulse an audience with jokes against herself. An Indian who can hear jokes against himself, let alone tell jokes against himself, is an exception. There is not the suspicion of any inferiority complex about Sarojini Naidu, and she is impatient and outspoken when she meets this trait in her countrymen. Who will forget her indiscretion at the end of one of the sessions of the Conference when she turned round for Mr. Gandhi and asked:

"Where is our little Mickey Mouse?" Many will remember another occasion when a certain delegate had bored his colleagues almost beyond endurance by a repeat performance of his views in favour of second chambers. "Why only second chambers?" asked Mrs. Naidu. She was, she said, in favour of third, or lethal, chambers for certain politicians!)

Outstanding amongst his colleagues was Dr. S. K. Datta, former National Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association in India and the representative of the Christian community in the Legislative Assembly. A giant in physique and intellect, Dr. Datta is at present the Principal of the Forman Christian College in Lahore, one of the Punjab University Colleges. In a friendship lasting over several years, I have never known Dr. Datta to say anything trite. Everything that he says or writes breathes originality. Mr. N. M. Joshi, the Brahmin Labour leader, had the outlook more approaching his than any other delegate, but it was not long before Dr. Datta found himself more in the Gandhi group than elsewhere. This was partly because Mr. Gandhi had staked his claim to represent the whole of India and not any particular sectarian interest. With such an approach to the problem, that is as a human problem involving not one section but the general masses, Dr. Datta was in sympathy.

Then there was Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, the Bombay multi-millionaire, a former Chairman of the company for which I was working. Several people have told me that Sir Purshotamdas, by reason of his forceful character, determined jaw, and authoritative manner of speaking, reminds them of Signor Mussolini. The dominant impression he gives is of a man who knows

his own mind. Yet Government officials have been known to accuse him of "sitting on the fence." Such an accusation might have been levelled against almost any intelligent Indian of that time. What were they to do? On the one side they saw the vast and hitherto impregnable machine of Government, on the other the nationalist forces storming the walls of Jericho. Neither side had, in their view, the monopoly of right. If the walls fell, what was to be substituted? The Congress itself is not at all united on this matter—but this is a subject for a later chapter. Thus, until now, unless one were an extreme partisan it was not an easy matter to come off the fence. The new Constitution will change all this, for the instinct for self-preservation alone will encourage the early alignment of forces on an economic basis.

Another commercial delegate was Mr. G. D. Birla, of the great Marwari firm of Birla Brothers. Follower of Mr. Gandhi, he is reputed to have helped the Nationalist movement to the extent of vast amounts which, however, it is stated, found their way back to their source by reason of the popularity he and his firms consequently enjoyed. Mr. Birla has considerable influence over the Marwaris (the banking class), and much more will be heard of him and his influence under the new Constitution.

Before the formal opening of the proceedings of the Conference, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar called on Mr. Gandhi and discussed their impressions of the results of the change of government and Sir Samuel Hoare's appointment as Secretary of State. This meeting was followed by another at the Dorchester Hotel, which was attended by the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Sankey.

Nothing substantial transpired, the Prime Minister confining his remarks to recollections of his visit to India.

Mr. Gandhi's formal introduction to the other members of the Conference took place at a meeting of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee held on September 14th. It was the Mahatma's day of silence, and, while he followed the proceedings intently, he did not speak a word. Lord Sankey, the Chairman of the Committee, expressed the hope that the Congress leader would speak the following day.

The Lord Chancellor's hopes materialized on the Tuesday when the Mahatma addressed the Committee for forty-five minutes. He explained the case of the Indian National Congress and declared: "For the present, in the spirit of co-operation, I will not obstruct, but if my participation will not be helpful then I will withdraw. . . . If we are intent upon complete independence it is not in any spirit of arrogance nor out of any desire to parade before the universe that we have severed the British connection. On the contrary, the Congress contemplates partnership—but between two absolutely equal peoples. . . . Time was when I prided myself as a British subject, but today I would rather be called a rebel than a subject. But still I aspire to the citizenship of the Empire, to a partnership (if God wills) indissoluble, but not imposed by one nation on another. Hence our claim to dissolve the partnership at will. . . . I would love to go away with the conviction that there is to be an honourable and equal partnership between Britain and India. It will be my fervent prayer during all the days I live in your midst that that consummation may be reached."

British politicians and the Press were gratified at the moderation with which the Congress leader expressed himself, and in circles anxious for a conciliatory outcome of the Conference the view was expressed that the gap between the intentions of the Government and the demands of the Congress was not unbridgeable. The *Manchester Guardian* summed up the opinion of the liberally minded very effectively when it stated that few people in England would deny the desirability of the kind of partnership envisaged by Gandhi, and they would probably be inclined even to accept stock-taking. As the paper said, "The present difficulty lies rather in deciding who is the partner—not Gandhi, not even Congress, but the mass of conflicting, and, in many cases, antagonistic interests. To arrange equitable partnership with these is no easy matter."

Describing the background of the Conference for my papers I had already written: "The sectionalism which developed amongst the delegates last year shows little signs of diminishing, and it now remains to be seen how far Mahatma Gandhi's presence will serve to rally the more progressive elements." Before leaving India Mr. Gandhi had said that he would not attend the Conference unless the Hindus and Moslems amicably settled their conflicting claims. The Working Committee of the Congress, however, held other views and the problem was still unsolved when the Conference opened. Interviewed on the day of his arrival, the Mahatma had said that the Hindu-Moslem difficulty was "baffling," but he would never despair at arriving at a workable solution. He was always an optimist. He was prepared to go the whole hog with the Moslems, without the slightest reser-

vation. He would sign a blank paper and let Moslems write in what they considered truth, and he would then fight for it. Any demand by the Moslems, however, must be made on behalf of the whole of them—and that included the Nationalist Mussulman Party.

To achieve the desired solution, meeting after meeting was arranged, peregrinations from this hotel to that hotel undertaken, reams of paper containing discarded formulae wasted, until in the end nerves became so frayed that it became apparent that unless the attempt were abandoned, the Conference would only end in acrimony and exacerbated rivalries.

This question is raised at this stage in order to explain how Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, who had stood out at the first Conference for his soundness, hard work, and geniality, began to take a retiring position. Although a Kashmiri Brahmin by birth, he has no sentimental attachments to religion; its problems are seen purely from the standpoint of expediency. He is neither a bigoted Hindu nor a bigoted Agnostic. I have been a guest in his home in Allahabad during the death of a relative, and Sir Tej has carried out all the ceremonies and rites that that relative would have considered meet. But his mind is so secular, reasonable, and practical that he is extremely impatient of hair-splitting and dialectics. Speaking Urdu and Persian perhaps better than Hindi and having understood the Moslem culture from his upbringing in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, he has not a trace of the blind prejudice so often seen in Brahmins. His great interest in the work and progress of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk is an index to his outlook. Even at the first Conference Sir Tej did not sit on the

Minorities Sub-Committee, although he did participate in some of the early informal negotiations. By the second Conference he dropped out completely from all the parleys and wrangles.

Mr. Gandhi spared no effort to obtain a reconciliation of the conflicting claims for seats, both in the difficult provinces of Bengal and the Punjab and in the Central Legislature and Government. In these two provinces the Moslems are in a numerical majority, though the economic power is in the hands of the Hindus in Bengal. The situation is complicated by the existence of third parties in both provinces—by the Europeans in Bengal and the Sikhs in the Punjab. According to the Mahommedans, they were entitled to a statutory majority in the Legislatures of these provinces by reason of their numerical strength and the fact that they would be a permanent minority in the other then existing provinces—with not the slightest chance at any time of having a deciding voice in the government of those provinces. The dispute raged round the question of one seat here and one seat there; the Moslems, as convinced of the validity of their claim as the Hindus were convinced of the objectionableness of the position of permanent inferiority in Bengal and the Punjab into which they were being forced.

The firmer the stand taken by the Moslems, the more convinced became the Hindus that the former were receiving the support of the British Government and the Government of India—on the *divide et impera* principle. The more energy that was expended in denouncing the Moslem claim, the less energy was there available for finding a way out of the impasse. While no one could deny that there was a certain ground for the Hindu

belief regarding the attitude of the Government, it was largely a rationalization of their own intransigent attitude. Mr. Gandhi lost the biggest opportunity of his life when he did not take his courage into his hands and, in open defiance of the Hindu leaders, take responsibility for a settlement with the Moslems.

So plagued were the Hindus with the obsession that if they made any concession at that stage the Moslems would only ask for more some time later, that they seemed to ignore the consequences of an imposed settlement. After all, it is the minority which asks and the majority which has it in its power to give; the Government were bound, therefore, in any solution devised by them to take into account the wishes of the minority. The Hindus seemed well aware of the line the Government would take, yet still shrunk from anticipating it and thus doing something to bridge the gulf about which they were always talking. What has been the result? Today the Moslems have received substantially, through the settlement devised by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, what they wanted. The Hindus have not the credit for having agreed to this settlement—although they asked the then Prime Minister to contrive it. And yet the very worst that could have happened would have been a breakaway by the orthodox Hindus from the Congress fold. But that is what has actually happened today as a result of the refusal of Congress to formally "reject" the Communal Award and yet the Congress goes on. Fortunately, there are signs that the more far-sighted Congress leaders are unwilling to do anything which will revive old purely religious rivalries, and as the younger men come to the top much of this bigotry is bound to disappear.

It was at a private meeting between the delegates in St. James's Palace, which lasted till nearly one o'clock in the morning, that the Indian members of the Conference admitted their failure to reach a settlement. Negotiations had arrived at a point where the Moslems agreed to a suggestion to refer the matters in dispute to one, two, or three of the Indian delegates who would be empowered to reach a solution on behalf of all the communities. Although Mahatma Gandhi confirmed that this was the original proposal which was submitted to the Moslems, the Hindu and Sikh representatives began to suggest that the arbitrators should be selected from outside Conference circles. It appeared that the latter were not prepared to leave their case in the hands of either Mr. Gandhi, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, or Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, to name three possible Hindus who might have been chosen for such an arbitration panel. Had there been a sole arbitrator, there is no doubt that the choice would have fallen on Mr. Gandhi, and there is also no doubt that by their inflexible attitude the Hindu representatives not only wrecked any chance of a peaceful solution of the problem, but they also prejudiced themselves as against the Moslems who were prepared to abide by the decision of Mr. Gandhi.

It had been expected that the meeting would succeed in arriving at a solution of the problem and that it would continue until the early hours of the morning. When, however, it could be seen that the Hindu representatives were going to adhere to their *non possumus* attitude, the meeting broke up. How well I remember that cold October night and the expressions on the faces of the delegates as they left the Palace, nearly all

revealing the same opinion that they had witnessed a tragedy.

The Minorities Committee had been repeatedly postponed to enable the informal negotiations to make headway. The following day, however, it met under the presidentship of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. Mr. Gandhi reported the failure of the informal conference of delegates and moved the adjournment of the Committee *sine die*. After some of the delegates had opposed the proposal, the Prime Minister said: "Believe me, the regret that has been so sincerely expressed by the representatives who have spoken today is shared in the most whole-hearted way by the representatives of the British Government here."

On October 5th, two days prior to the critical meeting on the communal issue, the National Government (which had come into existence in August) announced its decision to hold a General Election three weeks later. In the course of his speech the Prime Minister referred to the imminence of the election which, he explained, would necessitate his occasional absence from London. In the circumstances he suggested the adjournment of the Committee and the delegates agreed.

From this point the Conference "sagged" and the delegates already began to book their return passages. I had previously asked Mr. Gandhi, when with him in Lancashire, what he would do in the event of a General Election, and his reply indicated that he was thinking of the possibility of spending the time on the Continent. He did not do so and thereby greatly detracted from his publicity value. From being a front-page story, he was practically displaced from the news columns by the General Election.

During the election campaign the formal business of the Conference had naturally to be suspended as the British delegates who were members of the House of Commons had to hurry to their constituencies to defend their seats. In the meantime, the Indian delegates met informally on several occasions in an attempt to settle this and that problem. In particular, I ought to mention the problem of the Depressed Classes, who were ably represented at each Conference by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, a barrister, himself a member of the Depressed Classes, who had received his academic training at London and Columbia Universities. This problem later became the subject of one of Mr. Gandhi's historic fasts and provided an example of how the Mahatma, adamant at one moment, can concede whole points at another for no very clear reason.

If other communities received separate representation, said Dr. Ambedkar, he would not consent to the Depressed Classes, who had for ages been treated as outcastes by the caste Hindus, being included within the fold of that community merely for the sake of swelling their numbers as against any other community. He would insist on representation on a numerical basis for his people unless the caste Hindus were prepared to guarantee that a certain percentage of the representation given to them would be set aside for representatives of the Depressed Classes.

The problem was the subject of much acrimonious discussion between the Mahatma, his followers, and Dr. Ambedkar. It certainly seemed as if the caste Hindus had secured the ear of Mr. Gandhi. It was not so surprising that the latter refused to accept the proposition

of separate representation, but he did show himself unexpectedly stubborn over the question of Depressed Classes representation even on a basis of reserved seats. His argument was that the Hindu community would thereby be "vivisected" and what possibilities there were of bringing the outcaste and the caste men closer together would be destroyed. A breach developed between Mr. Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar which has never since been healed. On his side, Mr. Gandhi has now given practically all his time to the work of uplifting the Depressed Classes —renamed the "Harijans," "sons of God." He has inspired a country-wide campaign for the removal of untouchability, a campaign which is meeting with the fate of all reformist movements. While a relatively small band of workers persist in their efforts to break down the ancient barriers, they are met with the determined resistance of the orthodox who cling with great tenacity to their own version of privilege.

Dr. Ambedkar, for his part, is now the Principal of the Bombay Law College. He has recently formed the nucleus of a Labour Party into which he hopes to attract as many of his community as possible in preparation for the forthcoming elections for the provincial Governments.

The results of the General Election of 1931 were announced towards the end of October. While the voting strength of the Labour Party only fell from 8,362,594 to 6,648,023, its numerical strength in the House of Commons was reduced from 287 members to 52. Those of the Indian delegation who had placed certain hopes in the Labour Party were very despondent over the results of the election. By that time, though, a large number of them had realized that nothing substantial

was likely to emerge from the Conference without the full support and approval of the Conservative Party, which was already the dominant partner in the National Government. Further, they were beginning to appreciate the incongruity of their sponsorship, as it were, by a Party whose political aims embodied the destruction of the very system of which many of them were successful products. Resolutions in favour of "self-determination" for India on Labour Conference agendas were all very well so long as they were not read in conjunction with other resolutions defining the Party's economic programme.

CHAPTER SIX

WITH MR. GANDHI

IT is convenient at this stage to break away from the general picture and describe, to some extent, my work with Mr. Gandhi. I think I reported practically all his public speeches; partly as a result of my professional activities and partly because I had agreed to supply him with a *verbatim* report of each address which, it was intended, should later be published in book form.

The conditions under which Mr. Gandhi himself, and anyone attached to him, had to work were chaotic in the extreme. While he slept in the Kingsley Hall Settlement in the East End, his actual headquarters in London were in Knightsbridge in a charming house the back of which overlooked Hyde Park. The ground floor was given over to secretaries, visitors, journalists, detectives, and, in short, to anyone who was not admitted to Mr. Gandhi's own apartments which were on the first floor. Here, only the essential furniture had been retained and pillows and cushions were scattered about the floor in Indian fashion. When he was "at home," the Mahatma would be found reclining or squatting on a cushion, surrounded by piles of papers and letters, admirers and artists. There were sculptors, painters, etchers, and cartoonists all busy on their subject while he, unconcernedly, took his meals or attended to his correspondence. Throughout the house there pervaded a nauseating odour of Indian cooking and oriental hair oil. Actually, the food which was intended for Mr. Gandhi's entourage was brought by

a Marwari admirer of the Mahatma's, but it had to be reheated after its journey from north London.

Patient, efficient, and retiring Miss Slade, better known by her Hindu name of Miraben, took charge of the scene. It is extremely difficult for English people to understand how this once popular member of the official set in Poona so changed the course of her life that she forsook all her own ties to become Mr. Gandhi's follower. Miraben is so practical, so unsentimental, so well versed in the ways of the world, that people cannot follow her action. After knowing her for some years, I believe that it is because of these qualities and not in spite of them that Miraben has taken the line she has. In Mr. Gandhi she sees the practical manifestation of all that Christians profess, not a sentimental love for the poor and lowly, but a genuine and determined attempt to pool what energy and resources one has in ameliorating the conditions in which the people one claims to care for have to live. Miraben has not the temperament that feels it has performed good works by presiding over a monthly Mothers' Meeting or an Infant Welfare Committee. She is robust, virile, dominant. It is inevitable that the life of practical toil—in which no menial work is too degrading —which she has now led for some years should have had its effect; an utter indifference to appearance, coarsened hands and skin, an ability to tolerate the greatest discomfort. But if she has adopted the life of the peasant, Miraben has the commanding presence and manner of one accustomed to authority. Her father was an admiral in the British Navy, but I am inclined to think that this tone of authority arises more from her satisfaction with her present mode of life than from any inherited charac-

teristic. She has her own difficulties amongst Mr. Gandhi's followers, but she surmounts them all with dignity.

Often when I was travelling with Miraben in London tubes or omnibuses I was struck by the courtesy of the average Londoner. It must have been a surprise at, say, Knightsbridge Station to see Miraben and one or two of her Indian colleagues, enter the train. Sometimes an eye would peep surreptitiously from behind a newspaper and then return to a perusal of the day's racing results or market prices. There was nothing in the nature of staring, which would not have been surprising in the circumstances.

Little in the Gandhi headquarters in Knightsbridge was ever done to schedule. The confusion which reigned over everything became hectic where time was concerned —with one exception, the hour of prayer. I never knew this to be a minute late, which showed that it was not any absence of capacity to keep to time but an indifference to it which lay at the bottom of all the unpunctuality. Mr. Gandhi himself is very punctual, but he undertook so much, his friends loaded him with so many engagements, that he was occupied for almost the whole twenty-four hours. Trains were caught with hardly seconds to spare. I don't remember a train ever having been lost, but this was due to the efficiency of the Scotland Yard detectives who, when they saw the lack of precision in these matters, themselves undertook to buy all tickets in advance, order the cars, and, in fact, to see that all visitors were out of the way when the time for departure approached. Nearly always something was left behind, but this was hardly a serious matter in a party whose material wants were so few.

My most memorable recollection was the week-end in Lancashire. We left Euston on Friday evening, September 25th, the strangest group of people imaginable. In the first compartment was the Mahatma himself with Miraben; in the next were his son, Devadas, and his secretary, Mahadev Desai, accompanied by Mr. C. F. Andrews and a gentleman from Lancashire who had supervised the arrangements for the tour. Then came the detectives, adjoining the carriage in which were travelling a number of American journalists and myself. Further along, there were two or three other compartments containing the British newspapermen.

Prayer time came soon after the train had steamed out of the station, and, as the Americans and myself settled down to cards and drinks, we heard the strains of the hymn from the *Bhagavad Gita* which was always sung at the end of the devotions. I went along a little while later to have a few words with Mr. Andrews, who had wanted me to put up with the Congress group, and found the Mahatma sound asleep, utterly exhausted.

We had not gone very far, though, before his sleep was disturbed, for crowds had besieged all the stations en route. The scenes at Stockport and Manchester were extraordinary. People clambered on the train, threw their hats into the air, and shouted: "Good old Gandhi!" as though they were welcoming their own hero. One did not need to undervalue Mr. Gandhi's power and popularity in his own country to be surprised at the vociferous welcome these English people were giving him. So few are the opportunities for emotional outlets, that it is said that English people will cheer anything and anybody. One wondered whether there was not the element of

that truth in the tumultuous welcome. After all, in doing what he conceived to be his duty to his own country—and no one will deny his sincerity—Mr. Gandhi had initiated the greatest non-co-operation and boycott movement of all time. His propaganda had had the effect of taking the bread from the mouths of the very people who were now shouting their heads off!

As we approached midnight, the detectives whose hands had never been far from their loaded pistols, told us that we had almost approached Springvale, a village near Darwen, where the Congress party had arranged to stay for the night.

The Sheriff, certain high police officials, a number of people connected with the cotton industry, and some members of the Society of Friends were waiting at the station. The night was still and heavy and the gaunt greyness of the Lancastrian buildings beckoned like some sinister witches. We had to walk some distance from the platform to the waiting cars. Beside them, but shepherded by mounted police, was what appeared to be the entire population of the town. I had not seen women with shawls round their heads and clogs on their feet since my early days in Scotland. Here they patiently stood—long after midnight—to rise at four or five in the morning, at least those who were fortunate enough to have work. But these were in a minority. We had gone to this town because it was said to have been hit the hardest of all by the Indian boycott—"grim skeletons stalking over the graveyard of the Lancashire cotton industry"—as an American colleague cabled to the States. But their faces showed nothing but welcome and friendliness. It was difficult to judge whether they understood the situation

at all. Yet, I reminded myself, this is part of the democracy which is ruling India.

Fearing the possibility of hostile demonstrations, the police had given orders some days previously that anything that could possibly be used as a missile should be collected from the streets. The result was that the place was as tidy as a model village; not a stone, not a piece of broken glass, not a loose brick to be seen anywhere. Fortunately, the precaution was entirely unnecessary. Throughout the tour the crowds behaved with the greatest good humour, and even the local Conservative Associations, in all the circumstances, with admirable restraint. At this point reference should also be made to Mr. Gandhi's own courage in going into the heart of Lancashire; but then I have never heard of him flinching from the possibility of physical harm and discomfort.

It was arranged that he should spend the night in the house of one of the operatives. Anyone who knows the conditions under which the mill workers in India live knows that the comparison, for all the hardship Lancashire was and is enduring, is as between a human and a sub-human state of affairs. At any rate, Mr. Gandhi was surprised at the neatness and tolerable comfort of the houses he visited. The Unemployment Benefit and other forms of relief were explained to him and he asked how long it would be before some such measures were introduced in India. This reminded me of an incident, which vividly illustrated the difference in the outlook on life and its values, which had occurred the previous year. I was explaining how Unemployment and Health Insurance payments were made by the fixture of stamps to the employee's card to one of the kindliest and most

ympathetic of the Indian delegates. "Thank God," he aid, "we have nothing like that in India. I hope I am lead before that comes!"

Some of Mr. Gandhi's friends had hoped that some kind of constitutional *quid pro quo* might be achieved if he Mahatma could see his way to recommend certain economic concessions. The latter had himself made some observations on the subject of his attitude towards Lancashire which had given rise to certain hopes. It was not long, however, before it became clear that the two questions could not be related in this manner. Intrinsically, of course, they are related. The entire British connection in India can only be maintained if, firstly, India herself pays for the cost of the administration and, secondly, continues to be the best market for British manufactures and thus makes the administration necessary. The Indian viewpoint will never be understood unless it is first realized how acutely India feels the fact that she is paying the piper with no effective voice in the calling of the tune. It was to compel the paying of some attention to the Indian view on the matter that Mr. Gandhi initiated his civil disobedience movements and the boycott movements. He has by no means failed. The Lancashire mission, though, became in the end more of an educative or sightseeing visit, although Mr. Gandhi took the opportunity of emphasizing that he was in favour of prohibiting the importation of all foreign cloth into India, except British, provided the Congress demand for full Indian freedom was conceded.

At a meeting at the Darwen Town Hall Mr. Gandhi received a deputation of employers and workers. The latter explained that they were in dire distress and

impressed upon him the desirability of attending a conference of Lancashire workers. The Mahatma listened to their case with sympathy and in reply said that the poor in England and India were equally dear to him and he prayed that his present visit might be directed by God to prove of mutual benefit.

Later Mr. Gandhi stated that he was overwhelmed with the hospitality which was being accorded him, but that he was greatly depressed by the poverty he had seen and he was pained that he was partly responsible for the unemployment. He added, however, that his feelings were relieved because it was unintentional and the steps he had taken were for the relief of the largest army of unemployed in the world, namely the starving millions of India. Compared with the poverty in India, the poverty in Lancashire, he said, was insignificant.

On another occasion at West Bradford Mr. Gandhi said, "My two days' contact with employers and employed has shown me that the people of Lancashire have borne their distress very bravely, and it has given me the keenest satisfaction that they have not shown any bitterness towards India. I regard this as a happy sign."

Some of Mr. Gandhi's observations on the Lancashire industrial conditions were interesting. We had motored hundreds of miles throughout the county visiting establishments where the various cotton processes were carried on. He was struck by the decentralization of the industry and much of the obsolescent equipment. "Ahmedabad," he said, "would not use such machinery." He was also interested by the extent to which the workers' representatives were versed in the facts and figures of the industry. Trade Unionism in England has certainly had

the effect of producing a considerable body of officials as conversant with the position of a particular trade as the executives themselves. Although Trade Unions exist in India, they are mostly top-heavy institutions covering only a minute proportion of the workers, and are controlled generally by a handful of non-working-class well-wishers. The second stage is developing, with the spread of education, but it will be a slow process.

The two days' work in Lancashire had been extremely strenuous, less for the journalists filing cables to America, however, than for the Indian Press. We had made our headquarters in Blackburn, most depressing of towns with its half-dead look due to the many closed mills. The United States is served by more than one cable company, and, in their anxiety to provide the maximum service, they had all sent representatives to co-operate with the American pressmen. Returning to their typewriters after, perhaps, a fifty miles motor chase, they had merely to hand over their copy to the cable company officials, who took the responsibility of seeing that it was transmitted to London. The Indian Press had no such good fortune. After the same strenuous chase we had the disadvantage of having to work against the clock (Indian time being some five and a half hours in advance of Greenwich time). In addition, we had somehow to transmit the copy to Manchester or London. Experience taught me that it was just as easy—or as difficult—to shout over the trunk line to London as to Manchester, where my London accent was not followed, and one thus eliminated some of the possible margin for error. But the hotel had only one telephone and there were several sets of covetous eyes on it. The alternative was a visit to the General

Post Office some yards away. The length of time it took to get the connection established depended on the time of day, but I know of no more exhausting experience, and most journalists will agree, than having to make oneself understood over hundreds of miles—"B—for brother; O—for orange; M—for mother; B—for brother; A—for apple; Y—for yellow," and so on—every word in analogy.

We arrived in Manchester from Clitheroe at about 11.30 on Sunday night after a journey in the pouring rain. How bleak and grim looked the Lancastrian capital! Beyond the station-master and some other railway officials there were few to see the party off as we left on the midnight train to London—Mr. Gandhi in his uncomfortable third class compartment (which, of course, was the acme of comfort in comparison with an Indian third class carriage) and the rest of us in more comfortable accommodation.

It is not easy to say what exactly was the value of such a visit, but then one might also make the remark in reference to many other of Mr. Gandhi's activities in England. Pursuing my work of taking down his speeches *verbatim*, I think I went to every society and organization professing an "ism" or an "ist"—Fruitarians, Vegetarians, Anti-Vivisectionists, Socialists, Theosophists, Religionists of various denominations, meetings of Indians, meetings of Members of Parliament, meetings of cranks, meetings of cynics.

The speeches were generally very much the same; how, from beginning life with an English education, Mr. Gandhi went to South Africa, came up against the very big reality of racial rivalry and discrimination, set his

heart on bringing the injustice of such an attitude home to people without the perpetration of a further injustice, and how he came to evolve the weapon of non-co-operation or civil resistance as a method of non-violent strength. This is the very barest outline, and Mr. Gandhi would develop it according to the audience he was addressing. When he was tired he was inclined to become too discursive, but for the most part his addresses were succinct, delivered in his quiet conversational manner which is unusual on the English platform. Perhaps it was inevitable that in explaining his own ideas and policy, the *ego* seemed to obtrude to a greater extent than English people like. It might be argued as evidence of Mr. Gandhi's extreme candour and simplicity; whereas the English suppression of the *ego* might be adduced as evidence of mere sophistication rather than modesty. Hasn't it been said that the English never sing or write about their own superiority, they just assume it?

I think the dominating impressions carried away by British audiences were of Mr. Gandhi's patent sincerity, sweet reasonableness (he can say the most revolutionary things in the most convincing manner), and his "other worldliness." Disliking anything which marks him out as conspicuous, the average Englishman, I am sure, felt that there was something theatrical in the Mahatma's adherence to his own scanty form of dress. But the Englishman was wrong here. Mr. Gandhi not only claims to represent the peasantry of India, he ardently desires to be one of them. To do anything which would place him in a different grade would be alien to his whole outlook.

The Oxford and Cambridge dons, the London pro-

fessors, the Church dignitaries, the practised Parliamentarians who also met the Indian leader were more inclined to regard him as an impractical visionary, or, more correctly, to wonder how he had come to achieve control of a political machine when his *métier* seemed more in the realm of religion and sociology. But then that was the secret of his rise to power—he had gripped the imagination of his people through the channel of religious inspiration. As a propaganda officer, as it were, he is superb; as a negotiator willing to compromise on principles for the sake of a settlement, impossible. About this aspect of his character and personality and its effect on the future of India, I shall make some suggestions in the concluding chapters.

It was difficult to say at the time which part of his work Mr. Gandhi regarded as the more important—the work at the Conference or the work involved by the establishment of the many contacts his friends were thrusting on him. Following the declaration of the General Election results and the reconstitution of the Ministry, interest in the Conference had flagged to an appreciable extent. The American Press, which had been spending thousands of dollars in reporting the minute-to-minute developments and the movements of the Mahatma, received orders to "go slow" on the Indian story.

About the middle of October Mr. Gandhi had received a cable from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the most powerful leader in India after the Mahatma himself, so far as popular support goes, which had caused considerable consternation. The cable, which was lengthy, reported the development of a very serious agrarian position in the United Provinces and stated that the Allahabad

District Congress Committee had, in the circumstances, resolved to ask the President of the Congress for permission to start *Satyagraha* (passive resistance). Mr. Gandhi replied by telegraph: "Your cable. You should unhesitatingly take necessary steps meet every situation. Expect nothing here."

Early in November the Mahatma received a further cable from his colleagues in India, in reply to one which he had sent, to the effect that his further continuance at the Conference appeared to be unnecessary but in view of various facts and circumstances, which were better known to him, the Working Committee of the Congress left the final decision to him. The Mahatma's attention was drawn to the rapidly worsening condition in Bengal, the Frontier Province, the United Provinces, and elsewhere. Further, the Committee expressed the opinion that his early return to India was desirable and a long Continental tour inadvisable. Mr. Gandhi consulted his friends, and the conclusion was reached that, as the end of the Conference was already in sight, it would be better not to abandon the slightest chance of achieving a point. But it could not be said that his heart was in the Conference work.

By this time the Tory diehards who had been unsparing in their criticism of the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, were beginning to see virtue in his achievement of succeeding in bringing the Indian leader to England. An Indian mystic sitting in an *Ashram* in, say, Sabarmarti, issuing edicts which are obeyed by thousands and thousands of followers throughout a vast continent, is a different thing to a spokesman of a political organization presenting his case to a Conference of statesmen in St. James's Palace,

or going to see the King at Buckingham Palace, or addressing a meeting at Caxton Hall, or going out of his way to meet Charlie Chaplin without knowing who Charlie Chaplin was. From being an unknown quantity, Mr. Gandhi became a quantity which was weighed, assessed, and docketed. Whether the assessment was correct—or whether anyone will ever be able to check this for years to come—is another matter. The fact remains that the visit did, as the Americans say, "de-bunk" the mystic Mahatma in the eyes of those who were in the practical control of affairs.

No description of Mr. Gandhi can do him justice without reference to his sense of humour and the impression of a sunny temperament he gives to all who meet him. In this he is very like his prototype, the Indian peasant. Go into any Indian city and one is struck by the grimness of the expressions on the faces of the people. But go into the villages and the fields, and the faces, for all their emaciation, radiate smiles and good humour.

The occasion of the delegates' visit to Buckingham Palace to see the late King George and Queen Mary provided much merriment in Congress circles. Thirty years previously Mr. Gandhi had met King George when, as Duke of Cornwall, he visited South Africa. The Mahatma had presented the future King with an address of welcome on behalf of the Indian community. This time he was meeting the Sovereign as one who had led the most widespread movement of "disloyalty" in India. Wearing his customary loincloth and shawls and accompanied by Mrs. Naidu and his secretary, he reached the Palace five minutes before the appointed time. Tea was served in the Green Dining Room, and after the delegates

had been introduced to Their Majesties, they adjourned to the Picture Gallery where the String Band of the Scots Guards gave a programme of light music. King Edward, then Prince of Wales, returned to London by air from Liverpool in order to attend the party. The nature of the conversation was, naturally, slight, but all the delegates carried away a respect for King George's knowledge of Indian affairs.

As the Mahatma had declined invitations to other purely social functions, he was asked by friends why he had accepted the invitation to Buckingham Palace, and the following was his very characteristic reply: "I am here in an embarrassing position. I have come as the guest of this nation and not as the elected representative of my own nation. I must, therefore, walk warily, and I cannot tell you how warily I am walking. . . . I am faced with a moral problem. I have an invitation to attend His Majesty's reception. I am feeling so heartsick and sore over the happenings in India that I have no heart in attending such functions, and if I had come in my own right I would not have hesitated to come to a decision. But, as I am a guest, I am hesitating. I can do nothing hastily. I have every moment to consider the morality of the thing and not the legality."

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CONFERENCE ENDS

THREE weeks after Mr. Gandhi had received the cable advising him to return to India, the Conference came to a close. In the meantime letters had been addressed to the Prime Minister, signed by a number of the delegates, requesting him to arbitrate on the communal issue. Hindu representatives who were not prepared to agree to a proposal which might have made Mahatma Gandhi the arbitrator, agreed unconditionally to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's arbitration in the matter. Some of the delegates who requested the Premier's intervention have since been loud in their denunciation of the award as made; revealing an attitude for which there is no excuse.

The delegates gathered at St. James's Palace on December 1st for the final plenary session. Nobody seemed satisfied with the progress that had been made and the atmosphere was tense. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, nervous and hesitant, declared that the Government's declaration made earlier in the year still held good, namely, that the only solution of the constitutional problems was the establishment of an All-India Federation in which the Governor's provinces were to be responsibly governed units. Three committees were to be appointed to examine questions relating to federal finance, the franchise, and the existing treaties with the Indian States.

Speaking in subdued but deliberate tones, Mr. Gandhi, in the course of his speech proposing a vote of thanks to the Prime Minister, referred to the declaration which

had just been made. He said he would study the declaration once, twice, thrice, as often as might be necessary, scanning every word of it, reading its hidden meaning, if it had a hidden meaning, crossing all the t's and dotting all the i's, and if he came to the conclusion, as was somewhat likely, that so far as he was concerned they had come to a parting of the ways, it would not matter, the Prime Minister would still be entitled to a hearty vote of thanks. Sometimes even blood brothers, he added, have each to go their own way. The assembled delegates and visitors listened to the Mahatma's calm—though mixed—sentences with anxiety.

Mr. Srinivasa Sastri had already focused attention on the grave implications of Mr. Gandhi's attitude when, in a stirring and eloquent appeal the previous sitting, he exhorted him not to return to the arid fields of non-co-operation. "Mahatma," he said, "your duty hereafter is with us. You have acquired an unparalleled reputation. Your spiritual power to command men and raise them above themselves is acknowledged throughout the world. Shall not these great gifts be harnessed to the constructive work of the nation? . . . In your hands more than those of any other single Indian lies our future progress. We can be of some use. Take us in hand. With you and your chosen associates we can fashion our constitution to great ends. India will have cause to be truly thankful that you changed your plans and came here. I have read some history. British people often do wrong and take unwise courses. Nevertheless, in the long run, they return to ways of reason, moderation, and justice." It was obvious that the delegates were profoundly stirred by Mr. Sastri's appeal, made at two o'clock in the morning. Earlier

in his speech he had summed up the fundamental cause of the Indian revolt when he said that Indians lacked not loyalty to the Commonwealth but occasions to take pride in the Empire.

All eyes at the plenary session, therefore, were on the Mahatma, but his face bore no trace of any expression which could be interpreted one way or another. After the Prime Minister had wished the delegates a very good voyage home, he declared the Conference adjourned. The delegates began to disperse. It was obvious that another conference was ahead, for the three committees which were to be appointed would have to report back to the full Conference. In addition, an Advisory Committee, under the leadership of the Governor-General, was to be set up in India to maintain the contacts already established and to go into certain questions which had been left pending. Discussion centred largely round the circumstances which would be prevailing at the time of the next conference. The Mahatma's words had given no cause for optimism, and there were many forecasts of another period of civil disobedience, mass imprisonments, and the frequent stoppages of business which had occurred during the previous movements.

On the constitutional side many of the delegates began to feel, from the way things were moving, that they had been manœuvred into positions, and some even said that the All-India Federation scheme, which seemed to have evolved so spontaneously when Lord Reading somewhat unexpectedly gave it his blessing at the first Round Table Conference, had been waiting in the pigeon holes of the India Office and the Government of India for their unsuspecting ensnarement. Some Indians have a

tendency to suspect others of greater subtlety and "cleverness" than they deserve, and the simplest circumstances are sometimes reproduced in terms of a great Machiavellian conspiracy.

In any event, the Indian representatives were committed to the form of constitution which the Government was now going to evolve. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, at the first Conference, had supported the proposal with all the weight of his knowledge and eloquence. Mr. Gandhi, by his acceptance of the threefold formula of federation, central responsibility, and safegards in his pact with Lord Irwin, had taken a step from which the Congress could hardly recede. These two, together with the late Dr. M. A. Ansari, the Nationalist Moslem leader, share responsibility for the present constitutional position more than any other Indians, and yet, curiously enough, each one has left the political field. Whether the retirement of Sir Tej and Mr. Gandhi is temporary or permanent remains to be seen.

Not only were the public of Britain and India anxious for some indication of Mr. Gandhi's future course of action; the Press of the world was eager for his appreciation of the situation. In a farewell interview with representative pressmen, he was asked whether he was satisfied with the results of the Conference. "I never believed we would get anything more than what our own internal strength entitled us to" was the answer. "These negotiations have been a method of measuring our strength against those from whom power has got to be taken, and in that measure evidently we have failed. I must go back and take such measures as would give the Congress consciousness and the requisite strength

enabling those in authority here to see that strength themselves. I am, therefore, not going to blame the Government for not recognizing the strength of the movement."

"Do you regard the Conference as a failure?" the journalists persisted.

"It is a failure," smiled the Mahatma, "if I cannot get anything more out of the meaning of the declaration (the Prime Minister's) than what I have already seen."

"Has your visit been worth while?" asked an American pressman.

"It was a good thing that a way was opened to me to England. My work outside the Conference was more valuable than my work inside. A tremendous gain has been achieved by my contact with British public opinion."

"Will you advise continued co-operation and the Conference method?" asked the representative of a Conservative journal.

"If I see that the policy in India is the policy of conciliation, consultation, and concession to public opinion in India, and if the declaration leaves room enough for full expansion that is to extend to acceptance of the Congress demand, I would advise the continuance of whole-hearted co-operation with Government, but the Bengal Ordinance is the very negation of any desire to give responsible Government."

Questioned regarding the position of Europeans in India under a responsible Government, Mr. Gandhi said: "I would not jeopardize those lives. I would safeguard every British life and legitimate interest that did not conflict with the best interests of India."

The meeting broke up long after midnight, the press-

men hurrying to be in time for their morning editions, for this was the Mahatma's final and considered interview on the results of the Conference.

Two days later the Congress leader and his party left London on their homeward journey. A group of friends went to see him off by the early boat train at Victoria Station. In unharmonious but, nevertheless, fervent tones they sang "Lead kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom" —Mr. Gandhi's favourite hymn which had so often been sung during the prayer time in the house in Knightsbridge. "Gandhi Ki Jai!" shouted the Indians present, and the train steamed out.

Before embarking on the cross-Channel steamer the Mahatma declared: "English people should believe me when I say that if it falls to my lot to fight them, I will be engaged in the fight never out of hatred but most surely out of love, even as I have fought some of my dearest relations. Hence, I am determined to make every effort to continue co-operation as far as it is consistent with national self-respect. I must, however, confess that the more I study the Bengal Ordinance, the more I am filled with misgivings of the gravest character."

The Bengal Ordinance had been promulgated as a counter to the terrorist movement in that province. "Grievous and dangerous diseases," said His Excellency Lord Willingdon in a speech at Calcutta, "require the most drastic remedies, and I am quite sure that all loyal citizens in this province and in India as a whole will co-operate with us in getting rid of the disease as quickly as we possibly can."

As their reply to the Ordinance, and coincident with the Mahatma's departure from London, the Bengal

section of the Indian National Congress revived the general boycott on British goods. Their action was endorsed by the President of the Indian National Congress who wired his approval. There was consternation amongst the friends of Mr. Gandhi, who, by that time, had embarked on a series of meetings in Paris which were followed by others in Switzerland.

Their concern was, however, increased when there appeared in the London *Times* a report of an interview which Mr. Gandhi was stated to have given to Signor Gayda of the *Giornale d'Italia.* The alleged interview attributed to Mr. Gandhi statements to the effect that the Round Table Conference had marked the definite rupture of relations between the Indian nation and the British Government, that he was returning to India in order to restart at once the struggle against England, that the boycott would now prove a powerful means of rendering more acute the British crisis, already difficult through the devaluation of the currency and unemployment.

Before his departure from London Mr. Gandhi had solemnly assured his friends that he would do all he could to keep the door of negotiation open and the "interview" acted as a bombshell. There were hurried consultations between these friends and certain members of the Government which resulted in the dispatch of a cable to Mr. Gandhi who was then on board the Italian liner *Pilsna* in the Mediterranean. The cable outlined the assertions in the alleged interview and added, "Some of your friends here think that you must have been misreported and, if so, denial desirable."

Mr. Gandhi replied by cable that the *Giornale d'Italia*

statement was wholly false and that he never gave any interview to pressmen in Rome. He would, he said, take no precipitate action but would make ample previous entreaty to the authorities should direct action become unfortunately necessary. "Please give this statement," he added, "the widest publicity possible."

Notwithstanding Mr. Gandhi's cable, Signor Gayda, said *The Times* Rome Correspondent, resolutely refused to accept Mr. Gandhi's denial of the statements attributed to him. The Correspondent added that Signor Gayda was introduced to Mr. Gandhi at a meeting in a private house.

Over two years later Mr. Gandhi referred to this matter in a letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, then Secretary of State for India. In this letter he said that he had only just had an opportunity—owing to his long imprisonment—of seeing the actual cuttings containing the report of the alleged interview in Rome. "I have now read and re-read them several times," he wrote, "and I have no hesitation in saying that A and C (the enclosures to his letter containing the cuttings) are a caricature of what took place. . . . All my hopes, fears, and future intentions were expressed in as precise a language as it was possible for me to command and use in my speech at the close of the Round Table Conference. Whatever I said in private conversations was but a paraphrase of the sentiments expressed in that speech. I am not given to saying one thing in public and another in private, or to saying one thing to one friend and something else to another. I could not have said that there was a definite rupture between the Indian nation and the British Government, for I had said to several friends about the same time

that I was determined to strain every nerve to prevent a rupture and to continue the peaceful relations established by the Irwin–Gandhi pact. Being an optimist I do not believe in a final rupture between human beings. . . . I never said that I was returning to India in order to restart the struggle against England. . . ."

I am referring to this incident at some length because to it must be traced many of the events which followed and much of the ill feeling which was generated. In India the belief is still held (and this is supported by the anti-British attitude Signor Gayda has since developed) that the interview was "faked" in order to provide a pretext for the Mahatma's immediate arrest which, it was calculated, would throw India into a state of political convulsion.

The Mahatma returned to India to be welcomed by the vastest crowd that Bombay has ever seen—thousands upon thousands of white-clothed figures anxious for the merest glimpse of their revered leader.

Immediately on his arrival, the Congress leaders met in Bombay to acquaint Mr. Gandhi of the position in the country and, in their turn, to have his report of the London proceedings. On New Year's Day, 1932, Mr. Gandhi informed the Viceroy—then Lord Willingdon—that the Congress Party had resolved to resume the civil disobedience campaign. He added that the Government's action in promulgating the new coercive decrees and in arresting numerous leaders of the Congress had barred the way to peaceful negotiations between the Congress and the Government.

Very swiftly the Government replied by the arrest of Mr. Gandhi, who had been in Bombay less than a week,

and of Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, the President of the Congress. The Government also published an Ordinance in which the Executive Committee of the Congress was declared an illegal body. "The Government must hold you and the Congress," said the telegram from the Viceroy's Private Secretary to Mr. Gandhi, "responsible for all consequences that may ensue for the action which the Congress have announced their intention of taking and to meet which the Government will take all necessary measures." As Sir Samuel Hoare had quoted on several occasions, "The dogs may bark but the caravan passes on." It was clear that the Government intended to pursue its policy without the support of the Congress. By this time India had been once more thrown into a state of upheaval which involved not only the active participants in the political movement, but also those outside who were carried along on its tide.

On the day that Mr. Gandhi was arrested we received his portrait, autographed by himself and the members of his party; it had been sent from Port Said and was inscribed "With love always."

CHAPTER EIGHT

EXPERIMENT IN JOURNALISM

IT was natural that the close contacts which had been established between most of the Indian representatives and the British Press should have led some of the former to inquire with interest into the possibility of introducing more news into India. It had long been a grievance with Indians that news from India was frequently of a character which represented that country as a land of barbarism. But it was also felt that the news received into India was often inappropriate.

Addressing the All-India Press Conference in Calcutta in 1929, Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee, the distinguished editor of the *Modern Review*, had said in his speech welcoming the delegates: "One of the disadvantages of Indian journalism is that the supply of foreign news is practically entirely in the hands of foreigners. Reuter gives us much news which we do not want, and does not give us much of what we want. Moreover, what is given reaches us after manipulation in British interests. Permanent arrangements for the independent supply of foreign news would remove a much-felt want."

It was represented to my husband and myself that if such an independent news service could be established, based on the services of the three available British News Agencies, but with the editorial discretion vested in ourselves as paid officers of the Indian Company, the Indian Press would quickly respond. In other words, making available to India a second channel of world news.

The dislocation of Indian life caused by the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and hundreds of other Congress members resulted in the proposal being held in abeyance for some time. By April, 1932, however, conditions were less unstable and we were asked to negotiate with the news agencies concerned. The upshot was that they extended to us their co-operation and by May an attenuated service had been inaugurated. In the following October arrangements had been completed for the launching of a full service of world news.

We were prepared for many shocks, but we were not prepared for our first set-back—the Government of Bombay's forfeiture, under the Press Ordinance, of the security which had been deposited by the chief newspaper of the organization sponsoring the news service. Fresh security money had to be found, and the consequence was that finances which should have been remitted to London were unavoidably diverted to other purposes. One result was that we had to run a 24-hour cable service of news for three nights by candle light! We took consolation in the fact that we were pioneers and were not over-troubled by any discrepancy between the resources and equipment at our command and that which most other Fleet Street offices might have thought appropriate.

From the news agencies associated with us and the various Government departments we received the maximum of co-operation and goodwill. To judge from letters, the reception in India was excellent. When the third Round Table Conference met in London in November the organization was in full swing.

In the meantime the relative calm of the Indian

political scene was disturbed by an announcement of the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, to the effect that as Federation would take time to come into being, His Majesty's Government had decided that reform in the provinces need not wait for reform at the Centre. In order to implement their policy, His Majesty's Government would invite a small group of Indians to London to supplement the advice which would be given to the Government by the Consultative Committee which had been set up after the second Round Table Conference. In the opinion of the Government the Round Table Conference procedure and the Federal Structure Committee had become too unwieldy to be useful. On the close of the deliberations of the Consultative Committee a Joint Select Committee of the two Houses of Parliament would be set up. The Indian Moderates had always emphasized the need for a single Bill to cover both the Provinces and the Centre. In this connection the Secretary of State's declaration said: "His Majesty's Government have definitely decided to endeavour to give effect to their policy by means of a single Bill which will provide alike for autonomous constitutions in the provinces and for the Federation of Provinces and States. They intend that this measure shall contain provisions for enabling provincial constitutions to be introduced without necessarily awaiting the completion of all the steps required for the actual inauguration of the Federation."

There could not have been a more equitable proposition from the point of view of the co-operating Indian politicians than the course proposed by the Government. Yet they were immediately up in arms, and statements were made by all the delegates of the Liberal Party and

of that persuasion to the effect that the proposal was absolutely unacceptable. The Council of the Western India Liberal Association declared that the new procedure was "a deliberate departure from the previous plan on the basis of which alone the Indian Liberals agreed to co-operate," and "a distinct breach of the definite pledges given on behalf of His Majesty's Government." The Council criticized the Consultative Committee as an alternative to the Round Table Conference on the ground that it had never inspired confidence and that it was incapable of arriving at agreed proposals in so far as it did not contain representatives of His Majesty's Government, the British parties, or the Indian States. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M. R. Jayakar emphasized their protest against the new procedure by resigning from the Consultative Committee, the latter writing to the Viceroy, who was the Chairman of the Committee, that he had come to the conclusion that the variation effected in the procedure was not one merely of form but of substance.

This protest was followed by a statement signed by many delegates to the Round Table Conference stating that "In view of the change of policy of His Majesty's Government as announced in the statement of the Secretary of State for India, it will be impossible for the signatories to further co-operate in the work of constitution making and unless the present procedure were revised it will not be possible to continue co-operation."

"We are back to the time of the Simon Commission" was the comment of the *Manchester Guardian* on the almost complete stalemate in India. There are many in that country today with progressive views who would have

rather had the Simon proposals in place of the Government of India Act as it eventually emerged after so many deliberations. Explaining the new procedure in the House of Commons, Sir Samuel Hoare said that the two overriding factors in the situation were the necessity of speeding up the constitutional situation and the fact that in the ultimate resort Parliament must decide on the Government's proposals.

Most of the Congress leaders were in jail, but those members of the organization who were still free soon taunted the Liberals for their belated opposition to the Government. Nevertheless, the Moderates maintained their opposition and by the beginning of September the Government announced a change in the proposed procedure. Addressing the Legislative Assembly, His Excellency the Viceroy declared that it had become clear that it was not possible to look to the Consultative Committee (many of whose members had followed Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and resigned) for the contribution anticipated from it, and in consequence, in order to place His Majesty's Government in possession of material they required for the framing of their proposals, he was authorized to inform the Honourable Members that His Majesty's Government proposed to invite a small body of representatives to meet them in London about the middle of November. . . . Whilst the status of the Indian delegates would be the same as that of the delegates at the Round Table Conferences, the character of the discussion and the stage that had now been reached necessitated a less formal and more expeditious procedure than that adopted during the last two years.

Thus the Indian Moderates scored a point in procedure.

They had successfully demonstrated that their opposition could not be ignored by the authorities. On the other hand, the Government showed good sense, from their point of view, in conceding the point, for it was, after all, merely one of procedure. In the long run, as events have shown, the result has been the same except that the reforms have been delayed somewhat longer than need have been necessary. The same criticism can be applied, of course, to much of the constitutional agitation in India of the last decade. Whenever one hears the view that the constitution advised by the Statutory Commission held out better prospects than the latest Government of India Act, one is very forcibly reminded of the fact that there is some substance in the allegation that the tactics of Indian politicians have had much to do with the constant delays in the inauguration of a successor to the Montagu–Chelmsford constitution.

CHAPTER NINE

THIRD ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

1932

TWO months before the Round Table Conference was due to meet for the third time, Mr. Gandhi had begun his historic "fast unto death." His decision had been made some six months earlier and had been conveyed in a letter to the Secretary of State. In his letter Mr. Gandhi stated that separate electorates for the Depressed Classes would vivisect and disrupt the Hindus and he, therefore, respectfully informed His Majesty's Government that in the event of their decision creating a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, he "must fast unto death."

The letter was kept a well-guarded secret, both by the India Office and Mr. Gandhi, and only became known after the publication of the Communal Award in August. Under the provisions of the scheme, the Depressed Classes were to vote with the caste Hindus except where there were large Depressed Class populations. In these areas there were to be communal constituencies for a period of twenty years. Out of a total allowance of 1,513 seats in the Lower Houses of the Provincial Legislatures, 705 seats were to be given to the caste Hindus, 489 to the Mohammedans, and 71 to the Depressed Classes.

A week later Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Depressed Classes, criticized the award on the ground that it ruthlessly scaled down the representation of the Depressed Classes in the Provincial Legislatures to quite insignificant proportions. He drew particular attention

to the fact that no representation for the Depressed Classes had been allowed for in the Punjab in which province, he declared, their need for special representation was the strongest.

Two or three weeks later Mr. Gandhi, who was of course in prison in Poona, also expressed himself as opposed to the award. He then sent a further letter to the Prime Minister saying that the proposed fast would come into operation unless the Government's decision were revised. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald replied by saying that only in the event of an agreement amongst the communities themselves could the Government's proposals be substituted. On September 9th the Mahatma replied that he had been reluctantly compelled to adhere to his decision.

The fast began on September 20th, according to plan, in Yeravda Gaol, Poona, although the Government had suggested that a private residence would be more appropriate. By that time the leaders of the caste Hindus and the Depressed Classes had already met in conference in an attempt to render unnecessary the continuation of the fast. The negotiations had many ups and downs, largely the result of the conflict between emotion and reason. At one moment anything seemed worth conceding if the alternative was to be responsibility for the demise of the Mahatma and at others cool calculation secured the upper hand.

Four days after the fast had begun, agreement was reached. In the fervour of the moment certain Hindu temples were thrown open to the "untouchables" and it was expected that others would be similarly opened. The main points of the agreement were that 148 seats

should be allotted to the Depressed Classes in the Provincial Legislatures as against the 71 allowed by the Government's Award; that a percentage of the seats in the Central Legislature which would be allotted to the general electorates (that is, the non-Mohammedans) should be reserved for the Depressed Classes; that the voting in the joint electorate should be preceded by a primary election for a panel of four representatives of the Depressed Classes for each reserved seat; and that the system of reserved seats and primary election should be terminated after ten years. Adequate representation of the Depressed Classes in the public services was also to be secured.

Under the terms of this agreement the Depressed Classes substantially increased their representation in the Provincial Legislatures. At the same time, as the Report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform points out, and as Dr. Ambedkar has acknowledged, the Government's Award gave the Depressed Classes electors a vote in the general constituencies as well as for the special seats reserved for themselves. Under the Poona Pact, however, there will only be an election by the general electorate—although the candidates for the reserved seats will have been previously chosen at an election where only members of the Depressed Classes will be entitled to vote. Very few people are able to see any difference in principle between the Government's plan and that evolved at Poona.

Mr. Gandhi formally signified his agreement to the terms, but announced that his fast would not be terminated until the Government's acceptance of the arrangement had been received. Immediately, the leaders of both

sides cabled to the Prime Minister asking him to annul the provisions of the Award relating to the Depressed Classes and substitute the new agreement. Simultaneously a number of cables were dispatched by friends of Mr. Gandhi to acquaintances in London, including ourselves, asking that every endeavour be made to impress upon the Government the need for quick action in view of the precarious condition of Mr. Gandhi's health.

Mr. C. F. Andrews, who had on so many occasions acted as a "go-between" between Mr. Gandhi and the authorities, immediately got into touch with the Prime Minister. The fact that Mr. Gandhi had announced his decision to fast so far back as March in a certain eventuality and the fact that the Government had, nevertheless, awarded separate electorates to the Depressed Classes, had gained a certain amount of sympathy for the Indian leader. Opinion was, however, by no means unanimous that any Government could or should have allowed itself to be influenced by such a threat.

The Prime Minister was at this time immersed in discussions arising from the Ottawa agreements and the handling of the situation consequent on the imminent resignations of Viscount Snowden and a number of Liberal Ministers from the Government. Mr. Andrews was invited to breakfast at Chequers the following day (Sunday) and he asked us to accompany him.

It had been raining all night and the roads were greasy. We had to leave London at six in the morning so as to allow for any possible delay, consequent on the bad motoring conditions. As we dashed through the deserted streets of the metropolis, then the Middlesex suburbs of London, now the country lanes carpeted with the

fallen, rain-sodden leaves of autumn we thought of the little man in Yeravda Gaol whose life was hanging on a thread. Crossing the Bucks border, we passed the Prime Minister's car; urgent Ministerial discussions had necessitated his presence in Downing Street.

After a welcome breakfast over which Miss Ishbel MacDonald charmingly presided, Mr. Andrews explained the position to Mr. Malcolm MacDonald (then Under-Secretary of State for the Dominions), who was deputizing for his father. The Government, it appeared, had not lost a minute in doing what was required of them. The India Office staff had already been requested to report for duty on Sunday, and Lord Lothian who, as Chairman of the Franchise Committee, was well acquainted with the problem, had already begun his examination of the franchise implications of the Poona proposals.

Nothing could be done immediately as the complete details of the agreement had not yet been received. By September 26th, however, which was the sixth day of the fast, the Prime Minister sent a long cable explaining the Government's position. This was handed to Mr. Gandhi at 4 p.m. and he broke his fast an hour later. The Government had always taken the line that an agreed settlement amongst the communities was preferable to an imposed settlement and that it would gladly agree to the substitution of the latter by the former if the agreement could be guaranteed.

Pandit Malaviya, the doyen of the Hindu Mahasabha movement, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and Mr. Jayakar had agreed to the terms of the compromise on behalf of the Hindus. Little time was lost before other Hindu leaders began to question their right to commit the Hindu

community, and, as the emotional intensity of the occasion began to disappear with the Mahatma's restored health, the dispute became public and acrimonious—especially in Bengal where the caste Hindus had been "sacrificed" to provide the additional seats for the Depressed Classes.

The public began to recall Mr. Gandhi's firm attitude at the second Round Table Conference in his discussions with Dr. Ambedkar, and the more partisan Hindus characterized his present act as typical of a man who had before been known to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. There were others who felt that his fast had arisen from a conviction which had developed during the London discussions that India's first problem was an internal one, others who felt that his object was the preservation of the Hindu community as a single political unit as well as a social unit, and yet others who were of the opinion that he was anxious to testify and prove his claim to speak for the masses—for the "underdog"—even to the extent of sacrificing his life in their interests.

Naturally, the ethics of this form of coercion—however passive—are open to dispute, just as much as are the ethics of an economic blockade or economic sanctions as more humane methods of settling conflicts. They all have the disadvantage that what is sometimes acquiesced in in haste and under the stress of the moment, is repented at leisure. Certainly the orthodox caste Hindus showed a resistance much stronger than was expected. Mass meetings, hostile demonstrations, and very unpleasant personal recriminations were the order of the day. Many of the supporters of the Mahatma doubted the spontaneity of these demonstrations of opposition, but there was no gainsaying the fact that there existed very bitter

feeling amongst the orthodox, especially in Bengal, for, obviously, the extra seats which were to be allotted to the Depressed Classes had to come from the quota which the Government had awarded to the Hindus.

All movements have a vanguard and a rear, and while the latter were doing everything in their power to preserve things as they were, the former were carrying out Mr. Gandhi's requests for the removal of "untouchability." In certain districts temples were thrown open to the outcastes and in others wells were made available for their use.

So far as Dr. Ambedkar was concerned, the question of temple entry was but an offshoot of the main problem —the iniquitous injustices under which his people were suffering; injustices which, in the present scheme of things, would have to be borne for all time and from which there was no escape by merit. While he could be, and had been, accepted in England and America, he could not in India, even in the pursuit of his professional duties as a barrister, use certain roads, stay in certain bungalows, take food or drink in the presence of an orthodox caste Hindu. To him the problem is an economic problem in that the present state of affairs means a state of permanent subjugation.

It has been necessary to go into this question at some length because not only did the Poona Pact have an influence over the third Round Table Conference and the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, it is having an influence, if unseen, at the present moment. Privately, several attempts have been made to devise a communal formula, which would be acceptable to all communities, before the Government of India Act is



SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKURDAS, C.I.E., M.B.E.

brought into operation. There are some Indian politicians who feel that their political case *vis-à-vis* the British Government has been undermined by their inability to settle this problem amongst themselves; there are others who assert that, in any event, it would have been the Government's duty to settle the representation of the various communities and that no obloquy should attach to Indians for their failure to settle the matter themselves. It is certain that the caste Hindus of Bengal will never rest content until there has been a revision of their representation in the Legislatures. But it is equally certain that neither the Mohammedans, the Depressed Classes, nor the Europeans will relinquish any of their seats.

Non-co-operation at this time then became contagious; the Parliamentary Labour Party decided not to nominate any representatives to take part in the forthcoming Conference. The reason given was that British policy had changed since the advent of the National Government and that it was no longer in accordance with the spirit of the policy set out in the White Paper on the subject of Indian constitutional development. It was also stated that without the nominees of the Congress (all the leaders of which organization were in gaol), the Conference would not be adequately representative.

This decision was one with which many in the Party did not agree, but it was taken as a matter of principle and the chief responsibility was Mr. George Lansbury's. No doubt he felt that Labour's voice in the Conference would be negatived and that the effort, therefore, would be futile. A similar suggestion had been put forward at the time of the appointment of the "all-white" Simon Commission and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald had pointed

out that non-co-operation would be a dangerous weapon in that it had been represented that the Conservatives might retaliate by refusing to co-operate on any Commission that a future Labour Government might set up.

Whatever might have been the practical result of the Labour Party's participation in the Conference, the psychological effect of the boycott was unfortunate. I went to Folkestone to meet Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and he and his friend, Mr. Jayakar, expressed themselves very forcibly on the Labour Party's action. They were handed a letter explaining the reasons for the Party's decision, but they were not convinced. They pointed out that they had attended the first Round Table Conference, at the invitation of the Labour Government, in the face of strong opposition in India and they felt that they were now being abandoned.

At the best the Indian delegates characterized the Labour Party's decision as ill-judged. Their parliamentary strength was not such that they could influence the Government in this way. Moreover, if they were going to take action on the basis of their impotence, or otherwise, they might have abandoned their role of His Majesty's Opposition, so small was the Parliamentary Party. When the Indian delegates met the leaders of the Party who were responsible for the decision, they were very outspoken in the expression of their disapproval of the course taken.

The third Round Table Conference, which was "to tie up the loose ends left by its predecessors," was opened by the Prime Minister on November 17th, this time in the King's Robing Room in the House of Lords. The Indian delegation was smaller than at the previous Conferences,

and of course the representatives of the Opposition were absent.

Relations amongst the delegates were not too harmonious from the first. By this time sectarian interests, more of an economic than a communal nature, were becoming apparent. The question of "commercial safeguards" in the constitution was one which could be looked at from many angles. European interests in India had, from the beginning, made their support to the Federal Constitution conditional on the incorporation in the constitution of clauses which would render commercial discrimination against them illegal. At the first Conference a formula, suggested by the late Lord Reading, had gained acceptance from all the Indian delegates with one exception—Mr. M. A. Jinnah. He alone of the Indian members signified his dissent when the Prime Minister read the clause when the Reports of the various Committees of the Conference were being "noted." It appeared that, on reflection, the delegates felt that they had conceded too easily and discussions had taken place in the endeavour to secure the maximum support for a formula more acceptable to Indian opinion. Behind the scenes there developed a cleavage between the spokesmen of big business and the "up-county" lawyers who for long had suspected the motives of the magnates from the maritime capitals. Inter-provincial and inter-professional jealousies may very likely increase, particularly under the new Federal constitution; and these were the shadows of future events.

Tempers were more than frayed. The Conferences were becoming monotonous, the situation in India was tense and depressing, and the Indian delegates, compelled

to spend so much time away from home, were suffering financially.

I recall the atmosphere with feeling, for we were the unsuspecting victims of it over a certain incident. At a session of the Conference in the first week of December there occurred some discussion between the Secretary of State, Sir Samuel Hoare, and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Sir Samuel was of the opinion that a particular subject on the agenda should be dealt with at a later stage, but Sir Tej wished to contribute his remarks that day. Eventually Sir Samuel agreed and Sir Tej rose to address the Conference. A little time later, it transpired, the Secretary of State left the room.

The delegates were affronted—or rather some of them. A "walk-out" in India signifies disapproval, and Sir Samuel's departure was interpreted as evidence of annoyance or disapproval. Little time was lost before the manager of our company, who was then in England, was informed of what had taken place. They spoke in such unequivocal terms, apparently, that he immediately sent a cable to his organization in India, giving his version of the incident and saying that conference circles described it as a "walk-out." He met me later in the day and related the episode. I could not believe it and said that the delegates must have misinterpreted a temporary absence, and that it would only be under the compulsion of an exceedingly strong emotion that any public man in England, particularly a man of Sir Samuel Hoare's temperament, would leave a public deliberation in this manner. So convinced was I of the correctness of my deduction, that he immediately sent a cable to the Bombay office instructing the sub-editors to treat the

previous cable as containing material of merely an incidental character and requesting them not, in any event, to "splash" the news. But it was too late—as we learned to our cost a few hours later.

The next day I received a letter from the Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for India saying that the Secretary of State had received a report from India of which a copy was enclosed. Would I come and see the writer, the letter continued. If I did not reply by midday the following Saturday it would be assumed that the report correctly reproduced the messages sent by the organization and that it would take full responsibility for them.

The accompanying report from India stated that the message had been "splashed" under a banner heading "Walk Out From R.T.C.; Sir Samuel Hoare In A Temper: Protest and Counter Protest: Sapru Stands Up Against the Secretary Of State." Then there followed an extract of over four hundred words from the original cable.

In consequence of this communication an interview took place at the India Office at which, however, I was not present. At this interview it was pointed out on behalf of the concern that the original message had been a bona fide news item based on unsolicited information given by one of the leading delegates, and, according to the sender of the message, confirmed by subsequent reference to others of the delegates. It was also declared by the sender that Lord Sankey, the Lord Chancellor, had on the evening of the incident called on them to explain the reason for Sir Samuel Hoare's absence—thereby confirming the information that the latter left the meeting.

In view of the circumstances, the sender of the message, who was the managing director of the company, stated that he did not feel that the message warranted the unqualified apology which was requested. The interview then terminated.

What was meant by taking "full responsibility" for the messages became apparent when I received a letter from the India Office stating that, as no acceptable explanation was forthcoming, all facilities for which the India Office was responsible would be withdrawn until further notice. This included the issue of *communiqués* and official documents, admission to meetings of representatives of the Press arranged by the India Office in connection with the Round Table Conference or otherwise, the answering of inquiries by the Information Officer and the issue by the Foreign Office, under arrangements made with the India Office, of tickets of admission to Parliament. The Press passes to the House of Commons and the House of Lords were in my name, and, in other words, I had been put on the "Black List."

According to Press circles such action had only been taken once previously, and then it was successfully resisted by the newspaper concerned. That a Government Department can affect privileges attaching to Parliament is explained by the fact that passes to the Foreign and Dominion Press Gallery of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords are controlled by the Foreign Office and in this instance the latter had received instructions from the India Office.

As I was covering the Parliamentary side of the service, I was deeply affected by this sign of official disfavour, the more so as I felt that I was being formally penalized

for something for which I had had no responsibility. We were not without hopes, however, that the delegates who had brought about this unfortunate impasse would take their share of the responsibility in effecting an amicable settlement. These hopes never materialized, and, as the delegates concerned tried to shift the responsibility on each other, it became apparent that the penalty was likely to exist for some time.

At this point I might add that the ignorance of sub-editors at the Indian end, plus their ardent nationalism, frequently led us into serious difficulties. For example, there was the occasion when certain emphatic sentiments expressed by Lord Lloyd were ascribed to Mr. Lloyd George. The cable had merely mentioned "Lloyd" who was a former Governor of Bombay and well enough known throughout India. The necessary amends were, of course, made to the Liberal leader after I had assured his secretary in the House of Commons that no misrepresentation had been intended. Incidentally, uninitiated Indians do experience difficulties with European names. As, quite frequently, the first name in India is used in preference to the second (which is often merely a place-name) it is not uncommon to find an Indian using the Christian name of a European before he has really come to know him.

There was another occasion which I always recall with a chuckle, though it angered me at the time. It concerned a well-known Englishman, then a priest in the Church of England, who has devoted many years of his life to work amongst a section of India's backward races. I had interviewed him at Victoria Station on his arrival from India after a continental tour in the course of which

he had undertaken a number of speaking engagements. Written in "cablese," the message ran " . . . *postmeetings florence sienna paris arrived afternoon declared etc. etc.*" Imagine my dismay when, in course of time, the sub-editor's version of this simple cable came back to me in printed form as " . . ., *after meeting Madame Florence in Sienna, took her to Paris and they arrived in London this afternoon. Interviewed, he declared, etc., etc.*"

Concurrent with the work of the Conference, there were meetings of the Reserve Bank Committee and the Statutory Railway Board Committee which had also to be "covered." The Reserve Bank has since been established and plays an important part in the economic life of India.

The third Round Table Conference was concluded on Christmas Eve with a message from King George. After referring to the complexity of the problem before the Conference, His Majesty said, "It is gratifying to learn that the spirit of goodwill which is uppermost in men's hearts at this season has prevailed throughout your meetings, and I am confident that your labours will prove to have fortified a partnership whose strength and endurance are of such consequence to all my people."

Sir Samuel Hoare said: "We are going to do our utmost to remove every obstacle in the way of federation, and to remove it at the earliest possible date."

While the Aga Khan spoke of "the great step forward" which had been taken, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru revealed his attitude with the remarks: "All I am prepared to say at present is that the chapter of negotiation and further consideration does not appear to have concluded."

The non-committal nature of his observation was indicative of the general disappointment of the delegates, which found specific expression in a Memorandum signed by Sir Tej and his friend, Mr. M. R. Jayakar, emphasizing the need for a "speedy establishment of Federation with responsibility at the Centre."

CHAPTER TEN

JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE. 1933

ON March 17, 1933, the Government published the famous White Paper on Indian Constitutional Reform embodying their proposals for the future Federal constitution for India.

Few State documents have ever raised such a storm of protest. It was condemned alike by Indian opinion and the diehard Conservatives. While India thought that the provisions of the proposed constitution retained for Britain the ultimate control of Indian finance, commercial policy, military policy, and foreign policy, the diehard Conservatives thought that it would lead to the complete "surrender" of British interests in India. The India Defence League was formed, consisting of a number of Members of Parliament, Peers, and others interested in India, to combat the Government's policy. A serious schism in the Conservative Party almost seemed to be threatened—with Mr. Baldwin leading the supporters of the Government and Mr. Churchill and Lord Lloyd the opponents.

The storm swept up. By June the campaigns of the exponents of both views were in full swing—meetings of local Conservative Associations in constituencies throughout the country, floods of letters in the *Morning Post* and the Rothermere Press, which almost daily were dealing with the matter in their editorial and news columns. These were offset by support for the Govern-

ment from *The Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and some other journals.

The fever had reached its height with the specially convened meeting of the Central Council of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations which was attended by twelve hundred delegates from all parts of the country. The meeting was held in the Friends' Meeting House—the same hall in which Mr. Gandhi had been some twenty-one months previously. How different was the scene! Sitting beside Mr. Randolph Churchill, I looked down from the balcony on the animated delegates below; most of the men wore morning suits and carried elegant silk hats. The women were perfumed, bejewelled, some smart, but many belonging to that aristocracy which can afford to be unfashionable.

As the delegates rose, to impress first this view and then the contrary, my mind went back to those Lancashire days, and again the dominant thought was: "Well, here you have in action a democracy trying to govern another democracy; a dictator might succeed, but a democracy six thousand miles away, is it possible?" The fact that the chairman of the meeting was a woman was a reminder of constitutional advance in Britain. But as platitude succeeded platitude; as the late Lord Carson, brought from a sick-bed to support the diehards, with admonishing finger pleaded for caution, one became deeply conscious of the enormous gulf between what Britain was prepared to concede and what India was demanding.

Feelings ran so high that, on occasions, even these generally sedate Conservatives lost their decorum. Voting on an amendment which amounted to a recommendation in favour of suspension of judgment, the

supporters of the Government mustered 838 votes. Their opponents, who were definitely against the White Paper, secured 356 votes, while there were at least 50 abstentions. The Government had succeeded, not on a question of the endorsement of their policy, but by promising that the whole matter would be reviewed again before irrevocable steps were taken.

This opposition to the Federal proposals was to continue until the Bill had been finally passed by both Houses of Parliament.

Opposition in India was equally determined. The following year I was to meet many of the bitterest critics of the White Paper. Some admitted, on being questioned, that they had not read the document. On seeing my surprise, they would explain their summary rejection of the proposals by asking what was the good of examining the details of a scheme when the main principles of the structure were objectionable. I know some responsible Indian leaders who have only recently read the Simon Report—although they were in the forefront of the denunciations. One would have thought that one would be better equipped to answer one's opponents if one were conversant with their case; but this is a matter where there are different views and is mentioned to show the utter disappointment of Indian opinion.

One so often refers to "public opinion" that perhaps I may be permitted to digress for a while. To have a worth-while opinion on a subject one must be informed on it, and the number of people who can claim to have sufficient knowledge to give such opinions on specific subjects is not very large. Every journalist knows that the Press is mostly responsible for public opinions on

controversial matters; the average man is either too ignorant or does not want to be bothered to go to the length of informing himself. This applies to India as well as to other parts of the universe—with this difference. The Indian leader is not anxious to curb any "advance" in so-called public opinion because it is his only sanction in dealing with Britain. A public opinion always ahead of his demands makes those demands seem relatively moderate. While, however, this is true today, it will not be true tomorrow when Indian Ministers will be responsible for controlling a situation resulting from increased industrialization, increased urbanization, increased realization of their needs by the working classes.

When one says, therefore, that "public opinion" in India was bitterly opposed to the White Paper one should think in terms of the comparatively small number of commercial magnates who felt that the proposals would prevent them from securing the control of the country's financial and economic policy, of the lawyers who visualized themselves as Ministers baulked by the special powers of the Governors, of the college professors, equipped to stand side by side academically with their colleagues in other countries but still labelled by the constitution as of inferior status, of the professional men and women in other spheres who would, any day, compare favourably with their confreres across the seas.

This is not to decry Indian opinion, but to lead the way to a discussion at a later stage of the enormous disparity between the man at the top and the man at the bottom in India. I am often told that I know "everybody" in India; this much is certain that it is not at all difficult to know "everybody who is anybody." In spite

of the size of the country, the distances between the capital cities, differences in language, climate, and customs, practically all the people who have made names are personally known to each other. Wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few, and they move about from place to place. It might be said that it is the same in Europe. It is not so. There the social grades rise or fall, as the case may be, in imperceptible steps. In India the real middle class, though growing, is numerically small. This development is to come.

The Indian delegates who came to the Joint Parliamentary Committee in the summer, therefore, with the "full weight" of public opinion behind them, were not sanguine of their ability to satisfy that opinion. By now the proposals had taken very definite shape and there were signs that the Right Wing Conservatives were becoming influential. All three British Parties were represented on the Committee and there were about twenty-eight nominees from India.

New brooms, it is said, sweep clean, and there were two new representatives, Sir Hari Singh Gour and Sir Abdur Rahim, representing the Legislative Assembly, who were apparently anxious to influence the proceedings. The former frequently came into conflict with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, whose leadership had not previously been disputed. In addition to the members of the Committee, about a hundred witnesses came from India to be examined on the particular point of view of the community or interest they represented. A number of witnesses from Great Britain were also examined by the Committee, the Proceedings, Evidence, and Records of which were published in various Parliamentary Papers.

It had been so often stated that India was not able to put up an agreed alternative to what Parliament was proposing that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru began, some weeks before the Committee's proceedings terminated, the preparation of a memorandum, classifying India's objections to the White Paper proposals, to which he hoped to get the assent of all the delegates.

This memorandum became the subject of private discussions amongst the delegates. Eventually all the twelve delegates who were still in England out of the original twenty signed the document, certain of them making minor reservations. Specifying the minimum amendments which would be necessary before the White Paper proposals became acceptable to Indian public opinion, the memorandum was presented by the Chairman of the British Indian delegation, His Highness the Aga Khan, to the Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, Lord Linlithgow, later Viceroy.

A Minority Report is not permissible in a Joint Parliamentary Committee, but the Labour Party representatives and the Right Wing Conservatives also handed in documents, which were published, stating the points of view of their respective Parties.

It is one of the standing grievances of the moderate Indian leaders who signed the memorandum what while the British Government hopes and expects that they will endeavour to make the new constitution a success, their views—as expressed in the memorandum—were not met by embodiment in the Government of India Bill, much less in the Act. They feel that at no time has the Government ever strengthened their hands to the extent of accepting their opinions, thus enabling them to demonstrate to their more extreme

colleagues the efficacy of constitutional agitation as opposed to the direct action methods of the Congress.

While the Committee pursued its wearisome but necessary work of asking the same questions over and over again to the different witnesses, I was engaged in the even more wearisome task of wading through each day's published proceedings and making a summary which would convey some adequate impression of the session's work. When the field is so large and the number of cable words available so small, the précis work involved becomes very tedious. The Press were not admitted to the Committee room and there was no possibility, therefore, of giving an "impression" of the proceedings.

Life was complicated by the fact that the World Economic Conference was also in session in South Kensington, and I had also to cover these proceedings. The short four or five hours' sleep, and those often interrupted by telephone calls from sub-editors, would have been endurable were it not for the chronic state of financial jeopardy in which we were living. This was partly the result of circumstances and partly the result of ineptitude at the Indian end.

So intolerable did the situation become—as we were responsible to constituents in London for the effects of a situation in India over which we had no control, that in July my husband decided to leave for India. He travelled on the same ship as a number of the delegates, and I was left to handle what we hoped would be a "slack season" for news.

My husband returned in the autumn having been informed that no definite decisions regarding future policy could be arrived at for another six months, when there would be further consultations. On his return I went to North Africa, on the first holiday for four years.

Part II

CHAPTER ELEVEN

IN INDIA

BY March 1934 I was working in India. This was due to the fact that a month previously we had received a cable in London indicating that the newspapers in the group for which we were working were, from that date, subscribing to the rival service. We were, of course, aware that the undertaking with which we had associated ourselves had been working at a considerable loss. Indeed, this loss had been anticipated, and it was in consideration of it that it had been possible to secure the agreements with the other news services at the terms to which they consented. We were also aware that there were other disabilities with which a new and independent organization had to contend. These included the ability of a well-established concern to offer rate concessions and considerable credit facilities to their clients who were, in consequence, less likely to support an undertaking which had to insist on early and regular payments. The established concern was also in enjoyment of several privileges conferred by the authorities. These included substantial cash payments for the supply of news to Government officials, concessions in the form of free railway travel and free trunk telephone calls, official payment of expenses on certain occasions, preferential rates for the transmission of Press telegrams over the inland telegraph system, and priority of treatment in the handling of telegrams.

Following the cable we received a letter containing what were stated to be the terms of a confidential agree-

ment with the rival service. The burden of it was that, in return for the company agreeing not to offer its news services to papers outside their own group of newspapers, the other agency would supply all their services and at approximately half-rates.

Anyone examining the "agreement" would have immediately asked the question as to what was the financial saving which would accrue from it. The company was already committed by contract to five-year agreements with the other news agencies whose services formed the basis of our company's own news service, and these payments were a legal liability whatever happened. According to the report of the directors of the company, this saving would only have amounted to Rs. 2,800 (approximately £215) per month—in an organization running five newspapers and with four others about to be published). Considerations of economy hardly seemed to have been served by the "agreement," especially as one of the papers' greatest attractions—control of their own news supply—had been sacrificed in its achievement.

But there was another question which anyone would have asked, and that was whether any organization of prudence would have put themselves in a position, as the rival service was stated to have done, where all their other clients could have sued for breach of understanding.

These considerations apart, we were in the embarrassing position of owing several hundreds of pounds in London on behalf of the company. While these obligations were not being met, extensive schemes of expansion were being pursued in India where new rotary and linotype machines were being erected in five towns, apart from Bombay. A situation had developed, without our know-

ledge, where immediate action became necessary if we were to preserve our reputations with the London news services which had helped us in so many ways.

It was accordingly decided that I should leave for India immediately. My friend, Agatha Harrison, happened to be sailing that week on a visit to Mr. Gandhi and we travelled together. Mr. Gandhi had written to her suggesting that she should travel in the cheapest class, "for it is there," he said, "that you will see humanity." We travelled by the Tourist Class and saw colonels, majors, wives of officers, well-to-do farmers returning to Australia, and commercial men. Agatha Harrison's previous voyage out had been with the Royal Commission on Labour and we both rejoiced in the informality of the Tourists.

We landed in Bombay on March 15th—just when the weather was warming up. We had both been "warned" in London that we would be under observation during our travels in India. On the principle that one only sees what one is looking for, I have never noticed any evidence of this, although my friends, throughout the two years of my stay in India, frequently told me that their chauffeurs had been cross-examined as to my movements. So long as they did not mind, I was indifferent. The cars in which I travelled, belonging to multi-millionaires, Trade Union leaders, aristocrats, artists, socialists, lawyers, doctors, or ex-prisoners could have told no coherent story.

Our friends anxiously pressed us to attend immediately the Women's Conference which was then in session in Bombay, but my desire to get a thorough discussion of the business situation compelled me to decline.

The only new piece of information which emerged from these discussions with the management was that the negotiations with the other service were initiated and conducted by or through the financier of the company and not by the management. The amounts he had invested amounted to as much as £12,000, but had been paid—according to the books of the company in the name of someone else. In the meantime the rival agency had made a further stipulation that the credit line or caption attaching to the service we had organized should be abandoned and the messages in future ascribed to Special Correspondents.

I immediately tendered the resignations of my husband and myself. The whole development, I pointed out, was contrary to the policy which we had been given to understand and had, in turn, given others to understand, would be pursued. Expenditure, I suggested, could have been curtailed to the extent of £215 per month (which was the ostensible saving by the proposed new arrangement) and the object of the company—to build up an Indian-owned news service—could have thereby been preserved.

The management of the company then informed me that the "agreement" had not yet been formally signed and that it was not too late to retrace the steps which had been taken. I was then given a series of assurances which, it was stated, had been previously given by the financier. The chief one was that there would be an early return to the *status quo ante*. On our part we were asked to suspend our resignations and I to extend my stay in India until such time as a satisfactory solution had been finally reached in regard to the news agency. I accepted

the assurances and agreed to the request on condition that the obligations of the company in London were duly met, pointing out that the matter was one of principle.

All along the discussions had not been with the people who were stated to be in ultimate control. I had met the financier concerned, in London some two and a half years previously, and the most sensible thing seemed to me to attempt an understanding with him.

To my amazement, he declined to see me for any discussion of the position in which I had been placed, although three of the leading commercial magnates of Bombay attempted to bring about a meeting. To one of them he said that he was prepared to meet me socially, but would not discuss any matters of business with me. We had worked for this organization for so long, had built up that which had become the "consideration" in the "agreement," and yet I could not see the man who was said to be instrumental in bringing about that "agreement."

One was at a loss to know how to act in such an impasse. A heavy moral responsibility to the companies in England rested on my shoulders, yet, in spite of my having come thousands of miles to help to resolve a difficult situation, no progress could be made because those responsible for the situation refused to discuss it! Third-party assurances, it was clear, were not going to be a satisfactory foundation for the future.

Knowing the whispering gallery that is Bombay, I had only discussed the position with two or three of the leading business men, who were also shareholders of the company. They assisted me to the extent of urging on the then financier of the company the necessity of having

a frank discussion with me; but to no avail. At the same time, an acquaintance was pressing on me the desirability of utilizing the services of his brother who, he said, had the reputation of being one of the city's leading solicitors. I confessed to the Britisher's usual abhorrence of litigation, but was asked what was the alternative; a continuation of the present stalemate? By that time I had been in Bombay well over three months and was feeling keenly the hopelessness of a position where I had to write and cable home that there was no prospect of the financier of the company either telling me what had happened or informing me as to how it was proposed to meet the liabilities outstanding in London. Had it not been for these liabilities, there would have been no question about my continued stay; patience had been strained to the utmost and I had no illusions.

Reaching desperation point, I telephoned to my husband in London, and the result was that he concurred in my seeing whether the help of the solicitor would be of any avail—all other avenues having failed.

Five days after consulting the solicitor an interview was arranged between the financier, the solicitor, and myself. The financier made certain statements which were embodied in a memorandum of the meeting drawn up by the solicitor. The main points were that the former had advanced certain moneys to the company comparatively recently which were intended to be used for the discharge of the obligations in London, but that the management had appropriated these moneys for other purposes, and that in the negotiations with the rival agency he had acted merely as an intermediary and the arrangement was between the company and that agency

and that he had "not taken any personal liability in respect of such agreement."

This statement did not, of course, coincide with what I had been told by the management, and when the management refused to accept the statements made by its financier, confusion seemed to me to be about as complete as it could be—little did I anticipate what was in store!

CHAPTER TWELVE

MR. GANDHI AGAIN

MR. GANDHI arrived in Bombay on Thursday, June 14th, after his strenuous tour in the Bihar earthquake area and his campaign for the removal of untouchability. My friend, Agatha Harrison, who was due to sail for England on the following Saturday, had already told me that Mr. Gandhi wished to see me, and I felt that, as a last resort, I could not do better than put the whole position before him—as it was affecting the reputation of India amongst influential concerns in England.

Mr. Gandhi is usually surrounded by an entourage of devotees, but he was good enough to arrange that the interview should be private. Miraben (Miss Slade) had previously advised me to "put all the cards on the table," and this I did. Mr. Gandhi said he would see the financier that afternoon and ascertain from him what was likely to happen.

The same evening Mr. Gandhi's secretary telephoned to me at my hotel asking me to come immediately. The room was cleared on my arrival and Mr. Gandhi told me that he had had the desired discussion and that he wanted to "put my mind at ease as soon as possible." We had been spoken of in very appreciative terms and the position, as explained to the Mahatma, was that if he took possession of the concern, the financier would certainly observe the sanctity of the contracts which we, under Power of Attorney from the company, had negotiated and signed. If, however, the firm went into liquidation we would stand, with the financier, on the equal footing of creditors.

It seemed necessary for me to point out that this "assurance" gave me no case which I could submit to the news services in London in explanation of the "agreement" with the rival concern. Liquidation was a process which anyone could understand, but the utilization of a situation, which had been brought about by the existence of certain favourable agreements for the exaction of a concession, was something which I could not, and would not, defend.

There then followed one of those conversations which make Mr. Gandhi such an enigma to non-Indians. He felt that I was allowing the situation to take too great a toll on my health, and I replied that this was inevitable as I felt my honour to be at stake. There were important concerns in England looking to me for a "square deal," yet here I was, in India, confronted with a state of affairs, confused and irregular, which one could not explain—let alone defend.

"I will say to you," he said, "what I have said before to English friends. Whatever sacrifice you have suffered as a consequence of what has happened, you must regard it as part of the debt that England must pay back to India."

I was shocked. Even if one accepted the proposition that England owed a debt to India, how had *India* benefited, I asked, by what had transpired? Moreover, was I to return to England and say this kind of thing to the companies there which had been assisting us? Was I to say that what was supposed to be a nation-building endeavour (in that it aimed at the liberation of news and ideas which might not otherwise be disseminated) had been exploited by someone unknown? Or was I to say that certain capitalists had been more sinned against than sinning?

"I, too," replied the Mahatma, "am exploited by capitalists." "The moral," he continued, "is that there is no room for co-operation between idealists and capitalists. You are an idealist."

"But," I answered, "you co-operate with capitalists and utilize capitalists' money for your various causes."

Mr. Gandhi then smilingly explained that direct contributions without any obligations attached to them were a different matter. He did not see any hope for the Press as an honest medium for the spread of knowledge so long as its conductors were limited by the requirements of financiers on the one hand and the limitations set by stipulations made by advertisers on the other.

The following day I received a cable from London indicating that the companies there saw no alternative to the setting in motion of formal measures to secure respect to the terms of the agreements which had been entered into. I showed the cable to Mr. Gandhi and he saw that the situation was serious.

As befits a barrister and one who has spent many years on the study of legal matters, Mr. Gandhi has a quick grasp of practical business questions; his spiritual values are responsible for his frequently impractical opinions. Moreover, believing that suffering purifies, he often allows himself to give the impression of being callous, as many who were ruined by their participation in the civil disobedience movement will testify. On one occasion we were discussing the situation in which I had been placed when something that he said about betrayals recalled to my mind an incident of many years previously. I told him how, over ten years ago, one who was genuinely interested in what he believed to be my welfare asked

me to see him. "Do you remember the fate of Erskine Childers, who was at college with me?" my friend asked. "Yes," I replied. "What happened to him then?" he asked again. "The Irish shot him in the back," I answered. "Then remember the fate of those who work for countries other than their own."

Mr. Gandhi, who was spinning, dropped the yarn for a second and, nodding his head said, "Yes, I see how you feel." Then very solemnly: "But you must learn to love those who do you injury."

This was in June 1934, and Mr. Gandhi was himself the centre of what might be called an almost mass betrayal by many of his followers. Disillusioned after one and two years in gaol, in which they had expected the millennium to be established, they were now issuing manifestos and statements criticizing and ridiculing the Mahatma's leadership. He was being abused by some for ever having started the civil disobedience movement and by others for having diverted his energies and those of his chief followers to the work of the removal of untouchability which, the critics contended, had nothing to do with the struggle on hand. The Mahatma, being more far-seeing than his castigators, would go on smiling and pursuing his work.

The demoralization in public spirit was at that time, however, about as complete as it could be. No routed army ever produced so many demagogues yearning to displace the leader who had not led them to victory. The twin spirits of loyalty and discipline are now so lacking in Indian public life that when one subtracts what there was during the fervour of the political campaigns, there is indeed very little left. There was another aspect and

that was the quality of the Mahatma's leadership. I have heard many of his immediate followers joke about him, criticize him, and even carp at him in private. But those same critics, in his presence, so lose their identity under the influence of his strong personality, that they are willing to follow blindly whatever course he suggests. Even allowing for the disparity which many Indians feel may be permitted in one's criticism of a person behind his back and one's attitude to him face to face, I do not think that Mr. Gandhi's followers were carried away under the negative influence of their own cowardice so much as by the magnetism and authority of the Mahatma's appeal. His arguments may appear tortuous and inconsistent to a non-Indian, but he pronounces them with authority, and he is thus able in an emergency to make up his followers' minds for them. The difficulty arises when, after having accepted his lead, for various reasons, they change their minds. Instead of blaming themselves, they seek an exterior cause, and of course it is the leader they criticize.

I saw the Mahatma about five times on this occasion, and he, in turn, again spoke to the financier of the company. A few days later we learned that the latter was making arrangements to invest a further sum of money and take over the whole of the tangible assets of the company as the second mortgagee—the debenture holders having first preference.

The necessary legal documents were executed about the end of July and part of the debt due to London liquidated. No decision regarding the position of the company in its relation to the news services had, however, yet been reached.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

INDIA AT WORK

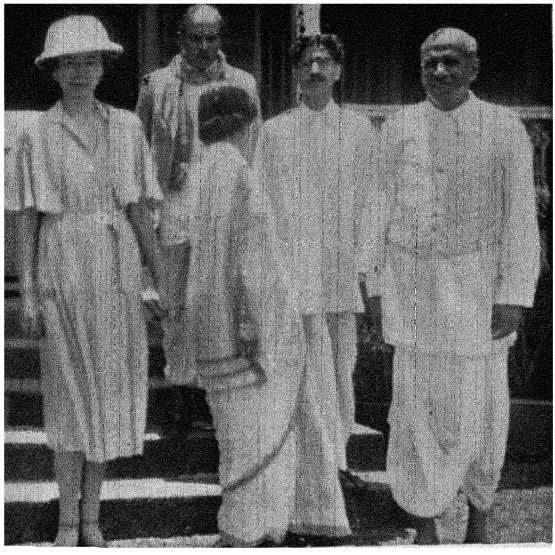
BY the time the monsoon was drawing to a close, I had been in India over six months. In that period I had acquired, by working in an organization where I was the only woman, as well as the only non-Indian, certain impressions of the Indian at work.

Bombay is to India what London is to England, or, more nearly, what New York used to be to the rest of the world. Everyone in other parts of India who is slightly superior to his colleagues and is anxious to "get on," goes to Bombay. The result is a vast population of people representing all the provinces, competing, in helter-skelter fashion, with each other. In this immigrant population, the Madrasis predominate. This is due to the poverty of their own province, in that it is industrially backward, and the Madrasis' proficiency in English. This makes them adaptable for all kinds of clerical positions, and one hardly comes across a stenographer in Bombay who is not a Madrasi. In addition, they are accustomed to live at a very economical rate, which enables them to compete favourably in the wage market.

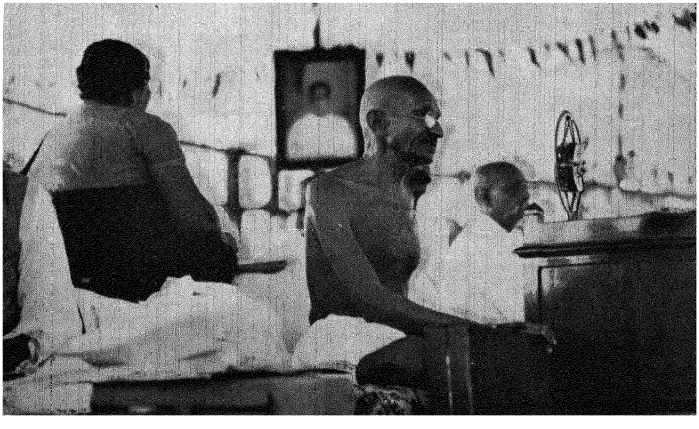
It is not surprising, therefore, that of all the provinces Madras has supplied more workers in English journalism, editorial, reporting, and mechanical, than any other province. Their memories are excellent and their minds subtle. The excellence of their memories has, however, many drawbacks. I remember once in London hearing a student from Madras recite one of Keats's poems in the

most unintelligible manner imaginable; it is doubtful whether he understood any of it. Under the provisions of the Press Act, the Indian Press is liable to very heavy penalties, including suspension of publication, if anything is published which might be construed as "bringing His Majesty's Government into hatred or contempt." This might, of course, be applied to almost any criticism of the Government, although, in practice, it is not. I mention the Act because I used to check most of the work expressing opinions before it got on to the rotary. How often was I reminded of the youth who gabbled Keats! Quite 75 per cent of the material containing vituperative phraseology, which I blue-pencilled, was the result of ignorance; ignorance of the different shades of meaning between, say, argued and harangued, criticized and abused, retires and "chucked out" (this was in a headline!)

I confess, however, to having used the blue pencil and explaining my reasons to the authors with considerable diffidence. It was not within my ability to write an editorial in any Indian language and I never heard of any European journalist in India who could have so written if called upon. It is true that one had no pretensions in this direction, but, at the same time, when one is amused—or angry—at some of the slips Indians make in speaking or writing English one must remember that it is a language which has been imposed on them by its adoption as the official language of the Courts and Legislatures. Not that there is anything detrimental to India in that; after all, it has opened up the way to the greatest literature in the world and has enabled the man from Bengal to speak to his brothers from the Punjab and Madras in a way which he could not have



MR. N. M. JOSHI (EXTREME RIGHT) WITH PANDIT H. N. KUNZRU, PRESIDENT, SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY, AT POONA, 1934



MAHATMA GANDHI ANNOUNCING HIS DECISION TO RETIRE FROM THE CONGRESS, BOMBAY CONGRESS, 1934

dreamt of in former days. Having heard the sponsors of Hindi, as the universal tongue for India, deliver a speech in that language, one knows that English expressions occur once in every five or six sentences.

This, then, is a plea for toleration in judging the deficiencies of Indian writers in English. One is immediately drawn on to the question whether, in the circumstances, the Press Act is not a necessity in that it *at least* makes writers pause and think. The whole of the Indian-owned Press, however, not only abhors the Press Act of 1931, but is of the opinion that the Government has already the widest powers, to take any action it may consider necessary, under Section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code; Sections 124A and 153A of the Indian Penal Code reinforce these powers.

Addressing the All-India Journalists' Conference in 1935, Mr. C. Y. Chintamini, the well-known editor of the *Leader* of Allahabad and a delegate to the first Round Table Conference, recalled the opinion of Edmund Burke that it was no excuse of a bad law that it would be employed with discrimination, that very sparing use would be made of it on proved necessity, and that it was intended more to be a salutary warning to persons prone to err than to be a penal measure in everyday use. Mr. Chintamini added that the very existence of a bad law on the statute book is demoralizing both to the possessors and the victims of authority. It tempts the former to seek short cuts to easy administration and is apt to make cowards and hypocrites of the latter.

In any event the application of the Act draws far more attention to the sentiments of an offending article than its original publication could ever do. I have myself been

the victim of a sensational Press, but I am convinced that I pursued the wiser course in not exercising the legal rights that were open to me. And, generally speaking, unless there is some perversion, the Indian journalist is amenable to reason and argument. One cannot press too strongly for closer contacts between the authorities and the Press. By their aloofness, and hitherto partiality to the Anglo-Indian Press, the former have been largely responsible for the spirit of bravado which is in no small part underlying the present attitude of the Indian-owned Press. The coming into operation of the new constitution, and the consequent coming to closer grips with practical problems by Indian Ministers, will necessitate a Press that is both keen and informed if public life is to develop along healthy lines. The administration would do well to remember the words of Lord Rosebery, spoken over twenty-five years ago: "The power of a great newspaper, with the double function of guiding and embodying the public opinion of the province over which it exerts an influence, is immeasurably greater than that of any statesman can be"; and reflect on the dangers of driving this great influence into opposition.

These observations might have come more appropriately in the chapter on the Press, but they are included here because the course of events with which I was concerned was very much affected by the further loss of a security of Rs. 20,000 on account of an article written by a leader writer who, though slightly fanatical in his nationalism, is as reasonable as any student of philosophy, such as he, could be. How much better would have been a friendly discussion between him and the authorities—which might easily have led to an emendation of his

original statement—than the forfeiture of the deposit which led to India-wide attention to the article, widespread publicity for the views it expressed, and consequently equally widespread sympathy for the victims of the Press Act. Official imagination, which is so restricted by the very nature of the course which is pursued, would stand to gain immeasurably by encouraging a friendly approach by the Press, which is a feature of British journalism.

Notwithstanding the greater poverty, the Indian employee frequently shows much less anxiety to retain his job than his English brother. He will be unpunctual, he will absent himself on the flimsiest excuses, and he will suddenly go away to his native district for weeks on end to attend some family ceremony or other. His job may or may not be open to him on his return. But the meagreness of his material wants and the existence of the joint family system—which makes it incumbent on the head of the family to see that the family resources are made available to all the members—leads to a sense of, if not security, at least the knowledge that there is no question of destitution.

There is another tendency, with which no non-Indian can fail to be struck, and that is the very small extent to which responsibility is delegated in Indian concerns. The head of a firm will work all the hours of the day and many of the night supervising the details of his organization's activities. There exists nothing comparable to the work-proud foreman class with which English people are familiar. Absence of responsibility for their own political affairs may, in turn, lead Indians to a disbelief in the capacity of their own people and thus

to the development of so many "one man" institutions. On the other hand, it may be due to defects in the present educational system which, while producing B.A.S and M.A.S, does not seem to produce many men of the type who, having been instructed to undertake a certain piece of work, will see it through to the end with a due sense of initiative and responsibility. This aspect of the Indian character has its basis, perhaps, more in the sociological circumstances than in the educational conditions which, after all, are governed and affected by the social environment. It will be referred to again in the chapters on the Women and Youth of India.

There is no doubt that the youth of India is quick to learn and anxious to learn. There is also no doubt that, at the present, his capacities tend more to facility in imitation rather than to originality. It is not just enough to put the responsibility for this on to the inherent conservatism of the Hindu social structure, for that structure existed when Hindustan was amazing the world with the beauty of her arts and the wonder of her crafts. Nor is it enough, as many nationalists are tempted to do, to blame the comparatively short period of British rule in India. The truth, it would seem, is to be found in a combination of reasons. In the first place, as the various crafts are practised by certain communities or castes as hereditary trades, there is no infiltration of fresh blood and ideas. But more important is the irresponsible pursuit of wealth, which is the main occupation of a class which might otherwise be regarded as nation-builders.

Whatever may be India's reputation for "spirituality," her urban populations can show as great a proportion of materialists as any other country. This partly arises

from a desire to be on an equal financial footing with the alien rulers. But it has the effect of forcing people into activities which yield a quick and easy return, the development of a class of *entrepreneurs* who cannot be said to contribute to the nation-building strength of the country. Most of the fortunes of commercial India have been built up simply on buying and selling; commodities, bullion, foreign manufactures. The real backbone of the country is the ryot, the peasant who is toiling today with the same kind of implements used hundreds of years ago.

If the wealthy classes, having achieved their bank balances, put them to some practical use, one would have more sympathy with the diligence with which they pursue their ends. "You see that man?" I have often been asked, "Well, he is worth a crore (Rs. 10,000,000)." "What does he do with all that money?" I have, in turn, questioned. "Nothing: just counts his bank balance at night" has been the semi-jocular, semi-tragic answer.

There are many such men, without hobbies, without interests except those derived from hoarding. Their personal tastes necessitate but the barest standard of living, and very often the sole result of their avarice is that in course of time their fortunes are inherited and dissipated by indolent sons; all of which might be a form of circulating money, but has left India not one iota the richer.

Fortunately there are exceptions to this tendency, for otherwise there would be a very depressing outlook. The Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas Village School Building Scheme is one such exception. Under this scheme Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas has endowed and equipped over a hundred village schools in the Surat district, where

accommodation is provided for nearly ten thousand pupils. In order that the village people shall take a pride in the building up of this network of primary schools, contributions have been invited from them and they have provided approximately one-third of the cost. In addition to the schools there are about one hundred and fifty libraries which are open to the villagers.

When one remembers the many private endowments in England from which the great educational system has sprung, one is surprised that there are not more well-to-do Indians to promote and foster such schemes. In this connection no one can fail to be struck by the munificence of the Parsee community of Bombay. So far as the self-styled "Nationalists" are concerned there is a disposition to act on the belief that no work of a nation-building character can be undertaken successfully under an alien Government. Those who have made the attempt, however, so far from experiencing impediments, have often derived considerable assistance from the Government.

It is not that there is no philanthropy in India, but so often it takes the form of tribute to temples, sadhus, and priests. Nobody has ever been able to compute the amount, but crores of rupees must pass hands in India every year in that form of charity which brings no return to the country. On the people who hold that this form of sacrifice brings a spiritual return to the country, I make no comment. But with those nationalists who have the means and attempt no work of this character pending the settlement of political issues, one cannot have much patience.

Another question which used often to occur to me was why no political leader had made the abolition of com-

munity costumes an integral part of his programme. The various types of dress and headgear one comes across in India certainly add to the picturesqueness of the country and enable one to tell at a glance from what part a particular individual may come as well as his nominal religion. But they also lead one to prejudge a person without a hearing. One automatically begins to docket him and to associate with him whatever may be the particular prejudices concerning his community. Mr. Gandhi's advocacy of the simplest *khaddar* apparel and the wearing of the white cap by Congressmen have gone some way to abolish community distinctions, but no one, so far as I know, has openly sponsored a universal dress. If one of the most powerful arguments against the wearing of different coloured shirts by the partisans of certain political creeds in Europe is that it arouses prejudices on sight, how much more true is the argument in a country where the people are *enfranchised* on a community basis? The regulation of costume by the authorities would be by no means an innovation, and as political-cum-communal friction re-occurs perhaps someone will be so bold as to defy orthodoxy and advocate reforms along the lines of the Turkish example.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CONGRESS MEETS IN BOMBAY

BY October 1934 most of the prisoners convicted, or otherwise detained, for their participation in the civil disobedience movement had been released. Moreover, the decision of the Congress leaders the previous May, under the influence of Dr. M. A. Ansari, to abandon their policy of boycotting the Legislatures and to contest the forthcoming elections, had led to Mr. Gandhi's suspension of the general civil disobedience movement and, in consequence, the lifting of the ban by the Government on the various Congress organizations.

The Indian National Congress was to meet for the first time for four years in the city where it was born almost fifty years previously. Excitement was great. Much had happened since the last meeting in Lahore when the Congress had voted in favour of Independence; the Round Table Conferences, the White Paper (which Congress had rejected), the imprisonment of the nationalist leaders, the Communal Award, Mr. Gandhi's Poona Pact, his decision to retire from Congress, the advance of the Socialists, and last, but not least, the adoption of a policy of Council entry.

The Bombay Congress leaders were anxious to secure a site for the meeting within the city area, but the authorities, with an eye on the effects of such a vast concourse on the health and traffic conditions of the city, declined to agree. Eventually a site was chosen at Worli sea-front, a few miles from Bombay proper. As soon as sanction

had been secured, a host of builders, plumbers, and electricians began their installation operations.

The venue was perfect. It was on a vast rising mound overlooking the Arabian Sea, which, after its monsoon ferocity, once more invited the fishing smacks to plumb into its rich depths. Gaunt, but picturesque, coconut palms fringed the sea shore, beckoning first, so it seemed, from this direction and then from that, according to where one stood.

No one in India ever expects an exhibition to be ready on the opening day; with luck it is generally completed on the final session. It was not surprising, therefore, to find the Congress Nagar (Congress City) of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, named after the Frontier leader, but half finished on the opening day. I think that the crowds at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1923 are the nearest comparison to the vast concourse of delegates and visitors who thronged the Congress Nagar. The city was divided up into a Swadeshi (Indian-made products) Exhibition Ground, an enormous open meeting place for the public sessions of the Congress, an enclosed *pandal* (or tent) where the deliberations of the Subjects Committee took place and where all the effective decisions of the Working Committee were endorsed, an Exhibition of Indian Art, and the "camps" of the various leaders and their followers. Most of the delegates were, of course, housed in the city itself, and it was very interesting to see the different contingents from the various provinces.

Large temporary arches, built on the Moghul pattern, had been erected all round the city, which was illuminated by a million and one coloured electric lights. The *pandal* for the Subjects Committee was a large, approximately

circular construction covered with bamboo matting on the outside and lined with *khaddar* (hand-spun and hand-woven cloth). The erection was supported by poles every here and there around which were wound strips of bunting in the Congress colours—green, orange, and white. Suspended from the "roof" were electric lights and fans. By way of extra decoration, there were festoons of leaves and flowers. The whole effect was extremely pleasing. Delegates sat on the ground and each was supplied with a little desk—three pieces of three-ply wood hastily thrown together, but, nonetheless, serving the purpose.

One's first impression was of the vastness and the orderliness of the crowds who were being directed by Congress "Volunteers," dressed in khaki shorts and jackets with Sam Browne belts and "Air Force" caps. There were guards of honour and volunteers "armed" with *lathis* (long poles) at the slope; an interesting manifestation of the military spirit in a passive organization.

Although Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan—the "Frontier Gandhi"—is regarded as a dangerous leader, he speaks in the mildest tones, both in public and private. Bombay was hearing him for the first time since his imprisonment and release. As he was extolling the virtues of Swadeshi (Indian-made) goods, I caught sight of a procession of some thirty coolies carrying huge packing cases on which was painted in large black letters: "Made in England"! His speech over, an imperious voice told the crowd, through the microphone, to sit on the ground and allow the Khan Saheb to pass through. Of all the incredible tunes to play, a brass band struck up: "All the robbers are breaking through!" It is recorded that on a former

occasion when the President of the Congress was mounting the rostrum, the band broke out with "The Girl I Left Behind Me!"

The "Frontier Gandhi" did not enjoy his freedom for very long, for soon after he was arrested for a strong speech which he delivered at a social settlement in Bombay. Although he paid a deep tribute to the English missionary who had taught him much in his youth, he also implied that the English were responsible for the divisions amongst the Indian people. The Congress leaders were greatly perturbed, and the lawyers examined the speech to see whether a defence were possible. It was agreed that it was not. Mr. Gandhi desired the Khan Saheb to express regret—which he did—but he received his sentence all the same.

The vendors of Indian-made goods yelled themselves hoarse—almost like the hawkers at Happy Hampstead on August Bank holiday, if the comparatively solemn Indian crowds can be compared with their exuberant Cockney brothers. Samples of this and samples of that were being pressed on us, as footsore and weary, we sought the exit on our way home late in the evening. "Stop! Memsahib, free sample," and a small packet was pressed into my hand and the hands of my Indian companions. We looked at the parcel, and, to our inexpressible embarrassment, saw that it was a sanitary towel. We were not reading the sophisticated advertisements of an American magazine; we were within the precincts of the Indian National Congress, *indeed* the sponsor of "direct action"! "We came for Independence," laughed the cynical lady politician who was with me, "and we were given sanitary towels!"

On the following day Bombay was *en fête* for the triumphal arrival of the President, Babu Rajendra Prasad of Bihar. It was a Sunday and thousands of sightseers gathered along the route of the procession, the first sign of which was the emergence of outriders—the local papers called them "Cavalry." Dressed in volunteer uniforms, the majority of them sat their horses very well. Now and again there were rounded shoulders, but, generally speaking, their bearing was as good as, say, the horsemen's in a French village fête. They carried the Congress flags like the heralds of a new dawn—which, no doubt, they felt they were. Then came a "detachment" of "troops" carrying *lathis* as though they were bayonets. Afterwards came the coach and four carrying the President, who was accompanied by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mr. K. F. Nariman, the Mayor of Bombay for 1935–36. The President wore the outfit of a peasant, as is his custom, and he had his hands folded in salute. One thought of the European conception of the appropriate attitude for a king or potentate, and, again looking at Mr. Prasad, the very picture of humility, one realized the difference in values.

Monday was the Mahatma's day of silence, and it was therefore given over to the deliberations of the Working Committee (the "Cabinet" of the Congress). On Tuesday he was to make his momentous (favourite Indian adjective) announcement regarding his retirement from the Congress. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, as the retiring President, spoke first. Then he garlanded his successor and Mr. Prasad spoke a few words. Then came the Mahatma. He spoke in Hindi, but one could follow as a result of the introduction of many English phrases.

After he had finished one delegate rose and asked for a rendering in English.

"That seems a very good reason why I should remain in Congress," remarked Mr. Gandhi to the amusement of the meeting and himself. "We want you to stay and teach us Hindi"—from another part of the tent. "Why! I have been doing it for fifteen years," was Mr. Gandhi's retort, "and this shows you what a failure I am." More mirth.

Then he began his speech in English. At the end he consulted his watch and said he would give delegates twenty-five minutes in which to express their opinions, but they must be short and concise. The Mahatma was usurping the chairman's functions and he suddenly seemed to realize it, for he smilingly said: "Well, give me twenty minutes of being a dictator. After all, I am half in the chair!" The informality which Indians introduce into deliberations of this kind is very charming so long as it is good natured—not that Mr. Gandhi could be otherwise. But I have seen the other side of informality when books, chairs, and inkpots have been thrown about —when it loses all its charm.

His colleagues had already reconciled themselves to the Mahatma's retirement, and it was the younger men who appealed to him to remain. But his mind was made up, and when he left the tent of the Subjects Committee that afternoon he did not thereafter return. Whether he will return one day is a subject for later speculation.

Just before five the tea interval was announced and Mrs. Naidu took me to the tent of the All-India Congress Committee. There I met Mr. T. C. Goswami, the Bengal politician, dressed in a spotless handspun and woven

dhoti. "Hullo," asked a mutual friend, "when did you last see Goswami?" "In the bar of the Savoy," I replied truthfully, but to the merriment of those surrounding, many of whom were either Oxford or Cambridge graduates. Abstention from intoxicating drink is one of the Congress maxims.

We were all laughing at the contrast, when we suddenly caught sight of what appeared, at first glance, to be a number of white marble torsos. A second look, and they proved to be three or four porcelain lavatory pans, lying horizontally on the ground. This was the tea tent, but no one had thought of covering them up with some of the bamboo mats which were at hand.

After tea we went to see the Mahatma. Four separate cottages had been built in the President's camp. One was for Abdul Ghaffar Khan, appropriately decorated with red bunting and furnished with red wicker chairs and tables. Mr. Gandhi's came next, decorated in a kind of mustard colour, then the retiring President's with green, and the incoming President's with yellow.

Having taken off our shoes, we waited in the outer room until we were called in. Mr. Gandhi was seated on the usual white mattress, chewing stalks of celery.

"Hullo," he said to me, "Are your troubles over yet?"

"Well—it depends what one means by 'over,'" I replied, not wishing to discuss anything in front of others.

"You know," he continued, "the outlook is always bright if you really *feel* it is bright."

I just smiled, but Mrs. Naidu interjected, "It is not nearly so simple as all that, Mahatmaji."

"I am so sorry," he replied, and the subject was dropped.

The spectacular part of the Congress was the open

session which was attended by between seventy-five thousand and a hundred thousand delegates and visitors. This enormous crowd was accommodated in what was a vast natural amphitheatre. Owing to the heat of the day, the meetings were, of course, held at night, and the crowds started to collect as soon as the sun had begun to set. I was invited to sit on the platform with the Working Committee, and from this position of vantage I watched the sea of faces stretching out almost as far as the eye could see—little brown discs in an otherwise uninterrupted ocean of white; a huge bunch of human marguerites. Most magnificent of all canopies was the sky above; shafts of brilliant red and orange gave way to the more tender hues of mauve and blue, to be, in their turn, transformed into mystic shades of grey and lilac. Night came; the canopy now a deep rich blue—supple as velvet—decorated with myriad starry spangles.

On the platform were the President, Mr. Prasad, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai (the present Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly), Mr. K. F. Nariman (Mayor of Bombay, 1935–36), Mr. K. M. Munshi (Advocate and author), the late Dr. M. A. Ansari (leader of the Congress Moslems), Pandit M. A. Malaviya (the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha), as well as many other leaders from Bombay and other provinces. They belonged to three well-defined groups —those who, retaining their nationalist outlook, were in favour of the economic *status quo*; the Socialists; and those who, still thinking along religious lines, wanted the Congress to "reject" the Communal Award.

The President addressed the "House" through a microphone on the platform, but other speakers spoke from

an elevated rostrum near the centre of the crowd. Their voices were carried to the farthest listeners through loud-speakers. There were many lively incidents due to the inability of some of the speakers to address the Congress in Hindi. Sometimes the crowd showed its hostility to unpopular speakers by insisting that they should speak in Hindi when it was known that this was not possible. Now and again translations were given.

Voting was by show of hands—not so difficult a procedure as may be imagined. The entire amphitheatre had been divided into sections for the delegates and visitors from the various provinces, and the approximate accommodation in each section was known to the tellers attached to each province. Their figures were conveyed to the platform, calculations quickly made, and the result announced within a minute or so.

One collected many impressions during the week's proceedings, but the chief one was of the successful organization of so enormous a gathering on so little money. About a lakh of rupees (£7,000) was spent on the structural, drainage, and electricity expenses, and this amount was balanced by the entrance fees and contributions from wealthy patrons. There was nothing impressive about the architectural side, but then it was a temporary arrangement for one week only. The chief value about the meeting, one felt, was the propaganda value. That this side was overweighted in favour of the more necessary fundamental discussions seems to have been realized by Mr. Gandhi and the other leaders who made recommendations, which were adopted by the open Congress, in favour of fewer delegates at future Congress meetings and the formation of provincial

Committees which would be less unwieldy than they were at present.

Outstanding amongst the Congress personalities, in addition to those I have already described, were Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, Mr. K. M. Munshi, Mr. K. F. Nariman (all of Bombay); Dr. B. C. Roy (of Calcutta); Mr. C. Rajgopalachari (of Madras), and Mr. M. S. Aney.

Mr. Desai, the Leader of the Congress in the Legislative Assembly, is approaching his sixtieth year. He is short and sturdy, a brilliant lawyer and a forceful orator. His professional speeches in the Law Courts are so immeasurably superior to his political speeches that one wonders whether he has not strayed from his vocation. Moreover, his ready mind and tongue—invaluable in his profession—so frequently lead him into trouble politically that one is led to see some substance in the suggestion that he is capable of being his own worst friend. Temperamentally, Mr. Desai is more suited to the constructive work of office than to opposition and non-co-operation, and the next few years should see him playing an important role.

Mr. K. M. Munshi is also an Advocate of the Bombay High Court. He possesses considerable driving force, but would pride himself, no doubt, more on his contribution to Gujerati literature than to political thought, in which realm he is not very sure of his ground. Adroit in argument, he too would be seen to better advantage in office than on the political platform; a possibility which has, perhaps, not escaped his attention.

Of all the Bombay politicians perhaps Mr. K. F. Nariman can command the widest support. His aban-

donment of his legal career in the cause of nationalist politics and his persistent exposure of the Bombay development administration greatly appealed to the popular imagination. His year of office as Mayor of Bombay added to his reputation as one who could satisfy all parties without sacrificing his essential principles. Yet it is as a provincial politician that Mr. Nariman is likely to make his mark, not because of any deficiency, but on account of his wide experience in municipal and local affairs.

Dr. B. C. Roy plays little part in the present political scene, having withdrawn himself as the result of the internecine quarrels in the Bengal Provincial Congress. How long this genial personality will be allowed to remain off the stage depends on the development of affairs in his province.

No allusion to the leading personalities of the Congress would be complete without a description of Mr. Rajgopalachari. "No-changer" in 1922, he remains of the same opinion to this day. That is to say, he feels that no useful object can be served by the Congress entering the Councils and working a Constitution in which they have no faith. Many would describe this Madras leader as the idol of his province. Softly spoken and gracious, he has a gentle sense of humour and a great capacity for leadership. He, too, has given up his legal practice for political work since 1920, a fact which endears him to his followers. Of all the Congress politicians, Mr. Rajgopalachari most closely resembles Mr. Gandhi in his political and social values, and it is fitting, perhaps, that the latter's youngest son should be married to the Madras leader's daughter, though they are of entirely different castes.

Two other personalities come to one's mind. They are of Mr. S. Satyamurti of Madras and Mr. Subash Chandra Bose of Calcutta. They are both ambitious and in any future controversy in the Congress ranks over a more clearly defined programme, are destined, other factors being equal, to play important parts.

The dominant figure in Congress politics, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was at this time in gaol undergoing his seventh term of imprisonment.

I returned from Worli one evening to find that the financier had made an application before the High Court for the appointment of a Receiver and the redemption of his mortgage. He did not succeed on the Interim Motions. The suit was to be heard the following February; we were thus at least another four months away from the "satisfactory solution in regard to the News Agency" in connection with which I had been asked to remain in India. Had it not been for the obligation imposed on me by the heavy liabilities of the company in London, I would not have remained in India and continued to work for the organization to which I was attached.

Not only was the work on the newspaper arduous, due to climatic conditions, to the erratic conduct of certain of the staff, to frequent lightning strikes, and to one's attempt to influence in favour of an unsensational attitude during tense political conditions, but the intrigue into which it was now becoming obvious one had been enmeshed, took away that zest which is the foundation of all good work.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

INDIA AT THE POLLS

THOSE who declare that the problem of India is not a purely political problem—which will be solved by the ascendancy of this or that existing political party or by the extension of the franchise here and the curtailment of power there—could cull ample support from the elections to the Assembly of November 1934.

Although the policy of Council entry had been officially endorsed, the Congress was by no means united in its views on this policy. There was a large section which not only believed that any form of co-operation under the present constitution was futile, but also that the necessary contact with official life which work in the Legislatures would involve, would lead to the contamination of the morale of the Congress members. They referred to the "lesson" of 1924 when, after a period of non-co-operation, Congress abandoned that policy and entered the Councils; and they made the reference not without some point. But it was a confession of weakness, and the view that strength must come through experience prevailed. The bargaining spirit, so strong in India, had been introduced into the legislatures and the "secret history" of Indian politics bristles with stories of how this and that man was bought. But then the history of the House of Commons has something to tell about the traffic in votes. All these incidents are but the growing pains of a system of democracy which, an ideal in itself, is yet in a very crude state of development. To run away from

the effects of these pains is to permanently soften the character, and the Congress leaders did well in agreeing to face up to the realities of the material they had to handle.

The Congress members who thought otherwise, though, were not reconciled to the new policy, and they constituted, as it were, an opposition block within the Congress camp. Then there were the Congress Socialists, much irritated by what they considered Mr. Gandhi's metaphysical and equivocal attitude to their policy, and by some unfortunate deprecatory remarks of Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel. The latter has a considerable following amongst the peasantry of Gujerat as a result of the rural reconstruction and no-tax campaigns which he initiated. He was also one of the administrators of the huge Flood Relief Fund of about twenty lakhs of rupees which had been subscribed to in 1927 by the generous Bombay public. Much of his reputation is due to the experience and popularity he acquired during the carrying out of this work.

One of the problems the Congress Socialists have to face, so far as the practical application of their policy is concerned, is the problem of peasant proprietorship of land; a proprietorship circumscribed, no doubt, by indebtedness which sometimes clings to the family for generations, but, all the same, a proprietorship conferring a sense of identity with a particular piece of land. The Socialists have their answers. But when a man like Mr. Patel with special knowledge of and influence over the peasantry expresses himself in no uncertain terms, the tension is bound to be of a kind which threatens a split.

When India went to the polls, therefore, the people

who made themselves heard were the Council-entry and "rejection of the White Paper" section of the Congress, the "non-co-operating" section of the Congress, the Socialist section of the Congress, and the orthodox Hindu or "rejection of the Communal Award" section of the Congress.

There *were* candidates from other parties. But they could not secure a public hearing. Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, for example, the Liberal Party candidate for Bombay City, did not address a single public meeting during the whole of his campaign; he would have been shouted down, to say the least of the possibilities. Of course, India is not unique in this kind of intolerance; I have heard members shouted down in the French Chamber and before the Nazi regime, have seen scenes of even greater violence in the German Reichstag. The point is that here is a hitherto passive and emotional people being led along the path of a system which, when it breaks down, leads to Fascism and Naziism. Is it a blind alley so far as the *welfare* and the *well-being* of the people are concerned? Ought we not to be clear in our minds that India is on the threshold of a prolonged struggle, no more bitter part of which may be the realization that much of what is loosely termed "progress" is illusory?

An even more serious aspect of the prevailing election tactics was the large extent to which personation was practised. Title-holders, men whose names and appearance were known to all and sundry, went to the polling stations and found that their votes had already been utilized. The same thing happened not only in the Municipal elections but also in the Congress elections for the members of the Provincial Committee. In the

former, proceedings were taken in the High Court over the conduct of the elections in a certain ward of Bombay City and the plaintiffs were successful in having the results set aside and the elected candidates unseated. Although these elections took place in the beginning of 1935, the last has not been heard of the litigation arising therefrom.

The generous statutory limitation on the amount a candidate may spend over his election expenses not only gives rise to a wealth of stories regarding the buying of votes, but it genuinely handicaps the candidate of slender means. It may not follow that the well-to-do candidate always takes advantage of his wealth, but it would hardly be human if he did not utilize his resources to the maximum, especially when there are so many anxious to profit from his fear of the success of the other side.

Moreover, in a country where the constituencies are enormous, the cost of contesting an election is correspondingly large. This postulates either the backing of a party with considerable financial resources or private wealth on the part of the candidates. Success on the basis of individual merit alone seems inconceivable; the odds are too overwhelming. And the vested interests will squeeze out the "disinterested" public worker.

I watched the voting going on from the various polling stations in Bombay; there were only four and the crush was enormous. As the franchise is based on property and not on educational qualifications, it was inevitable that a proportion of the electors looked less intelligent than the others.

"How do you think they discriminate in their minds," I asked my companion, a Congressman, "between Sir

Cowasjee Jehangir (the Liberal candidate) and Dr. Deshmukh and Mr. Munshi (the Congress candidates)?"

"Well, replied my guide, "they sort of feel that the Congress repesents the 'good fellows.' The Congress is the party of the people who went to gaol and who sacrificed their careers."

The appeal is of a popular and emotional character. My mind went back to the election meetings I had addressed in England—the comparatively small proportion of the electors who could have expressed an opinion on, say, the Gold Standard or on foreign policy, that was not of the crudest nature. I thought of the "fickle" voters of Britain where a constituency might change its political colour—as defined at the polls—overnight. The aim of the Congress has been—and it is not illegitimate—to impress on the people that they are the 'good fellows.' The spectacular demonstrations in the civil disobedience movements were all directed towards the awakening of a mass consciousness which would at some time be used as a driving force. If this policy needed any vindication, from the point of view of the Congress leadership, it received it when the results of the general elections of 1934 were declared; the Congress nominees were returned in even greater numbers than had been hoped by the most sanguine prophets of that organization.

It is a commentary on the situation, however, that despite the eulogies of praise the Congress leaders had showered on the women for their participation in the various Congress activities, not the slightest effort was made to ensure that a woman representative was returned to the Assembly. The emancipation of women, in which the Congress expresses profound belief, would have

received, one felt, far greater impetus by the election of at least one woman to the Central Legislature than all the platitudinous remarks of men who were doing nothing more to achieve this end.

After all, if the argument that the election platform (even if it is confined to manifestos and the columns of the Press) provides the best means of ventilating the nationalist cause is valid, it is equally applicable to the case of women who in India suffer many disabilities.

The new Constitution will, to a certain extent, remedy this state of affairs in that a certain number of seats will be especially reserved for women both in the Federal Centre and the Provincial Lower Houses. The reservation of these special seats, necessary to secure adequate representation, will have the drawback that women will not be expected to enter as candidates in the other constituencies. This is a pity, for there are a number of women who could represent a general constituency in the Central or Provincial Legislatures with distinction. But as the male vote will be nearly five times larger than the female vote, this day is not likely to come in the near future.

To judge from the conduct of the various elections which I have seen in India, there is much evidence to support the contention that a mere extension of the franchise will not lead anyone very far so long as the constituencies are constituted on the present basis. People, it is stated, may be deluded in believing that the addition of a few more thousand voters on to the electoral rolls will be a safeguard against the depression of their working conditions by reason of the political power they can exercise. This may be so, for they will

not be equipped to safeguard themselves against the worst forms of demagogy which will then be practised. One argument heard in favour of adult franchise in India is that it would then not be possible for a candidate to bribe the electors—with any appreciable result. But then the electors can be bribed in more ways than with money, it is contended by opponents.

Not only can the electors be bribed but attempts are sometimes made by voters to extort their own price for their votes. I have seen a letter from a voter on the roll of electors for the Council of State, that is to say, a super-tax payer, who promised to vote for a certain candidate *on condition* that the latter exerted his influence to get a brother of the writer a particular post. One could not, happily, generalize from this incident.

These aspects of the present electoral system in India are touched upon to illustrate a view which may gain ground that some political idea other than parliamentary democracy may emerge after the first elections under the new constitution.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

PLAINTIFFS AND DEFENDANTS

MR. C. F. ANDREWS, arrived in India in December and he was naturally interested and concerned about the various experiences I had encountered. He saw a number of the leading politicians with a view to seeing whether anything could be done about the deplorable impression which was being given in England regarding the development of the situation. The concensus of opinion seemed to be that no one had yet got to the bottom of the matter and, therefore, that nothing could be done effectively by outsiders. Either one persevered, and took the consequences, or one gave in and left the mystery unsolved.

In January I went to Madras for discussions with the editors of the English and Tamil papers there which were in the group. Bombay is hybrid and commercial, Madras is homogeneous and academic. Bombay is congested, Madras is spacious. The magnificent promenade along the sea front, the setting of the Government and other official buildings in an impressive row facing the Bay of Bengal, the charmingly designed flower-beds and the well-tended streets all impart an atmosphere of grace and ease, so noticeable to the visitor from Bombay where nothing seems to have been planned and there is not a single noteworthy road.

Blots on this pleasing prospect, of course, there were. Not the least was the sight of man being made to do the work of a beast of burden. In Bombay one is used to

coolies carrying far too heavy burdens on their heads. In Madras, though, one saw groups of two, four, or six men dragging along enormous loads fit for nothing less than a lorry. One almost imagined that one saw harness on them—though, of course, one did not. The marvel of it was that their bodies, tall and straight, seemed to be quite healthy. The constant exercise, one argued to oneself, had developed them thus. Then a heavy lorry would pass and one would wonder at the anachronism in this mechanical age. Supposing, one asked oneself, there were lorries for the asking, would these men then be put out of employment? And the answer was: "Yes, unless there were some wonderful reorganization of the economic system so that it automatically absorbed those who were displaced as a result of 'progessive' discoveries."

It was very pleasing to go to Adyar and see the place about which I had heard Dr. Besant speak so much; one of the cradles of the Indian renaissance. The well-kept gardens (it was raining, though, when I was there), the famous banyan-tree with its thousands of branches, the rich library, and the interesting Hall of Prayer, containing representations, and bearing inscriptions from the works, of all the great religious teachers, conjured up many memories of that departed personality.

I visited all the newspapers of importance in Madras and saw the conditions under which they worked. Journalists in Europe and America would be interested to see their counterparts in Southern India. Followers of either Vishnu or Shiva, many of them wear their caste marks on their foreheads. Sometimes the hair is left to grow long in the middle and shaved off at the outer circumference of the scalp; sometimes the front half is

completely shaved and the remainder allowed to grow long and twisted in a plait. Their clothing is often of the scantiest. But, so interesting are the contrasts in the India of today, that side by side with such men at the sub-editor's table you will find a colleague smartly dressed in a well-cut tropical suit, complete with college tie.

The personnel of the Madras Press appeared altogether less mercurial than that of its Bombay counterpart, one felt, as one noticed that everything went on quietly and smoothly, no matter the politics of the paper. Subsequently, I was able to compare these conditions with those prevailing in Calcutta, Allahabad, Lucknow, Delhi, and Lahore, and, with the exception of Allahabad, Madras leads in at least what appears to be quiet and efficient administration. There is, of course, an atmosphere of repose about the city itself, something like that of the English cathedral and university cities, in spite of the fact that there are numerous industries serving the whole of Southern India.

It was with regret that I left Madras to return to Bombay and the troubles that were brewing there. They were becoming far too complicated, and although I had no say in the conduct of affairs (I did not want any) one was being every minute affected by their development.

From the time that unharmonious relations with the financier began, the management of the company had declined, on certain grounds, to pay the amounts due to the rival agency. As a result in the beginning of February, that agency filed a suit for the recovery of these moneys and stopped all their services to the papers in the group. Five newspapers found themselves one afternoon without any news for the next day's editions.

There was nothing for it but to agree to assist in

whatever might be suggested as a way out of the difficulty. Cables were sent to London requesting the immediate resumption of the full world service and telegrams were sent to correspondents throughout India. It was the day of the important debate in the House of Commons on the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The notice had been so short and the credit of the organization in London so low that one wondered whether it were going to be possible to set all the machinery into motion once more. At midnight, to our relief, we knew that the London Office had been able to rise to the occasion, for the cables started to flow in. To our satisfaction, we found the next day that while we had not of course touched the opposition in the sphere of bulk, we did not miss a single point of the debate. In addition, we had reported some three or four more speakers than they had been able to do.

The editing of the foreign cables, the writing of the editorials on foreign affairs, and the furnishing of a special feature each day were my work, and there began a period when for six months I did not go to bed till three or four in the morning—except on Sundays, when the office was closed.

The hearing of the financier's suit began shortly afterwards. After arguments on both sides, lasting some days, the plaintiffs agreed to accept less than half the amount due to them in full settlement of their claim on condition that the money was found within two months.

In the meantime the organization decided to file a counter-claim against its erstwhile supplier of news for alleged breach of agreement. As a result, in the beginning of April the rival agency produced an affidavit, in reply

to the counter-claim, denying such an agreement and setting out their version of an agreement between themselves and the financier. This affidavit alleged that, as a condition of the rival agency supplying news to the company's group of papers, the financier had undertaken not to finance any of the news agency activities of the group.

This version differed from the solicitor's account of what the financier had said to us; namely, that in the negotiations "he had not taken any personal liability in respect of such agreement."

My perplexity was profound. Daily the liabilities in London were increasing and daily the prospect of meeting them decreased as legal charges mounted up. Yet what was one to do? Whatever was the truth of the arrangements that had been entered into in Bombay, there was no question that we in London—the creditors in London—had been placed in a most unenviable situation. By this time I had been a year in India and so far from being nearer a solution of the problem, confusion had become worse confounded.

The rival agency's suit was due to be heard in June; the mortgage to be paid off by April. By now the intrigues associated with the company had become so popular a subject of conversation that it was difficult to escape from them; one developed a feeling of nausea whenever they were raised.

April came and, for various reasons, the management failed in their attempt to raise the necessary amount to pay off the mortgage. By May it was obvious that my health would not stand the strain much longer; there were some nights when, after a day in the Courts, I would have to do all my work after midnight and before

2.30 a.m. Mr. C. F. Andrews again discussed the matter with Mr. Gandhi, who suggested that I should join him in Bombay in the third week of May and travel with him to Borsad, where he was going to visit an area which had been smitten by plague. This was to provide an opportunity for a full discussion.

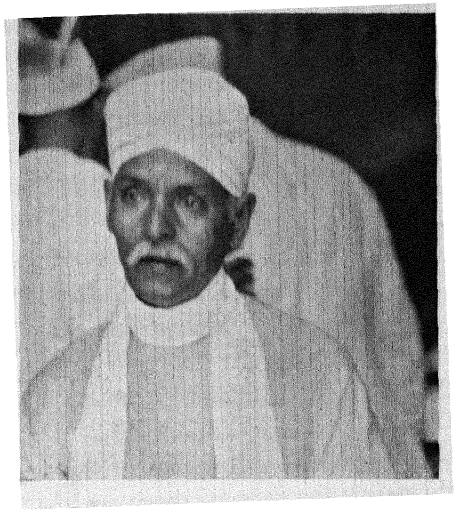
By the time Mr. Gandhi arrived my health was so bad that I was advised against undertaking a journey —especially in a third class carriage which in India is approximately like the English goods vans. As a result I saw Mr. Gandhi in Bombay, although he was only passing through, for a few hours.

He remarked on the ill effects of the strain, but said that "Truth should prevail above all else" and that I should see the proceedings through.

"Well, you *are* having some experiences in India," he remarked, as I told him what had happened since we had last met.

By the third week in June further troubles came pelting down like the monsoon through which we were then living. The Government of Bombay forfeited the security of Rs. 20,000 deposited under the Press Act by one of the company's newspapers in Bombay on account of two articles which had been written by the staff on the Quetta earthquake relief.

On the question of the security under the Press Act it was obvious that the Government would ask for a deposit of at least another Rs. 20,000, and it was decided to call a meeting of the debenture holders, the trustees for whom were then in possession; the trustees being the same as the old management. Ten days was the period allowed by the Act for the provision of fresh security.



PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA



MIRABEN (MISS MADELINE SLADE) ON HER RETURN FROM ENGLAND AND AMERICA, NOVEMBER 1934

Counsel on behalf of the rival agency then made an application that their suit, which was then due for hearing, be postponed on the ground that their manager, who was a vital witness, had been called away to Europe on urgent business which would take him until the end of the year, and an adjournment was granted till November. This development clearly meant the end of the venture.

A meeting of the debenture holders, held to discuss the situation, decided, in view of all the circumstances, to wind up the business and realize the assets, the proceeds of which were to be distributed first to the creditors of the trustees for the debenture holders (which included the liabilities in London), then to the debenture holders themselves, and then to the second mortgagee.

On July 1st, the financier again went to Court and succeeded in securing a temporary injunction restraining the trustees from disposing of the property on the ground that the sale might not be bona fide and that he might be deprived of his legitimate rights. The application for the appointment of a receiver, however, was not granted. These proceedings led to conduct which caused me acute pain. To one of his affidavits the financier annexed a *private* letter written by the manager of the company to my husband. He said in his statement that it had "come into his hands." This twenty-four page letter, which was annexed *in extenso*, described the efforts which had been made to secure the payment of the mortgage amount in the previous April. It so happened that my Christian name had been used in practically every paragraph, as it was natural that I had participated in most of the discussions with various prominent business men. In any event, it was a private letter to my husband and while, perhaps,

there was some not strictly relevant detail, the writer could never have imagined that one day it would be published.

When the application came up for hearing, and documents were filed in Court, the letter became public property. Although counsel on behalf of the company protested against the impropriety, several Bombay papers devoted not columns but pages to it. Headlines were used of an insinuating character which actually left me speechless. By then I had had enough of litigation for ten lives to agree to take any action in the matter.

The first publication was in the evening. When certain morning papers gave page upon page of the subject, I felt I could stand the strain no longer. To a certain extent the anguish was offset by the numerous telephone calls from friends expressing their horror at such an occurrence and assuring me of their regard.

But this was not the end of the letter. A few days later it was published in booklet form and, I later learned, distributed throughout India. In Delhi I learned that the Government of India had received a copy and it had also been sent to acquaintances of mine as far apart as Travancore, London, and Calcutta. Again my friends assured me of their sympathy, but, in spite of this, my powers of endurance gave way.

Towards the end of July I developed an attack of influenza and I had to go into hospital. Thanks to the great courtesy and consideration of the hospital authorities, I was allowed to conduct what business my health would permit from my sick-bed. This would not have been possible but for the kind assistance of certain gracious friends who sympathized with me in the undeniably distressing situation in which I had been placed.

Daily, cables were coming from London and replies had to be sent, as the affairs of the company had now reached a critical stage. The situation was bewildering enough without this additional complication of a mounting temperature, but, with the assistance of the hospital authorities and my friends, it was possible to gather what was happening and advise London accordingly. While in hospital I learned that the trustees had decided to wind up the accounts and close the books of the company forthwith. As soon as I heard of this I asked, on behalf of the London creditors, for a formal acknowledgment of the liabilities in London which, from some hundreds of pounds had now gone into the thousands; the extensive credit having been allowed as a result of a desire to aid the company in its struggle.

In their accounts the trustees had shown the block assets of the company as worth some Rs. 80,000 (£6,000) and the shares in the Madras papers as worth nominally, at least, Rs. 1,25,000 (£9,375). It had always been represented to the creditors in London that the realization of these assets would bring more than enough capital to liquidate the liabilities of the trustees, whose creditors we were.

It seemed reasonable enough to expect that when, in due course, the Court permitted the sale of the assets, our claims would be met. Matters, however, began to look less obvious when the trustees declined to provide a formal acknowledgement of these outstandings. In the meantime, they had been negotiating with the other agency, and the outcome was their agreement to a consent decree for the amount claimed. As a result, a deposit of Rs. 6,400 which had been paid into Court by the

company was automatically released to the management. The managing trustee had given a written undertaking to pay Rs. 4,000 of this amount (which included a loan of Rs. 1,000 from myself which had been set aside for my passage home) towards the London liabilities. Not one anna of this was ever received.

Shortly after this case was settled the financier announced his decision not to go forward with his application for the redemption of the mortgage. That meant that the man in charge of the company whom the financier had been fighting with such vigour and at such expense for a year, now came into automatic and undisputed control of all the assets of the company.

Report has it that most of these assets, with the exception of the shares in the Madras papers, were liquidated. Whether this was so or not, not a penny of the money realized was paid to the creditors in London and not a single letter was answered in reply to queries as to how it was proposed their claims should be met; claims which had been admitted in the High Court.

Only a few weeks had transpired since the man responsible for the conduct of the company's affairs had, without my previous knowledge, written in his newspaper:

"The entire credit for the World Service belongs to two devoted friends of India who are full of missionary zeal, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Barns, whose co-operation it was the greatest good fortune to secure. Mr. and Mrs. Barns are imbued with the true spirit of pioneers of service. What Hume, Wedderburn, Keir Hardie, and Charles Andrews have rendered to India in other spheres, Mr. and Mrs. Barns have rendered to India by their organization of the World Service in London. The con-

nection of Mr. and Mrs. Barns with the cause of India extends over a number of years. . . . It is entirely due to the devotion of Mr. and Mrs. Barns to the Indian cause, their powers of persuasion, and their guarantee of the sincerity of the company that it was possible to secure the collaboration of three principal world News Agencies in the task of introducing into India an independent World Service. By reason of their devotion to the cause of an independent World Service to India, Mr. and Mrs. Barns have undergone in the last three years severe ordeals which would have exhausted the patience and tolerance of anybody else. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Barns have made sacrifices in money, in health, in every way. The debt which India owes would be difficult to repay at any time."

Well, here we were confronted with a further ordeal—perhaps the greatest of all because, in drawing on our own resources to pay the wages of the staff in the London office and other costs in maintaining the service, we had incurred debts which there now seemed no prospect of meeting.

The tragedy of the situation was that of the entire organization only the Madras newspapers remained. The News Agency had disappeared, the newspapers in Bombay and other centres had disappeared, the £15,000 or so which the financier had invested had also disappeared; and there was almost nothing to show for all the accumulated effort.

During all these tedious legal proceedings my mind would often wander and dwell on those early days when the problem of India seemed merely one of that country versus Great Britain or of brown skin versus white. I

would look round the Court; sometimes the Judge would be an Englishman, sometimes an Indian. There were Indians on either side and there were Europeans on either side. Issues and interests which appear at first sight to be so simple, soon show themselves in a very different light when theory is supplanted by practice!

There was another aspect. The whole humiliating episode was all too clearly illustrative of that vast amount of energy which is dissipated in litigation. In this particular instance I am convinced that plain speaking and frankness at the outset, and a responsible attitude by the shareholders, would have obviated the elaborate farce of hide and seek which, in the end, brought credit to no one.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A FRESH ATTEMPT

THAT an experiment had been inaugurated which should not be allowed to die was the opinion of both those in England who had already gone so far in the realm of co-operation and friends in India who had watched the developments from the inside, as it were. The *Indian Social Reformer* and other papers wrote about the necessity of reviving the News Agency. The All-India Journalists' Conference which met in Calcutta in August had discussed the matter. Mr. Chintamini, the Editor of the *Leader* of Allahabad, who presided, said he was quite sure that there was no one at the Conference who did not share the strong feeling that the existing British-owned agency did not always keep their point of view, their interests, their requirements before it, and that an indigenous agency would serve their requirements far better than any foreign agency could be expected to do. He hoped that the Association would take the matter in hand, investigate it, and come to some conclusion about the possibility of meeting the needs of the Indian newspapers in this respect.

By an "indigenous agency" was meant one under an Indian Directorate—it would obviously be a financial impossibility to maintain Indian correspondents in all parts of the globe. But no one who had gone through such experiences as I had could have done otherwise than develop a strong cynicism regarding professions made on behalf of the Press in India of a desire for an

indigenously controlled news service and of the ability of those so professing to withstand the inducements which the established service could offer—notwithstanding its "foreign" character. The latter agency, by reason of their established position and substantial resources, could well afford to offer attractive financial propositions to the Press which would very soon make those professing a desire for an indigenous service forget all their criticisms of the previously unsatisfactory state of affairs. Any organization fighting for the maintenance of its long hold would, quite naturally, so use its resources.

There was another reason why, left to myself, I would have preferred to defer any fresh attempt at establishing an independent foreign news service, and that was the acute sense of home-sickness which rarely left one. My work naturally took me much in the company of Indians —men and women—as well as my friendships. I was in their country and I wanted to understand their point of view. One can be in the company of Indians in London with nothing worse happening to one than, say, a misguided orchestra trying to show its imagination by playing *The Indian Love Lyrics* or a Cockney boy shouting after one: "Garn, why couldn't you find an English husband?"—as one once did to me! (He added: "You are pretty enough!" and this expert opinion softened the blow!)

In India it is, unhappily, rather different. Anyone working, as I had been, in an Indian concern, with all that that implied, had to face ostracism by the majority of the English people and experience daily embarrassments to which, do what one would, one could not make oneself impervious. I refer to this matter here because

no small part of the strain could be attributed to this kind of thing.

Moreover, it was often urged that my business experiences in India should have taught me the unwisdom of being out of step with the majority of one's countrymen in that country. But to have drawn such a conclusion from these experiences would have meant that I had mis-spent all my time in India. Life is not a matter of the adoption of simple formulae but the constant striving after the meanings underlying it. India is a country where the meanings are many and varied. The achievement of some degree of comprehension or perception of them was worth the misunderstandings entailed—but one must frankly confess that it told.

This was the frame of mind, therefore, in which I eventually agreed to make another attempt at establishing the News Agency before returning to England. A number of prominent business men, including my friends, Sir Phiroze Sethna and Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, agreed to form a Board to run the company on condition that I was personally responsible for the organization. It was agreed that this condition could not be maintained indefinitely and that a period of about six months should be allowed in which the intentions of the Press could be thoroughly tested.

A preliminary survey of the field by correspondence brought assurances of five subscribers from this centre, three from that, two from another, and the prospects looked encouraging. The service was already being filed, as two papers in Madras had never ceased to take it or to defer their subscription. It was only a matter, therefore, of increasing the subscribers, and, in consequence,

the scope. Some friends in Bombay, English and Indian, who realized and appreciated the value of the work to which we had set our hands as a liberalizing and liberating force, very graciously offered their assistance in the task that lay ahead.

In October I left on an extensive tour and visited every single Anglo-Indian and Indian-owned newspaper of influence in Calcutta, Allahabad, Lucknow, Delhi, and Lahore. The verbal response was excellent; only one newspaper definitely saying that it did not want a supplementary news service. Even those papers which could not afford any extra expenditure at the moment, welcomed the endeavour and promised to contribute to its success in any other way.

In Delhi I informed every official who might be concerned, including His Excellency the Viceroy and the heads of the Home Department, of the project and the auspices under which it was being undertaken. The only ground on which there was any doubt of our ability to maintain a useful service was the financial ground; already enough has been said of the advantage enjoyed by the well-established concern.

The impressions derived throughout the tour warranted, one felt, if not confidence, at least some hope in the future. By the time I returned to Bombay, the service was being relayed to newspapers in Madras, Calcutta, and Lahore, and, before long, it was also published in Bombay. Not a day passed when it did not distinguish itself journalistically. We made no pretensions to bulk, but aimed at speed and impartiality and a concentration on what might be termed significant news. The competition had a remarkable effect on the opposition; an

effect which could not but be welcomed as it was one way of achieving our object.

Very little time elapsed, however, before we heard the rumblings of distant thunder. Most residents in India will agree that there is little which is kept confidential —there are so many unofficial "listeners-in" who make it a whole-time job to find out other people's business— and although we never wanted to hear anything, we were almost inundated with reports of the alleged activities of the opposition.

The stories concerned the usual offers that any company, anxious to maintain its position, might be expected to make.

Although we were working in conjunction with British firms whose names were household words and with the support of as distinguished a directorate as any company in India, we did not escape the attentions of the C.I.D. The garbled versions of our activities were astounding; one would have gladly furnished copies of all correspondence rather than suffer the consequences of this kind of espionage. Unfortunately, the system, which is part of the present machine, is far too established for a willingness to be completely frank, on the part of one party, to have the slightest influence. We had nothing to hide, yet our activities had been represented in such a way as to put us, *prima facie*, in the eyes of certain officials in the same category as outlaws.

Fortunately, many of the officials are not so credulous as their informers imagine them to be. By the time, however, that they have been able to examine a situation, the damage wrought by incorrect information has become too deeply rooted to be eradicated. I am not at liberty

to describe, without involving others, the amazing attempts that were made to prejudice the official world against us. Although I believe I am able to face up to difficult situations, by nature I am shy and diffident. Much as I felt the burning injustice of what was done, therefore, I could not have pleaded for understanding. It was reassuring to learn, though (on the day I sailed from Bombay) that the stories which had been relayed by interested parties had not been taken at their face value by the official concerned.

Suffice it to say on this matter that we reached the conclusion that so long as the Government shows partisanship to certain news organizations, financially and otherwise, it is impossible for other companies to become established, for they will be as handicapped as were the "interlopers" of John Company days. With this conclusion comes to an end what might be termed the personal side of this book which has been introduced with the utmost reluctance to illustrate more graphically than any other method some of the forces which go to make up the India of Today.

There is the Government, not responsible to the people of India, but being paid for out of Indian pockets. There is the example of a vested interest entrenched with the help of that Government—but ultimately the people of India. Again there are the people of India (typified by the Press) beating the air against this state of affairs but supine when it comes to real resistance and constructive action.

But all this will change. India is entering on a new phase. Responsible government is to replace irresponsible government. There are limitations in the new con-

stitution which are not acceptable to Indian politicians, but, as it is no part of my purpose to discuss the constitutional details but rather the *general forces and tendencies*, the fact of these limitations may merely be recorded.

The future is more important than the past. In Parts I and II I have tried to give a glimpse of the immediate past as it appeared to one who, through certain circumstances, had to see things through Indian eyes, as it were, without in any way abandoning her own identity. In Part III an attempt will be made to outline the chief forces which will go to the making of the India of Tomorrow.

Part III

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE WOMEN OF INDIA

OF all the influences moulding the future India the women are the most important. It is at the knee of the mother that the boys of today and tomorrow learn and will learn what they know of initiative, of courage, of originality—in short, all the character-building virtues. What can the descendants of generations of slave-wives teach their children of these qualities? On the Jesuitical principle that the first seven years of a child's life are the years which mould the complete man, the mothers must be liberated before their children can be free—free, not in the political sense, but free in the sense of being untrammelled by shiboleths and inhibitions.

To talk of the women of India is to talk in terms requiring as much qualification as if one were to generalize about all the women in Europe and America. There is the rich Parsee of Bombay sitting at lunch bedecked with thousands of pounds worth of jewels, loud and superficial; but there are others working as doctors, teachers, and lawyers. Here, perhaps, you have a Gujerati woman, generously proportioned and lethargic looking, walking along with that slouch so common in her community. Look out in the fields or at some new building construction and you will see the low-caste Marathi woman carrying an enormous load on her head—but with the poise and dignity of a queen. You will wonder how her frame can stand all the hard work, such as the carrying of the bricks, which is passed on to her by

the men. Then, again, here is a woman from Bengal, gently nurtured, delighting you with her instrument playing or her recitations. Go to the north and you will meet the sturdy Punjabis—Hindus, Moslems, and Sikhs —where the climate has developed an altogether more vigorous stock. Many of them you will find in *purdah*, that is to say, they will only meet women and their immediate male relatives. The limitation in outlook imposed by such a life needs no description.

So one could go on describing women as diverse as the flowers of the field. With the exception, however, of the women of Malabar, on the west coast of India, they all have one thing in common—they are all the inheritors of a system which believed that man was the undisputed and unchallenged superior. One has to go far back into the history of Hinduism for the origins of this belief. When the early Hindu sages were looking for symbols to illustrate the divided functions of nature, they said that here is woman, *the producer*, who shall therefore be the symbol of that which is material; here is man, *the creator*, who shall be the symbol of that which is spiritual. In course of time the analogy, for various reasons, became so debased that woman came to be regarded as the mere chattel of man.

Before the Christian era, in the period which Indian historians sometimes refer to as that of the *Upanishads*, the same type of higher education was imparted to women as to men. There existed women teachers and philosophers whose names are known even today. With the coming of the early Moslems, Hindu life became less free and restrictions were put upon the freedom of women lest they should be coveted by the invader. As a result,

the Moslem system of *purdah* grew and women neither saw nor heard what was going on in the outer world; they remained immature. Moreover, what was originally a social precaution became—like so much else in the Hindu code—of religious significance. Nevertheless, there were some energetic *purdahnashin* ladies who administered their estates with vigour through male managers who took orders from their women employers.

Generally speaking, though, it was not until British missionaries began the work about a hundred years ago that the women of India had any real opportunity of re-emerging from the seclusion of their restricted surroundings. Much has been said and written about the type of life they led and the impression often given that they were unhappy. Happiness is such a relative term that it seems almost beside the point. The aspect I would like to emphasize is the effect of this type of existence on the women in their capacity as mothers. Their daughters were going to lead the same kind of life in any event and they were affected less by the lack of maternal direction than their brothers. The key to the character of Indian manhood is undoubtedly to be found with the mothers, as reformers are admitting up and down the country.

Arising from the tradition of treating women as appendages there were, and still are, certain Hindu laws which militate against an assumption of equality between men and women. The laws of inheritance, for example, which are not uniform with every caste, and are based on the joint family principle, place women at a great disadvantage. A reformist measure is now before the Assembly.

Old customs and laws had their place in the ancient

family structure, but if India is to justify herself this structure must be modified in conformity with modern requirements. Various women's organizations in India are pursuing this matter with vigour. Though nothing tangible has yet been achieved by these efforts, there is no reason for pessimism; one day they will bear fruit.

The only alternative way women can break free from the traditional dependant position is by the other form of economic freedom—professional service. This is not so easy as it sounds, for one does not know at what point to break into the vicious circle. Qualifications for such service can only come after training, and training is not going to be given to a girl if her mother is all the time afraid that her daughter will, as a result, prejudice her chances of a suitable match or be characterized by her family as "immodest." Yet in spite of the dead weight of the orthodox against such innovations as women's education, there are the most encouraging signs—teachers, doctors, lawyers, dentists, journalists, and even some business women.

The next stage is the provision of opportunity for the exercise of the talents manifested. This seems to me one of the most vital requirements for the future of India. It is the only way which will lead to that intellectual and social freedom between men and women, the present absence of which makes India seem a country without a pulse. There is little doubt that the Congress non-co-operation movements, whatever defects they may have had, succeeded in bringing the women out beside their men, sharing their struggles, their sacrifices, and their honours. The traditional outlook that woman's sole responsibility was that of child-bearing received a

setback from which it will never recover. It is hardly my province to argue the case for women in public affairs; countries such as Britain and the United States have long since recognized it. If only India would recognize that her future character, her future stamina, her future man-power depends on her women!

I would like just here to refer to the magnificent work of Professor Karve, the founder of the Indian Women's University in Poona. This great educationist has told me of the misunderstandings, the calumny, the distrust which has had to be endured in the building up of this fine institution which, one hopes, will be but the forerunner of many such universities. Striking as they did at the root of the conception that woman is merely the producer and, therefore, the embodiment of that which is material, those who supported the University were subjected to charges that they were breaking up Hindu family life and leading the women into paths unbecoming to the ideal of Indian womanhood. The taunt that would-be husbands would be frightened off was so effective that most of the early students were girl widows who would not, in any event, have remarried. Side by side with his University—to which the members of his family have also devoted their lives—Professor Karve has established a Home for Widows, who would otherwise have been discarded, and has encouraged the movement for widow remarriage. A non-Indian thinks of a widow as someone at least mature, but these are often little girls, some as young as nine, whose "husbands" have died before their "wives" have ever joined them. I have watched them playing in the Home in Poona, smiling and happy, and have compared them with actual cases

I know of young girls being shyly secluded from visitors for the rest of their lives because they are widows—in the legal and not in the actual sense.

The importance of the Indian Women's University lies in the hesitancy with which parents are prepared to allow their daughters to come into contact with boys of all castes and communities—there is the double barrier of sex and caste. If one can be eliminated a great step forward has been taken in the cause of women's education. It is very gratifying that it is now proposed to establish the University in Bombay and that the Government of Bombay in its Budget proposals for 1936–37 has allowed for a grant-in-aid towards the purchase of a plot of land for the purpose.

There are many fortunate women who have received an education which has equipped them to strike heavy blows at Ignorance and Superstition, but who, rather than face the consequences of their entry into public life, sit quietly in their drawing-rooms discussing this betrothal and that death. So much the poorer is India! Unless there is courage, unless there is a policy of contributing something to the common pool, unless there is a conviction that principles are worth sacrifices and that the torch of life is something one passes on and not just contemplates, the women of India will not justify the hope that is placed in them.

I believe that hope will be justified. One sees the thousands of college trained girls and one sees them going into professions. Already the pressure of life and the recognition of its realities has brought some of them into the political field, where they are making definite contributions to political thought as apart from mere

participation in political demonstrations. In course of time this pressure will exert itself in such a way that these women will compete with men in the Municipal elections in larger numbers than they do at present. In the new Federal Legislature and the Lower Houses of the provinces they will sit side by side with men.

Under the new constitution there will be a woman's electorate of some 6,000,000 for the latter, giving an approximate ratio of women to men voters of 1 : 4·5. Hitherto the ratio had been 1 : 20, and this means, therefore, that over four times the number of women formerly enfranchised will now be placed on the electoral rolls. Of this number only some 2,000,000 will be included on the rolls automatically, by reason of their property qualifications. The remainder, whose qualifications will be in respect of property held by their husbands or by education, will have to apply to the Returning Officer for inclusion on the voters list.

This is regarded by women's organizations as tantamount to disenfranchising a number of qualified women electors who may be too timid to exercise their rights under the law. On their part, the authorities cite the administrative and other difficulties involved by any other method. As in the last general elections to the Legislative Assembly in 1934 in Bombay only about 52 per cent of the total electorate voted, it can be taken for granted that the number of women who will vote under the new rules will be much less than the 6,000,000 who will be entitled.

A further provision to which strong objection has been taken by women's organizations is the splitting up of the female vote into special communal constituencies. In

accordance with these clauses of the Act, Moslem women representatives will be elected by Moslem women, Sikhs by Sikhs, Christians by Christians, Hindus by Hindus (or mostly Hindus, as their constituency is termed "General" and includes certain other minor communities), and so on. The general argument against separate electorates is also applied in this instance, as it is felt that they will tend to produce extremists and fanatically inclined candidates who will appeal to sectional interests, rather than to the general welfare.

While the objection may have some substance, it is not strong enough to deter women from going forward in the political field. There is something to be said for the official contention that any other method might have led to the disproportionate representation of any one community, bearing in mind the franchise qualifications. It is reasonable to expect, moreover, that Moslem women will be better acquainted with the disabilities of their own section and Hindus with Hindu problems. In any event, the women have a splendid opportunity of showing that, notwithstanding the communal electorates, they are capable of selecting representatives who, whatever may be their religious professions, recognize that the problems relating to human welfare are the same whether one is a Moslem or a Hindu.

There is no shortage of women of this calibre. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's reputation is world-wide. Then there is Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, of Simla, gentle but determined. Take Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, the Socialist leader, or Maniben Kara, a Labour organizer, of Bombay. Both hold advanced social and economic views, but both have abundant drive and conviction. The three Captain sisters

have the fire of an Ellen Wilkinson. Surely there is scope under the new Constitution to provide these distinguished ladies with more constructive outlets than the path of non-co-operation which they have hitherto trod with such determination?

In a different category come Mrs. Subbarayan of Madras and Begum Shah Nawaz of Lahore, both of whom were delegates to the Round Table Conferences. Their path to the Legislature has already been hewn, and, though of different communities, they can be expected to fulfil the hopes that the women's organizations of Great Britain and America have placed in them.

Mrs. Brijlal Nehru and Mrs. Hamid Ali are prominent reformers who can also be relied upon to place the cause of women generally above any sectarian claims of their own communities.

In the professional field perhaps no Indian lady is more greatly admired than Mrs. Mathulakshmi Reddy, the well-known doctor of Madras. She has been the Deputy President of the Madras Legislative Council, and no one knows better than she how essential it is that those who have political power should assist those who are working for the amelioration of social conditions.

It is impossible to give any idea, in so short a space, of the very promising material amongst the women. It is true that they have a long road to travel, but along it, I am convinced, lies the chief hope of their country.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

YOUTH

THE youth of India is the product of the present-day economic, social, and educational conditions—all of them impinging on each other.

India is primarily an agricultural country, but the prevailing world depression in agriculture has had the effect of forcing the young men away from the land into the cities. Where parents have been able to acquire, one way or another, sufficient funds to educate their sons, these young men have become qualified for a type of work very far removed from tilling the land. There are others less qualified, and, therefore, to a greater extent, devoid of prospects of successful careers in the city. The prime problem of the youth of India is that of unemployment.

It seems paradoxical that, in a country where there is so much work crying out to be done, there should be not only a shortage of jobs but also a shortage of efficient workers. Most educationists are, however, agreed that the type of education which has hitherto been imparted is scarcely of a nature to develop in the students those qualities of mind and character so necessary in those who are to take responsibilities. It has been contended, not without justice, that the chief failure of Britain is the failure to *train* Indians for rule rather than in the failure to transfer ruling powers.

Those qualities which are inculcated in British youth —whose teachers are similarly trained to those who

direct Indian educational policy—seem to escape the youth of India. Academic knowledge by itself will not qualify to govern or for the management of heavy responsibilities. This deficiency would be serious enough by itself, but it goes further in that it is part of the vicious circle with which India is surrounded. It provides some honest basis for the Englishman's scepticism of India's capacity for self-government. The Indian nationalist, on his part, asks how he is ever to be "fitted" for self-government, unless he is trained for it.

It would be very unfair unless one were to add, in almost the same breath as the criticism, that educationists have been greatly handicapped by the social environment of their students—and all that that implies. School and college activities cannot possibly be carried on on the same basis as in Britain in a country where there is a caste system. That part of a school's activities, strictly outside the academic curriculum, but which has a deep effect on the character development, such as sports, dramatics, special outings to places of interest, school dinners, and free friendships is only possible when there exist no distinctions as between pupil and pupil. This has not been so in India, although progress is being made in this direction. One consequence has been that schools and colleges have become more like cramming factories than institutions where the future men or women receive their early moulding.

A further factor is the home environment when it happens to be on a lower level than that aspired to by the student or, on his behalf, by his teachers. Perhaps there is a mother with the mental development of a child, tending her numerous children, neither fitted nor pre-

pared to take an interest in her son's progress. Perhaps he is surrounded by bigoted orthodoxy, pulling his mind away from all the liberalizing thoughts to which his education is introducing him. Perhaps he is, as in most Indian households, associating freely with the adults, overhearing and joining in their conversation, so that his juvenile mind, instead of being allowed to develop progressively, contains a mixture of sophisticated and unsophisticated ideas. In addition he is, as a result of this indiscriminate association, denied the precious stage of childhood—jumping straight from babyhood to youth. Happily, there are many enlightened families where children are allowed to live the life of their age. I have, however, seen children of under five in well-to-do households crawling about and being petted by the adults at midnight! This question of home environment is not, of course, peculiar to India. It is also the problem which faces the teachers of the bright child in England who comes from a home in the slums. The only solution is the slow one of progressive enlightenment.

India has already realized the need for vocational training, although much more requires to be done in this direction. In Bombay City alone there are about a hundred schools where crafts such as printing, book binding, needlework, and so on are taught to pupils who have passed out of the first vernacular stages of the municipal educational standard.

A discussion on the relative merits of education in the vernacular or the early teaching of English is no part of my object. So long as it is agreed that the first need of education in a country like India is to teach a man to use his head and hands to some purpose, it stands

to reason that it is quicker to teach him through a medium with which he is already familiar rather than to have to spend precious years mastering a foreign language.

These, then, are the main economic, social, and educational conditions which govern the development of the Indian youth. He emerges from his college with his degree, full of hope for the future. It is not long before his hopes are diminished—if they have not disappeared altogether—as he finds that the profession he has chosen is already "overcrowded," and that he is being offered salaries scarcely above those of menials. At the first survey, he ascribes this ruthless situation to the existence of an alien Government. Perhaps he was not politically minded before; now he becomes an ardent nationalist. A little further examination and he sees that the economic power is concentrated in the hands of a few who can expand and restrict credit according to how it suits their own pockets. He begins to come to the conclusion that not only is work a necessity, it is also a *right*—a right which is denied to him by the existing economic system. From ardent nationalism he graduates to ardent socialism. Because he believes, though, that unity is strength he does not part from his brother nationalists (unless he becomes a communist), but remains within the Congress fold and calls himself a Congress Socialist. This group, fired with a double mission, will be the storm centre of the India of Tomorrow.

Young people would soon begin to lose one of their greatest charms if they were not impatient and, sometimes, intolerant. The youth of India has, however, a strange kind of impatience, an impatience born, very often, out of a disinclination for persevering and uphill

work. In other words, there is very little stamina. The capacity for sustained work is a rare quality, the ability to take criticism with a smile, the willingness to endure physical hardships.

All of these deficiencies are understandable. Here is a country where people are born in this or that caste. If the hereditary occupation is of a menial or a manual nature, one follows that occupation. For a man of a higher caste to perform that work would be degrading, and he, therefore, neither learns how certain work should be done so that he can direct it, nor has he the joy of doing something with his hands. The idea of "fagging" for an elder is extremely distasteful to an Indian, bred in the tradition that to be gentlemanly is not to soil his hands, especially in tasks for others. It follows that anyone born to a high station in life (on the caste basis) automatically assumes a position and superiority which he might not attain on merit alone. The necessity, therefore, for the proof of any merit or qualifications for the position which he is maintaining does not exist; and, in consequence, the necessity for sustained effort. The man at the top does not need to qualify and the man in the middle or at the bottom can *never* qualify.

With the gradual breaking down of caste barriers, there will arise the new economic castes—such as we know in the West—based on differential standards of income. Aspirants for promotion will soon learn the necessity for sustained effort and one of India's greatest deficiencies will disappear. The end in itself may not be welcomed, but the by-product will have immense cumulative effects.

As this development takes place there will gradually

disappear those complexes, under which a large proportion of Indian youth is labouring, but which handicap himself more than anyone else. Amongst these are a tendency to consider his education finished when he has taken his B.A., an erroneous belief that to be off-hand is to show independence, a repugnance to taking orders and carrying them out.

I have a letter written by a young man who was an applicant for a post for which he had had no previous experience. The letter explains why he declined the offer; the reason was that he was not guaranteed that at no time would anyone be placed over him! He assumes, on very thin evidence, that he might at some time be superseded by an Englishman and says: "The Indian employee will have very little initiative for work. And the satisfaction of doing his work well will be denied him by knowledge of the fact that his status was unstable. In these circumstances, whatever attractions the work might have, it would be scarcely worth my while to take up the position"! And this in a country which is crying out for opportunity—victim largely of its own inferiority complex.

It would be utterly false to conclude that this attitude is a typical attitude; it is, however, illustrative of a certain section of nationalists who prefer to sit back and tell others what to do rather than undertake any constructive work themselves. At the same time one must remember that the treatment which British employers have accorded to Indians in the past is largely responsible for this attitude. Indians who have borne the brunt of the work of a firm or an organization will, when the time comes for their promotion to a position of executive respon-

sibility, often be superseded by an untrained, inexperienced Englishman brought from home.

Indeed, many of the difficulties of today are the reapings of the seeds of the past. How well I remember my reactions when a well-known Indian industrialist of my acquaintance told me of the immense satisfaction he derived from ordering about a certain British engineer in his employment. Years ago, the positions had been reversed. The engineer was the head of a large firm and the Indian had to go to him for concessions. He would be kept waiting for hours and then treated with scant courtesy.

As this process continues—the process of the change over of positions of authority to Indians—incidents are sure to take place which Englishmen will resent. The reaction is but natural. If only the Englishmen who treat the inhabitants of a country out of which they make their living as they would treat no others would only realize this!

The politically minded youth of India owes its allegiance to Pandit Jawaharalal Nehru. Coming from a long line of distinguished Kashmiri Brahmins, the Pandit is one of the most vital personalities, if not the most vital personality, in India today. His unflinching opposition to British rule, his willingness to suffer in the cause of his beliefs, his frequent apparent imprudences have all endeared him to the young men of the land. With the coming of the new constitution, and the inevitable splitting of forces along economic lines, many of the young men who now applaud the Pandit will pause and think as he speaks of unearned incomes, of the appropriation of lands, of the many evils out of which some of his fol-



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE WOMEN'S SECTION AT THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, BOMBAY, 1934

lowers are this day making comfortable livings. Those who hate injustice, who are prepared to analyse, who are ready to take the logical consequences of their professions of sympathy for the masses, will remain under the banner of Pandit Jawaharalal Nehru, whilst their erstwhile colleagues will join hands with the vested interests of the States, of commerce, or of property.

This is the background, as I have seen it in close working contact, of the youth of India in the cities. What of the days that are to come? The leaders and teachers of the young men and women have a heavy responsibility in that there is so much to be unlearned, as it were, so much yet to be taught.

Obviously, the purpose of education is to enable a student to think for himself or herself, to equip his mind in such a way that he may be able to come to a balanced judgment in a given situation. The type of education which is at present being imparted is rarely of a kind which fulfils this function. I have already referred to its limited character imposed from without. Its products so often give one a feeling that they have no foundation, no background which will serve them in the days when they need to be qualified to direct rather than merely to receive orders. This is largely due to too early specialization in a given subject. Students will emerge from their universities armed with paper qualifications in a particular subject but almost completely innocent of the barest foundations of others. The pressure of modern economic life is, of course, responsible for this development, which is not peculiar to India. It is, however, of greater importance in that the powers of government are to be transferred to such people who are not

equipped either by tradition or training, for the gigantic task that lies ahead.

"Looking forward and not back" might well be the motto of the leaders of young India. Signor Mussolini recalls the splendours of ancient Rome when he wants to fire his people with national pride and ambition. India is no less right when she refers to that in her past which she feels is worthy of veneration and emulation. But there must be a limit to this living in the past if the country is to develop into a living, progressive organism. The resurrection of old art-forms, for example, and their flogging to death in the belief that Indian art will thereby receive the necessary stimulus, is as wearisome as it is a failure to achieve the desired object. From the point of view of historical records, researches into ancient dance rituals, poetic and other literary values, and the formulae of early painters have enormous value. Their slavish reproduction not only saps what there is of originality but deprives the art of the dynamic quality it should have. Furthermore, it panders to India's inherent conservatism.

I have deliberately introduced the subject of art, although it is a slight digression, because so much is to be hoped for along these lines. It would be no exaggeration to say that if one were to ask twenty of the best-known figures in India to name, let us say, the chief schools of Indian painting and to give a very brief outline of each, it would be remarkable if more than two could give any creditable answer. Of course, experts in such subjects there are. The contention is that the well-known leaders are so obsessed (and, to a certain degree understandably) with politics and finance that they are in-

capable of devoting any attention to other subjects. Unfortunately, this has a deleterious effect on youth who, in imitating their elders, do not develop that rounded interest in life which makes it worth living.

Ask twenty Indians the name of a particular tree which you see is indigenous to the district or of a bird which is hopping on the verandah and you will be lucky if one of them is able to answer correctly. But ask who was the President of the Congress in 1911 and they will most probably all be able to answer.

Of all the directions in which youth can exercise its influence the direction of communal amity is the most important. In every sphere of life one sees communal tension being aggravated and intensified—for reasons upon which I have already touched. Young men and women who have been together in schools and colleges forget what they have learned of comradeship and become bitterly communal in their later outlook. In Bombay today, for example, there are mills which are slowly but persistently replacing all their Parsee technicians for no other reason than that the mills have changed from Parsee to Gujerati hands. This is so in other industries, and one result is that a community, once willing to place its wealth and resources at the disposal of others, now tends to withdraw into itself. In other departments of life are to be found those in authority who lend their influence to the promotion of men of their own communities.

The vocal youth of India despises the type of leader communalism throws up, yet these leaders could not exist if the sectional feeling were not very powerful. If only youth will take a stand on the principle of promotion on merit and not on preference, this feeling could

not exist with all its present intensity. Naturally, this is much more easily said than done. When your rivals are relying on the support of leaders of their communities for, say, their appointment to a particular post, it requires considerable character to resist the temptation of seeking the aid of leaders of one's own community. But professions to nationalism are meaningless if they aim at nothing *more* than a hostility to Britain; and the youth of India professes nationalism to a man.

Mr. Gandhi has done so much for the youth of his country that it is pertinent to ask what these young people feel towards him. It should first be stated that any criticism I may have felt compelled to make has also been made by the Mahatma himself time and time again. The whole basis of his teachings and movements has been founded on the prime necessity of self-reliance. Differences may occur over the methods he sometimes adopts, but there is not the slightest question that, with his intuitive knowledge of his own people, he has been able to draw out of them much of the unreasoning fear that existed and replaced it by a confidence undreamt of, say, twenty years ago.

Let us take for granted that to which I have already referred—an absence of loyalty which, to a non-Indian, seems stupendous. Even apart from this reason, the youth of India is apt to turn its back on Mr. Gandhi because, though a revolutionary in so many ways, he is inclined to give the impression of being reactionary when it comes to matters social. The young men see the disintegration of the old family system before their eyes, brought about not so much from choice as by economic pressure; they read of the approach of the West to questions such as

marriage and family limitation; they know by experience that to rely on age-long methods of agricultural and industrial production is to invite stagnation. Yet they see Mr. Gandhi extolling the virtues (and there are some) which are produced by the joint family life; they hear Mr. Gandhi preaching that the only form of family limitation he would support is that resulting from "self-control"; they listen to Mr. Gandhi advocating and himself using the spinning wheel as a means of improving the lot of the agriculturist. And the net effect is that they are at first perplexed and afterwards sceptical as to whether the Mahatma is not, after all, too much of a seer for this practical world. He is too remote from them, does not speak their language, or see through their spectacles to an extent which would entitle them to claim him as their leader. The more contemplative, philosophical young men he will always attract, but I very much doubt whether they are of the type to pass on the torch.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE PEASANT

ALMOST everything that I have said refers to urban India—because that is vocal India. But it is an agricultural country with 89 per cent of its population living on the land. India's great economic problem is the problem of adjusting her agricultural community to the demands of modern civilization, demands economic, social, scientific.

Like his brothers in other parts of the world, the Indian son of the soil possesses a remarkable intuitive sense which serves him well in his battle with nature. But whereas agriculturists elsewhere are fortifying this sense with all the knowledge that science can spread, the Indian peasant is still living the life, adopting the same methods, of his forefathers generations ago.

Then the peasant lived in a small village and his life was circumscribed by what happened in that little unit. He tended his land, adapted his labours to the vagaries of the monsoon, prayed to his God that the harvest would be fruitful and the buyers plentiful, and left it at that. His mind did not perceive, and could not perceive, the changes which were being wrought by a contracting world.

The peasant in, say, a small village in the Central Provinces of India was at one time affected only by what happened within a radius of a few hundred miles. Today his life is not only governed—but practically determined —by weather conditions in the United States, by pros-

pects of a war in Europe, by the economic policy of Japan, by the fiscal policy of Great Britain. The United States Department of Agriculture may decide to restrict the acreage under cultivation and the Indian peasant may find himself the recipient of higher prices. But the United States crop figures may have exceeded expectations, and the Indian peasant finds himself the recipient of lower prices. He does not know why, there is no one to tell him, and, apparently, there is no one who cares.

In short, when the modern conditions of civilization —railways, steamships, aircraft, cable, and wireless—have so contracted the world that what happens in Washington today has its immediate repercussions in London, Bombay, Shanghai, and Tokio, the Indian agriculturist is pursuing his daily avocation innocent of all but the slightest advance over the days when, hundreds of years ago, his forefathers tilled the same land. There is probably this difference, that the land is now encumbered by debt which will be a millstone round the "owner's" neck for the rest of his life—and his children's lives.

As the agriculturist is the backbone of India financially, his welfare should be in the front of all political programmes. But let us look at the interests of the people who frame these programmes. Almost to a man, they come from the towns. This means that their interests are commercial or, if they are professional men, they rely for their prosperity on the welfare of the commercial classes.

The *bunya*, or *entrepreneur*, of the cities is engaged in buying commodities from up-country and selling them to the mills or overseas. He is also importing from foreign countries and selling the goods in the interior or to the

mills near at hand. It matters little to him if world rates fall, and Indian prices sag in consequence, for he will make his commission whether he sells, let us say, cotton from the Central Provinces or cotton from Texas.

Again, let us look at the buyer—the owner of the mills. If the prices of American cotton fall below the parity of Indian prices, does he apply his patriotic principles of "Buy Indian" to himself? Not at all; he watches the market from minute to minute and buys in the cheapest. But more than this, he is in receipt of protection from Lancashire and Japanese competition. What protection does the agriculturist receive against competition from world markets not influenced, let it be emphasized, solely by natural causes, but by the adjustments and the manipulations of particular countries to suit their own economy?

Any fall in the prosperity of the agriculturist is reflected in his diminished purchasing power which, in turn, adversely affects the cities. Without a definite economic plan, though, no one is going to base his actions on the full turn of the cycle, and middlemen must be expected to take advantage where they first see it.

External competition is one aspect of the rural problem, but there are internal difficulties which may, at no distant time, assume proportions leading to a serious crisis. I refer to the change in equilibrium which is taking place as a result of, for example, the increased fertility of the new irrigated lands of the Punjab and Sind. Anyone who has seen the great cotton crop of Central India unable to withstand the competition from these more popular sources cannot but help ponder on the problems of the days to come. Hitherto desert districts have been

converted, as if by magic, into irrigated gardens. The new cultivator, resting on the sure support of Government canals, has not the anxiety about weather conditions as the real *ryot*, and he has the further advantage of cultivating almost virgin soil as compared with the lands which have had their salts drained away by centuries of agriculture. The less fortunate cultivator has not the means with which to buy the necessary fertilizers, and he is altogether incapable of standing the strain.

With the inauguration of the All-India Federation and Provincial Autonomy, inter-Provincial and State competition will be intensified. It is easily appreciated that certain labour or factory legislation in the Provinces may soon affect the prospects of a particular industry as compared with the outlook in the States. Already one has a condition of affairs where, in consequence of the fiscal policy of the Government of India, factories have been moved from British India to the States or, to take another example, ports in certain of the maritime States have acquired undreamt of prosperity because, by using them, importers have escaped the customs duties levied at British Indian ports. None of these factors is peculiar to India; industry in England is shifting southwards; post-war Central Europe has an entirely different industrial complexion compared with its 1914 predecessor; post-sanctions Italy differs from the Italy of 1934; exporters in France have little in common with the *rentier* when it comes to the gold policy. Conflicting interests there must be in a system of *laissez-faire*. I refer to the Indian interests in some detail because it is not clear that the interest of the peasants is going to get much of a hearing at all.

How can one ensure that hearing? Virile departments analogous to the Ministry of Agriculture in Britain certainly seem indicated. Their urgent tasks would be the freedom of the cultivator from his load of debt and the wider distribution of the system of co-operative banks and the teaching of improved methods of agriculture in order that the quality of the crop may compete more equitably with foreign varieties.

Both of these things are, of course, at present being done, but the scale is, unfortunately, so small that it is out of all proportion to the requirements of the situation. An allied problem is that of the improvement of the cattle stock of the country. As was pointed out by the Royal Commission on Agriculture, under the Chairmanship of Lord Linlithgow, "India has acquired so large a cattle population and the size of the animals in many tracts is so small that the task of reversing the process of deterioration and of improving the livestock of this country is now a gigantic one." The Government has the matter in hand, but it will be many years before any appreciable improvement will be observed.

More fundamental, and therefore more difficult of accomplishment, will be the reorganization of the present land tenure system. There are absentee landlords, scarcely ever visiting the property over which they have sole rights, subject only to the Government, drawing enormous incomes earned for them by the peasant. There is another system, the *ryotwari* system, prevalent in the Deccan and Southern India, under which the peasants are the proprietors, subject to their debts. This system has evoked the admiration of poets and philosophers who glory in the pride it is supposed to produce. What

of the other side of the picture? What of the multiplicity of holdings, what of the perpetual indebtedness brought about by uneconomic units and the other factors I have already mentioned, together with the extraordinarily disproportionate expenditure of the agriculturists over weddings and festivals? Large numbers of the smaller zemindars are also ruined or in the hands of money-lenders.

Other countries have had this problem; the replacement of small unremunerative units by large-scale undertakings, the supersession of the absentee landlord by the genuine farmer, the adjustment of the needs of agriculture as an integral element of the national interests.

Mr. Gandhi is heart and soul with the peasantry. It is his aim to live and feel as one of them. He sees the terribly depressed conditions—almost sub-human—under which they live, and the problem presents itself to him as one rather of *morale* than of economics. The individual holdings are frequently so small that the cultivator cannot find the work to occupy all the idle hands that depend on him. In order to meet the problem of enforced idleness and to augment the very meagre incomes, Mr. Gandhi has turned to the spinning wheel. These wheels are supplied by organizations affiliated to the National Congress either free of charge or at a very nominal cost and the villagers are taught to spin. When the cotton has been spun, these organizations buy it, distribute it to the weavers, and the finished product, *khaddar*, is then put on the market. Under the influence of Mr. Gandhi, *khaddar* has become very fashionable, and many people who at one time wore only foreign material, today would think of nothing but the Indian hand-produced article.

As a palliative, Mr. Gandhi's proposition is sound. But, in a market where cheapness rules above all else as the decisive factor, home-spun material cannot be expected to compete against the cheaper mill-made product whether *swadeshi* (indigenous) or Japanese.

Nonetheless, Mr. Gandhi has done much by his example to liberate other forces for the uplift of the peasant. His economics may seem crude, but, in his present state of development, the villager can only be reached through the simplest of devices. In course of time he will become susceptible to other media for the opening up of a wider outlook on life. These are the school, the Press, the cinema, the radio, and the rapidly increasing transport facilities on rail and road.

As the prosperity of the agriculturist is closely connected with the level of commodity prices, it is clear that the currency and exchange policy of the country is of the highest importance. A financial adviser will assist the Governor-General in the carrying out of his special responsibility in respect of the financial stability and credit of India. It is the apprehension of a section of Indian public opinion that if the advice tendered in regard to the currency and exchange policy is not "in the sole interests of India," Indian Ministers in charge of the development of Agriculture (and Industries) would be so handicapped as to prevent them from taking full responsibility for the development of their Departments. There are, however, so many incompatible interests to be served that it would be impossible to define "the sole interests" of India, although politicians will continue to use the phrase until the delimitation of new economic frontiers compels them to be more specific.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER

THERE are about four million industrial workers in India out of a total population of over three hundred and fifty million. It would not be correct, though, to assess their influence on a population percentage because, being mostly concentrated in the towns, this section of the community has it in its power to affect the lives of others far beyond its apparent orbit. For instance, a strike of the textile workers in Bombay can influence the fortunes of agriculturists all over the country.

Moreover, as India expands industrially and becomes more and more self-sufficient, the number of workers so employed must necessarily increase and so must, in consequence, the influence they may be able to wield. At present the majority of industrial workers can be classified under the main heads of Railways, Shipping, and other forms of transport, Cotton Textile, Jute Textile, Mining and Quarrying, Engineering and allied trades, Printing and Paper Manufacture, and other growing industries such as Sugar, Match, and Cement.

Less than 10 per cent of these workers are organized in trade union groups, and those who are organized are divided under two auspices, the National Trades Union Federation and the All-India Trade Union Congress. The main point of difference between the two bodies is the disbelief of the latter in the efficacy of affiliations to outside organizations, such as the International Labour Office in Geneva or the International Federation of

Trades Unions in Paris, and their belief that the class struggle should be the basis of the movement.

That absence of unity amongst the trade unions has had adverse effects on the conditions of the workers has been realized by the responsible leaders of both sections, and efforts have been made to bring about a *rapprochement*. These have led to the two bodies agreeing to act jointly on matters where there is no divergence of opinion.

What are the main problems facing the trade union leaders today? Like their *confrères* in other parts of the world, they are confronted first and foremost with the menace of unemployment. There are no accurate statistics available, but it is estimated that there are no less than forty million unemployed throughout India. Some are unemployable, others are the victims of rationalization and the other devices made necessary by the struggle for markets.

Of almost more importance—to those already in employment—are the conditions of labour. In 1929 the Royal Commission on Labour was appointed under the chairmanship of the late Mr. J. H. Whitley. The trade union movement cites the fate of the recommendations of this Commission as support for their contention that the Government's solicitude for labour at Geneva is more declamatory than real. It is computed that of the 457 modest recommendations made by the Whitley Commission, 108 have been rejected by the Government and only 65 implemented; 8 are under legislation; 12 are "noted"; 70 are under consideration; 24 are considered unnecessary, and in 68 cases there has either been no action or it has been deferred. It is asserted that the Government's intentions in regard to the remaining recommendations are obscure.

The Communist Party has been outlawed, but, according to the moderate trade union leaders, only a sincere desire on the part of the Government and the employers to encourage the growth of genuine trade unionism can prevent the spread of the communist idea. There is no doubt that today the average Indian employer's conception of the obligations inherent in his position are mediaeval; when clashes occur with the workers he can generally rely on the protection of the armed forces of the Government, since the peace and tranquillity of the country become involved in any industrial disturbance. If this was so under the old regime, the possibilities created under the new constitution are infinite, for Indian Ministers will be responsible for the maintenance of law and order. Any interference—however necessary—will be construed as intervention on behalf of vested interests, and as the contingencies of such situations are hypothetical and dependent on judgment which may be debatable, it is obvious that crises may arise in which class is pitted against class.

Visualizing such possibilities, the Whitley Commission recommended the statutory appointment of an Industrial Council, but the Government has yet to act on the matter. The Government of Bombay has, however, established certain arbitration machinery which has in it the possibilities of holding a balance between the employer and the employed.

A policy of direct action has, in the past, often had disastrous consequences to the workers, but their conditions are already so pitiable, that they have little more to lose by the adoption of extreme methods. Only their very depressed conditions could have accounted, for

example, for the remarkable response of the workers during the Bombay textile strike in 1934.

If their grievances were not redressed by methods of discussion and arbitration, it was not very difficult to organize strikes. But not only did the worker himself suffer but also those employed in allied industries. It is essential, therefore, not only from the point of view of the welfare of a particular section, but in the interests of the whole community that adequate means should be contrived for the ventilation of the grievances of the workers.

Industrial Councils and Arbitration Boards have already been mentioned, and there remains the question of parliamentary representation. The details of this aspect of the problem of the industrial worker will be discussed in a later chapter. It will be sufficient to mention here that there seem to be no signs at the moment of a repetition of the history of the British Labour Party when in 1918 the intelligentsia of the Socialist Party became hitched on, as it were, to the Trade Union movement. The fact that there is some disintegration at the moment between these two sections would suggest that the Indian Trade Union movement has much to learn from the experience of the older organizations which tried to combine the objects of those working for a new economic structure and those who were merely concerned with the amelioration of working conditions.

The problem in India is not, however, the same. In the first place, the system of separate electorates for different communities and the reservation of seats for certain interests will lead to a multiplicity of parties which may, or may not, combine after election. In the second place, the existence of statutory majorities reduces

the necessity of a strong alternative party such as is essential under the British constitution. It will be possible for parties in India to retain their separate identities and yet combine on a common platform when the occasion demands.

Under an "alien" Government certain measures for the protection of the workers have been adopted such as the Trade Union Act, the Factories Act, the Workmen's Compensation Act, and the Mines Act. In addition, a certain number of international Conventions, aiming at better conditions of work, have been ratified by the Government of India. It remains to be seen whether greater satisfaction will be accorded to the workers under the new self-governing constitutions and whether the transfer of Labour from the Central to the Provincial sphere will operate in their interests or against them, or whether it will lead to inter-provincial friction.

It has not been necessary to emphasize the existence of a class of seasonal workers, that is to say agricultural labourers who migrate to the cities during those months when their labour is not required on the land. As this type of worker begins to get accustomed to the amenities of city life, and especially the cinema, he is becoming more disinclined to return to his village. In course of time these workers, numbering about 400,000 of the total factory employees, will be absorbed in the permanent industrial population. At the moment they do, of course, share the problems of the agriculturist and the urban worker, although, as they work on raw material such as cotton, jute, and oilseeds, after the crops have been gathered, there is no conflict of interest in this dual occupation.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE PRESS

WHEN Wendell Phillips, the American reformer, said that if he were allowed to make the newspapers, he would not care who made the laws or the religion, he was thinking in terms of a country which was literate.

In India only ninety-five persons out of a thousand are literate and of that number only about twenty-four are literate in English. The Parsees are almost cent per cent literate and they are followed by the States of Cochin, Travancore, and Baroda.

Almost as important as the question of literacy is that of the financial resources of the people. That there should be thousands of people who can read and yet cannot afford the half-anna (say halfpenny) necessary to buy a newspaper seems unbelievable, yet it is a fact. These then are the two factors governing the circulations of newspapers.

It is not, of course, a newspaper's income from sales which is so important as its income from advertisements, and, as the latter is so often dependent on the former, there is a vicious circle so far as the improvement of the paper is concerned; limited circulations, limited resources.

Readers in India can be divided into three categories. The Europeans and the Indians who insist on a certain minimum of efficiency and accuracy will buy the Anglo-Indian, or European-owned Press. English-speaking Indian readers who pride themselves on their nationalism will support the Indian-owned newspaper, while the man

who can read only in the vernacular[1] will, of course, buy none other than his local vernacular paper.

There are examples of the Anglo-Indian Press in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Delhi, and Lahore. Several reasons contribute to their ability to bring out a better product than their Indian rivals. In the first place they have been established longer. Secondly, they are able to exact higher advertisement rates from clients not only in India but especially in Britain. Thirdly, they are in receipt of substantial revenue from official sources for advertisements; departmental, legal, and so forth. The financial stability—or relative stability, for newspapers in India are by no means "gilt-edged" securities—which these three factors help to produce enables their conductors to give their readers more for their money than they can get elsewhere. There may not be much to choose between the actual newsprint and the technical equipment of the Anglo-Indian and the Indian Press, but the former will be in a financial position to employ a better qualified staff. The reader will not find all the irritating mistakes in grammar, fact, and punctuation

[1] Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his valuable autobiography refers to the various Indian languages and says, "It is an extraordinary fact that very few Englishmen know even one moderately well, in spite of a lifelong residence in this country. They class the lot of these together and call them the 'Vernacular,' the slave language (from the Latin *verna*, a home-born slave), and many of our people have, unknowingly, accepted this nomenclature."

Is there any other single adjective which expresses the meaning which the word "vernacular" now conveys? I would like to avoid a word which gives offence, but, granting its origin, I see that the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives Froude as having used the adjective in reference to German and Pope as having written of a certain word being "entirely English and vernacular."

which makes the Indian paper sometimes look as though it had not been produced but had just happened; he will find many errors but they will be considerably less than in the nationalist counterparts.

Increasingly, the Anglo-Indian papers will have to rely on their Indian readers for their main support. This means that even though the editorial policy were of a particular character in the beginning, the necessity of survival alone will now dictate a policy which is more acceptable to Indians. And, as every journalist knows, this does not apply merely to leading articles but to the news and the way it is presented. There is no comparison between, say, the present-day reports in the European-owned Press of the activities of Congress leaders and the reports of five years ago. Commercial considerations have prompted the change, just as commercial considerations have necessitated the closer official approximation to what is called the Indian view on politics generally. As time goes on, the leading article, unless it undergoes radical changes, will be less and less read and will almost cease to have importance from the average reader's point of view.

Confront a stranger with copies of the various newspapers in India and he is sure to comment on their "stodginess." The stigma will be true, but there are several reasons for it. First of all, the Indian reader often chooses quantity in preference to quality, one reason being that the paper he buys for one anna can be re-sold for half an anna in the bazaar as wrapping paper! Moreover, a single copy of a paper will often be shared and read by as many as twenty and sometimes sixty readers (a whole village). Obviously, twenty sheets will go round further than twelve sheets.

Then, again, the absence of originality to which I have already referred makes itself painfully conspicuous in the Indian Press. The "news sense" is very immature and reporting is mostly confined to dry-as-dust accounts of speeches, précis of reports and the ubiquitous interview. A man should only be reported on his arrival in Bombay if he has something to say. But the mere fact that he has arrived is enough for the Indian Press, and he may say something that is as stale and pointless as possible—he will get his column in the newspaper all the same.

Technical deficiencies, both mechanical and in the personnel, are often responsible for this dullness. The use of photographs, and their effective presentation, is very little understood and appreciated.

So far as the personnel is concerned, it is too much to expect a sub-editor who has had no rigorous professional experience or training to give a correct "lead" at the mere sight of a news message or for a leader writer to have to write on every subject in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* at a moment's notice. The latter tendency is, I think, needlessly indulged. Many a leading London paper would unhesitatingly wait a day before expressing an opinion on a particular subject if by so doing it could achieve a better perspective. Better were it so with the Indian Press. In a country where everything is supposed to be put off till tomorrow, the leader writers step in to show that some things can be done on the nail!

It should not be thought that efficient journalists do not exist; they do. The difficulty is that the conditions under which they work are frequently so appalling that it is often a miracle that the papers are published at all.

There are some newspaper offices where the congestion, due to the overcrowding of staff and equipment, renders calm work wellnigh impossible. I have visited one office where the effect of the proximity of the toilet arrangements would have made work impossible for any but the most hardened. Certainly a visitor could have but one desire and that was to leave the premises as soon as possible. By the very nature of its work, a newspaper office, unless efficiently organized, can in a very short time become the picture of disorder. The easy-going methods of most of the Indian papers are responsible for this impression.

As a contrast there are newspapers, such as the European-owned newspaper of Calcutta, which are as well equipped, for their requirements, as those in Fleet Street. Again, there is an Indian-owned newspaper in Allahabad which has made an interesting experiment in the adaptation of Indian conditions to modern Press needs. In the compound containing the offices are also a number of small bungalows in which most of the staff are housed. They live here with their families, available for any emergency, and not under the necessity of travelling the large distances of the city on bicycles. It is also proposed to establish a farm for the community so that, in so many respects, it will be self-contained. Incidentally, many of the employees have joined the organization as young men and intend to pass their lives in the service of the company.

The journalist in India has an exceedingly difficult task. He has to please his employer, the owner of the newspaper, he must satisfy his reader and the Government, and must see that the staff under him works as efficiently as possible. The employer may or may not be

a capitalist. He may simply be the head of a joint family which is conducting the newspaper. (There are two newspapers in India with well-known names which are joint family property, have been in the family for generations, and are now conducted by various members of the family.) It is interesting that at present there is only one example of a capitalist owning control of a newspaper and influencing its policy. In another instance of a capitalist in possession, he takes no interest in the editorial policy to the extent of setting down its lines. In the days to come, the vested interests will more and more recognize the necessity of the aid of the Press and we may expect to see them unite in ventures of this kind. Already the zemindars (land-owners) have an organ to further their interests, and the industrialists will certainly follow.

The reader in India varies from province to province. In Madras you will find him buying his paper in the evening (when the main editions are printed to suit his taste) and reading every page, line by line, as he goes home to his house in the suburbs and after he has had his evening meal. Not only will he read the news carefully, but he will discuss it with his friends who call for a chat. Of all the readers in India, the Madrasis seem the best informed—very largely because they are interested in *ideas*. They are interested in, say, President Roosevelt's speech for any ideas it may contain, not from the point of view of its reactions in the markets and the effects on, let us say, silver.

The Bombay man, on the other hand, living in the home of speculation, reads everything in terms of market values, whether the new French Government will have a bullish or a bearish effect on the market,

or whether events in Japan will affect the cotton bazaar. He is less interested in ideas as such. Like the readers elsewhere, he is interested in sport (especially racing).

The Bengali is noted for his clannishness, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the Calcutta papers contain more local news than their counterparts in the other provinces. He is also interested in personalities and two nationalist daily newspapers ran for years on the basis of one personality versus another.

It is a moot point whether Punjabis, with very few exceptions, are very interested in world events or, indeed, in affairs outside their own Province. I recall a Lahore newspaper which published seventy-nine columns of advertisement matter and only about twenty-one of reading material, and the readers are so undiscriminating that there was not a single complaint! Interests in the Punjab run very much along communal lines. Not only are newspapers (and rightly) in danger of losing their deposits if they pander to these interests, but they also constitute very meagre material for the journalist of merit to work upon.

I have already referred to the position of the Press *vis-à-vis* the Government and the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931. But there are other Acts which most editors regard as redundant curbs on their activities as, according to them, the ordinary laws of the land are sufficiently comprehensive to enable cognizance to be taken of any Press offence. These Acts include the States' Protection Act of 1934 (making punishable the bringing into hatred or contempt or exciting disaffection towards the administration established in any State in India). The Princes' Protection Act of 1922 is of the

same nature, while the Foreign Relations Act of 1932 makes punishable the publication of any matter defamatory to a Ruler of a State outside but adjoining India or of the consort or son or principal Minister of such Ruler and tending to prejudice the maintenance of friendly relations between His Majesty's Government and the Government of such State.

It may be asked why British Indian editors feel so keenly the passage of these laws if it is a fact that the laws of the land, already established, cover these offences. The answer is that the former laws make it possible for papers to be penalized—to the extent of the stoppage of publication—by the immediate decision of the Executive. Appeal is, of course, allowed, but before it can reach a hearing by the High Court, the damage to a newspaper's finances may have become irreparable. In any event, the High Court has no jurisdiction to revise the order of the magistrate in regard to the amount of securities demanded.

Press laws relating to the States place restrictions on the publication of news of and comments on the administration of Indian States, so that criticism which might be permitted on the administration in British India would be culpable if applied to any of the Indian States. When Federation is established, and the nominees of the States are sitting in the same Federal Legislature as the elected representatives of British India, it may well be that the administration in a certain State will have a direct bearing on the affairs of British India. The contention that the contact between the two groups will lead to a gradual liberalization of the administration in certain backward States may well prove to be false, according

to British Indian editors, if they are not permitted a certain scope in their reports and comments.

It should not be thought that newspapers do not criticize the administration in certain States and the individual lives of some of the Princes. In fact, sometimes there are allegations of a startling character, but editors apparently rely more on the truth of their reports, and the consequent unwillingness of the persons concerned to take the matter to the Courts, rather than on any rights they may possess under the law. One of the most unpleasant reactions of such a situation is that money has been known to pass between representatives of the States and certain venturesome characters. There are at this day events taking place in certain States, which have been accorded honoured places in Imperial functions, which no enlightened public opinion should tolerate. Editors in British India, therefore, should be excused their cynicism when abuses of which everyone is aware can continue under the shelter of the law and they see nefarious activities prospering as a result.

From the owner, the reader, and the Government we now come to the staff of the average Indian newspaper. Most of the Indian journalists I have met—and I have seen all the leading newspapers at work—have drifted into the profession from a desire for public service. Very few have looked upon it as a career in the lucrative sense except those who have succeeded in collecting money on some journalistic pretext or venture. Unfortunately, the finances of the Indian Press do not seem to permit of salaries commensurate with the training and experience which should be necessary before a journalist can be expected to assume a position of responsibility.

Very often his salary, already meagre, is in arrears and he is unable to buy, either in his personal or his official capacity, those books and journals so necessary to stimulate his interest and imagination.

The editorial staff of a newspaper has to contend with a staff on the mechanical side which is sometimes enough to drive anyone to distraction. The Indian sub-editor is not himself very particular about punctuation or spelling, but the indifference of the compositor or proof-reader on these matters is appalling. I have seen the editor of perhaps the largest Anglo-Indian newspaper correcting the proofs of his own *corrected* proofs, because he would have taken too many risks if he had allowed the work to be done by someone else. There is, of course, much to be said for the compositor. More often than not, his work is just visual, in that he does not understand English. If he has to operate his linotypes looking at indistinct copy or against time (as little in India is done to the clock) he cannot be expected to produce the kind of work he might be able to do in better conditions.

Copy in the vernacular is generally composed by hand, a much more laborious process when it is realized that one letter may call for as many as four separate pieces of metal. But linotypes are being increasingly used.

Obviously, the remedy for the disadvantages under which the Indian Press is produced—so far as self-help is concerned—is a sounder financial basis which will enable the employment of a better qualified staff. This is not as easy as it sounds, for the development of the Press is bound up with the increase in the reading public which, in turn, is dependent on the spread of education.

Moreover, the sources of capital will largely qualify the nature of the development.

At the present it is impossible for an English printed newspaper to achieve a circulation of even 50,000—which is microscopic compared with the millions of the English Press. But a circulation of between 8,000 and 10,000 is considered good, in a country where literacy and financial resources so limit the number of potential readers.

As the mother tongues are taught before a foreign language, it seems fairly obvious that the greatest scope for the development of the Press as a means of the dissemination of knowledge lies along the road of vernacular journalism. There are one or two papers in this class, I am thinking of one in Tamil and one in Bengali, which set a commendably high standard in their literary output and the technique of presentation. Discrimination as to types, headlines, and the judicious use of photographs and sketches can make a vernacular newspaper a very attractive proposition, both to the reader and the advertiser.

This brings me to one of the most important considerations which an Indian newspaper proprietor has to face; the necessity of retaining the goodwill and patronage of the advertiser. He is confronted with a difficulty largely of his own making, the difficulty of the apparently almost unending depression of advertisement rates. Steps were taken at one time to form a Newspaper Proprietors' Association, on the lines of the British organization, which should have as one of its objects the maintenance of certain standards in advertisement rates. Like too many Indian organizations, it saw the light of day and then died from inanition, due partly to the

falling off in interest of the potential members and partly to their internecine jealousies caused by the overlapping of territories.

Everyone knows that business in India is very largely a matter of bargaining. The idea of the "fixed rate" is something almost unheard of—in any event it is so in the advertisement world. A newspaper will try to maintain a certain standard and then reports will arrive that its rivals have accepted a lower quotation. This will lead to competitive measures on the part of the first paper, until it becomes a *reductio ad absurdum*, and advertisements are being printed and distributed at a cost which does not cover the price of the paper alone. This actually happens in Bombay and Calcutta, and there is no check to it except the demise of the throat-cutting papers. That they manage to survive is generally more mysterious than the rope trick. But an extension of credit here, a subsidy from a politician with an axe to grind there, a delay in the payment of wages and salaries, and the papers which once looked as though they were breathing their last, take on if not a new lease of life at least a fresh period of existence. The newspaper proprietors themselves are entirely responsible for this state of affairs, which is really at the bottom of the weakness of the Indian Press. Limitations imposed by the Government would not have anything like their potency if the Press were financially strong and united.

An extension of the reading public is the next requirement for the development of journalism. The spread of education through schools and free libraries will come with time and a vigorous educational policy. With the widening of the circle of readers there will come, or

should come, a broadening of the interests of the Press. Catering as it does for the urban politically minded reader, the Indian newspaper of today must give a foreigner the impression that Indians are obsessed with politics. He will see little of other interest that is not "scissors and paste" work—that is to say, articles which have been "lifted" from British or American newspapers. If the Indian editor ever hopes to infuse any vitality into his paper, he must send out his reporters to write on the life that is daily going on in his own city. The people who are interested in, and understand, the events which are taking place in Geneva, Belgrade, and London are already purchasers of the newspaper. It is the less knowledgeable readers who have to be attracted, if the Press is to become an effective vehicle of public service.

The development of women's education will, in the course of time, have considerable influence on the Press. Whereas in Britain it is the woman of the house so often who decides which newspaper shall be bought, in India there are many educated women (graduates of universities) who never even open a newspaper. Life's boundaries tend to be so restricted, that whatever interest they may have taken in the world at large in their college days, disappears with marriage. Local affairs, civic and otherwise, should be presented by newspapers in such a manner as to attract this type of reader. When women in large numbers are the readers, editorial policy must adapt itself to their requirements. Much as one might deplore the parochialism of India generally, I believe it will be infinitely better for the sake of the country to have a hundred intelligent readers of reports of local affairs than one super-intelligent reader able to follow

the moves in high politics. All this points to the development of the smaller half-anna newspaper, either in English or the vernacular, concise and appealing to the reader whose intellectual equipment cannot be strained too much, but who, nevertheless, has an effective voice in civic and provincial affairs.

It is only by the linking up of the general public with the gigantic organism of government, in all its phases, that Indian life can hope to gather that momentum which it so manifestly lacks. I have not made a plea for the lowering of the standard of the Press, but have tried to show the necessity of reaching the present non-newspaper reading public by adapting a section of the Press to the needs of this public—needs intellectual and financial.

Up till now little has been said of the difficult climatic conditions under which India works, but of all those who are thus handicapped, the newspaper world suffers most. Working in the blazing sun, if one is a reporter, or under the whirl of fans—with papers flying in all directions—if one is an editor or a sub-editor, or enduring difficulties over the printing ink deteriorating or the machinery showing unexpected defects if one is on the technical staff, is not conducive to the best work, the more so as one is working under pressure.

Although essentially English in its origin (in 1780), the Press in India today can be said to be Indian in many senses of the word, for even on the Anglo-Indian papers the majority of the staff are Indians. When, however, Indian editors complain of the restrictions on the Press, it is as well to remember that less than a hundred and fifty years ago the British Administration

was deporting English editors who insisted on the independence of the Press and their right to free opinions. That a Government should object to criticism of its conduct of affairs is understandable. The point of interest is that just as British administrators deported and otherwise penalized British journalists, the time is not far distant when Indian administrators may take similar action against Indian pressmen. It all depends on the type of Government and the manner in which it maintains relations with the Press.

His Excellency Lord Linlithgow made a significant and striking reference to the relations between the Press and the Government in his first broadcast to the people of India. He said: "It is within the power of the Press of all democratic countries to make a most material contribution towards the successful working of public institutions and the development of an informed and responsible body of opinion, but, like the rest of us, newspaper men cannot be expected to make bricks without straw. If they are to discharge their responsible duties towards the public and to comment effectively upon current affairs they require, whatever their editorial policy, to be informed as far as practicable upon the facts at issue. As one well accustomed to their requirements in this regard I intend to do my utmost to give them such assistance as properly I may, and both they and their readers may rest assured that such help as my officers may find it possible to give to the Press will be confined to facts, that these will be presented in a fashion entirely objective, and that the material available will be at the disposal of the Press as a whole without distinction or discrimination."



SOME CONGRESS LEADERS INCLUDING MRS. SAROJINI NAIDU, MR. VALLABHBHAI PATEL, MR. K. F. NARIMAN, BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD, MR. M. S. ANEY AND MR. S. A. BRELVI, AT BOMBAY, 1934

Such a policy should go a long distance towards the improvement of the Indian Press on which will rest so much responsibility in the future.

The problem of producing a newspaper with a daily all-India distribution is bound up, owing to the huge distances, with the development of rapid air transport and improvement in land line facilities. It is debatable, however, whether the future trend of politics, which will be largely along provincial lines, will be such as to discourage the growth of what in England are known as "national" newspapers.

The European-owned *Statesman* of Calcutta comes nearest to achieving an all-India status by reason of the edition which is simultaneously printed in Delhi. Other important European-owned dailies are the *Times of India* of Bombay, the *Madras Mail* of Madras, and the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore.

Amongst the Indian-owned newspapers, the *Hindu* of Madras stands out as maintaining a very high standard of journalism and newspaper production. The *Leader* of Allahabad, less comprehensive as a newspaper, holds an honoured position due to the high level of its editorial columns. The *Pioneer* of Lucknow, once European-owned, is now controlled by a syndicate of landowners. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta is an old-established daily which has made rapid strides in recent years, while *Ananda Bazar Patrika* of the same city shows that the vernacular Press can be both arresting and interesting. The *Bombay Chronicle*, the *Tribune* of Lahore, the *Hindustan Times* and *National Call* of Delhi, the *Indian Express* of Madras, and *Advance* of Calcutta, are other popular nationalist daily newspapers.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE CINEMA

WHILE the Press may be the most powerful means of influencing the educated public, the cinema has greater potentialities with the less-trained section of the population—the overwhelming majority. One is thinking, of course, in terms of numbers and of the more simple problems of life which require elucidation.

The cinema industry in India is in its infancy, both on the production side as well as the exhibition side. In the whole country there are only about 660 cinemas, and of these only about 60 show British and American films, which are mostly patronized by the European community. In other words, there is a cinema available for every 534,587 persons, whereas in Great Britain there is one cinema for every 9,177 persons.

On the production side there are just over one hundred producing units or companies. At the present there are about 20,000 persons who are directly employed in the motion picture industry, whereas in the United States, where there are over 14,000 cinemas, the industry gives employment to over 200,000 persons. These figures give some idea of the enormous field yet to be developed in India.

There is a certain amount of vague talk about the influence of Hollywood and Elstree on the Indian mind, so that it is necessary to inquire with some precision into the extent of that influence. Go into any cinema in Bombay, showing a non-Indian film, and you will find

that the majority of the patrons in the more expensive seats are Europeans or Americans with the Parsees a close second and with just a sprinkling of Hindus and Moslems. As the prices of these seats are approximately the same as in a London cinema, one would not expect to find the students there. They are in the cheaper part of the house which, curiously enough, may be in the front or may be at the back.

For the purposes of our discussion we can ignore the non-Indian section of the audience. What is the effect of the programme on the Indian section? They will see films dealing with the social problems of the West; domestic, economic, political. Whereas ten years ago a young Indian, drawing upon his reading and his imagination, visualized English life on the lines of Thackeray and Dickens, he now sees it depicted before him as it is—or as the film producer sees it. He will realize the implications of the free association between men and women, the theoretically free contact between class and class, the scope which is allowed to individuality, the possibility of rising to great heights from small beginnings—all of which are revolutionary from the point of view of the indigenous culture.

From the news reel he will get glimpses of an upheaval in Spain, a Rugby football match in Dublin, elections in France, and distress relief measures in the United States, which will stimulate his imagination and excite his further curiosity. Incidentally, while it seems impossible to establish a second world news service in India under existing conditions, there are several world news reels which are being regularly exhibited.

The next most important effect of the foreign film is

on the English-speaking capacities of the audience. While it is undoubtedly leading to greater fluency, it is also facilitating the introduction of phrases which, while common on the other side of the Atlantic, jar on English ears. Frequently, in the course of my journalistic work, I have traced unhappy phraseology and impossible headlines straight to Hollywood.

Just as there is misunderstanding of correct and incorrect English, there are misconceptions about Western life when impressions are derived through the screen. This is, of course, inevitable, and they are not confined to this type of experience. There are thousands of English people in India today who, because they have not gone deeply enough into the meaning of things, have as incorrect an idea of Indian life as a university student in Calcutta or Madras might have of English life.

The patron of the Indian film has, till recently, been entertained to stories of a mythological and fanciful character. They might be compared with the English pantomimes of twenty or thirty years ago, for humans become disembodied spirits, articles of furniture take on wings and fly through the air, or a bed of flowers suddenly becomes transformed into a bevy of dancers. Historical films are treated in as imaginative a way as their Western counterparts, and there is little in them of educational value. I am told by Indian friends that during the non-co-operation movements considerable advantage was taken of this type of film for political propaganda purposes. In analogy there was the undaunted hero (the Indian nation), struggling to free himself from the clutches of the avaricious oppressor (the British), and brought to the brink of victory by the

advice and intercession of his spiritual teacher (Mr. Gandhi). The method may seem far-fetched, but it is a potent weapon in a country where, until now, so much has been taken for granted.

From the mythological film, producers are now turning their attention to "social drama" pictures. These deal with such subjects as the educated woman forced to marry according to her parents' dictates, and other problems related to the emancipation of women, the evils of unemployment, and the effects of orthodoxy in a changing world. The importance of the effect of such films cannot be exaggerated, for they stimulate the audience, through the medium of entertainment, into consideration of the vital problems which are surrounding them.

While the advent of the talkies has increased the influence of the screen, it has also to a large extent limited the all-India potentialities of films and led to the development of the industry on a provincial basis. Of all the languages spoken in India, Hindi is the most widespread, although, notwithstanding Congress propaganda, its use is diminishing with the spread of literacy. This language is, however, spoken in four or five different provinces, and the producer with an eye to sales has to make use of the most widely spoken language. This may make his film ununderstandable in regions speaking other vernaculars, headed by Bengali and followed, in order, by Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Punjabi, Kanarese, and Gujerati, to name the most important tongues.

Historical films would seem to have in them considerable possibilities for the knitting together of the

various communities, but they would have to be treated in a very non-controversial manner if they are to be acceptable to the various elements. It is hardly conceivable, for example, that the Moslems would accept the conventional Hindu idea of Shivaji, the Mahratta hero, or the Hindus the Moslem version of the life of Aurangzeb. Already certain publications on these subjects have led to such strained feelings that the Government of India has been compelled to prohibit them.

Leaving the effect of the cinema on the urban mind, let us turn to its potential influence on rural life. The Government of India has recognized the possibilities and has set aside certain sums in the Budget for the maintenance of cinema apparatus for rural uplift propaganda. Portable projectors are mounted on motor vans and their visits to particular areas are notified well in advance. Thousands of villagers attend these demonstrations which deal with various aspects of rural life.

Hitherto, any form of propaganda initiated by the Government has been suspect. Whether this will be so under the Reforms depends on the types of Ministries which come into office. The only alternative to Government-sponsored work is private enterprise, and this is a field which has not yet been touched, though several efforts are afoot for its development.

The village-cinema requires but the simplest of equipment and the open sky is an adequate enough roof. A screen and the projector apparatus are all that is required for films which might show, for example, simple lessons in hygiene, improved methods of agriculture and hut building, or glimpses into the lives of workers in other occupations.

There are three great difficulties which confront the enthusiasts of this form of rural reconstruction. The first is the necessity of making the admission fee as low as one pice (one farthing), the second is the increased cost involved by the necessity of repeating the films in various vernaculars, and the third is the Indian public's disinclination to see anything which is new and which tells them a story with which they are not already familiar.

The first difficulty can only be overcome if the enterprise is subsidized in some way, either by philanthropic bodies or through the agency of the Government, or if it can be undertaken by a company, already established in the film industry, which is ready to utilize its surplus in this cause.

Not only is the duplication of "talkie" films in the various vernaculars expensive, but it also necessitates delicate apparatus which is liable to frequent breakdowns due to being constantly jolted over rough-surfaced roads. Those interested in this problem suggest that the best method of overcoming these difficulties is the production of silent films which would be accompanied by gramophone records synchronized with the projector. This is, of course, a cruder form—in fact, the first form of the "talkies"—but it will meet the situation.

Mental stagnation is a powerful enemy in India, and one has only to analyse the average cinema audience to realize its extent. The mythological type of film, to which I have alluded, could not continue to exist unless the audiences were mentally unexacting. Their insistence on the same story over and over again, perhaps in a different setting, merely because it is one with which they happen to be familiar, is evidence enough that they offer to

the producer no more scope than a child who asks to have his favourite fairy story repeated to him again and again until he falls asleep.

What are the possibilities of the cinema as an instrument of political propaganda? Since the open-air cinema is such a feasible proposition in India during the greater part of the year, there is every reason for foreseeing its use in the political field. With the development of political parties along economic lines rather than on the present strictly communal basis, the screen is sure to be pressed into service as a means of reaching the masses.

One can also foresee its utilization in any controversy as between province and province or British India and the States. Boards of Film Censors exist, of course, in each of the provinces but it is conceivable that on any major issue the Government itself might require assistance of this nature.

There remains but one other aspect to this question of the development of the film and that is the degree to which Indian-produced films can find markets overseas. It is obvious that any such film would have to be recorded in English or certainly "dubbed" in English if it were to be screened in the English-speaking countries. I have not seen many films which could bear reproduction overseas for the reasons I have already given in describing the mentality of the average Indian audience. There is, in addition, the problem of the preconceived notions of Western nations who think of India and immediately visualize Maharajahs, elephants, rubies, snake charmers, rope tricks, and, above all, the silent bearer of the White Man's Burden. This difficulty is not, however, insuperable, as it is answered by the degree of technique achieved

by the Indian producer who, in dealing with realistic subjects, must be able to grasp the interests of his audience without resorting to claptrap. Some Indian pictures have reached a high standard of technical efficiency, and if a channel can be opened for the supply of Indian films to foreign countries, many of the popular misconceptions about the country would disappear.

At present all the raw materials, films, mechanical equipment, and chemicals are imported and the Government derives considerable duty therefrom. The net effect of the industry at the present time, therefore, is the exodus of large sums of money from the country. So vast are the potentialities of the industry in a country such as India, where visual education, like other forms of education, is in its infancy, that the Government of India have been requested to create a special section of the Industries Department to deal with it. Closer Government contact will certainly be found to be necessary before very long.

Last, but not least, is the vast unexplored realm of the amateur photographer. There are many well-to-do young men and women in India, anxious to serve their country, but unwilling to work within the present political parties. A very attractive field of service lies open in the equipment and running of village-cinema units, which would tour within a certain area, aiming at the stimulation of the villagers from their age-long mental torpor.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE RADIO

ON first thoughts the radio might seem to be a more powerful instrument for mass education than the cinema —but experience has taught otherwise. In the first place, before the villager can understand the implications of spoken words he must be able to visualize certain situations in his mind. So limited is his mental equipment, as a result of centuries of inanition, that this demand is beyond him. After his curiosity and wonder over the loud-speaker have had their play—he is apt to drift off to other occupations.

Even amongst the literate classes, the radio has not been the instrument of instruction and entertainment it might have been expected to be. When it was first introduced into India in 1925 by Messrs. Marconi, it failed to catch the imagination of the public. Indeed, it was not until market prices were introduced as regular items in the programmes that the *bunya* up-country began to think of buying a receiving set.

From 1927 to 1929 the control of broadcasting was in the hands of the Indian Broadcasting Company of Bombay, a concern which met with no more success than its predecessors. In 1929 the Government of India acquired control of the service, but, finding like the others who had attempted the undertaking that it was inseparable from financial loss, decided to abolish it at the end of 1931.

Disappointed at this decision, certain parties suggested that sufficient funds would be forthcoming if the proceeds

of a tax on imported radio goods could be allocated for the support of the broadcasting service. An Act to this effect was passed by the Legislative Assembly in May 1932, the chief argument which appealed to the then Member for Industries and Labour being the scope which the service offered for educational broadcasts. The revenue derived from this tax, together with the proceeds from licences, today enables the Broadcasting Service to make both ends meet.

As a medium of instruction and propaganda, the influence of the radio at the moment is potential rather than real, the chief factors being the financial inability of the people to purchase receiving sets and the necessary licences, differences in language and faulty reception.

As the approximate number of wireless licences issued in 1935–36 only amounted to about 27,210, one need not labour the fact that the broadcasting system is in its infancy. This figure, however, shows a remarkable increase on the figure of 18,412 for 1934–35 and an even greater one on the 1933–34 number, 12,214.

The language difficulty requires no emphasis; on the musical side there are allied problems. Generally speaking, European music is unintelligible to Indian listeners, except to the Parsees and the Goans. Similarly, Indian music is not often found attractive by non-Indians, who soon weary of the plaintive sounds of the instruments and the nasal tones of the singers. Again, so much in an Indian song depends on the meaning of the words and their adjustment and appropriateness to a given combination of sounds. In consequence a Bengali singer, for example, cannot be appreciated in Bombay to anything like the extent an Italian tenor, say, might be appreciated in

London. Yet it can be assumed that the bulk of the Broadcasting Service revenue is derived from those who appreciate European music. It is obvious, therefore, that the development of broadcasting is a provincial problem.

In addition to these factors, there is the technical problem of faulty reception due to atmospheric conditions. Violent storms, heavy rains, earthquake tendencies, and the working of electric fans and signs all militate against the radio as a thoroughly reliable means of reaching the public.

All these considerations tend to place the same restrictions on the development of the radio as one finds in relation to the Press and the cinema.

The Government has, however, an extensive programme of construction on hand. Nine powerful wireless transmitting stations are to be erected in the different provinces out of the sum of 40 lakhs of rupees which has been set aside for the development of broadcasting by the Government of India. Still, this is but a fraction of the sum of over 100 lakhs which has been spent in England on the erection of transmitting stations alone.

Where financial considerations play so important a part, it has been necessary to consider every possible means of reducing costs. One suggestion is the employment of the relay system, that is the relaying of programmes from a central amplifier by line to local loud-speakers. The system would undoubtedly be most important in any scheme of rural reconstruction and would get over problems connected with the villagers' ignorance of mechanics and electricity. Some provincial Governments have already initiated schemes for the erection of communal receivers.

Similarly, the development of the broadcasting of records of performances which have taken place in London and elsewhere—of plays and talks—provides an interesting solution to the problem of costs. Naturally, no programme could be built up in this way since the encouragement of local talent is part of the aim of the broadcasting system.

It is important that the possibilities of broadcasting as a political instrument should be considered. The Government of India Act has a whole section devoted to the subject of Broadcasting—a sign of the times. While reasonable liberty is to be permitted to the Governments of Provinces or the Rulers of Federated States, nothing in this section of the Act is to be construed as restricting the powers of the Governor-General for the prevention of any grave menace to the peace or tranquillity of India or as prohibiting the imposition on Governments and Rulers of such conditions regulating the matter broadcast as appear to be necessary to the Governor-General to discharge his functions.

There may well be differences on this matter between, let us say, the Governor-General and any State which is using its broadcasting system as a method of airing a particular grievance. In any such divergence, the former is more than likely to succeed, but in the event of any serious issue between British India and the States as a whole, much might be made of the restrictions in this connection on the liberty of the States.

Radio is on the eve of great developments, and if television continues to make progress, it would be impossible to resist a Government controlling these two powerful instruments for the exertion of their will.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE BRITISH IN INDIA.

OF all the potential forces, emanating from without, which could make for the welfare of India, the presence of the British people is the most powerful. But I hasten to add certain qualifications, for, while it is possible to look round one in India and feel as proud of one's nationality as anyone ought to be, it is also possible to feel, on occasions, very ashamed. Throughout I have tried to avoid any discussion on the rights and wrongs of the present constitutional and political position. Inexorable historical facts have placed one nation in command over another. It is an unnatural situation which, in many ways, is as harmful to the governors as to the governed. But this is the situation with which one has to reckon.

The smallness of the British community is not always realized. According to the 1931 Census it numbered just over 155,000, though this figure includes some people of mixed stock. Of this number some 70,000 are in the Army and the Police and some 6,000 in the administrative Civil Departments. The remainder, excluding the 45,000 women, are engaged in commerce and the professions; perhaps 30,000. This is the section of the community which represents the original motive for Britain's association with India.

Curiously enough, although the military form the preponderating proportion of the European population, they seem to obtrude the least. This is partly because

they live in cantonments and their duties do not involve, in the ordinary way, intercourse with the civil population. While the British officer in the Indian Army will learn much of Indian life from his men, the officer in the British Army, who is, after all, a bird of passage, has quite frequently but a remote conception of the country and her peoples. Not only are large sections of the military thus separated from the people of the land, they are also separated from the other classes of the British community. It is inevitable that this segregation should lead to the formation of what might be termed a separate caste of Europeans as rigid in its rules as any limited body of people can be.

The officer is generally rather charming and, as an individual, is the best liked of the British community. He often has that vague quality of gentlemanliness which appeals to upper-class Indians even though it is frequently accompanied by an ignorance, to which I have already referred, of the country in which he is living. Listen to the conversation of a British officer, and it will centre round polo ponies, sports, the recent scandal in the regiment, the best golf courses in the district, and the Commanding Officer's latest fad. Their wives are even more limited in their outlook; I have asked many an officer's wife of the conditions in her district, and her reply has never included a description of the people or their history.

This lack of interest might be all very well if it had not far-reaching effects. But it has. These are just the English people who are apt to give currency to false notions in England, but—worse still—give India a very wrong impression of English people generally.

The British soldier in the rank and file is in a category by himself. Unemployment in Great Britain during the last few years has brought into the army many who were unfit for any other occupation, and the type of recruit, say those who have studied the matter, is in no way comparable to the recruit of a decade or so ago. More often than not these men have neither the education nor the perception to understand the position in which they are placed; all they appreciate is that they are members of a race which rules over others.

Bad conduct and horse-play no doubt there are in home barracks; but it becomes a terrible sight when one sees a soldier from, perhaps, a mining village in Durham, asserting himself over an Indian as if he were lord of the earth. If only it had been possible to take cinema records of some of the incidents I have seen, one would not have to spend any time describing the effect on the mind of India of the conduct of many a British Tommy. He is not entirely to blame, for, clearly, it is never impressed upon him that it is the Indian who is so heavily paying towards his football, his cricket, his swimming, and all the other sports which fill so large a part of his day.

Not only does the soldier, whether he is an officer or in the rank and file, make practically no material contribution to the wealth of the country; he is also, for the most part, draining wealth out of India—a fact to which India has taken the greatest objection. Pay which is largely found by India is remitted to England in the form of pensions, school fees for children, the cost of running establishments at home, the cost of passages, clothes and holidays, and so forth. Practically the only

direct employment given by the military is to menial servants and to tradesmen for certain indispensable foodstuffs. But by no means the larger proportion of the money spent on food goes into Indian pockets. Much is spent on imported goods and drinks which, of course, goes back mostly to England.

It should also be recorded that nationalist India objects to the country being used as a garrison, maintained at India's expense, for what are considered to be Imperial strategic purposes.

Now these are some of the objections which political India has had in the past to a system of defence for which she has had to pay, but in which she has had no final say and only a hypothetical recompense. Will there be any considerable variation in this attitude under the new constitution which transfers considerable power to Indian hands, but still retains defence affairs within the discretion of the Governor-General?

The answer will largely depend on the personnel of the Ministries which are formed. Is it improbable that the vested interests may begin to regard the army in a different light so long as there is a *quid pro quo* in the form of speedier Indianization? Much will also depend on the outlook of British army officers. Modern theories relating to the position of the army *vis-à-vis* the State are at present the subject of much discussion throughout the world, and it is not unlikely that the future may see the views of these officers and the Indian Ministers of the Federal Government coincide to a greater degree than they have ever done in the past.

In contrast to his colleagues in other spheres, the British civil administrator is generally as well informed

on the country in which he works as the others are ignorant, but he is not so well liked as an individual.

It is a matter for satisfaction that many a member of the Indian Civil, Educational, or Medical Services has contributed much more to the knowledge of the country than the strict confines of his work would seem to demand. Practically all the literature on the fauna, flora, archaeology, ornithology, ethnography, and architecture of India has come from the pens of British administrators in one service or another. This alone is evidence of something more than a time-serving attitude to their service in the country and is a quality of which the Indian officials who are now succeeding them might well take note. Perhaps one ought to add that present-day conditions, such as the restlessness of the modern world and increased facilities for travel, are having the effect of decreasing the British administrator's fundamental interest in India. Fifty years ago he would arrive there in the sure knowledge that his sojourn would be of some duration. He began to take an abiding interest in the country and to feel *of* it and not merely *in* it. Today, through telephone, radio, cinema, airmail, and transport facilities, he is able to keep in close contact with Europe, and the result is that he hardly has the time or the inclination to immerse himself in a different culture.

Unfortunately, the area under his control is always so large that the civil administrator frequently finds it necessary to rely on information conveyed to him through his subordinates. Sometimes this leads him to commit errors of judgment of which he might not otherwise be guilty. It is necessary to remember that the Indian Civil Administration—with its six thousand British members—

rests on a completely Indian subordinate personnel without which the executive and judicial machine could not function.

We now come to those British people in India who are engaged in commerce. Naturally, they come into greater and more real contact with Indians than any other section of their countrymen. One says *real contact*, for, while the official necessarily has much to do with Indians, it is the trader who meets them on equal terms, as it were, and not as ruler to ruled.

So far as the executives of British firms are concerned, I have found very little difference in their attitude to Indian commercial leaders and their attitude to their own countrymen. They sit on the some Boards, share the same responsibilities. It is true that the Indian's different political status often stands in the way of his assumption of social equality, but I cannot help feeling that the power of the purse tells, and that, broadly speaking, there exists no economic clash of a racial nature, as witness certain projected amalgamations.

It is said that as American, Japanese, and European manufacturers have gradually penetrated the Indian market and competition has consequently increased, British exporters have had to avail themselves of salesmen more adapted to cut-throat methods than were their predecessors. This has unavoidably led to an increase in what might be termed the irresponsible British element. Ability to withstand the rough and tumble of commercial competition perhaps goes hand in hand with a certain boisterous outlook and conduct. Whether that is so or not, it is the subordinates amongst the English traders who cause the most misgivings.

It will not be denied that the trade connection is a vital part of the present-day association between Britain and India. Yet this connection is of a voluntary nature, and, except as a by-product of currency and fiscal adjustments, cannot exist without the goodwill of the customer. British firms make the most profound mistake if they rely on any but the best of their employees. To send a man to India on a salary which would be unthinkable for anyone of his status in England, who has not the necessary cultural equipment, is a suicidal policy.

There have been occasions when I have returned to my hotel from the office at three o'clock in the morning to meet the last of the revellers from the dinner-dance. They looked like nothing so much as the inflated rubber pigs which an emaciated Indian hawker on the pavement was holding out to them for sale. I have seen men in responsible positions throwing raw eggs on a hotel dance floor and taking delight in the sight of the women's dresses becoming soiled with the liquid. I have sometimes heard English men—and women—using language to subordinates which would disgrace the coarsest home in England.

This is a side matter, but the allusion is worth while because of the misconception of European standards of behaviour which is caused by such conduct. Moreover, it may act as a boomerang if, in years to come, an Englishman finds himself the victim of such conduct rather than the perpetrator of it.

Only those who have lived amongst Indians can fully appreciate the swiftness with which they perceive the intention behind a slurring remark or action. If there ever was a day when the assumption of superiority by

one people over another had any reasonable basis, it sits ill on the shoulders of Europeans today if for no other reason than that the peoples of the great Powers of the West are themselves in such a state of confusion and mutual conflict. Perhaps more important still are the implications of the rapid world spread in the ownership of capital.

One of the pictures that the average person in England has of his countrymen in India is of missionaries educating semi-savages. It is extremely unfortunate that there should be this distortion, which has repercussions in India, because amongst the missionaries—educational, medical, and social—are to be found some of the most unselfish and devoted workers that any country could produce. I do not profess any particular religion, but I cannot write in sufficiently admiring terms of the spirit which animates much of their work.

One will find quiet, modest people who are giving all their lives to the amelioration of the condition of lepers, others who have started schools which have developed into large colleges, others who are offering medical relief in outlying districts, still others who are giving the lead in social work amongst the most backward classes.

Indian nationalists have often expressed dissatisfaction with and opposition to the work of missionaries. This attitude is often misunderstood. So far as the formulators of nationalist opinion are concerned, the antagonism is to the evangelistic side of the work, especially when, as they assert, it is made an integral part of the mission work itself. Their argument runs something like this: Here is a powerful country, having derived and deriving much of her wealth from India, and consequently being

in a position to finance and send back to that country some of her people for the disinterested assistance of the population in social development; we are grateful for the moral and material assistance, but we object to another religion being substituted for our own which is better suited to the needs of the people and which is only deprived of such social expressions for want of resources.

It seems that it is difficult for the partisans of one religion to recognize that the adherents of another faith might be just as convinced of the infallibility of their particular belief. Christian missionaries have, however, been quick to adapt themselves to Indian nationalist sentiment. Moreover, whatever may be the validity of the nationalist argument, taken as a whole, it cannot possibly detract from the value of the devotion shown by individuals who have thrown their all into the work they have undertaken.

It should not be forgotten that much of the work of this kind initiated by British, American, and Continental European missionaries is now being partly financed or completely taken over by Indians. There is not very much work in the latter category but the movement is growing. Bombay, for example, is soon to have an institution, financed by a wealthy Charity Trust, in which training is to be given to post-graduate students in every branch of social work. There are some other centres, of a less ambitious character, where good work is being done. While what may be called the social consciousness in India is nothing like as developed as in the West, there are indications of an increase in the sense of public responsibility for social conditions. In this connection one has to remember that the obligations imposed by the

family system hitherto largely rendered unnecessary the seeking of outside assistance so far as material wants were concerned. The gradual breaking down of that system, and its replacement by small units, will necessarily tend to divert the social consciousness from the family to larger groups.

In addition to the military, civil administrators, police officers, commercial men, and missionaries, there are English men and women teachers working in various schools and colleges; there are doctors working on their own; there are judges and lawyers working side by side with Indian judges and lawyers; there are engineers engaged on vast works; there are planters living comparatively secluded lives; there are journalists. There is not one who has not the power for considerable good.

I have tried to show, very briefly, that the 155,000 British in India, though belonging to the same nationality, cannot be said to have identical interests. Much less is it possible to define these interests on any racial basis. As I have suggested, it is possible to visualize powerful sections of Indian opinion actually welcoming the presence of the British Army. Similarly, is there any clash of interest between, let us say, an Indian social worker and an English social worker in the same field?

If this thesis is correct, it seems remarkable that the racial gulf should still be as wide as it is between the British elements who cannot be said to have any vested interests and equally disinterested Indians. For, while the bridge is rapidly being built between the representatives of the vested interests in both countries, there is no corresponding movement on the part of those who might be called progressives.

It is arguable that some of the profound differences between the Oriental and Occidental temperaments render co-operation difficult. But isn't this a mistake? Isn't it a tragedy that Indians are put off from making the effort because they happen to see all Englishmen in the shape of arch-Imperialists or that Englishmen are put off because of impatience with Indian methods?

Battles of ideas are to be welcomed, for whatever other battle ground India may have provided in the past, no blood has been spilt on the score of ideas. Hitherto it has been a matter of conqueror succeeding conqueror. In the new phase into which the country is passing it seems to be a matter for urgent consideration whether there cannot be extended co-operation between those who are interested in ideas, political and sociological. Such co-operation might well affect the development of India as a political entity, and it is for the British people who, through their elected representatives, have endorsed the new constitution, to watch keenly the experiment which has been set in train.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE "FOREIGNER" IN INDIA

FOR the purposes of discussion I am using the term "foreigner" to include all who are not of either Indian or British descent, although, strictly speaking, it should include all of non-Indian descent.

While there are actually only about 15,000 such foreigners in India, they are certain to have considerable influence on the development of thought for reasons to which I shall refer later. While some of them are in the professions, such as medicine, engineering, and mission work, the majority of them are engaged in commerce.

America has her missions, but she has also her automobile salesmen, representatives of her cinema industry, promoters of sales of her food products and raw materials. Germany has her agents for her vast engineering and electrical firms, chemical works, and other manufacturers. France is similarly served on behalf of her textile, wine, and produce merchants; Japan is pushing practically every kind of manufacture India may require; Central Europe is availing herself of her ability to quote for extensive orders at keenly competitive rates. What was once regarded as the preserve of the British manufacturer has now become a field to be explored and developed by producers of other nationalities. Assisted or discouraged by such all-important factors as the exchange, tariff arrangements, the imposition of economic sanctions, State subsidies, or barter concessions, these and other countries, jostle each other and Great Britain in the race for markets.

Having mentioned the decisive influence played by the exchange, tariff arrangements, or sanctions, one is led unavoidably into the realm of politics. Every country trading in India is served by Consuls whose duty it is not only to safeguard the interests of their nationals but also to act as representatives of their countries. It sometimes happens that statements are made publicly about a certain country which the Consul of the nation concerned may deem it necessary to refute, and to substantiate his assertions by explanations. In these days of experiments in forms of government, the influence exerted in this manner on what might be termed a politically "new" country is of considerable consequence.

To come from the general to the particular, we might take the instance of Italy. Here is a country which was formerly engaged in substantial trade with India. Suddenly she found herself cut off from this market. Italy then engaged in counter-propaganda. Her Consuls issued elaborate statements to the Press which had been received from Rome. More often than not they were published. Incidentally, the Indian editor was in a dilemma on this point for, while his sympathies were with Abyssinia, he rarely hesitated before publishing any statement containing a criticism of Britain—implied or otherwise. Then broadcasts are transmitted from Italy in Hindustani. Indians are encouraged to visit Italy where every kind of facility is accorded them. All this amounts to an elaborate explanation or vindication of Fascism. Whatever other effect it has on the mind of the Indian, it must at least make him think.

Then, again, there is the example of the German National Socialists who, either voluntarily or under

instruction, maintain powerful propaganda in favour of the present regime in their country. That the policy of that regime seems to be one of friendship with Britain and includes a belief in the destiny of the so-called white man to rule over his darker brothers does not affect the argument, for it is apparent that considerations of trade are forcing on India an examination of political forms differing from the path which she is supposed to be now treading.

I do not know how many Buddhist monks have in recent years entered India from Japan, but I have met several, and, in particular, have in mind two followers of the Buddha who at the time of writing this were accompanying Mr. Gandhi. They are building temples and undertaking other devotional works with the avowed object of reviving their religion in the land of its birth. But if Mr. Gandhi can appeal, and succeed in his appeal, to thousands and thousands through the medium of religion, would it be impossible for a foreign nation eventually to succeed in winning adherents for its theories of government through a similar approach?

Some consulates use the direct method when they want to contradict a statement which they think is unfair to their country, and it is not uncommon to find a letter in the correspondence columns of a newspaper dealing, perhaps, with a particular speech or article. There are others who employ Indian journalists, who write either under their own names or pseudonyms. Sometimes the article has not even been composed by the ascribed author; sometimes it has been compiled from data supplied by the consulate concerned. Many Indian editors are not very discriminating in the material they handle, and as the journalist, having been paid from

other sources, requires no remuneration for the article in question, it sees the light of day not only with the authority of the newspaper behind it but with the impress of impartiality.

Soviet Russia is precluded from engaging in propaganda of this nature, but no one can prevent her from broadcasting from her own territory, and, while it is an offence in certain countries to pick-up outside broadcasts, it is no offence in India. Indeed, everything that Soviet Russia cares to be known in foreign countries can be heard in India through the medium of the broadcasts in English.

We come, then, to the conclusion that it is not only the representative system of government which will be brought before the attention of India but also the totalitarian forms now in vogue in a large number of countries. Apart from any question of desire, the consideration of these theories will be forced on her since economics and politics are interrelated. It is no longer a question of having to consult foreign newspapers for news of what is happening in a particular country but of having it laid at one's feet—wrapped up, of course, to give as attractive a picture as possible of the country concerned, since no one is going to engage in trade commitments unless he has confidence in the stability of that country.

Generally speaking, the foreigner in India has followed a policy of amity and equality towards the people of the country for many years, and, with the intensification of the struggle for markets, we can anticipate a broadening out of this attitude and its inevitable influence on the policy of United Kingdom traders whose share of Indian imports has already fallen from 45 per cent (1928–29) to 39 per cent in the last fiscal year.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

LEGISLATORS OF THE FUTURE

THERE remains now the task of gathering up all the component parts of my picture so that we may look at the future constitutional structure of India as a whole. By structure I do not mean the Clauses and Schedules of an Act of Parliament by themselves, but the motives, the human emotions, the strivings of those who will translate that paper document into action.

Subject to the reservation of defence, external, ecclesiastical, and tribal affairs—responsibility for which will remain with the Governor-General—the new Federal Government will be charged with the duty of the government of India. There will be a Federal Legislature, consisting of His Majesty—represented by the Governor-General—and two Chambers which will be known as the Council of State and the House of Assembly.

From these two houses the Governor-General will chose a council of Ministers, not exceeding ten in number, to advise him in the exercise of his functions except in the subjects enumerated above where he is required to exercise his functions in his discretion. The Governor-General will, in addition, have other special responsibilities, in which he must exercise his individual judgment, including the safeguarding of the financial stability and credit of the Federal Government.

Let us first take the Upper House, the Council of State. This will be a permanent body and not subject to dissolution although approximately one-third of the members

will retire in every third year. There will be one hundred and fifty-six representatives of British India and not more than one hundred and four representatives of the Indian States.

The representatives from British India coming within the General, Mohammedan, and Sikh electorates will be chosen from territorial constituencies composed of voters possessing a high property qualification or who are holders or former holders of official positions, titles, or honours conferred by the King-Emperor or by the Viceroy. It is estimated that the electoral rolls will consist of 150,000 such voters belonging to the uppermost classes; a minute fraction of India's total population (over 350,000,000). As defined by the Marquess of Zetland, the present Secretary of State for India, the essence of the Government's proposals regarding the Federal Council of State is that it should be an aristocratic body for which there should be a well-educated, intelligent electorate. Originally the Government had proposed a system of indirect election to the Upper House, but when the Bill came before Parliament an amendment was introduced substituting direct election. This is certainly more in conformity with Indian desires, notwithstanding the difficulties involved by such enormous constituencies and the impossibility of maintaining personal contacts with the scattered electorate.

The representatives of the States will not be elected at all but will be nominated by their respective Rulers. Their representation has been apportioned on a population basis, Hyderabad leading with five seats. As there are some seven hundred Princes and Chiefs, it has obviously not been possible to accord them all individual

representation, and the smaller States will be represented in groups and their nominees chosen by rota.

The hundred and fifty-six seats allotted to British India will be distributed amongst the various communities and interests, allotted on a provincial basis. There will be seventy-five General seats. These may be filled by Hindus, Parsees, Jews, or any other of the communities not specifically mentioned in the allotment. The next largest section will be the Moslems with forty-nine seats. They are followed by the Europeans with seven seats. Then come the Scheduled Castes (out-caste Hindus) and the Women, each with six places, the Sikhs with four, the Indian Christians with two, and the Anglo-Indians with one. The remaining six seats will be filled by representatives chosen by the Governor-General in his discretion.

It will be noted that no representation has been accorded to Labour, the contention being that no special seats have been reserved for Commerce as such and that Labour representatives may be elected on the Scheduled Caste ticket. To this the Labour movement replies that while there may be no specific reservation for Commerce or the other vested interests, their nominees will automatically achieve election through the other constituencies. The Europeans, for instance, will all, in effect, be representatives of Commerce of one form or another.

The object of the Second Chamber is, of course, to ensure stability; often interpreted as the ability to maintain the *status quo*. It can hardly be denied that the Federal Council of State will present an almost solid phalanx of spokesmen on behalf of the vested interests. There will be the States, concerned primarily with the conservation of their hereditary rights and privileges.

Their colleagues from British India will be drawn wholly from the propertied classes, with the exception of the representatives of the Scheduled Castes, perhaps the Indian Christians, and the Anglo-Indian. Even if these representatives of the unpropertied classes are joined by some of the women, they will form a very small minority of the Council.

From the Council of State we turn to the House of Assembly. This body will consist of two hundred and fifty representatives of British India and not more than one hundred and twenty-five representatives of the Indian States. The former will be chosen by electorates consisting of members of the Legislative Assemblies of the Provinces, except those representing special interests who will be elected through Electoral Colleges. Members from the Indian States will be nominated by the Ruler of the State, as in the case of the Federal Council of State.

The House of Assembly, unless dissolved earlier, will continue for five years and will be summoned to meet in joint session with the Council of State at least once every year. Unlike the procedure in the British Parliament, every Minister, counsellor, and the Advocate-General will be entitled to take part in the proceedings of either Chamber, although he will not have the right of vote.

What will be the composition of the Lower House? There will, of course, be the States' *bloc*. British Indian representation will be divided amongst one hundred and five General seats of which nineteen will be for the Scheduled Castes, eighty-two Mohammedan seats, eleven for representatives of Commerce, ten for Labour, nine for Women, eight for Europeans, eight for Indian Christians, seven for Landholders, six for Sikhs, and four for Anglo-Indians.

Assuming again that most of the General and Mohammedan seats will be gained by what are generally called "stake-holders" in the country, it will be seen that Labour is very barely represented, especially as the twenty-six seats accorded to representatives of Commerce and Industry, Europeans and Landowners will be occupied by employers.

It is necessary to proceed with the analysis on the basis of the "haves" as against the "have nots," because these are the lines along which the future of Indian politics will run. Moreover, if only those who are apprehensive of the future of India, as a consequence of the Government of India Act of 1935, would examine the implications of the Act a little more closely, they would realize that the forces making for what is sometimes euphemistically called "stability" will be so entrenched that the "have nots"—who are generally regarded as being irresponsible since they have nothing to lose—will be constitutionally powerless.

It may be argued that the Federal Government, which will possess legislative powers over some fifty-nine subjects, touching both the States and the Provinces, will not be the danger spot so much as the autonomous Provincial Governments. Let us, therefore, analyse the composition of the Governments which will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of their respective provinces.

The maintenance of public order, the administration of justice, jurisdiction over the public debt of the Province and the Services, education, communications, public works, agriculture, and the relief of the poor are among the many responsibilities of these Governments.

In addition, there are some thirty-six subjects which,

though strictly coming within the sphere of autonomous self-governing provinces, are subject to the direction of the Federal Government. Labour legislation is one of the items in this Concurrent List which is designed to secure uniformity of operation for such international obligations as the Federal Government may enter into and otherwise considers desirable. The authority of the Federal Government in this connection is, however, limited to the provinces.

There is to be a Legislature in every province, consisting of His Majesty (represented by the Governor) and two Chambers in Madras, Bombay, Bengal, the United Provinces, Bihar, and Assam. The other provinces, the Punjab, the Central Provinces and Berar, Sind, the North-West Frontier Province, and Orissa will have unicameral Legislatures.

The Upper House will be called the Legislative Council and the Lower House the Legislative Assembly. The latter, unless sooner dissolved, will continue for five years and the former will be a permanent body, subject to the triennial retirement of one-third of its members. While the members of the Provincial Assemblies will be chosen by the newly extended electorates, the members of the Councils will be elected by persons enfranchised on high property qualifications or qualification based on service in certain distinguished offices.

The Provincial Assemblies will, therefore, come the nearest to representing the "voice of the people." About 14 per cent of the total population of British India will be numbered on the electoral rolls; in other words, about thirty-five million voters as compared with the former seven and a half million—or 3 per cent.

The largest Provincial Council will not contain more than sixty-five seats and the largest Provincial Assembly not more than two hundred and fifty seats. They may, however, be as small as twenty-one and fifty seats respectively, according to the province.

As the conditions vary from province to province the composition of the Legislatures has been so adjusted as to include representatives of the chief interests on a basis of reserved seats. This has led to the demarcation of no less than seventeen different categories of seats—each with their own electorates. They are General (Hindu, Parsee, etc.), Scheduled Castes, Backward Areas and Tribes, Sikhs, Mohammedans, Anglo-Indians, Europeans, Indian Christians, Representatives of Commerce, Industry, Mining and Planting, Landholders, University Seats, Labour, Sikh women, Mohammedan women, Anglo-Indian women, Indian Christian women, and the General seats reserved for women who may belong to denominations not otherwise provided for.

It is a matter for discussion whether in the present circumstances in India this system of reservation of seats does not offer a "purer" form of democracy than a free election. It may be argued that it eliminates the possibility of such electoral landslides as was seen in England, for example, in 1931 and ensures the hearing of the cases of minorities who might otherwise be drowned by the majority. Against this is set the argument that when the composition of the House is a foregone conclusion and, in some cases, where statutory majorities of certain religious communities are established, the voicing of a case by a minority has little value since it is powerless to compel redress by appealing to the possibilities of the

future. Moreover, the Hindus (and certain Mohammedans; but the minority) have always felt that the reservation of seats would have been equitable if the electorates had not been separate. That the Mohammedans should be able to influence the selection of the Hindu candidate, and vice versa, it is repeated, is the only way to secure the election of candidates who will look to the common weal and not to purely communal interests.

Coming to the question of separate electorates, there is little theoretically which can be said in their favour. However, a voluntary agreement between the Hindu and Moslem communities having proved impossible, separate electorates have been continued in the new Constitution, making any criticisms of the system, no matter how valid they may be, futile.

Apart from the objections to separate communal electorates on their merits, there are other objections which have, perhaps, strengthened the opposition of the Hindus to the system. Not the least of these objections rests in the fact that the Mohammedan community has a smaller economic stake in the country. Yet they are guaranteed under the Constitution a larger proportion of seats in the Legislatures than they would have been likely to gain under a system of general electorates without the reservation of seats.

In Bengal, for example, where they form over 54 per cent of the population, and can, with the assistance of the European members of the Legislatures permanently form the Government, the Moslems do not contribute one-fifth of the provincial revenue—evidence of their considerably lower economic status. In Calcutta they contribute only about 5·6 per cent of the Corporation

rates. Over 62 per cent of the Moslem community in this province is employed in agriculture, while the bulk of the vested interests is in the hands of Hindus and Europeans.

It is frequently stated that the present allocation of seats does a great injustice to the "Nationalist Moslems" for whom no provision has been made; the assumption apparently being that such representatives might have been returned to the Legislatures with the assistance of Hindu votes. But if there are so many "Nationalist Moslems," is there any reason why they cannot be returned in preference to the less "Nationalist" candidates? A constituency which returns Mr. Jinnah, to take an instance, will not, I am certain, reject him in preference for a fanatical sectarian. But it might accept him—or reject him—on the basis of a political and economic programme. And that brings me back to the line of argument I want to emphasize.

The problem of hunger is the same whether a man is a Hindu, Mohammedan, or Sikh. The struggle for existence is just as keen if he is a Christian or an Anglo-Indian (who is, of course, generally also a Christian). The desire to keep what he holds is just as strong in the breast of the Mohammedan landowner as in that of the Hindu landowner.

Consider for one moment the type of legislation which is likely to engage the attention of the Legislatures. Whether it affects the maintenance of law and order, social conditions, fiscal policy, education, taxation, unemployment—it will affect the electorate as citizens and not as adherents of this or that religion. In spite of separate communal electorates, though, there is no

insuperable obstacle standing in the way of the formation of political parties on economic bases.

The leaders of the Labour Movement already visualize the formation of a Labour Party. Thirty-eight seats have been reserved for Labour in the Provincial Lower Houses, but there is no reason why they should not nominate candidates through the other constituencies. Similarly with the women, for whom forty-one seats have been reserved in the Provincial Lower Houses; they may belong to any political or economic party.

The question, though, which is exercising the minds of the more vital section of Indian politicians is whether the dice are not too heavily loaded against those who are fighting for the emancipation of progressive ideas. They see that the electorate for the Lower Houses has been considerably extended, but they also see that Second Chambers have been established as a kind of offset. They see that certain important functions have been transfered to the responsibility of Indian Ministries, but they also see that the Governors have very wide discretionary powers which they may exercise in the event of an emergency. They see that the official *bloc* in the Centre is to be removed, but they find that it is to be succeeded by a Princes' *bloc*. They see that a self-governing Federation for All-India is to be established, but they also see that matters relating to Imperial policy are to be the special responsibility of the Governor-General and are not to come within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government. They recall that India asked for Dominion Status and that she has been accorded a constitution which can never be described as coming within that

category in virtue of the presence of the Indian States who hold direct Treaties with the Crown.

What, therefore, does this section of opinion propose? Counsels are divided. While there are those who believe in entering the Legislatures and working the constitution for what they can get out of it, there are others who would enter the Legislatures but decline to take any part in the Government. Their object will be to "wreck the Constitution" from within by causing stalemates which will necessitate the implementation of the Governor's special powers and so lead to frequent clashes and, it is hoped by them, a breakdown of the constitutional machinery.

The Indian National Congress has within its ranks adherents whose views on property do not differ from those of the Indian Liberals; their only distinguishing mark is that the Liberals are more realistic in their appreciation of the consequences of direct action—one of the planks of the Congress platform. It is clear that in viewing the problem ahead this group of the Congress is not going to follow a policy which will lead to their own destruction. Either they enter the Legislatures and join hands with the other propertied interests or they remain aloof and see the political divisions stratifying as between the workers of the Constitution on the one hand (who may, or may not be, place hunters pure and simple) and the wreckers of the Constitution on the other (who will also, in all probability, be those holding radical economic views).

In anticipation of the cleavage ahead, a group of the Congress has already been formed under the style of "The Anti-Ministry Committee of Congressmen." Their

objects are implied in the title of the organization. Explaining their attitude, the Chairman stated: "If once Congressmen accept offices they will become servants of the Constitution and will have no power to fight against it. They will not then be able to take the masses with them in the march for freedom. Our Imperialist friends are extremely anxious that, under whatever excuse, we should at least once enter their parlour and play with them the political game on a common board."

This sums up the attitude of this group quite neatly. If they join the Ministries, they will have to take responsibility for the maintenance of law and order—and that might involve apparent partisanship in, let us say, a communal riot or a strike of workers. They will be accountable for actions of the Ministries which they might not support as private individuals—an inevitable consequence of Cabinet rule. Their supporters will become, it is feared, contaminated by the temptations of office and power and lose the pristine faith of their pre-Ministry days.

Many of these arguments look like a confession of weakness, but may be are the result of previous experience. Some of the leaders who hold these views have contributed more to the strength of the Indian National Congress than those holding the contrary opinions. But to walk out from the movement, as it were, would not only weaken it numerically and otherwise, but would deprive these leaders of much of their present potential power. Whether to work within or outside the parent body is a question which has often exercised the minds of minorities in the British radical movement. The Indian radical view is that it would be a concession to the

separatist tendencies of Indian organizations if they were to split at this juncture. Discussions at the moment centre round the possibility of maintaining a single body with two wings—one to work within the Councils and to accept the responsibility of Ministerships and the other to work from without, preparing the ground and educating mass opinion.

In order to fully understand the viewpoint of the non-Ministry Congressmen it should also be added that they are not altogether convinced of the altruism of their colleagues in the opposite camp. During the civil disobedience movements, when large numbers of Congressmen were in gaol, many altercations were known to have taken place within the prison walls over the "dividing of the spoils" when the then prisoners were eventually called upon to form Ministries.

Whether such a dual policy could possibly work is more than doubtful because, taking an extreme case, if a Congress Minister in charge of law and order deemed that a certain public meeting were prejudicial to the maintenance of public peace and accordingly exercised his functions, he might have all the other side of his party ranged against him. Or, supposing he capitulated to pressure of this kind from a section of his own party, he would soon lose his reputation as a Minister.

One thing seems clear, and that is that while the conflicts of the past have been as between the alien ruler and the ruled, the conflicts of the future will be increasingly between those Indians who have inherited the earth and those who have not. The remarks of the Anti-Ministry Congressman which I have just quoted imply that this is part of the game which Imperialists are enticing India to play so that the rest of the world

may have tangible evidence of what the alien rulers have always been saying—that they alone were the amalgam of, and peaceful influence over, a thousand and one opposing groups and sections.

The assertion may contain a correct forecast of events ahead, but it is somewhat pointless as an accusation. Surely it was inevitable that those who possessed heavy stakes in the country (ethically or unethically acquired is beside the point) were not going to hand over the future responsibility for the preservation of those stakes to those who were not themselves under equal obligation to maintain the *status quo* for the protection of their own interests?

Some spokesmen of Indian commerce have, it is true, denounced the Government of India Act. But denunciations of this kind must not be taken at their face value. The next few years of the new Constitution will witness many of these bitter critics eating their own words.

It is true that the provisions of the Government of India Act relating to Finance subordinate the Indian Finance Department, if not in theory at least in fact, to the City of London. It is true that the reservation of Defence means that nearly 30 per cent of the total revenues will be automatically appropriated (taking the present Central and Provincial expenditure percentages as a basis) before nation-building departments such as Education, Medical and Public Health, and Agriculture can stake their claim on the national revenues. It is true that the reservation of External Affairs means that the foreign policy of India will be the Imperial policy of the Foreign Office.

While there is no doubt about any of these limitations on the sovereignty of the Federal Legislature, there is

equally no doubt that they serve the purposes of the Indian vested interests, in their broad application, as much as they do the interests of the British investor in Bengal–Nagpur Railway Stock, the jute mills of Calcutta, or the mines of Bihar.

In the ultimate recourse, the Indian Princes rely on their Treaties with the British Crown for the maintenance of their privileged positions. There are some States where the administration is advanced and where the Ruling House would be re-elected almost unanimously if there were such a thing as a general plebiscite. But there are others where nothing less than the bayonet secures the vicious and tyrannical ruler from the wrath of his subjects. In the event of a popular uprising against some such Prince, the army can, in the future, as it has in the past, be called in to restore what is pathetically known as "order." On the one side the States will use all their voting strength for the preservation of things as they are and, on the other, if human endurance breaks the bounds of constitutionality, British soldiers will teach their Indian brothers that revolt against the powers that be means broken heads, if not worse.

Part of the cost of the British Army in India, and the entire cost of the British Navy which patrols and "protects" her coasts, is borne by the British taxpayer, a large part of whose resources are derived from overseas—India contributing a substantial share. If it should happen that Indian finances were allowed to get into the hands of the unorthodox, or experimenters, or people who did not care whether India's credit was sound in the City of London, what would happen to Britain's ability to provide these instruments for the protection of the ensconced interests?

Furthermore, investments in Indian railways, the jute mills of Calcutta, the irrigation works of the north are not confined to British shareholders. Indian bankers, industrialists, and landowners with surplus capital will also suffer if there is a depreciation in the value of their investments. They are as vitally interested in the preservation of British as well as Indian credit as any investor in Bath or Harrogate.

But it is not only the large-scale operators who are concerned with the stability of Indian finance. Much of the internal Rupee debt, as well as an appreciable portion of the Sterling debt, is held by individual investors belonging to the upper middle classes. Many of these are now to be found in the ranks of the ultra-nationalist politicians; but if a stage is reached when political activities menace the stability of such scrip, these politicians will soon change their camp to that of those who believe in "constitutional development."

The argument is equally apposite in the realm of Foreign Affairs. An experimental Government might become entangled in arrangements with, let us say, Soviet Russia or Japan. The City of London would frown and the vested interests would suffer the consequences of this suspicion and disapproval.

There is yet a further consideration and that is the opening up of British and foreign firms in India in order to avail themselves of the cheaper labour conditions and to escape the tariff walls which have been erected to assist indigenous industries. As examples there are the British jute mills of Bengal, American automobile assembly plants, and international soap combines, industries employing Indians but transferring their profits overseas.

While there must necessarily be cross-currents which affect the validity of any general argument, the main contention is true that the interests of the Indian and the British stakeholder, by and large, do not run along divergent lines. After all, capitalistic interests are not identical amongst the nationals of any one country. In this connection I am reminded of a conversation I had some years ago with a gentleman from Lancashire who was engaged in the export of textile machinery to India. Discussing his early days, he spoke of the great unpopularity of his firm amongst the textile manufacturers of his county who now saw India producing her coarse cotton requirements for herself rather than importing them from Lancashire. Since then machinery from manufacturers of other countries has also entered the Indian market, and it only remains for some firm to install the requisite plant for the manufacture of the machinery itself in India for my Lancashire friend to lose even his present outlet for the supply of spare parts.

These incompatibilities and inconsistencies of the present economic structure apart, it is clear that the general outlook of the British and Indian stakeholder must run in parallel channels. They are both interested in the continuation of a political state of affairs which gives them scope to exploit the position in which, by birth or merit, they find themselves.

What will be Mr. Gandhi's position in this complicated political pattern, as varied as any that ever came off a Kashmiri hand-loom? Undoubtedly, his primary sympathies are with the villager. Yet his actions are circumscribed by his belief in "non-violence" and a certain feudal outlook which shrinks from saying or doing any-

thing to undermine the caste system because there is nothing at the moment to put in its place. Having both a revolutionary and an evolutionary aspect to his temperament, Mr. Gandhi is something of a paradox. One cannot believe in caste and not believe in class. In fact the Mahatma has openly said that if attempts are made to deprive the landowners of their "legitimate" rights by force, the ensuing conflict will see him on the side of the owner, or words to that effect. Yet in the case that he presented to the second Round Table Conference for the adjustment of India's national debt, he advanced some very fundamental arguments as to why India should not be expected to pay for wars and other items which, in effect, meant that she was having to pay for her own conquest. But many of these so-called "legitimate" rights of landowners sprang from the same origin; they were the awards for loyalty to an alien conqueror who very generously granted perpetual interests in lands which were only his to give by right of the sword.

Basically, this paradox in Mr. Gandhi springs from a desire not to weaken the Indian people by splitting them into opposing camps. Forces have, however, so shaped themselves that, quite apart from any conscious desire on his part, the rupture is no longer avoidable. His health permitting, he is likely for some time to continue to exert his influence in favour of a conciliatory policy between the possessors and those who have not. He will not come into the open political field, but the Congress leaders will continue to consult him, as they do now, on every point of difficulty and where there is a divergence of opinion. It is likely that he will do all in his power to maintain this position for as long as

possible, for it will mean the retention of his present influence. While this is not comparable to his ascendancy of the 1929 period, there is, as yet, no successor.

If, however, the economic struggle develops in his time in such a manner that partisanship is inevitable, then Mr. Gandhi will come out on the side of the underdog. But he will dislike very much having to lead one section of his countrymen against another group. Mr. Gandhi visualizes political tactics in terms of mass movements; sweeping gestures of disapproval which, if successful, would paralyse any Government. The parliamentary moves of the debating chamber are not for him. Nor would the astutest tactics of this kind on behalf of the proletariat stand the slightest chance of success under the new Constitution for reasons I have already outlined. Where there are shrewd Ministries, the mechanism of administration will be so designed that there will be an effective exhaust to prevent a spontaneous explosion from within. The more short-sighted Ministries may easily precipitate situations where their only course will be the imprisonment of the workers' leaders and the calling in of the army for the maintenance of law and order. Less sure of themselves, the new Indian Ministries will probably be more repressive in situations like this than were their official predecessors.

Nobody could look forward to such a development, but it is in the very nature of things so long as property is sacrosanct, so long as human life is cheap, so long as the full development of man's capacities depends not on his intellectual reserves but on his financial resources; in short, so long as the capitalist system of indiscriminate exploitation and competition continues to exist.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THE FUTURE

IN depicting the India that I saw I have tried to indicate the under-currents of this immense ocean of humanity. What are the conclusions to be drawn from this examination?

The most far-reaching seems to me to be that the last of the determined *national* movements of resistance to the British connection has now been seen. Short of the outbreak of a large-scale war in which Great Britain was involved, in which event it is conceivable that India as a nation might be roused to avail herself of an opportunity, or a complete breakdown of the Federal Constitution, there seems to be no prospect whatsoever of Mr. Gandhi, or any other leader, being able to unite the country in any mass movement.

In other words, Indian politicians who have made their names by the force of their denunciation of the British connection have now been deprived of their platform. Political parties must now devise programmes which will assist them on the road to office. There are many in India who would like to see a development of the Liberal Party along the lines of the British Liberal Party when it was at the height of its influence, because they feel that it is premature to precipitate a crystallization of parties along economic lines. But the time for temporizing has gone. Political India is entering a new phase, and the demand for a lead, an ideology, more positive than nationalism must make itself felt.

To some extent the pace has been set by the Socialists, who, alone of the parties, have a definite programme. Some of them already see the seeds of Fascism working in the minds of those who are likely to wield power under the new Constitution. While, however, it is true to say that the business interests, who, with the large land-owners, would be most likely to adopt Fascism, are the best organized of all the sectarian interests, it is too early to suggest that there is any conscious adoption of such a policy. There has, however, already been some crude propaganda from outside sources.

At the same time, given certain circumstances, it does not require much labouring to foresee a situation where such a programme would make rapid strides. Suppose, for example, those who are now laying plans for "wrecking" the new Constitution meet with some success. The resultant state of emergency will be one necessitating the taking of sides. It will postulate the formulation of some clear-cut programme which will appeal to the electorate when laid side by side with the Socialist plans.

Such a programme will have to provide against the unleashing of that vast majority of India which is not enfranchised and at the same time give concessions to national development. Will it be Fascism? By tradition more inclined towards autocracy, the Fascist conception is by no means unattractive to a number of Indian politicians, and is one which will be readily supported if the choice lies between it and Socialism.

The extensive degree to which essential services are already controlled by the Government—Railways, Irrigation, Public Works, Lands, Medical, and Educational Services, works connected with the manufacture of

weapons for the armed forces, broadcasting, the manufacture of salt and liquor, the distribution of overseas cables, and so forth—is such as to suggest that the State would require no extra power to implement the Fascist idea if it were captured by politicians of this persuasion.

Indian traders in Abyssinia will now, presumably, have first-hand experience of Fascism in action, and this close contact may easily have repercussions amongst their colleagues in India.

Let us turn to the other side of the picture and examine the forces which may be reckoned as positively against any Fascist theories of government. It must be admitted at the outset that, on the surface, they are infinitesimal.

Entire political India is but a fraction of the whole country. Moreover, the enormous gap which exists between the few in whose hands the economic power is concentrated and the masses is such as to suggest that some form of *benevolent autocracy*, is best suited to the needs of the country. This is an era when huge populations are willing to be regimented and to have their values imposed upon them from without. If a hitherto highly individualistic nation, such as Germany, can be made to accept the totalitarian view of the State, how much easier will it be in a country such as India which has for ages accepted the caste system?

Such leaders as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who have come into the open in support of a Socialist programme are by no means popular amongst many of their Congress colleagues. Expediency will no doubt demand the avoidance of any split before the first elections to the new Provincial and Federal Legislatures have taken place. But the fissure cannot long be delayed after that.

For then the era of words must be succeeded by action. But the outlook for the Socialist is by no means hopeful. Beyond a handful of lawyers, college teachers, and intellectuals engaged in other professions, he cannot look for much support except from the urban workers—and the overwhelming majority of these will not be enfranchised.

This leads to the final suggestion that those who are anxious to avert the spread of Fascism should not confine their attentions to Europe. I know it will be said that Indian radicals do not seem to welcome interest, and much less advice, from outside. The tendency can be explained, but in any event it is likely to diminish or disappear as there is a closer recognition of present political trends.

I have already tried to show that self-interest on the part of traders has done much to break down what once were racial barriers. As more and more economic power is grasped by Indians there will be an even greater tendency for mutual co-operation between them and the vested interests of Britain in the division of the fruits of commerce. Let no one think that "the interests of India" have only to be referred to by an Indian for them to be necessarily authentic and of general application.

In this connection a recent speech by the present High Commissioner for India, Sir Firozkhan Noon, is of special interest. He was inaugurating a London affiliation of an Indian bank. He said, according to *The Times*, that it was an important landmark in the financial and commercial development of India that an Indian bank should find itself in a position to establish a branch in a city which occupied the strongest financial position in the world. . . . For the healthy growth of their trade

it was essential that the British and Indians should unitedly work together for their mutual benefit. British men of business could bring to their assistance the ripe experience of centuries. The most successful commercial ventures in the India of the future would be those in the prosperity of which Indians and English were unitedly interested. If it was in the interests of India that British capitalists should have a stake in India, it was equally in the interests of Great Britain that Indians should have financial stakes in England.

In the future an Indian spokesman will have to have another label, besides that attaching to his place of birth, to enable us to assess where he stands. With this new phase comes the passing of nationalism, pure and simple. What will be evolved from the new Constitution remains to be seen. It cannot be Dominion Status, since the States which are an integral part of the new Federation will be in direct relationship with the Crown—much less can it be Independence. Will it be an indigenous form of Fascism?

INDEX

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Khan, 153, 154, 155, 158
Advance, 241
Advisory Committee after 2nd R.T.C., 92
Adyar, visit to, 172
Aga Khan, his Highness the, 34, 36, 127
  on 3rd R.T.C., 120
Agriculture, Ministry of, 218
Agriculture, Royal Commission on, 218
Aiyar, Sir C.P. Ramaswami, 34, 35
Ali, Mrs. Hamid, 201
Allahabad, 50, 173, 186
All-India Journalists' Conference, 145, 183
All-India Trade Union Congress, 221
Alternative party, no necessity for, 225
Ambedkar, Dr. B. R.—
  at R.T.C., 72, 73, 111
  on Communal Award, 106
  on Poona Pact, 108
  disabilities of on account of caste, 112
Americans in India, 265
Amrita Bazar Patrika, 241
Ananda Bazar Patrika, 241
Andrews, Rev. C. F., 27, 78, 109, 171, 176
Aney, M. S., 161
Anglo-Indians—
  in Federal Council of State, 271, 272
  in Federal House of Assembly, 272
Annamalai University, 35
Ansari, Dr. M. A., 93, 152, 159
Anti-Ministry Committee of Congressmen, 278, 280, 281
Arbitration machinery, 223, 224
Army, attitude of new Ministries to, 257
Art in India, 210
Ataturk, Mustapha Kemal, 67
Aurangzeb, 246
Authoritarian government, theories of, 30

Baldwin, Stanley, 58, 122
Banks, co-operative, 218
Baroda, literacy in, 226
Barter concessions, 265
Bengal—
  communal problem in, 68
  Hindus, 111, 112
  Ordinance, Mahatma Gandhi on, 94
  Provincial Congress revives boycott, 96
  situation in 1931, 87
Benn, Wedgwood, 28, 38, 39
Besant, Dr. Annie, 24, 25, 26, 36, 172
Bhagavad Gita, 29, 78
Bikaner, his Highness the Maharajah of, 37
Birkenhead, Lord, 38
Birla, G. D., 64
Bombay—
  comparison with Madras, 171
  cosmopolitan population of, 143

Bombay Chronicle, 241
Bombay Law College, 73
Bose, Subash Chandra, 163
Bribery, effect of, 170
Britain, India and, 29
British administrators, 258
British capitalists, Sir Firozkhan Noon on, 292
British Committee on Indian and Burman Affairs, 25
British community—
  interests of, 263
  number of, 254
British Empire Exhibition, 153
British missionaries, 261, 262
British soldiers, 256
British traders, 259–61
Broadcasting, Government of India Act on, 253
Broadcasts, foreign to India, 266, 268
Buddhist monks in India, 267
Bunya, business attitude of, 215, 216
Burke, Edmund, on bad laws, 145
Burma Round Table Conference, 10
Burma at first R.T.C., 33
Burma Sub-Committee, 52
Buckingham Palace, Mahatma Gandhi at, 88

Calcutta, 173, 186
Captain, the sisters, 201
Caste—
  effect on youth, 206
  restrictions of, 148
Castes, growth of economic, 206
Chaplin, Mahatma Gandhi meets Charlie, 88
Chatterjee, Ramananda, 100
Chattopadhyaya, Mrs. Kamaladevi, 200
Chelsea, 21
Chequers, breakfast at, 109
Childers, reference to Erskine, 141
China, 21
Chintamini, C. Y., 145, 183
Churchill, Randolph, 123
Churchill, Winston, 122
C.I.D., 47
  attentions of, 187
Cinema—
  audiences at, 243, 247
  influence of, 242, 243
  political propaganda through, 248
  potentialities of, 242
  rural possibilities of, 246, 247
Cinema industry, extent of, 242
City life, amenities of, 225
Civil and Military Gazette, 241
Civil disobedience, 31
  suspension of, 152
Class struggle, 222
Cochin, literacy in, 226
Commerce representatives in Federal House of Assembly, 272
Commercial safeguards, 115
Commodity prices, level of, 220
Commons, House of, 31, 32, 37
Communal amity, influence of youth on, 211, 212
Communal Award, 69
Communal formula, search for, 54, 68
Communal leaders, 41
Communal problem, politicians' attitude to, 113

Communal question, 53
  failure to settle, 70
Communal spirit, 29
  origins of, 41
Communist Party, 223
Community costumes, 151
Competition—
  inter-Provincial, 217
  inter-State, 217
Conservative Party, 32
Consuls, foreign, in India, 266
Consultative Committee, resignations from, 103
Congress—
  appeal of, 168
  ban on, lifted, 152
  declared illegal, 99
  demand, 61
  hostility to R.T.C., 57
  Meeting in Bombay, 152
  non-co-operation struggle, 42
  on R.T.C., 33
  views on property, 279
  views on 1934 Assembly Election, 164, 165
Congress Socialists, 159
  problems of, 165
Criminal Procedure Code, 145
Currency and exchange policy, 220

Daily Herald, 27
Daily Telegraph, 123
Datta, Dr. S. K., 63
Defence, reservation of, 282
Defence Sub-Committee, 52
Delhi, 173, 178, 186
Democracy in India, 33
Democratic government, theories of, 30
Depressed Classes, 72, 73 (*See also* Scheduled Castes)
  separate electorates for, 106
  under Poona Pact, 108
Desai, Bhulabhai, 159, 161
Desai, Mahadev, 78
Deshmukh, Dr. G. V., 168
Dickens, Charles, 243
Direct action, consequences of, 223, 224
Dominion Status, demand for, 33
Downing Street, 31, 46
Dyarchy, 32

Economic sanctions, 265
Economic structure, present, 34
Edward, his Majesty King, 89
Educational endowments, paucity of, 150
Education, limitations of, 202, 203, 209
Educational system, defects of, 148
Egypt, Mahatma Gandhi in, 58
Elections, cost of contesting, 167
English—
  Indian proficiency in, 144
  use of, in India, 144
Etiquette, 47
Europe, effect in India of events in, 29
Europeans—
  in Federal Council of State, 271
  in Federal House of Assembly, 272
  in India, on Federation, 115
Exchange factors, effect of, 265
External affairs, reservation of, 282, 284

Fabian Society, 22
Factories Act, 225
Fascism—
  paths to, 166
  seeds of, 289
  programme, appeal of, 289, 290
Fasting, ethics of, 111
Federal Council of State, 269
  Anglo-Indian in, 271, 272
  composition of, 269–71
  electorate for, 270
  Europeans in, 271
  Hindus in, 271
  Indian Christians in, 271, 272
  Jews in, 271
  Moslems in, 271
  object of, 271, 272
  Parsees in, 271
  Scheduled Castes in, 271, 272
  Sikhs in, 271
  States' representatives in, 270
  Women in, 271
Federal Government, powers of, 273
Federal House of Assembly, 269
  Anglo-Indians in, 272
  Commerce representatives in, 272
  composition of, 272
  electorate for, 272
  Europeans in, 272
  Hindus in, 272
  Indian Christians in, 272
  Labour representatives in, 272
  Landholders in, 272
  Moslems in, 272
  procedure in, 272
  Scheduled Castes in, 272
  Sikhs in, 272
Federal House of Assembly—*continued*
  States' representatives in, 272
  Women in, 272
Federal Legislature—
  composition of, 269
  Women in, 199, 200
Federal Structure Sub-Committee, 51
Federation, 51, 57
  Sir Samuel Hoare on, 102
Films—
  exhibition overseas of Indian, 248, 249
  historical, 245
  Indian, 244, 245
  materials, duty on, 249
Finance—
  Indian concern with stability of, 284
  obsession with, 210
Finance Department, Government of India, 282
Financial Adviser to Governor-General, 220
Flood Relief Fund, 165
Foreigners in India, number of, 265
Foreign Office, 27, 118
Foreign Relations Act, 233
Forman Christian College, Lahore, 63
Franchise Committee, 90, 110
Franchise Sub-Committee, 52
French Chamber of Deputies, 166
French in India, 265
Friends' Meeting House—
  Conservative meeting, 123
  Mahatma Gandhi's reception at, 59–61

Frontier Province, situation in, 87

Gandhi, Devadas, 59, 78
Gandhi, Mahatma—
acceptance of Federation formula, 93
addresses to English audiences, 84, 85
alleged interview, 96
arrest of, 98
arrival in England, 59
at Buckingham Palace, 88
attitude of youth towards, 212, 213
attitude on Socialism, 165
attitude to communal problem, 66, 68
attitude to Depressed Classes, 73
attitude to racial discrimination, 84
attitude to R.T.C., 33
attitude to rural problems, 219, 220
breaks fast, 110
decision *re* R.T.C., 87
effect on English audiences of, 85, 86
fails to settle communal question, 70
farewell interviews in England of, 93, 94
fast begins, 107
"fast unto death," 106
Friends' Meeting House welcome, 59
in Bombay, 98, 138–42, 176
in Egypt, 58
in Lancashire, 78–84
Gandhi, Mahatma—*continued*
in South Africa, 34, 84
introduction to R.T.C., 65
Lancashire welcome, 78, 79
leadership of, 43
leaves England, 95
leaves India, 58
letter to Premier on communal award, 107
London headquarters of, 75
meets Charlie Chaplin, 88
observations in Lancashire, 82
on Bengal Ordinance, 94
on Buckingham Palace visit, 89
on Europeans in India, 94
on Premier's statement, 90, 91
on rights of landowners, 286
on travel, 133
opening address at R.T.C., 65
probable course of, 285–7
publicity value of, 71
quality of leadership of, 142
replies to Congress cable, 96, 97
retires from Congress, 156, 157, 158
welcomed in Bombay, 98
Garratt, G. T. 31
Gayda, Signor, 96, 97, 98
General Election (1931), 71
results, 73
Geneva, 35, 46
George V, his Majesty King—
on third R.T.C., 120
opens first R.T.C., 52
South African visit, 88
George, Lloyd, 119
German National Socialists in India, 266, 267
German Reichstag, 166
Germans in India, 265

Giornale d'Italia, 96
Goswami, T. C., 157, 158
Gour, Sir Hari Singh, 126
Governor-General, special responsibilities of, 169
Government of India, 32, 33, 38
Gujerat, peasantry of, 165

Haksar, Sir Kailas, 37, 38
Harijans, 73
Harrison, Agatha, 133, 138
Henderson, Arthur, 44
High Courts, procedure *re*, 34
Hindu, the, 241
Hinduism, individualism of, 41
Hindus—
  at R.T.C., 53, 54, 68, 69
  in Federal Council of State, 271
  in Federal House of Assembly, 272
  orthodox, on Poona Pact, 111, 112
Hindustan Times, the, 241
Hoare, Sir Samuel, 21, 97, 99, 102, 116
  on Government's proposed procedure, 104
  on third R.T.C., 120
Hollywood, effect of, 242, 243
Housman, Laurence, 59
Hunger, problem of, 277
Hydari, Sir Akbar, 37

Independent Labour Party, 21
Independent Party in Assembly, 38
India Defence League, 122
India Office, 27, 32, 37, 46, 106, 110, 117, 118
India Office officials, 38
Indian capitalists—
  Sir Firozkhan Noon on interests of, 292
  British Trade Unionists on, 32
Indian Christians—
  in Federal Council of State, 271, 272
  in Federal House of Assembly, 272
Indian Express, the, 241
Indian interests, definition of, 66, 220, 291
Indian Liberals, 28
Indian Moderates, 28, 104
Indian Penal Code, 145
Indian politicians at R.T.C., 32
Indian public opinion, 125
Indian Social Reformer, 183
Indian States, 51, 57
Indian Women's University, 197, 198
Industrial workers—
  classification of, 221
  influence of, 221
  number of, 221
Inheritance, laws of, 195
International Federation of Trade Unions, 222
International Labour Office, 35, 221
Irrigation, effect of, 217
Irwin, Lord (Viscount Halifax)—
  on R.T.C., 33
  Pact with Mahatma Gandhi, 58
  policy of, 87
Ismail, Sir Mirza, 37
Ismaili Moslems, 36

Japan, 21
Japanese in India, 265
Japanese mill-made goods, 220
Jayakar, M. R., 36, 64, 103, 110, 114, 121
Jehangir, Court of, 37
Jehangir, Sir Cowasjee, 166, 168
Jews in Federal Council of State, 271
Jinnah, M. A., 36, 37, 38, 115, 277
John Company days, 188
Joint electorates, 54
Joint family system, effect of, 147
Joint Parliamentary Committee, 126, 127, 128
Joshi, N. M., 34, 35, 63
Journalists—
  deportation of, 240
  difficulties of, 239

Kara, Maniben, 200
Karma, doctrine of, 42
Karve, Professor D. K., 197
Kaur, Raj Kumari Amrit, 200
Kelen, 37
Khaddar, as palliative, 219, 220
Kingsley Hall Settlement, 75
Kismet, doctrine of, 42

Labour, displacement of, 172
Labour Government—
  first, 44
  second, 28
Labour Legislation, 225, 274
Labour Party (British), 20, 28, 31, 39
  at J.P.C., 127
  before and after office, 44
Labour Party, British—*continued*
  boycotts third R.T.C., 113, 114
  1931 General Election results, 73
  history of, 224
  Indian attitude to, 73, 74
Labour Party (Indian), prospects for, 278
Labour representatives in Federal House of Assembly, 272
Labour, Royal Commission on, recommendations of, 222, 223
Lahore, 173, 186
Lancashire—
  conditions of workers, 80
  goods, Indian boycott of, 79
  Mahatma Gandhi in, 78–84
Landholders in Federal House of Assembly, 272
Landowners, Mahatma Gandhi on rights of, 186
Land tenure system, 218
Lansbury, George, 27, 31, 113
Law and order, maintenance of, 281
Leader, the, 145, 183, 241
Legislative Assembly, 35, 38, 42, 104
Legislative Assembly President, 33
Legislature, irresponsible, 44
Legislatures, Congress attitude to, 279
Liberal Party, 288
Linlithgow, Marquess of, 127, 218
  on Press, 240
Literacy, effect on Press, 226
Livestock, condition of, 218
Lloyd, Lord, 119, 122

Lords, House of, 52
Lothian, Marquess of, 110
Loyalty in Indian public life, 141, 212
Lucknow, 173, 186

MacDonald, Ishbel, 110
MacDonald, J. Ramsay, 39, 44, 64
  Communal Award, 69
  presides over Minorities Sub-Committee, 71
  reply to Mahatma Gandhi on Communal Award, 107
MacDonald, Malcolm, 110
Madras—
  comparison with Bombay, 171, 172
  journalistic conditions in, 172, 173
Madras Mail, the, 241
Madrasis in commerce, 143
Maharajahs at R.T.C., 51
Mahrattas, 40
Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan, 59, 110, 159
Manchester—
  Mahatma Gandhi's departure from, 84
  Mahatma Gandhi in, 78
Manchester Guardian, the, 66, 103
Markets, race for, 265
Marwaris, 64
Mary, her Majesty Queen, 88
Maynard, Sir John, 31
Military, segregation of, 155
Millowners, nationalism of, 216
Mines Act, 225
Minorities Sub-Committee, 45, 52, 71
Miraben (Miss Slade)—
  at Friends' Meeting House, 59
  in Bombay, 138
  in Lancashire, 78
  in London, 76
Missionaries, Indian attitude to, 261, 262
Missionary Societies, 24
Modern Review, the, 100
Moghuls, the, 40
Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms, 26, 32, 35
Montagu, Edwin, 36
Morley–Minto Reforms, 53
Morning Post, the, 122
Moslems—
  at R.T.C., 53, 54, 55
  in Federal Council of State, 271
  in Federal House of Assembly, 272
Munshi, K. M., 159, 161, 168
Music—
  European, 251
  Indian, 251
Mussolini, Signor, 63
  use of history, 210

Naidu, Sarojini, 59, 62, 88, 156, 157, 159, 200
Nariman, K. F., 156, 159, 161
National Call, the, 241
National Government, effect of Indian policy, 113
National Trades Union Federation, 221
National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations, 123
Naval Conference, 46

Nawaz, Begum Shah, 201
Naziism, 166
Nehru, Mrs. Brijlal, 201
Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal, 86
  and Congress colleagues, 290
  in gaol, 163
  personality of, 208, 209
Nehru, Pandit Motilal, 33
News organizations—
  American, 46
  European, 46
News Reels, 243
Noon, Sir Firozkhan, 291

Obligations to workers, Indian employers' conception of, 223
Occidental art, 38
Oriental art, 38, 210
Ottawa Agreements, 109

Parliament—
  prerogative of, 33
  Press facilities *re*, 118
  questions in, 25
Parsee community, 150
  technicians, replacement of, 211
Parsees in Federal Council of State, 271
  literacy of, 226
  munificence of, 150
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 99, 156, 161, 165
Patel, Vithalbai, attitude to R.T.C., 33
Peasant—
  indebtedness of, 165, 215, 218, 219
  interests of, 217
Peasant—*continued*
  intuitive sense of, 214
  limited outlook of, 214
  world influences on, 215
Personation, practice of, 166
Philanthropy, 150
Phillips, Wendell, 226
Photography, amateur, 249
Pioneer, the, 241
Polak, H. S. L., 31
Pole, Major D. Graham, 25, 27, 31
Political programmes, interests of framers, 215
Politics, obsession with, 210
Poona Pact, 107
  Government attitude to, 110
  influence of, 112
  orthodox Hindus on, 111, 112
Port Said, 58
Prasad, Babu Rajendra, 156, 159
Press Act, 144, 145, 147, 232
  operation of, 144, 145
Press, Anglo-Indian (European), 44, 227, 228
  British, 46
  Foreign, 46
Press, Indian, 26, 28, 44, 46
  advertisement rates, 236, 237
  as vehicle of public service, 238
  attitude of authorities to, 146, 147
  conditions of, 230, 231
  difficulties of, 229
  effect of poverty on, 226, 228
  effect of women's education on, 238
  Government attitude to, 240
  improvement of, 235
  Indianization of, 239
  laws relating to, 145

Press, Indian—*continued*
Marquess of Linlithgow on, 240
on civic and provincial affairs, 239
on R.T.C., 33
proprietors of, 231, 237
readers of, 231, 232
relations of authorities with, 146
R.T.C. delegates' attitude to, 45
scope for development of, 236
staff of, 234, 235
Press Laws, effect of, 233
Press Ordinance, 27
operation of, 101
Press security, forfeiture of, 146, 176
Princes at R.T.C., 33
Princes Protection Act, 233
Privy Council, 34
Progressive legislation, outlook for, 278
Provincial Governments, powers of, 273
Provincial Legislative Assembly
categories of seats for, 275
electorate for, 273
Provincial Legislative Council, 274
Provincial Legislatures—
composition of, 274
legislation of, 277
Public spirit, demoralization of, 141
Punjab, communal problem in, 68
Purdah, system of, 194, 195

Queen's Hall, 24

Racial barriers, 263, 291
Racial discrimination, 34
Mahatma Gandhi on, 84
Radio—
financial considerations *re*, 252, 253
influence of, 250
in India, history of, 250, 251
political possibilities of, 253
scope of, 251
technical difficulties *re*, 253
yearly licences, 251
Rahim, Sir Abdur, 126
Railway Board Committee, 120
Rajgopalachari, C., 161, 162
Rajputana, s.s., 58
Rajputs, 40
Reading, Marquess of, 56, 151
Reddy, Dr. Mathulakshmi, 201
Reforms, delay of, 105
Religious rivalries, deprecation by young Congressmen of, 69
Reservation of seats, arguments for and against, 275, 276
Reserve Bank Committee, 120
Responsible Government, formula embodying, 57
Responsibility, delegation of, 147
Roe, Sir Thomas, 37
Rosebery, Lord, on function of Press, 146
Rothenstein, Sir William, 37
Rothermere Press, 122
Round Table Conference, first, 28, 32, 33
Publicity Department of, 46
Roy, Dr. B. C., 161, 162
Rural problems, internal aspect of, 216
Russell, Bertrand, 20, 21

Russia, 21, 268
Ryotwari system, 218

Sabarmarti, 87
St. James's Palace, 52
Sankey, Lord, 39, 64, 65
Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, 33, 34, 64, 67, 70, 93, 103, 110, 114, 116, 120, 121
  Memorandum for J.P.C., 126
Sastri, Srinivasa, 34, 35, 70, 91
Satyagraha, permission to restart, 87
Satyamurti, S., 163
Scheduled Castes—
  in Federal Council of State, 271, 272
  in Federal House of Assembly, 271, 272
Secret Service, 47
Separate electorates, 53
  arguments for and against, 276, 277
Servants of India Society, 35
Services Sub-Committee, 52
Sethna, Sir Phiroze, 36, 37, 185
Shaw, Bernard, 22
Shivaji, 246
Sikhs—
  in Federal Council of State, 271
  in Federal House of Assembly, 272
Simon Commission—
  boycott of, 31
  proposals, 103
  Report, 124
Simon, Sir John, 31
Snowden, Viscount, 44
  resignation of, from Cabinet, 109
Social environment, effect of, 203, 204
Society of Friends, 79
South Africa—
  Mahatma Gandhi in, 34
  Mr. Srinivasa Sastri in, 34
Springvale, Mahatma Gandhi in, 79
State subsidies, 265
States, conditions in Indian, 283
Statesman, the, 241
Stockport, Mahatma Gandhi in, 78
Strikes, organization of, 224
Sub-editing, Indian vagaries in, 119
Subbarayan, Mrs., 201

Taj Mahal Hotel, 48
Talkies—
  effect on cinema industry, 245
  language difficulty of, 245
Tariff arrangements, 265
Thackeray, William M., 243
Thakurdas, Sir Purshotamdas, 63, 149, 185
  Village School Building Scheme, 149, 150
Theosophical Society, 25, 36
Theosophy, 24
Times, The, 96, 123, 291
Times of India, the, 241
Totalitarian theories of government, 268
Trade Union Act, 225
Trade Union leaders, problems facing, 222
Trade Union movement, Mr. Joshi's work for, 35
Trade Union unity, 222

Trade Unionists (British), on India, 31, 32
Trade Unions, Mahatma Gandhi on British, 82
Travancore, 36
literacy in, 226
Tribune, the, 241

Unemployment, 202, 222
Unemployment Benefit, 80
United Provinces, 86, 87
United States of America, 21
Universal suffrage, Mr. Joshi on, 35
Upanishads, the, 29, 194

Vernacular—
teaching in the, 204, 205
use of term, 227
Vocational training, 204

Wealth, pursuit of, 148, 149
Wedgwood, Josiah, 32
Western India Liberal Association, Council of, 103
White Paper—
critics of, 123, 124
on Indian Constitutional Reform, 122
Whitley, J. H., 222
Widows, Home for, 197
Wilkinson, Ellen, 201
Women—
as mothers, 195
communal constituencies for, 199, 200
diversity of, 193, 194
electorates, 199
emancipation of, 168
in Federal Council of State, 271, 272
in Federal House of Assembly, 272
in Legislatures, 169
in politics, 198, 199
opportunities for, 196
seclusion of, 195
Woolf, Leonard, 31
Workers, seasonal, 225
Workmen's Compensation Act, 225
World Economic Conference, 46, 128
Worli, Congress session at, 152

Youth of India, 202

Zemindars, indebtedness of smaller, 219
Zetland, Marquess of, on Federal Council of State, 270