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# THE GANDHIAN WAY

By

**J. B. KRIPALANI**

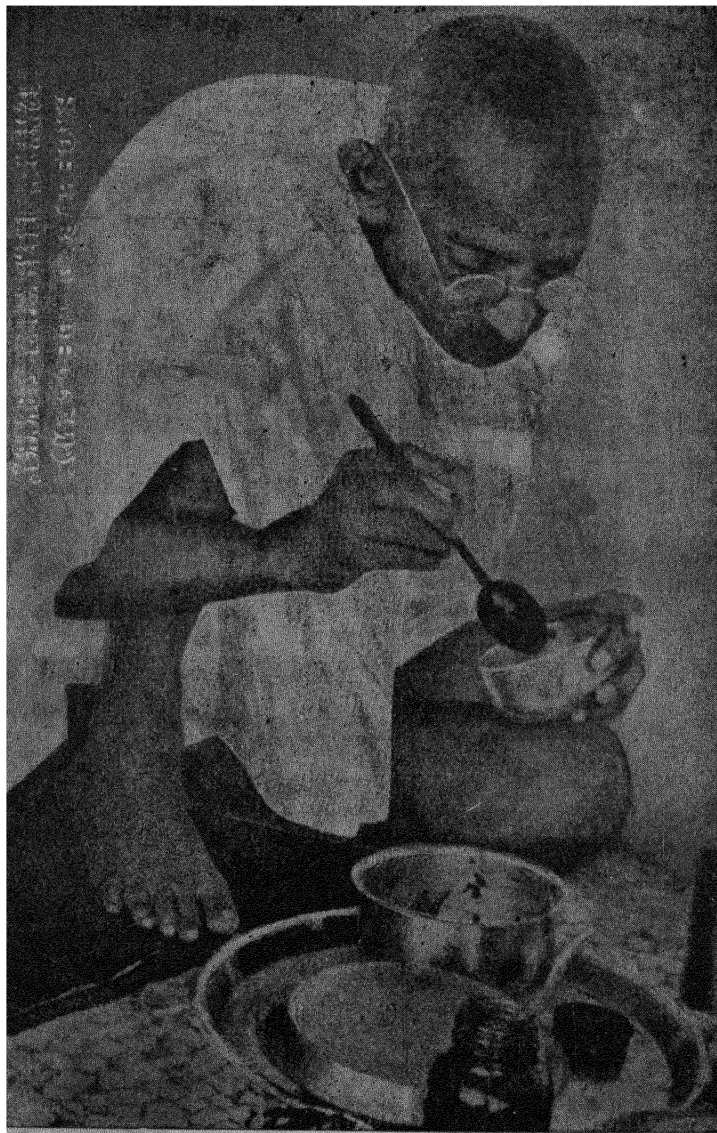
*(General Secretary, Indian National Congress)*

*Second Revised Edition*



**VORA & CO., PUBLISHERS LTD.**

**2, ROUND BUILDING, KALBADEVI ROAD, BOMBAY**



MAHATMA GANDHI

## FOREWORD\*

There is something in Acharya Kripalani's way of thinking and writing which distinguishes it from others', and those who know him, can tell at once that a particular thing is from his pen. This is the impression that the present collection has left on my mind.

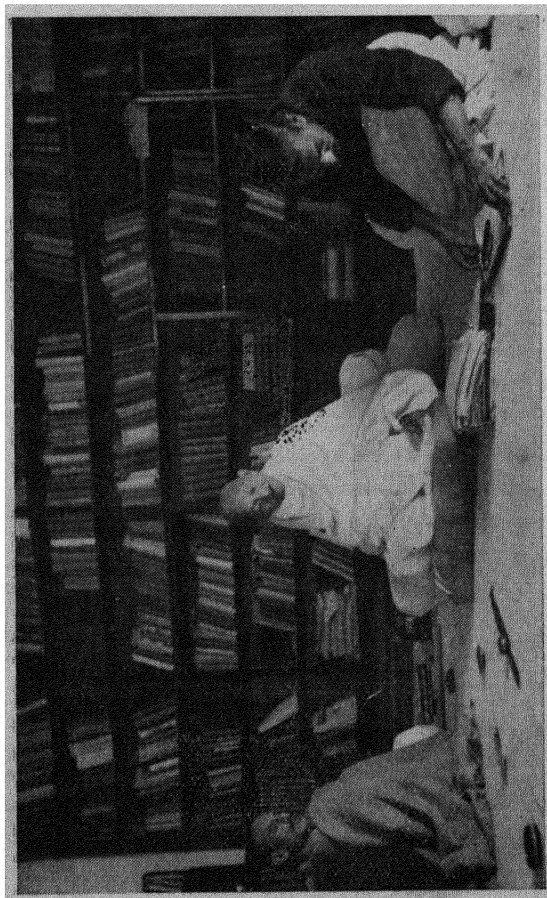
The collection is likely to be of considerable help to the student in making his choice from the various ideologies that are at present being made current in the country. Acharya Kripalani has, I think, succeeded in demonstrating that the programme adopted by the Congress in 1920, is as necessary for securing Freedom, as it was in 1920.

He is right in his statement that there is no such thing as "Gandhism." Insistence on Truth is an eternal principle. The jewel of Non-violence was discovered during the search for and contemplation of Truth, and the programme of 1920 is part of the practice of *Ahimsa*. To expect Freedom without this is to plough the sands.

M. K. GANDHI.

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\*Being a translation of Gandhiji's Foreword to the Gujarati Edition of this book.



THE AUTHOR

GANDHIJI

BABU RAJENDRAPRASAD

*Second Edition*

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NOTE

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Passing thoughts on the problems of the hour are like the unassorted stones in the quarry of life. That is what these detached contributions to the Press originally were. The task of republishing them in a second edition in response to the desire of the publishers afford an opportunity of grading and classifying them into ascending steps to the country's independence along the Gandhian way of Truth and Non-violence.

THE AUTHOR.

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*PART I*

# THE PREPARATION



# I

## KHADI AND INDUSTRIALISATION

(*Gandhi Jayanti*, 1931)

THE most favourite, also as they think, the most formidable, argument, which the educated and more specially the socialists bring against Charkha and Khadi, is that they arrest and turn back the hands of the clock of modern progress. Impressed by the prosperity of the West, they have come to think that only the industrialisation of the country would solve the problem of Indian poverty. Evidently these friends had no occasion to study the history of Modern Western Industrialisation critically. If they had, they would not be so dogmatic. Everywhere and at every step of industrialisation, whether in the West or in the East, the powerful arm of a national oligarchical government was at the back of the industrialists. Not only this, but in most of the countries such oligarchical national governments were actually run by either the industrialists and financiers themselves directly, or indirectly by their paid puppets. This is so even to-day. The main point of attack of the socialists against modern governments is that they are directly or indirectly run by big business in the interests of capital. There is no other way known to history than oligarchical concentration of power for the industrialisation of an agricultural

country. The recent experiment in Russia only proves this point. Here, a powerful oligarchy taking possession of all power and all the resources of the land has industrialised the country and, in some cases, even against its wishes. This industrialisation has not been effected as in the capitalist countries in the interests of a small section of the population, the capitalists, but in the interests of the proletariat. The methods employed, however, are the same—the concentration of all political and economic power in the hands of a well-knit, compact oligarchy that knows its own mind and what is it about. India has an oligarchical form of government, but the oligarchy being a foreign one, rules not in the interests of industrialists and financiers of this country but of England. If the present bureaucracy could be replaced by a coloured oligarchy, it might be possible for the latter to effect something in this direction, provided it could get the necessary capital and the technical skill from outside. Both these it will not have except by some very substantial concessions to the foreigners, which would greatly impair India's sovereignty for a considerable time to come.

The second factor in modern industrialisation has been the foreign markets. These foreign markets consist of so-called backward countries supplying raw material and serving as markets for the finished products. As the field for this economic exploitation of backward races has been narrowing for reasons now universally known, industry in Europe and America and in parts of Asia has been experiencing ever-increasing difficulties. These difficulties in the past led to the Great War and may lead, unless timely and heroic measures are adopted, to more widespread and devastating world

wars in the future. After a couple of such wars, there will be no country left, on this planet of ours, 'civilised' enough to wish for industrialisation in the future.

But even in the industrialised countries, has the problem of poverty of the masses been solved? At one time it seemed near solution in some favoured countries, when the industrialisation of other countries in the West and the East upset the whole arrangement. Today there is no industrial capitalist country that does not suffer from unemployment which threatens to be pretty permanent and chronic. The blame for this state of affairs is thrown upon the anarchic condition of production and distribution of wealth under capitalist regime. It is expected that the remedy would come from planned national economy. This may be possible in some big countries more or less self-sufficient in respect of raw materials and having extensive internal markets, countries like Russia, U.S.A., and others. So far as smaller countries like England, and those on the continent, and Japan are concerned it would be impossible to do anything by planned economy, if their imperial markets disappeared. Even when they are able to do something they will have considerably to lower their present standard of living, not for any one class but for all classes. Under favourable circumstances, however, a planned economy for free India, though difficult, is within the range of possibility. Only it would require a two-fold revolution, one that would get us national independence, and the other that would give us a planned economy, whether of the Fascist or of the Bolsheviek type. Till these revolutions are accomplished, it would be idle to talk of the industrialisation of the country even if it were desirable.

Recently in some local Councils there was a talk of planned economy for something or other. Such talk betrays gross ignorance, for which the only excuse is that such ideas emanate from legislators, not a clever community the world over, but here in India having more than their share of ignorance, being attached to Councils that lack reality and seriousness. There can be no planned economy for production only, nor can there be any planned economy in one or two industries. The unit for planned economy must be a country at least. It must embrace both production and distribution. Without this there can be no planned economy in any scientific sense of the term.

The history of recent developments in Indian industry shows the possibilities and limitations of the industrialisation of India situated as she is today. The cotton industry is ever at the door of the Government for protection in addition to the huge protection it receives from the Swadeshi movement. The Government protection is granted on the implied understanding that the industry will behave itself, that is, support the Government in their schemes. The schemes of the Government are first to help Lancashire, their masters, and then for imperial reasons not to annoy Japan. In all the arrangements that they make in these two directions, the Indian cotton interest must support the Government. The Ottawa Pact and the two agreements with Lancashire and Japan fully bear this out. More has been lost by these pacts and agreements than what the cloth industry has gained from protection. It is threatened with extinction as much today as before. Even this doubtful protection was purchased by siding with the Government against the Congress, their best friend in the long run,

if the mill agents had only the brains to understand. The history of other Indian industries reveals a similar tale of woe. Some industries built up during the war with the patronage of the Government saw this patronage gone as soon as the war was over. It was thought that they interfered with the British market. It is a notorious fact that the whole commercial, industrial and financial policy of the Government of India is mainly directed by big business in England. This is quite natural. The English came to India for no philanthropic purpose. To expect them to help Indian industry at the expense of British industry, or at the expense of their imperialist policy, is to delude oneself.

Some industrialisation in India, supported and unsupported by the Government, but always supported by the people, has been in existence now nearly for the last forty years. Let us examine the results :—

The population dependent upon agriculture in

1891 was 61 per cent	1911 was 71 per cent
1901 .. 66 ..	1921 .. 72.8 ..

The figures for 1931 are not specifically given in the census report. But it is not difficult to deduce them from the facts given there. They come to about 73% (Census Reports).

These figures are illuminating. They show a progressive pressure on the land. They only prove that under the present regime India will have to wait till the Greek Calends to effect any degree of industrialisation.

Apart from this, would it not be more appropriate for the advocates of industrialisation to save the already dwindling industries than to talk of further industriali-

sation? As the facts stand today, nothing in the direction of industrialisation, that would count, can be done except by a national government. The question then naturally arises, are we to wait till the advent of a national government to help the starving millions of our countrymen? If we have to industrialise before we can alleviate the poverty of the masses, we will have to wait whether we like it or not.

Yet, to do nothing in the meantime to mitigate the hardships and horrors of this grinding poverty would be callous indeed. The work for Swaraj can effectively be done only by those who have already begun to feel keenly about the poverty of the masses. They would not be true to their faith if, while working for Swaraj, they did not devise means for the amelioration of the conditions of their countrymen to however small an extent. Nay, such work itself would be work for Swaraj. This work of amelioration under the present circumstances can best be done by Charkha and Khadi. It also gives the necessary contact with, and influence over, the masses without whose active help or at least passive approval no national revolution can be possible.

In this discussion I have scrupulously avoided the views and personality of Gandhiji. This I have done because the opponents of the Charkha always bring his views about machinery, western civilization, *sanyam* and religion to confound the plain issue. Lest this be done, I have kept his views and personality outside the discussion, which I want to be entirely historical, economic and scientific.

## II

### SOCIALISM AND KHADI

(*Gandhi Jayanti*, 1934)

SOCIALISM is in the air. Everywhere in the land are springing up socialist leagues and societies. This is so not only in India but the world over. Socialism seems to be the idea of the times. It has attracted to itself many of the best minds of the world. Even its opponents Fascism and Nazism clothe themselves in the garb of Socialism and use its phraseology and catchwords. Every new group reform and group movement has, therefore, to justify its existence in terms of the aims of Socialism. Let us see if Khadi can so justify itself. It is also necessary that there be no conflict between two movements claiming the same objective, the raising of the masses of humanity.

For a scientific and systematic discussion of the problem it is necessary that we form a clear idea of what Socialism stands for. If we propose to import no prepossession or prejudice in the investigation, we must readily admit that religion, sex-morality, the family, the forms of the State, industrialisation and several other things with which Socialism is associated in half-educated and un-critical minds are not of the essence of Socialism. The essence of Socialism consists in its theory (right or wrong) of 'Surplus Value'. It is through this 'Surplus Value' that the exploitation of the masses is carried on. This 'Surplus Value' takes the form of

profit, rent and interest. An industry or commerce that leaves no 'Surplus Value', that is, has no room for profit, rent or interest, must be considered socialistic. It does not matter for scientific purposes whether the initiators and advocates of such commerce and industry believe in God or are materialistic ; it does not matter whether they believe in one set of sex-rules or the other ; whether they believe in industrialisation or not ; they have the essence of Socialism in them.

Now the Khadi industry leaves no room for 'Surplus Value', no room either for rent, interest or profit. All the profits go to pay the services. Nothing is distributed to any other party performing any real or imaginary services. The services are paid on very nearly equal basis. Some figures will make the point clear. The average earnings of a weaver are about Rs. 13 to Rs. 15, of a dhobi about Rs. 12 to Rs. 15, of a painter Rs. 25 to Rs. 30, and of a carpenter Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per month. The earnings of a spinner are less, but spinning is only a part time, leisure occupation. As against this the average allowance paid to the organisers of this activity, some of them highly educated, is Rs. 20 per month (Gandhi Ashram—U.P.—figures).

As a corollary from the theory of 'Surplus Value', Socialism has insisted upon the socialisation of the instruments of production. So far as Khadi is concerned the instruments of production are the Charkha and the Loom. These need not be socialised as their cost is such that the average villager can afford it. Where the villager cannot afford to furnish himself with these primitive and simple machines but is willing to work, the Spinners' Association, a public body, comes to his help. So, in

fact, these crude instruments of production are as good as nationalised.

The other powerful instrument of production is capital. This is nationalised, being in the hands of the Spinners' Association. It is public property earning neither rent nor interest nor profit. The few private producers in the field have also to regulate themselves by the standards set by the Spinners' Association. They must be certified. Their accounts and prices are subject to inspection and check. They have in addition to face the Spinners' Association's competition. They therefore have to satisfy themselves with profits that cover only their wages on a very moderate scale. In fact, the whole of the Khadi industry is a socialistic experiment and a socialistic venture. I have no doubt that if the present foreign government were replaced by an indigenous one, Khadi would be a national industry run by the national government in the interests of the proletariat.

The logic of Socialism is based upon the study of objective facts. However much an Indian Socialist may substitute for this the study of the Socialist and Bolshevich literature pouring in from the West in ever increasing quantities and swallowed with an ever increasing avidity it cannot be gainsaid that socialistic theories claim to be based upon a study of hard 'objective facts'. They are Realistic. This is the claim of all scientific Socialism. The movement of Khadi more than any other movement is based upon no preconceived ideas, no orthodoxies ancient or modern, religious or scientific. It is based upon the study of objective facts as they exist and manifest themselves in 700,000 villages throughout India.

Socialism among other things believes in Revolution. The Charkha, in addition to its incessant revolutions which those who run may see, is responsible for other and more philosophical Revolutions. In vulgar minds a revolution is identified or confused with popular upheavals of a more or less violent type, but the essence of a revolution lies in the re-valuation of values. From this point of view, no other movement in modern India has produced a more thoroughgoing transvaluation of values,—this not only in the sartorial sphere but in many other spheres. It has made the respectable, disrespectable, and *vice-versa* ; the beautiful, ugly, and the ugly, beautiful. Ideas of decency, art, necessity and hygiene have all changed with the advent of Khadi. The Charkha has not only affected the economics of the masses but also of the classes. Khadi stands for a particular mentality and a particular philosophy. We may agree with that philosophy or not, but there it stands transvaluing values and producing a stupendous revolution which only rank prejudice can afford to belittle or ignore. Such belittling and ignoring would ill square with a socialistic, scientific and realistic attitude of mind.

### III

#### FALLACIES ABOUT KHADI

(*Gandhi Jayanti*, 1934)

WHEN the spinning wheel is placed before the villager, he has no argument against it, not because he is unable to argue, but because he instinctively feels that the wheel will increase his productive capacity, and will be to

that extent a source of income. His difficulty is not that he is not convinced about the Charkha's utility and desirability in his home, and in every village home, but that he is no more used to it. It is not done these days ! His whole life is guided by custom. The uncustomary ! how can it be done ?

Not so with the learned. If they can be convinced about the soundness of Khadi as an economic proposition, they may have no further objection. This is what they feel, though custom rules their lives only a little less than the villagers'. While the villager cannot give a philosophical justification for his customs and narrow self-interest, the city man with his stores of learning can do this with seeming effect. He never does a thing without advancing some idealistic or scientific justification ! Very often the learned explanations he advances, when critically examined, turn out to be half understood and partially digested knowledge, a kind of learned ignorance. We here propose to deal with some of the objections raised by the learned against Khadi.

The first objection is that Khadi is not an economic proposition. Evidently the objectors are here confusing economics with personal and household economy. In the language of the learned this would be the fallacy of the *undistributed middle*, or four terms. That is, they are using the same middle term but with a different connotation. They of course do not detect the fallacy in their reasoning. What they mean by the proposition is that a yard of Khadi is dearer than a yard of the same sort of foreign or Indian mill cloth. But this proposition has nothing to do with the science of economics. It may be true and yet the science of economics may accept it as a good economic policy for a nation. The fact is that

economics is the science of the wealth of nations. It was sometimes called political economy. Adam Smith styled his book on economics as "The Wealth of Nations". Some of the classical economists did think that a universal stage of the science of economics was at hand when there would be no question of the wealth of nations as separate entities but the wealth of the world ; that in the field of economic activity, in the production, consumption, distribution and exchange of wealth, the whole of humanity would act as one unit, the different nations being as the different divisions of a nation today ; that there would be no national barriers, no tariff walls, no dumping, and that wealth would flow from one country to another without let or hindrance. This happy dream has not been realised. Today it is more distant than ever. The science of economics deals with the objective facts as they are today, not as they might be in the future in some real or utopian world.

Let us then examine Khadi from the point of view of the Indian nation, situated as it is today. Does the production of Khadi add to the national wealth ? There is no doubt that it does create some wealth. Is this done at the expense of the time and the energy with which greater units of wealth could be produced ? The whole argument for Khadi is based upon the undeniable fact of the leisure of the peasantry, which when it is least, is about three months in the year. Compulsory leisure in economic language is unemployment. So when Khadi is produced it means that this leisure is fruitfully employed in the creation of extra National Wealth. It is taking away, howsoever small a bit, of national unemployment. The elimination of unemployment from a nation's life is a sound proposition in Economics.

There is increased production. Some economists think that the standard of living in India cannot possibly rise unless there is increased production per unit of population. Khadi increase this production. It does this at the expense of no other greater production of wealth. It has not stopped the Indian mills. That is not its objective. For many years to come all mills that are working, and many more, and all the Khadi that is produced today and much more will be necessary to clothe the nation on the very meagre basis of today.

Khadi also increases the purchasing power of the nation. Purchasing power is a recognised measure for assessing national wealth. The villager spends less on cloth when he plies the Charkha than when he does not. This means he has some surplus wealth which he can profitably use to better his standard of living. The rich, when they purchase Khadi, may have to spend more, but it is not their standard of living that needs raising. As a matter of fact, even the rich, when they have taken to Khadi, have saved many a rupee. At this stage it is not necessary to discuss how this saving is effected.

Khadi also stops wealth from going out to the extent it displaces foreign cloth. This again means that there is a greater reservoir of national wealth from which individuals can draw and future production can grow. So that Khadi enriches, even when it seems to take away something from the pocket of the purchaser. What he loses in one form, he more than gains in another.

From the point of view, then, of (1) the diminution of unemployment, (2) increase in national production, (3) the purchasing power of the poor and (4) the collective wealth of the nation, Charkha and Khadi are sound propositions in Economics.

## IV

### KHADI AND LIVING WAGE

(*Gandhi Jayanti*, 1934)

OBJECTION is again raised that Khadi does not pay a living economic wage to the worker. What is a living economic wage? It has no fixed connotation. As a matter of fact, for the wage-earning population in general, there can be no living economic wage in a country where there is any great and chronic unemployment. There can only be customary wages changing after long intervals. These, in some well entrenched and powerfully organised trades and industries, may come up to the standard of economic living wage. But economic living wage for labour in general does not exist today in any modern country except perhaps in Russia; and the wages in Russia will not be considered economic elsewhere. Russia tolerates them today, only in the pursuit of an ideal. The so-called economic living wage, in some trades and industries, is really at the expense of the unemployed.

But the objector may ask, does Khadi provide even customary wages for the kind of labour it employs? Here are some figures. The weaver gets from Rs. 13 to Rs. 15 p.m., the washerman from Rs. 12 to Rs. 15, the carpenter from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30, and the printer from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30. (Figures according to Gandhi Ashram, Meerut.) Those who know will admit that these are customary wages for the skilled labour mentioned here.

Spinning is a part time and leisure occupation. However, if a spinner works for 8 hours, he would earn from 6 to 8 pice per day. The higher figure is in fact the customary wage paid to unskilled labour in the villages in many provinces. In some provinces higher wages are paid, but everywhere the conditions of labour are hard, and its demand is not steady throughout the year, but only seasonal. A steady income of two annas per day will satisfy rural labour in all provinces except perhaps in portions of Gujarat, Sindh and the Punjab. The objection about wages is, therefore, bound to disappear with the study of facts in rural India.

But what about the city? Whether in the city or in the village, nobody has ever advised those who are engaged in any kind of remunerative labour to substitute for the Charkha. The whole economics of the Charkha is based upon the idea that it is the most suitable supplementary industry for the agriculturist. Nobody wants the Charkha to be a substitute for any kind of more remunerative occupation. That the Charkha in the village apart from its supplementary character offers very nearly the customary wage for unskilled labour, must be considered an additional merit to its credit.

*Note.*—Since this was written Gandhiji has introduced his new scheme by which the spinner gets three annas for 8 hours' labour at the Charkha. But who can say that this is an economic living wage? All that can be said about it is, that it gives the minimum of food and clothing to an individual. If this is what is meant by the term economic living wage, it is there now, after the introduction of the new scheme in 1935.

## V

### SWADESHI AND COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

LARGE scale factory production has everywhere made the machine the master of man. By concentrating wealth in the hands of an ever-narrowing group it has created classes at war with each other, keeping society in perpetual, unstable equilibrium, leading to revolution and counter-revolution. The social and moral evils of the factory are too well-known to need mention here. But all this could be regulated if power were in the hands of the wise and the good who worked in public interest as distinguished from that of the owners of the machines. It is quite possible that a wise government either by or for the masses, may so order production of wealth as to eliminate inequalities ; and with the disappearance of inequalities, the social and moral evils associated with large scale machine production may cease to be. Humanity under such circumstances where production and distribution are ordered not for private but for public good and advantage, may enjoy all the benefits of science without its evils. It may make the machine its slave and not its master. But before such a wise authority is established or created, it is idle to hope that the present ills that humanity suffers from, can to any appreciable extent be eliminated.

Experience has proved that factory and social legislation of howsoever radical a nature, has been unable to remove the inequalities created by the capitalist order. These remain, creating jealousy,

discontent, hatred, strife and war between the "haves" and the "have-nots". Science if it is to regulate economic life for the advantage and the advancement of humanity, must regulate not only production and a minor part of it, but also consumption, distribution and exchange of wealth. To-day in capitalist society all that science is allowed to do, is to increase production not only of useful but even of useless, nay, of harmful commodities. Science having created the machines and technique, has stopped there. The machines have come to be owned by fair or foul means, more by the latter, by an ever narrowing number. If humanity is to take advantage of science, it must allow it to regulate the production of useful commodities, in quantities needed by society eliminating the useless and the harmful, in the interest not only of the present generation but also of the future generations. Science must regulate the distribution, exchange and consumption of all wealth which it has helped to create. To-day if physical sciences have made the control of nature possible, social sciences have made it quite possible to introduce a scientifically planned economy. So if the votaries of science advocate its use in some department,—the factory, to be consistent, they have to proceed further and bring the whole of the economic and social life under the rule of science. The partial use of science produces to-day utter confusion and chaos in the economical, and therefore in the social and political, life of humanity.

Before the advent of the machine and the factory, the economic life of an agricultural civilization, with its cottage industries, was more equitably regulated than now under the capitalist system. The question, therefore, arises whether it is desirable to introduce greater

confusion in countries that are more or less governed by the old economy. The old order is regulated by custom and protected from gross abuse by moral and social sanctions which the most powerful find difficult to disregard.

Apart, therefore, from any preconceived theories for or against the machine and the mechanic age, a practical reformer would seriously ask himself whether it would be worth his while to introduce a more chaotic economic life than already exists with its resultant inequalities, dirt, squalour, physical and moral disease, jealousy, hatred, and war between classes ; and then having introduced these, to await a bloody and sanguinary revolution to readjust the scales ? Would it not be preferable to live and struggle under the present regime, bad as it is, till a more ordered, scientific and planned economy became possible ; and in the meanwhile, to utilise all opportunities to put more life and energy in the old order, to make it better and more serviceable ? It is quite possible for the reformer to hold such views. This is what lies among other things at the root of the present efforts to revive cottage and village industries. It is for those who advocate the cause of science and mechanisation to show that they have not only the necessary ability and will but also the power to make science regulate all the departments of the economic and social life.

So far as India is concerned we have not even the little power that other free nations possess under a capitalist regime for labour and social legislation, to protect our masses from the extremest kind of exploitation. A conservative and admittedly a non-revolutionary trade union as the one at Ahmedabad, guided by

Gandhiji's spirit of compromise, is unable to protect the very moderate and reasonable rights of labour. Guided by a policy of ruthless and shortsighted selfishness, the mill-agents have always been busy in recent years to effect huge wage cuts—and this, inspite of the fact the mills in Ahmedabad have been reaping a good harvest of profits and the number of mills is increasing every year. The wage cuts are resorted to inspite of the help and the protection that the mills have been getting from the Swadeshi movement by which the Indian consumer ungrudgingly pays more than he would pay for similar goods from Lancashire or Japan, inspite of the fact that whatever protection was demanded of government was always backed up by public opinion, inspite too of the fact that the mills have ever refused to put their own house in order, and the agencies have been unwilling to make any cuts in their fat and unreasonable agency charges. Public workers have been acting as the unpaid agents and canvassers for the mills. They have advertised for them, and at great public expense, organised exhibitions for their benefit. The profits of all this have been silently swallowed up by the few capitalists. They have broken pledges solemnly given to the Congress. Ever since the Swadeshi and boycott spirit took possession of the nation, the mill interests have played a mean, unpatriotic and suicidal game. They so raised the prices in the days of the partition agitation that they brought about the literal collapse of the Swadeshi movement of the times. Since 1921 they have increased the production of the lower counts of cloth coming in direct competition with the movement that supported them, the movement of Khadi ; for all those who could not take to Khadi, invariably excused

themselves with the plea of Swadeshi. Some of the mills went further and styled their production of lower counts as Khadi. Since 1932 there has been an open betrayal of the national cause. Public workers know the haughtiness with which mill agents repudiated their agreements with the Congress, made in happier times. In various other ways they showed that they preferred narrow, short-sighted selfishness to the national cause which, in the end, would be their best protection, if they had only the eyes to see and the brains to understand. Their spokesman in the Assembly not only supported repression but even called for the suppression of the Congress. By their help to the Ottawa Agreement and the pacts with Japan and Lancashire they have completely demonstrated their unfitness to be the guardians of their own interests much less of the national interests. I have taken as an illustration the cloth industry. The sugar and other industries reveal the same tale of woeful disregard of public good in favour of inordinate, immediate greed.

When such is our helplessness that we cannot even enforce agreements, when we cannot protect labour, when we cannot protect the consumer, and when we, in short, cannot reap where we have sown, it is idle to talk of helping and encouraging large scale machine production. We have tried it with all the earnestness and patriotism at our command. We have protected large industry from foreign competition, we have tried to protect it from the foreign government, we have sought to protect it from revolutionary socialism and communism, yet we have received nothing in return except gross ingratitude and betrayal. If industry has done this, commerce has done no better. The whole-

sale and the retail merchants have often passed on foreign goods as genuine Swadeshi.

In the face of all this those who would ask us to advocate and protect machine-made goods in the name of science and modernism would indeed be asking us to commit political and economic suicide. For these friends it would be more reasonable and fruitful first to capture power and arm themselves with sanctions that will protect the masses, the cultivator, the labourer and the consumer. Let them develop power to enable them to punish, and if need be, to eliminate all those who stand in the way of national goods as measured by the masses, our helpless half-starved countrymen. Let them get this power first and then advocate machine production, or else they are greater and more dangerous theorists and more bigoted fanatics in the name of science than Gandhi is in the name of his many fads. He at least sees to the interests of the masses as distinguished from the interests of the capitalists. He wanted their co-operation but they would have none of it, or of him. Blinded by cupidity and selfishness they refused the hand of fellowship in a common cause. They have chosen to kick the ladder upon which they have climbed to their present heights. I am conscious of honourable exceptions but they have been few and far between. I am prepared to recognise that in the absence of effective sanctions all this would have happened any where else. But that only proves that it is no use for the middle and poor classes to help in their own exploitation and slavery. It is no use for those who are poor to add to the riches of the rich. It is no use adding car to car, bungalow to bungalow. Let it not be said that those who have much, much is added

to them, and those who have little even that little is taken away from them. Let us without co-operating in the game of the rich capitalist, yet keep to Swadeshi which must be the life blood of the nation.

Let, therefore, all thoughtful and vigilant patriotism that really cares for the good of the masses help the cause, good and true, of cottage industries, till power is captured and all production, exchange, distribution and consumption of economic wealth is ordered for one and only one legitimate and moral purpose, namely, the greatest good of the greatest numbers. ✓

*April, 1935.*

## VI

### CONSTRUCTIVE WORK AND REVOLUTION

*(September, 1934)*

“THE Charkha, village industry and generally the constructive programme of the Congress, partially ameliorate the condition of the people. The real remedy for the poverty, the degradation and the slavery of the masses can come only from a revolution. Whatever partial measures are adopted to better their lot, serve only as an opiate, lulling them into forgetfulness of the real problem, the problem of the revolution. Reform keeps them more or less content. It takes away the edge of discontent. It reconciles them to their chains. It makes them forget the essential class antagonism and the fundamental conflict of class interest embedded in

the very nature of things. No revolution in the past could be effected until the conditions had become the worst imaginable, absolutely unbearable. The more grossly unjust they were, the more thorough was the retribution and the consequent readjustment. No reformatory effort therefore should be made merely to better the lot of any class low down in the scale of humanity. If such a conscious, studied and scientific attitude results in any extra poverty, degradation, nay even considerable loss of life, that must be accepted with philosophic and scientific equanimity, and must be considered as the necessary price to be paid to a cruel, inexorable nature of things. Such suffering is like the surgeon's knife, the throes of a new birth. It is only when humanity has drunk the cup of degradation and misery to the last dregs, that it can burst forth and break its bonds." So runs the argument of a section of socialists and the communists.

Now it is quite possible that in the body social, circumstance may arise when nothing short of a revolution, nothing short of an entire readjustment of conditions and values could save society from a catastrophe. Things may be so fundamentally rotten, that no tinkering with the problem would have any durable effect. The situation may need a wholesale change of standards and values. The old order may be so hopelessly out of tune with the spirit of the times, and may be in such a process of degradation, decay and putrefaction from day to day, that the smooth, easy, sane, reasonable and evolutionary process may be unable to overtake the rot, that reform may lag behind and that every day society finds itself on the downward path. It is at such times that the cruel knife of the

surgeon, what in society goes by the name of revolution, may be necessary.

While all this may be admitted, it may be doubted whether revolutions always arise from and are born of adverse circumstances that have reached the rock bottom, when there can be no further going down. The history of revolutions shows no such inevitableness. In many instances, the external circumstances were favourable for a revolution and yet for want of something or other, the revolution never came. There are other cases, where the revolution did not wait for circumstances to get to the very worst, but some spirited individuals or proud groups forged ahead and brought it about. There are still other cases, when as the circumstances were improving, the revolution came on partly as a result of these very improvements. Nothing could be worse in external circumstances than the life of the slaves in the ancient world. They were a numerous class numbering many times their masters. Yet no revolution came. In modern times the emancipation of the Negro in America was not the result of any Negro agitation or effort, though it is difficult to picture to oneself worse conditions for human souls and bodies. The condition of the plebians in ancient Rome was not as bad as that of the slaves, yet they produced a revolution in the state. In mediæval Europe the condition of the masses was much worse than the condition of the present day European proletariat and yet all they produced were a few peasant risings put down in blood. The bourgeois revolution against the kings and landlords in the modern states, was not brought about by people whose economic condition was bad, but rather by people who were in

comfortable circumstances and at a time when their condition was becoming progressively comfortable and their liberties increasing with their affluence. The American revolution was not to drive away the demon of poverty but to assert their rights, which, they thought, was one of their natural rights, over their own political and economic destiny. The French revolution which may be considered to be in point, as proving the doctrine enunciated by a section of our socialist friends, also lends them no support. The condition of the peasantry and the lower middle class was, as a matter of fact, improving. The revolution was not so much the result of misery that was unbearable, as that people were no more prepared to bear what they bore in patience before. There was a wide gulf between the ideas of people about what they considered as their natural rights such as liberty and equality, and the external physical conditions under which they lived. These abstract ideas, not altogether correct or logical, were preached by philosophers some of whom had very little to do with the practical affairs of their times. Yet what is this French revolution? Historians have not hesitated to call it 'a unique episode.' The recent Russian revolution is the only one, that had as one of its causes the economic condition of the masses, which was the very worst imaginable. But that condition was more due to the exhaustion of the war and disappearance of authority. Before the war, the condition of the peasantry owing to the emancipation of serfs was certainly better than when the Russian peasant was a mere serf and there was no industrial life in the country. Again, the general economic condition in all the countries in Central Europe was at the time very much the same. Germany, Austria,

Hungary, were all in the same economic plight as Russia, if not worse, and yet no revolution resulted from their misery. The countries in central Europe even to-day are in the same hopeless economic plight, yet no revolution seems to be in sight. A critical student of the recent Russian revolution, will not fail to find the great part played by *chance* in its success. At many a critical juncture, if one bit had gone wrong, the whole thing would have miscarried. Sometimes it was even because the schemes of its protagonists miscarried, that success was achieved.

I have taken examples of revolutions from the West, for only western history is supposed by the modern mind to show the historical evolutionary process. The Asiatic history is a series of ups and downs, where it is difficult to mark the direction towards which the current of events is forging ahead. There are periods of advance and brilliance, and then there are long periods of silent decay and disintegration. Yet it would not be out of place to take a few instances of Asiatic revolutions recorded in History. Most of them appear to be bound up with the lives of individual geniuses, religious or political. Nothing could be more stupendously revolutionary in all departments of life than Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Yet take away the birth of the geniuses and for centuries society in India, Palestine, Arabia and elsewhere might have gone on without a ruffle. Then there were political geniuses like Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Constantine, Akbar, Shivaji and others. They brought about considerable political revolutions. They also brought about movements of people and culture. This does not mean that favourable circumstances for the unfolding of the personality

of the geniuses were lacking, but at least as much was due to the personality as to the circumstances. It is also a fact that under similar circumstances, if no genius arose, society kept to its even, wonted course for considerable stretches of time. All these revolutions, for revolutions certainly they were, were not built upon any unbearable, physical and economic conditions. Their causes were as varied and various, as the geniuses themselves, and the environment under which they were born.

Take again the Harijans in India. No conditions even in slavery, ancient and modern, could be found to compare with the physical and moral conditions under which a vast portion of humanity has been living from the very dawn of the historical period of the world. And yet there has been no revolution. Even the present upheaval is not of their creation, but from above. It is the same with the Negro emancipation in America. Whatever stir in the Negroes and the Untouchables there is to-day, is the result of the work done for them from above.

These historical examples from the east and the west prove that there are no sets of circumstances known to history, given which, a revolution would be an inevitable consequence. There seems to be no such inevitableness. The array of facts marshalled by historians as causes of a revolution are all, after the event. Even then the causes enumerated are so many, so various, so entirely embedded in the particular circumstances of the countries and the times and the personalities of those who played a prominent part in the drama, that it is well nigh impossible to lay down any scientifically correct preconditions of a revolution.

Each is a unique event by itself. If there are, however, any conditions precedent, they are rather psychological and ideological than physical.

One such is the great gulf between peoples' ideas of what should be and what actually is. The physical and the economic conditions need not be quite unbearable. Only there should appear to the contemporary eye, which is more or less unhistorical, a sharp contrast and a wide gulf between the actual facts of their life and their dreams.

If the gulf is wide enough, an upheaval may be expected. This is borne out by many a revolution, religious and political, in the east and the west. Mental restlessness has always manifested itself when great changes are in sight. The inordinate emphasis given to economic factors is quite a modern phenomenon. The conditions under which the European proletariat lives to-day, are very much better than those under which their forefathers lived a century ago. Yet the old conditions were borne in patience, because the former generations of the poor took them to be more or less as pre-ordained and inevitable, and therefore necessary and just. Preaching of the new ideas of justice, equality and the rights of man and the discoveries of science have made out that these bad physical conditions need not be inevitable or necessary. They are altogether unjust. The old loyalties that made things bearable have broken down. The connection between the employer and the employed has become commercial and casual. In the case of big factories it has altogether ceased. The bonds of love and sentiment have also disappeared. What is, is not economically and physically worse than what was,

but people are not willing patiently to bear even the improved conditions. The conditions have not deteriorated but the values of people have changed. Their ideas about right and wrong, about just and unjust, about their loyalties and their obligations, in short, their moral values have undergone revolutionary change. Whenever there appears such a gulf between ideas and objective facts, society is in a critical and transitional stage. The equilibrium under which life is lived is disturbed. And any upheaval restorative of the necessary equilibrium may be in sight.

Another such psychological condition is a hope born in the human breast that better conditions are possible. The new hope is a clarion call to humanity. It is just like the voice of the prophet that the "Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, prepare Ye." This hope has an element of faith in it. It is rarely based on any purely reasonable grounds. Rather is it the result of an enthusiasm, fervour and fever that periodically overtake a section of humanity in its onward march. It may be due to a personality, an apt phrase or formula, or a significant event. The personality, critically analysed, may in the end turn out to be theatrical, half-crack, fanatical, neurotic or morbid. The phrase may be a half truth clothed in deceptive aphorism which the mass mind finds easy to repeat, and throw, in the face of its opponents as a weapon of offence and defence,—phrases like the "natural rights of man", "Liberty, equality and fraternity," "surplus values". The event may have no significance beyond the particular time and country. How hope is born in human breast, even the all-knowing psycho-analyst is ignorant of. This hope may be born even as humanity is already upon the upward curve and

has traversed some distance towards the direction of progress. Generally it rises as the tendency to better conditions is visible. The present day hope of the proletariat is of this type. Hope generated by what has been accomplished by the ideas of justice and equality as worked out by the philanthropist and humanitarians of the nineteenth century, as also by what the trade unions have been able to accomplish by their efforts, struggles, sufferings and sacrifices. Even as conditions improve, hope rises. It is not born of weakness and despair, but of strength and exaltation, realised as in a vision. It is born not because the actual conditions are the worst possible, but because the future has tempting, tinted, fiery rainbow colours.

There is yet another factor which inevitably accompanies revolutions, political, social or religious. This is that the new hope, the new faith, the new idea, the new gospel is born in a personality. The personality embodies in himself and in his life, as much of the idea as a human personality possibly can. The person with an idea is a man with a mission, in which he lives, moves, and has his being. His work engrosses him. He seems like one possessed. No trouble, no hardship, no sacrifice, is too much. Life and death do not count. The idea alone counts. The man with an idea, is a desperate person. He, therefore, becomes contagious. He carries everything and everybody before him. He, as it were, hypnotises his coworkers. Reason and logic do not count for the time being. They seem to follow him. He produces in himself and others a kind of enthusiastic fever which catches on and becomes irresistible. For a period he is supreme. It has also been found that once the idea is worked out and has succeeded, and the

personality has outlived, he has lost his power and even his charm. He reverts in his proper place in the animal kingdom. *Virtue* seems to have gone out of him. He can no more perform the odds that he performed. Generally, his task finished, he disappears. But before the task is accomplished, he seems to carry about him a charmed life. No sword or bullet seems to touch him. The best laid designs of his enemies are frustrated. He seems to be enjoying some special protection. His efforts to take himself off the stage prove of no avail. He is carried along irresistibly by an inexorable fate that gives him no rest, and allows no rest either to his companions or to his opponents. His task must be done. Such are the personalities, by whom revolutions are usually brought about.

So if there are any pre-requisites of a revolution, they are to be found more in the psychological and ideological fields than in the physical and economic conditions. The latter serve more or less as the necessary background. As a matter of fact this over emphasis on economic conditions as a necessary pre-requisite of a revolution, is a Marxist dogma. The word revolution had and has a wider meaning than a merely or preponderatingly economic connotation. It is because of this psychological and ideological background that the present day revolutionaries lay so much stress upon the spread of ideas. The power of ideas is brought out in relief by the so called counter-revolutions. These have ever relied upon the propagation and preaching of an old and orthodox idea giving it a new meaning and a new interpretation. The counter-revolution comes even in the midst of physical and economic circumstances that are more or less identical. What changed is the values,

the ideas and the personalities. It is therefore, that every revolution is more strict and censorious about the free expression of opinion than the regime that went before. Heterodoxy and nonconformity are deadly sins against a revolution. They are just like apostacy in religion worthy of the gallows and the stake. Everything else can be viewed with leniency but not nonconformity in ideology. That must be ruthlessly put down even in former companions. The punishment must not only be harsh but swift. For ideas are more contagious than physical disease. They spread and multiply more than any germs known to science. They in their effect are more destructive. Those who have been installed in power by an idea knows its potency more than the previous holders of power. The old idea does not require any very great propping up. The natural conservatism in man, habit and even lethargy support it. Then it has created vast vested interests. The new idea depends only on its strength. When it is attacked, it cannot fall back upon the support of conservatism, habit, lethargy or vast vested interests, all of which it has destroyed, and which it has not the time to recreate. So naturally it has recourse to suppression, and this suppression, if it is not quick enough, will overturn the whole apple cart of the new revolution. This is perhaps what happened in Afghanistan. Amanullah hesitated. He shrank back from the shedding of the blood of his countrymen. Lenin, Kemal Pasha, Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin have been more ruthless.

Let us, however, for the sake of argument, grant that physical and economic conditions are the all deciding factors which, we contend, they are not. Even then, no student of history, politics or economics, can

foretell with any amount of certainty, the time when the revolution would arise. It may come any day. It may not come for a long time, and society meanwhile, may find a new readjustment.

Under such circumstances, to neglect the duty at hand would be a short-sighted policy. To refuse to take steps to alleviate human suffering will be just as if a doctor refused treating a patient for he was engaged in the work of a scheme for the general hygienic improvement of a locality, which in course of half a century will eliminate all disease. The doctor under such circumstances, has always a double duty to perform. While carrying into effect his vast and expensive schemes, he has to afford immediate relief. If he did not do this, he would be failing in his professional conduct, fixed after the ripe experience of generations of doctors and patients. If the doctor did not attend to the immediate trouble, such negligence of human woe would have an adverse psychological effect, not only on his profession, but upon the public at large. So also indifference to the actual misery and poverty around, will have the effect of deadening the finer feelings in the reformer and the public, who would get habituated to witnessing human woe without any effort being made for its removal. Nay, if persisted in, such a policy would make of human beings mere tools and instruments. Provided a particular policy succeeds, it does not matter how much life is lost. Men and women come to be looked upon as mere pawns in the schemes of clever people who may be at least as many times wrong as right. Human beings have, under such circumstances, no value in themselves. It is such dangerous ideas that have in the past led to massacres, *auto-da-fe*, and reigns

of terror. They still continue to exact the same toll only more thoroughly, for the machines of repression and suppression are more powerful to-day than they were ever before. Thus is the sanctity of human life lost.

It is no argument for the reformer that the tyrant, the selfish holder of power, the invader, the conqueror and the fanatic, use men as mere pawns in the game of their selfish aggrandisement. They frankly use men as means. The reformer cannot defend himself by their example. He works for higher aims, for humanitarian motives. He has to keep an ideal before himself and his people, of justice, mercy and economy of human life. He must set up a better standard.

If the arguments of our opponents based upon economic and physical condition are, however, valid, what is there in these arguments being pursued actively and positively? If we allow conditions to remain absolutely bad and delight in their being what they are, and move no finger of ours to improve them, simply because such efforts by mitigating suffering, dull the edge of popular resentment, we may feel justified in welcoming all natural calamities. Nay, we will be justified in going further and taking positive steps to worsen conditions, simply to sharpen the edge of discontent. Any sort of incendiarism would be justified, provided it made wretched conditions still more wretched for the revolution to succeed. The only provision would be that one is careful to see that the odium falls upon the powers against whom resentment is sought to be created, and who are to be unsettled from the seats of their iniquitous power, by a revolution. If by mendacious and false propaganda, authorities can be blackened, that also may be done, provided the revolution is brought

a little nearer. This would be to carry to its logical and diabolical conclusion, the doctrine, that "End justifies the means."

More or less the current morality without explicitly avowing the doctrine, has been acting upon it, specially in political and group life. But in the past there were always traditional limits, set to human conduct. The greatest revolutionary and the greatest tyrant were not free from their binding force. Tradition created a conscience, which kept the cruel doctrine of "End justifying the means" under practical restraints. True, at critical times, under the stress of circumstances these restraints did give away, but only temporarily. The foundations were firmly laid in morality, custom, religion and even in popular superstition. To-day when current morality is suspect, religion is considered a spent out force, superstition is replaced by science, custom is ever changing. If such dangerous and disruptive doctrines are to guide conduct, humanity cannot but end in absolute nihilism. There can be no basis, no recognised standard for the conduct of the human group-animal except success. Already the signs of this coming nihilism are not wanting. The Great War showed to what destructive depths group animosities could degrade humanity, all in the name of success, for every nation had justifiable aims. The preparations that are now on, in armaments, in the camp, the factory and the laboratory, for the next war, are such that would make the boldest and the most unscrupulous pause and think whether the present bases of morality are laid on sound principles when means are absolutely subordinated to the end. May it not, therefore, be that Gandhi insists that for him means and aims are convertible terms?

I am conscious that at critical times it is not given to human reason to weigh things in a nice, sensitive balance. We are first of all acting animals. All thought is for the purposes of action. Therefore in the world, we have to think even as we are on the run in this mad human race. Rough and ready calculations will have to be made at critical times. Some life will have to be sacrificed, so that larger life to-day or in the future may be conserved. A Gandhi marching some thousands of miles with thousands of people cannot wait on the way to look after the halting and the lame of the expedition. If he is to avoid disaster they must be left to their fate, and he must march on. A Lenin in the midst of a revolution may not divert his attention from the main issue even by a famine. But such things can only be justified by the critical stress of circumstances when one is in the grip of a life-and-death struggle. Such doctrines would be dangerous if they were made into general principles and applied to more or less stable conditions. The stress and the strain of the times may be very great. Things may be in a flux ; yet till one is actually in the grip of a revolution, when a false step may mean a disaster, one cannot look upon human woe, misery and death with philosophic indifference. The medicine of life cannot be made into its food. In point of time revolutions are entirely uncertain things. They may come to-day or may not come for half a century. A true benefactor of his people cannot afford to play with the destinies of the present generation of his countrymen lightly ; he has to be careful. Even at the risk of slower work for the preparation of a revolution, he has to take steps for the immediate amelioration of human woes. When the earthquake came in Bihar, the C. D.

Movement there was practically suspended. Even the opponents, the Government, immediately set all the prisoners at liberty. The patriots could have done no less.

Therefore the reformers even like good doctors, have to do double duty. While preparing the people for the coming revolution they have to keep solving the immediate problems. The solution of these problems itself would be a necessary training for the revolution. It will also give the leaders of the revolution a hold over the masses whom they have been serving in their day-to-day difficulties. The forces of the movement, if necessary may be divided, those who look to the immediate pressing demands of the hour, and those who create atmosphere for the coming revolution. At the end, when the historian sits to allocate the honour of the fight, who knows, the first may be the last, and the last first. The humblest then may have the place of honour.

The Bardolis, the peasant and village organisations, the trade unions, national education, untouchability, Khadi, prohibition and all work of a constructive nature are in a sense meant to solve the immediate problem. The most effective work in all these directions can only be done after the actual capture of power. The reformer has to have faith. He cannot bring the revolution by a scheduled time. The Revolution Mail will take its own time and course. In the meantime he has to do the work at hand in faith, never losing sight of the goal. In the stress of every day work covered with the dust of the soil, to a superficial observer, who did not look within, he might seem to have forgotten the end. So looked Gandhi from 1923 to 1929. He seemed to

to have forgotten the end. Many thought and said so in those days. But as a matter of fact the work of preparation was ever on. This was plain in 1930. If such a silent and necessary preparation did not go on, the revolutionary would miss his opportunity when the popular temper was ready to respond. Therefore, with the hope and faith of a ceaseless and tireless worker, Gandhi says, "one step is sufficient for me."

No scientific socialist leader has condemned the work of the trade unions. It is reformatory, concerned with the immediate problem. Sometime it resolves itself to so many rupees, annas, and pies. Yet, it is necessary. It gives the moral qualities, the unity, the organisation, the group patriotism, the spirit of co-operation, obedience and subordination, with its necessary curb on inordinate ambition and jealousy, without which, no successful movement can be inaugurated. Deprived of such constructive activities, what are the rank and file to do? They cannot merely keep on creating ideologies and repeating slogans. They must patiently learn to work and manage affairs.

Further, can a revolutionary say that there is not sufficient dirt, squalor, disease, poverty, degradation and ignorance among the masses throughout the country, enough and more not for one revolution but for ten? A little less will not dull the edge of human inequity and inequality, which in all conscience is sharp enough and proposes to remain so in spite of the tiny efforts of the reformer. There is no fear of the physical and economic pre-requisites disappearing or even diminishing. So far as the constructive programme goes, as our opponents remind us, it does not touch the very fringe of the problem of inequality and poverty. If it is so, and

so it is, they need not think, by the little help that we render by our humble efforts we are in any way postponing the day of reckoning. We who are happy to put a few coppers in the hands of the peasants, how happy will we be, if these coppers by the magic touch of a revolution, were to turn into nickels or silver ! We are not the ones to grudge the poor better wages and more equitable conditions. He would be no patriot nor would be a humanitarian, if he were satisfied with a few coppers as wages even for the spare hours of the peasant. It will be a low ambition indeed. We want our masses to grow to the fullest of their physical, moral and intellectual height. There should be no doubt that a man like Gandhi cannot wish for less. But he and his companions are practical idealists. For them the tragedy of the situation is, that for the poor these coppers do matter. For them it is a question of life and death.

Therefore without forgetting the revolutionary aim of the national movement, the constructive workers shoulder the day-to-day work of social and economic reconstruction under existing circumstances. The history of our movement since 1920 amply bears out this contention. For whenever the movement of satyagraha has been inaugurated, whenever direct action has been decided upon, the khaddarites and the advocates of constructive work have never been found in the rear. Whenever the exhausted have cried halt it is again not the khaddar mentality that has cried halt. When it is the question of offices, who are in the background ? As experience has shown, the people with the khaddar and the bullock-cart mentality. When it is hard, uninteresting drudgery that is demanded, who again are in the front ? Surely the khaddar mentality has shown no

lack of enthusiasm or courage in any hour of trial. So far as discipline is concerned, it has been the least troublesome. If suffering, readiness to sacrifice, obedience, organisation, honesty and absence of unworthy ambition and jealousy are the signs of a good and effective revolutionary, the constructive workers still compare with any other in the country.

Throughout this discussion, I have not mentioned the new morality of non-violence in group life. I have kept the whole discussion on the basis of what even to-day is considered good and practical politics and economics. I have based my arguments not upon what ought to be but what actually is. I have never questioned the basis of the present day morality. I have not talked of the new yet old doctrines of non-violence and truth of Gandhiji.

*PART II*

**LEFT-WING CRITICISM**



## VII

### THE TWO REVOLUTIONS

(October, 1931)

EVERY age has its problems and the problem now facing us is truly stupendous. It is not merely political. It embraces the whole of life in its various departments. Other people in their days had to adjust their lives to a single revolution. We in our time have to adjust ours to a double revolution. Hardly are we out of the one when we are faced with the other, greater and more comprehensive.

The first began with the advent and establishment of the British Raj. Overwhelmed by its organised, youthful strength, which like a hurricane carried everything before it, we stood agape at the achievement of the West in the brief space of about a century. We thought we could come up to their strength, their efficiency and their joy of life merely by copying their methods, accepting their values and adopting their attitude towards life's problems. Fired with zeal we, with hard cruel strokes, produced a hybrid civilisation which could be distinguished from the Western by its very inferiority. Like the mule it looked strong and serviceable but really was uncreative. This was but natural. How could it be otherwise with a race that had striven hard and accomplished much ! It had therefore to pause and take stock of its past and strike a fresh path in keeping with its genius,—its *Svadharm and Svabhav*,—born of ages of experience and *Sanskar*.

This stock taking and striking a new path in keeping with the national genius constitutes the second revolution. The two are running side by side. Both have their votaries, though the first seems to be on the wane. The second has been creative in all those departments in which it has been able to find a path suited to the Indian temperament. I shall take some examples from Bengal to make my point clear.

The first Western impact on a religious people produced a religious ferment, resulting in the establishment of a new sect, the Brahmo Samaj. It had much to its credit. It produced some outstanding personalities. But it could not create a movement India-wide or penetrate into the masses, or draw the busy world's attention to itself. This was done by a more purely Indian movement,—I mean, the movement deriving its inspiration from Shree Ramkrishna and unfolded by the genius of Swami Vivekanand. This movement not only penetrated into the masses, affecting the whole peninsula, but arrested attention abroad. Today Shree Ramkrishna and Vivekanand are names that belong to the history of world's religions.

In literature, so long as Bengal was content to translate, it produced nothing worth mention. But soon came Bankim, Sarat Chatterji and the Poet. Who would dare to say of them that they are robed in foreign garments? The result has again been glorious. The Poet's name is one to conjure with all the world over.

In painting, Ravi Verma created in Western Realistic style goddesses devoid of the illusive grace of Indian womanhood. We are now familiar with the New Bengal School which, in fact, is the new Indian School

of painting deriving its inspiration from Bengal. It has something of the aroma of Ajanta. Its very earthly figures seem to be just descended from the clouds. It has already won a place in the world's gallery of painting.

In science, Jagdish Bose, working in the spirit of his people, has demonstrated the unity of life. Elsewhere science may invent life-destroying formulæ ; in India, it could only demonstrate the unity of things, animate and inanimate.

These examples should suffice. Whatever has been inspired and informed by the Indian spirit, has been fruit in a short time,—has been creative. Whatever aspects of national life have not cast off the foreign grip, show not only stunted growth but also barrenness. Take one example, architecture : In the land of the Southern temples and the Taj, there has not been, after the advent of the British, one building worth looking at, in spite of the activity of the Government, the Indian princes and the big zamindars. One has only to look at the Victoria Memorial nearby. New Delhi is a standing scandal. The villas in Western style, miscalled 'palaces', that our puppet Rajahs have built with the money squeezed from the starving peasantry, show the degenerate modern taste. Everything is expensively ugly.

If then we are to accomplish anything great we have to settle our accounts with the first revolution and cast in our lot with the second. Recently politics has come to the fore-front and absorbed our attention. We had fondly hoped that it was but a small portion of human happiness that governments could make or mar ; but we soon discovered that upon the form of govern-

ment rested the foundation of our society ; that our culture, if it was to survive and fructify, must be helped by free, indigenous, political institutions. It was, therefore, natural that the political problem should loom large.

The political awakening is about half a century old. It began under foreign inspiration and on foreign models which we neither understood nor assimilated. The result was a yearly assemblage of learned and ambitious lawyers for a trinity of days at Christmas time when their courts closed. They indulged in eloquence after the pattern of Burke and Sheridan, alternatively denouncing and blessing their foreign masters whose creations they were. They passed some resolutions and dispersed to meet again next Christmas. Some of them, more earnest and more leisured, made speeches in the toy councils, and collected facts and figures to arraign their masters at the bar of English public opinion. They fondly hoped that if their eloquent phrases, penetrating the Congress canvas could but reach the democracy beyond the seas, all would be well. Deluded by utterances of the Liberal politicians who had not even grasped the logical implications of their own slogans that they used for party purposes, and were Imperialists in disguise, our leaders thought they had only to speak loud and long to get what they wanted. Their faith in British democracy and British Liberalism was childlike. Sometimes it was pathetic.

This naturally produced a reaction and a party of nationalists sprang up in the Congress. This party distinguished itself by its protest against the policy of begging, and by louder and more unequivocal denunciations of government. It did talk of going among the

masses and of a programme of work which, however, it never carried out. Both parties were equally impotent. They could not satisfy the growing demands of the youth, nor allay the growing general discontent that was bordering on desperation. To the despair of the young was added a desire for revenge, born of the ruthless repression of all legitimate political activity, and of a belief in terrorist methods. The result was the formation of a secret party of terrorist nationalists, miscalled Anarchists. Anarchism is a philosophy of life connected with the honourable names of Kropotkin, Tolstoy and Thoreau, having little to do with the bomb and the pistol. But the average bureaucrat understood as little of this as the so-called anarchist who stood at his bar, charged with murder or attempt to murder. All these three political groups recognise the foreign Western models of political agitation,—the first frankly, the latter two with loud protests to the contrary. The first on bended knees paid their homage to the guru; the other two showed their affection of the West by implacable enmity. Hinduism, true to human psychology, recognises enmity and hatred also as modes of worship, as concession of superiority.

These exotic growths could not last long. The ineffectiveness of the one exasperated the nation. The other two by their destructive programme are fast proving their own inability to solve the national problem. They did their little work and to-day are in disintegration. A more truly national movement in politics is fortunately in the field already. It behoves us to examine its pretensions in some detail. For the time we will sit as students, above all prejudice or prepossession.

With the advent of Gandhiji in the political field the aims, objects and methods of political activity in India have been, so to say, revolutionised. Though he works through the same old institutions, yet everything is changed. Politics was considered an activity apart from the rest of life. It was cut off from religion, morality and social life. It had a passing connection with economics. It was one department that could be studied and practised apart from the rest of life. With Gandhiji life was one and, therefore, political activity was intimately connected with morality, with social reform, with economics and with welfare work in general. All these acted and reacted upon one another. Sometimes, for political action, it was necessary to lay the greatest emphasis on social or moral or economic reform. Formerly, it was possible for a nationalist in Bengal, Madras or Maharashtra to be a reactionary in matters social, and a radical in politics. Such anomalies have become matters of the past now. It was possible for a liberal to preach Swadeshi from the Congress platform decked from head to foot in the latest foreign material and fashion. It was quite possible for him to be a first rate leader with a few pegs inside his skin. His mode of life and activity were no bar to the highest offices in the National Assembly. All this has changed. Taught by Gandhiji, we have come to recognise that this Raj has no inherent strength but is propped up by our National and individual shortcomings. It prospers on our weaknesses and vices. The best way to fight it then is by a process of self-purification and a reform in our institutions. The struggle for independence must go on, side by side with the efforts to improve ourselves. We may not for our Swadeshi wait till the establishment

of Swaraj and the consequent protective tariff. We may, even now, pass a self-denying ordinance, which may be helpful to industry and commerce. For a dry India, we may not wait for the shifting of power, but we may, by our example and peaceful picketing, produce a dry India. So about untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, national education and village Panchayats. We need not wait till the advent of Swaraj for the necessary drain-cleaning. We must begin the work without delay, and such work must embrace the whole field of National life.

Some will doubtless say that these ideas were there even before Gandhiji. Some items were in the old programme of the Bengal and Poona nationalists. I am not here concerned to establish the priority of Gandhiji in the field of discovery. My point is proved if I can show that he has brought them more forcibly before the public, and has, in every case, seen to it that some organised constructive work is done. Had the nation showed more faith in his methods, and given him greater and more loyal support, more could have been accomplished in the last ten years than has been possible. Even as it is, the change has been tremendous. This may not be plain to the new generation as to those who had the good fortune or the misfortune of doing some serious political work before non-co-operation.

The second change brought about, is regarding the aims of the political movement. The aim to-day is not the change in the personnel of the administration, nor even merely the transference of the political power, or the driving away of the foreigner, but the establishment of a government of the people, by the people, and for

the people. By the people, Gandhiji understands the starving, the naked, the downtrodden *Daridranarayan*, the submerged and the untouchables that stare us into shame everywhere. By his precept and example every one joining him or his movement has to identify himself with the poor, from princely Motilal and millionaire Jammalal, to the common volunteer, each, of course, according to his strength and according to his faith—*shraddha*. He has taught us that those who would lead, should take the badge of service of the poor. All without exception must put on the poor men's garb, Khadi.

Gandhiji has placed practice before precept, and by his own life of rigid rectitude brought home to all, the lesson of self-purification. The Congress had no creed truly so called. He gave it a creed and a programme and exhorted his countrymen to be soldiers true to both. He has raised the moral level of political life in the country and the same rules of conduct apply to political as to individual action. He insists that a politician's word should be as reliable as a gentleman's. A publicman need not make promises which he has no intention to carry out in action. He must eschew all duplicity that goes by the name of diplomacy in politics. Gandhiji does not believe in the dangerous moral doctrine that the means justify the end. His politics is based upon such verities as truth and non-violence. Both these he has made forceful and dynamic. His is not, however, the non-violence of the passive and emotionalist sage. It is an active principle that believes in organising itself. It is not the old doctrine of non-resistance to evil, but one of intense and unbending resistance. But the resistance should not cost anybody his limb or life. However even if limb and life must

be in danger, the sacrifice has got to be made by the reformer himself.

So, here we have a theory based upon principles governing all life and human relations,—principles, as old as the rocks and yet, as new and fresh as only Truth can be. We have side by side the revelation in action and practice of the theory. Not only have we an idea but the idea has incarnated itself in a personality. An idea deprived of the dynamic force of a personality would be empty as a person unguided by a principle would be unfruitful. It is when ideas take *Avatars* and are born in proper persons that they become effective in human affairs ; not taking birth, they remain theories convincing the logical brain but not rousing belief, faith and will. Bolshevism, had it not been incarnated in a dynamic and practical personality like Lenin, would have remained a mere Marxian theory and not vitalized a huge continent like Russia and been a menace to the world. Deprived of the practical wisdom and the high courage of the great moral and spiritual personality of Gandhi, Truth and Non-violence would have remained as empty principles or at best been practised in the forest retreats or by the weak to cover their cowardice in fine and high sounding phrases.

*(Summary of an address to the Students' Conference, Calcutta.)*

## VIII

### CONGRESS AND CLASS WAR

(*Open Session, Bombay, 1934*)

THE Congress resolution on the subject condemns only loose talk about 'class war' and 'confiscation of property'. It does not refer to any organised party whether the Congress Socialists' or any other. Organised and disciplined groups have their policies and programmes which they contemplate carrying out in their entirety only when they have the necessary power and control over the State machinery. The Congress can have nothing to say about what may be constitutionally and legally done by a new *de-facto* organised authority in the state except, when it finds it unjust, to offer Satyagraha. The Congress itself contemplates stupendous changes when it captures power and has the machinery of the State in its own hands. What the Congress, however, objects to, is the loose, irresponsible talk of stray individuals.

Whenever there was a revolution in the past, individuals and groups did not hesitate to take action against other individuals and groups on their own initiative, without bringing the machinery of the state into action. Individual and class hatred was promoted, leading to massacres and reigns of terror. The Congress is rightly against such class hatred leading to class war. This does not mean that the Congress fails to recognise the class antagonism that exists to-day and has been

in existence for centuries. It has been and shall be its constant effort to eliminate any class, caste or communal antagonism that leads to injustice to any class, caste or community or to the nation as a whole. The Harijan, khadi and village industries programme are conceived on the recognition of this antagonism between different groups in the Indian nation. But while the Congress recognises this conflict of interest it will not accentuate it nor will it countenance an individual or a group taking to itself the right of restoring the balance and in the process, taking the law in its own hands.

The Congress also makes a distinction between a system and the individuals that are the willing or the unwilling, the conscious or the unconscious instruments of the system. While Congress will put forth its best effort to eliminate a pernicious and unjust system, it will not penalise or victimize individuals. It will, therefore, set itself against all individual, unorganised wreaking of vengeance upon any person or group. Such vengeance in the past has disgraced the annals of many a glorious revolution. As the Congress creed is non-violence, it cannot but distinguish between the system and the individuals. It is pledged to lay no violent hands upon individuals except by the process of law. It must therefore discountenance from the very beginning any talk of class hatred and class war.

The case of confiscation of property stands on the same footing. The Congress has the political sense to know that in civilised society, all life and property in the last resort must belong to the State. Both these are being constantly requisitioned by the State for supposedly social ends. Certain crimes in the State are punished with confiscation of property and even death. If the

State has no power over the property and life of its citizens such punishments will involve it in constant friction and struggle with individuals and groups. In time of war every State calls upon sections of its people to give their life for the social good. There is compulsory recruitment and compulsory service. The same is true of property. Apart from war, every State confiscates a part of private property in ordinary times in the shape of taxes. In extraordinary times it takes possession of all that it wants with or without compensation. All this goes, not by the name of confiscation ; it is taxation in accordance with the law of the land, carried out by an organised authority. Nobody for a moment doubts the need for such confiscation of individual property. Why, the theory is that all property is the creation of the State, and that in the state of nature there is, and there can be no private property. As the State, whatever be its form, creates all private property, so in the last resort the State is its owner. This ownership usually it does not exercise in full, or directly, not because individuals have rights, but because the State, to suit its own convenience and the social end, has rightly or wrongly fancied a particular system of individuals acquiring and retaining possession of material goods and rights as the one most conducive to the good of the whole. Organised States allow themselves to be even sued. In devising a particular system it may be that the objective, public good, is not best achieved. There may be better plans ; but for the time that it lasts the particular State does fancy its own arrangement to be the best or at least it thinks that, though it may not be the most perfect any change in it would be disastrous.

The definition of a State in politics is that it is internally all powerful. It may serve the purpose of the state not to exercise all this power at every moment. It may consider it good to delegate portions of its worldly omnipotence within its territory, to individuals, groups, corporations and local bodies ; but it can never in the nature of things divest itself permanently of any portion of its authority without losing its distinctive mark as a State. It would in that case cease to be the supreme group that it is within its borders. The recognition of this fact is one of the cardinal principles of the League of Nations. If it did not recognise this, no State would consent to be its member.

Congress knows as well as any other political group in India that in adjusting the economics of the future, it will have to undertake a good deal of divestment to serve the nation in conformity with the new circumstances created. The programme it has chalked out tentatively for itself in what is known "The Fundamental Rights and Economic programme" resolution passed at Karachi is a big programme of divestment. It may or may not make any compensation for this huge divestment. No State is bound to give compensation if it thinks that the enjoyment of any object or right has been unjust in the past or enjoyed for a sufficiently long time to compensate all reasonable exertions spent in the acquisition of it. All this, and much more that a state is required to do for public weal, the Congress knows, it will have to do. In this it will not be deterred by any consideration of vested interests. It wants to scrutinize every bit of what is called the national debt of India, whether it was lawfully and properly debited to its account. It will similarly scrutinize ~~every Indian vested~~

interest whatever its nature, duration or supposed sanctity. The standard of judgment shall be the public good. The Congress, however, has never concealed its sympathies. Any interests that conflict with the interests of the masses of India must go. The Congress has left for itself no other standard in the scheme of Swaraj contemplated by it under the guidance of Gandhi. Every interest must prove itself to be for the good of the toiling and starving millions. It is this fact that makes so many indigenous vested interests fight shy of the Congress.

While Congress believes all this, it at the same time discountenances any loose or irresponsible talk about confiscation of property. For instance it will not tolerate individual tenants or groups of tenants taking possession of land. It may not tolerate, unless it wants to abrogate its good name and its claim to the guardianship of the public weal taking possession of a mill by mill labourers. All this has been done in the past in revolutions with results temporarily or permanently disastrous to the nations, to cure the evil effect of which they had to undergo years of dislocation, trouble, travail and sacrifice. The Indian nation and the Indian Congress therefore, are well advised to countenance no loose talk about confiscation. Such talk would give to the ignorant peasant and the labourer false political and economic ideas and hopes. Political and legal rights in all well regulated societies, recognise some processes by which wrongs are redressed. Redress of wrongs can never be left to individual, unorganised, chaotic and ignorant initiative. There must be a method and a system. It is because of this that the Congress has readily accepted and encouraged the idea of a Constituent Assembly.

## IX

### LEFT WING AND RIGHT WING

(*July, 1936*)

SOME of our Socialist friends try to prove elaborately what nobody who has any experience or study, ever denies. In a sense they try to convert the faithful. All are agreed that in India there is poverty, unemployment and low purchasing power. One also cannot deny such an obvious proposition as that production could be greatly increased by the mechanisation of agriculture and industry. We may, for the sake of argument, be prepared to admit that the last can be done under a socialist regime. What, however, we would like to know is, how the desired changes are to be brought about, how we are to get the necessary power and the means to achieve the end in view. It is admitted that we have not the necessary power and the means. The question therefore, is how we are to get these. Industrialization, socialization, divestment of vested interests, increasing production with purchasing power and the elimination of poverty and unemployment are not theoretical and academic questions. They are questions in practical politics, and they cannot be solved unless we have the power and the machinery of the state in our hands. Lenin could not electrify Russia without first securing political power nor could his successors carry out industrialisation and mechanisation of agriculture without absolute and unquestioned authority.

Why, for instance, is there no natural evolution of industries in India? Wherever we turn, we find hindrances in our way. These are not theoretical but practical. They must be removed before we can achieve anything. The obstacles in the way may roughly be classed as political, economic and social. We know, in the last resort, our economic disabilities are accentuated by our political system. We cannot economically progress to any appreciable extent unless these political disabilities are removed. Recently we have also seen that we cannot remove any great outstanding social evils without political power. Even when the nation is prepared to abolish untouchability, the law renders us no help. If we want to go "dry", the law renders us no help, but positively stands in the way. If we want to make our nation literate, the state, by its refusal to grant money for nation-building purposes, acts as a block in our path. No great reform can be carried out, unless the state authority either itself undertakes it, or is at least ranged on the side of reformers. We must either generate or capture political power.

Japan had political power and in thirty years or so, not only industrialized itself but was able to throw out an effective challenge to the western world. India began industrialization a little earlier, but what has been the net result? Census reports show that a greater percentage of the population lives upon agriculture to-day than ever before.\* Russia has been able to industrialize in fifteen years. And how futile seemed the dreams of the Russian idealists before political power became theirs!

Let us, however, examine in some detail the net results of the Indian effort at industrialization. All

industries are in a precarious condition. In the present-day-division of the world into nations that are politically and economically at war with one another, it is impossible for any country to keep its industries going, unless it has complete control over finances, currency, tariff and foreign policy. In the absence of this, industries are bound to be in a precarious condition. On account of the world depression even such Governments as have all the necessary control over finances, currency, tariff and foreign policy, find it difficult to protect their industries ; how much more so in India where we have no political power ! There is no normal healthy growth of Indian industries. This in spite of the fact that all indigenous enterprise has received heavy protection,—sometimes to the extent of 200 per cent and more—from the Swadeshi movement since the Partition agitation. The consumer has willingly and voluntarily borne the extra burdens in a country where the purchasing power is notoriously low. Public men have acted as the unpaid agents and advertisers of indigenous industry. Vast sums have been spent by the Congress and other public bodies to organise exhibitions and bazars. In the Councils and Assemblies the cause of big industry has always been advocated and some protection got from an unwilling Government. But what has been the reward to the public or the poor of all this sacrifice and effort ? The industries have not tried even to put their own house in order. Their efficiency remains the lowest in the world. They lack initiative and incentive alike. How could it be otherwise ? They know they may come to grief any day with one stroke of the finance member's pen. They,

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\*Refer to the section on 'Khadi and Industrialization.'

therefore, seek to make hay while the sun shines—the biggest profits, by hook or by crook in the shortest time. The Government allows them to do this because it gives an equal and more than equal opportunity to the foreign capital invested here. There is no great harm if some crumbs fall to the coloured capitalists. Only the crumbs should not be substantial enough to endanger industry in England or its foreign commercial and political relations.

The indifference of the Indian capitalists, and of the Government, to the interests of the country and of the masses, has such an evil effect that even the elementary rights of labour are not protected. Indian labour, so far as the hours of work, conditions under which the same is performed, housing arrangements, compensation for injury, pay, pension, education, medical aid and entertainment are concerned, is much behind labour elsewhere. The nation has not been able to protect it from the worst kind of exploitation—an exploitation that was known to other countries only half a century ago.

Take again the case of agriculture. The land is divided in homeopathic holdings. In most provinces the average holdings are of less than two acres. This only means that there are thousands of holdings of less than half or quarter of an acre. The sub-division is ever on the increase. There is no law in the land that can arrest it. Only a Government that could provide for the disinherited of an agriculturist family could change the law. Such provision could only be made in the fields of commerce and industry. Government knows this fully well and therefore no effort has been made to arrest the sub-division of land.

The holdings, small as they are,—are not in consolidated blocks but scattered and intermixed. What could a poor tractor do with such holdings? So the question is not one of theory, whether small holdings are more profitable or large scale production, whether peasant proprietorship will be more helpful or land nationalization. The question is of power in the nation to effect the one or the other revolution in agriculture; for I hold that under the present conditions both will be revolutionary changes, requiring in the hands of the reformers, absolute political and economic power over the whole of India. None of these things can be done without some sort of planned economy. But to talk of planned economy without power is possible only in irresponsible conferences of theoretical economists, afraid to say the right thing, even when they know it, and yet having the desire and the vanity to look learned and up-to-date.

The first problem, therefore, in India is not a revolutionary programme of reconstruction as is implied by industrialization and socialism, but a radical programme for the capture of power. Till such power is achieved, all social and economic programmes can only be of a reformatory character.

Apart from his fads, it is some such considerations that makes Gandhiji keep before the nation things that it can do *without* the aid of state power and state-machinery. His whole khadi and village programme has this political and economic background. Recently one Lord Farringdon, a Socialist Peer, visited Gandhiji. This gentleman wanted to know from him the real object of the Village Industries' Association. Gandhiji who was observing silence wrote: "To show the people how

to turn waste into wealth." The questioner asked : "How do you want to tackle the problem of rural indebtedness ?" The reply was : "That, we are not dealing with. It requires state effort. I am just now discovering things people can do without state effort. Not that I do not want state aid. But I know I cannot get it on my terms." This in a few expressive words reveals the whole economic basis of Gandhiji's programme. He was talking to a socialist who perhaps would not have understood his usual, spiritual language or his ideas of simplicity and voluntary poverty. So he talked in plain political and economic language that a foreigner could understand. No economist worth the name can have any quarrel with Gandhiji for utilizing the waste of the nation and turning it into the wealth. In the same interview he also said that there was no other constructive programme before the nation.

Under the present political arrangement, I believe there can be no revolutionary constructive programme. It will all have to be reformatory, "utilizing the waste" of the nation. It can only do very moderate things and that too, modestly. It is this fact that has made the socialists adumbrate no constructive programme. They tell us of their aims and what they stand for--nationalization of all instruments of production ; which only means that all economic activity, whether of production, exchange or consumption, will have to be regulated by the state, and a state necessarily managed by the producers, that is, the proletariat, in their own interest. Before this is done the proletariat or some body or some party on their behalf, must first capture power. These are the aims and objects of scientific socialism. The Communists, therefore, do not countenance the work of

the Trade Unionists. They hold that it is reformatory in character, concerned with the minor disabilities of the workers. Sometimes they tolerate it, because they consider such work as prelude to strikes, which give the necessary training to the masses for the final class war. Mostly, they denounce such trade union activity which, they think, by making labour a little more comfortable, dulls the edge of discontent and postpones the day of reckoning, the day of revolution.

The scientific socialists know that when industry is in depression no strike can succeed. The owners sometimes welcome it. They even engineer it. Yet the socialists, even under such circumstances when the industries are in depression, do not mind encouraging a strike, knowing full well that it will end in failure, causing untold misery and suffering. They think, however, that this misery and this suffering are inevitable. The price has got to be paid. Individuals can only be the means in themselves. The masses have ever been fodder for the cannon of the capitalists and the imperialists. They will at least be better paid in their future generations if they become the fodder in the cause of the revolution.

On the other hand, a genuine trade unionist calculates the chances of success. He does not want the poor to be mere instruments. He feels individuals have also a life beyond the group. Their sufferings and sorrows as individuals are real. Their life, however humble, is an end in itself. He lies low if he sees no chance of success. For him a strike is a means for a reformatory change in the conditions of labour. He does not indulge in it as so much gymnastics preparing

for the final struggle, the final war to the knife between the classes, which will establish a classless society.

The scientific socialist, therefore, cannot possibly do any constructive work among the city proletariat unless he modifies, or for the time being suspends for practical considerations, the rigour of his theory. If he cannot engage in any constructive work in the city, much less can he do so in the village. He would be lost in the village problems. They are so tiny, so local, that with his world vision he will find it difficult, if not useless, to work for their solution. He will find, only in aeons, if ever, such reformatory effort will produce conditions suitable for a revolution. He would throw up the sponge in sheer disgust. Here, therefore his work can only be, to organise demonstrations. These demonstrations must necessarily be periodical. As soon as the agricultural season begins, he will find that no revolutionary ardour of his, no picture of the millennium of a classless society to come, will induce the villager to leave his plough and his sickle. Such seasonal demonstrations will have to be, if they are to be on a big scale,—and demonstrations would lose all their virtue and effect if they were not on a big scale—few and far between. The village proletariat, when it assembles for a meeting of a demonstration, say, 50,000 strong, must disperse before 3 p.m. They all come on foot. They must disperse in time to reach their homes before nightfall. There can be no catering for a crowd of 10,000, much less of 50,000, in any village, even for a day. These crowds can therefore be spasmodic, having very little cohesion and serving no useful purpose for any constructive effort. They can have only some limited propagandist and demonstrative value. They may, when

excited, burst forth and produce a show of revolution. But such peasant risings have always been drowned in blood.

The sole function of the scientific socialist, whether in the city or in the village, can only be propaganda, demonstration and preaching of the socialist ideology. Preaching can only be fruitfully done by select and chosen intellectuals. If put in the hands of all and sundry, if put in the hands of the city and village volunteer, it would only teach one superstition in place of another, and one fanaticism for another. All talk of scientific socialism would thus go by the board.

What then are the rank and file of the socialists to do? This problem of the rank and file of the army is solved by Gandhiji. He effectively provides for the employment of the politically unemployed. His constructive programmes give scope not only to the leaders but to the humblest of his followers. All are provided with day-to-day work. They are provided with some wages in keeping with the voluntary contributions received from a poor people. They live a neat, simple and clean life. They need never be out of work.

For the capture of power Gandhiji has a radical programme, as radical as any red revolutionary; only it is non-violent. It is not my purpose here to go into the philosophy, or even into the practical value, situated as we are to-day, of non-violence. The latter has been recognised by a section of the socialists. The question is not whether this or that theory is right or wrong; that only the historian of the future or a prophet of the present can settle, and I claim to be neither.

The question is whether the new method of non-cooperation is direct action and, as such, revolutionary, as distinguished from constitutional action. I believe it is direct action and it is revolutionary. Non-cooperation is, as some have called it, an open conspiracy. I would say that it is a non-violent, open conspiracy. In ultimate analysis, Gandhiji has a programme which is revolutionary for the capture of political power, and reformatory for constructive work.

It is this double aspect of Gandhiji's movement that makes the political phrase, as used in the West, of the Right and Left Wing, lose most of its significance, when applied to Congress politics. Politicians who may be considered as belonging to the Right, when their activities are viewed from the conservative tendencies of the constructive programme, come to belong to the Left, when the movement of direct action is on ; those who belong by their ideology to the Left wing, sometimes fail to show their Left wing tendencies when the battle is on. This was clear at the conference at Poona in 1933 when Gandhi followers were for the continuance of the 1932 Movement, while many socialists advocated its suspension. It is also because of this, that socialists have not been able to dislodge Gandhiji's followers from their position of power in the Congress, and of affection in the hearts of the people. There are among them tried and seasoned soldiers, who have given good account of themselves in constructive work, in flood, in famine, in earthquake or any calamity that has befallen their people and also, when the occasion has arisen, given determined battle to the Government. When the battle is on Gandhiji, their leader, appears to be the greatest and the most uncompromising revolu-

tionary. He is the one in whom the idea of personal safety is least present. I could mention other names, but I may not. The intelligent reader can think for himself.

It is also common knowledge that Gandhiji and his followers do not want to lose touch with other groups, even though politically such groups come nowhere near direct action. Moderates, capitalists, reformers of any party or community, are all asked to join the movement against Untouchability, of Hindi-prachar, Khadi, Village Industries and Village Reconstruction. There is still another point from which the co-operation of other political and semi-political groups and classes is sought for by the Congress and by Gandhiji. Antagonistic groups and classes in India have one thing in common. They all suffer from the stunting and dwarfing effects of a foreign Government. It is not only the masses,—if it were so, the politicians would come from the masses exclusively. True, the masses physically suffer more. But the greater suffering falls to the lot of the most sensitive, and these are found in all classes and in all communities. Their pride in their country, in their culture, nay in their respective religions, is wounded. A national movement should harness all these forces, and focus them to one centre and one objective, that is, the achieving of national political liberty. The national sentiment, embedded as it is, in the present psychology of the peoples, is not yet such a worn-out factor as would render the joining of differing groups in its service impossible. Even Russian communists are not altogether without nationalism\* though some of our budding socialists seem to be ashamed to own it.

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\* World War II has proved this to hilt.

National and democratic movements the world over, show how different elements combined in other countries for a common objective. In Holland, England, America, Italy, France and even in Russia, the whole nation rose as one man to throw off the native or the foreign yoke. True, the share of the masses, their sufferings and sacrifices, were the greatest, though not always did powers fall into their hands. In the earlier revolutions power fell in the hands of a rich powerful middle class, considered then to be the natural leaders of the masses. In France there was an attempt to attach to the masses the power newly wrested from the king and the lords, but it failed, owing to the better ability, leadership and organization of the middle class. Even in Russia, after the overthrow of the Czar, power fell into the hands of the middle group which, however, was not sufficiently organised and vital to retain it for long. It also lacked the necessary leadership. The Bolshevics, with a better knit organisation, with greater push and drive, with a fuller knowledge of what they wanted, and above all with wise leadership, were soon able to carry through a second revolution which put them in power as guardians of the proletariat. In the first Revolution that overthrew the Czar and the Russian bureaucracy, the Bolshevics did not stand apart ; they too joined hands with all those who desired and worked for the overthrow of the old order. What happens at critical times in England ? Whenever the nation is in the grip of a crisis the political genius of the British evolves a National Government. The differences between the diverse groups are for the time forgotten. In all revolutions the progressive and effective elements of the nation join hands. The victory goes to that group which is the most prepared and the most organized and which, above all,

has evolved the right kind of leadership ; for in critical times much depends upon leadership.

Take the alternative where each group suspects the other and wants to keep itself pure and uncontaminated. Take the socialist group. It says the zamindar and the capitalist will never join the struggle for freedom. They will, in the last resort, back out because they will feel that their peculiar rights could only be supported by a foreign Government. If this is so, it holds true of the upper middle class also. It holds true of the lawyer, professor, doctor and others of the learned professions. The lower middle class is always doubtful material, as has been proved in Italy and Germany. The peasant proprietors, if they knew the full implications of the socialist programme,—the nationalization of land along with the other instruments of production, would be the greatest stumbling block. The communalists, be they Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs, will of course hold out. By this process of elimination—if whole classes are supposed to be homogeneous, organized and disciplined groups, and are guided by one and only one consideration, the advancement of their own class or sectional interests and that in a narrow sense—the whole vast population of India will be eliminated. What will remain will be a few chosen people, the Iron-sides. These must conquer, for they represent the only true idea, the idea that is going to conquer the world in the near future ! Such faith and fervour bordering on religious frenzy and fanaticism, can be understood in the followers of a Christ or a Mahomed, or even of a Gandhi. But in scientific socialism, wedded to objective facts, such frenzy would imply that the new faith of socialism is only another religion without

a god. It will have its new frenzy, its fervour, and, above all, its fanaticism. All this, I know, will be repudiated in the name of their theory as recorded in their books. But, in practice, it is no whit better than any of the older faiths, with like potencies of narrowness, formalism, bigotry, and the arrogance of the chosen people, destined not to inherit heaven but this earth, and destined also to throw into the pit all the unfaithful, to be there for all time to come. Such a faith will oppress, suppress and repress, even as the old faiths did, only with less sanctity for human life and with keener and more scientific weapons and a better organization. It will not have the saving grace of Gandhiji's truth and non-violence. If new fanaticisms must arise, it would be better for humanity that they be at least non-violent.

I have stated in brief, the position and merits of the Gandhian scheme of political and social reconstruction, as contra-distinguished from socialism. I have not discussed the theory of non-violence nor any of the far-reaching implications of the Gandhian programme. That would be going beyond the limits of the present controversy.

## X

### CONGRESS AND SOCIALISM

(July, 1936)

WE are rebuked and told that "Socialism, as every school boy ought to know, is an economic theory which endeavours to understand and solve the problems that afflict the world.\* A school boy may however know the definition, without realizing the full implication of these innocent looking words. The definition means one of two things : either (1) all problems that afflict this little world of ours are economic and arise purely out of economic relations or (2) there are human problems which, though more or less affected by our economic relations, transcend these and stand comparatively apart and demand other than purely economic remedies.

In the first case, all human relations are, directly or indirectly, the result of the economic structure of Society. All values, physical, intellectual, moral and artistic, not to talk of cultural and spiritual, are determined by economic forces. If this is so, socialism ceases to be a purely economic theory but becomes a philosophic system of thought and action concerned with all life and the whole of it. As such, it must seek to revalue fundamental values held heretofore by humanity. In the other case, if it is considered that the

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*Note.*—The quotations in this article are taken from Pandit Jawaharlal's article on this subject written in 1936.

problems afflicting the world are neither purely nor preponderatingly economic, socialism becomes only an economic theory. It concerns itself with a part of human life and activity, may be, an important part, having repercussions in other allied fields. It cannot claim to be a philosophy of life nor can it remedy all the ills that afflict the world. Fundamental values need not in that case change or be appreciably affected except by an evolutionary, imperceptible process.

What an earnest inquirer would, therefore, like to know, to clarify thought and make action rational, is : which of these two points of view a particular socialist holds. If this is not made clear there is likely to be confusion. A socialist then cannot complain if his brand of socialism is confused with some other variety of it.

If, however, a theory claims to solve the problems that afflict the world without the qualifying adjective of ' some ' or again, if it aims at ' social reconstruction ', and further, if its " approach is Marxian " and calls itself by the well defined and well recognised term " scientific ", the only natural conclusion is that not only what orthodoxy considers purely or predominantly economic values but all values and all life are in the crucible. The whole of human life is under examination, and a new earth and a new heaven on earth (of course in the historical future) is sought to be created. This exactly is the claim put forward by and on behalf of the Bolsheviks. They have revolutionised every field of human thought and activity. Personal and family relations, the breeding and upbringing of children, pedagogy and education, arts and sciences, literature and philosophy, ethics and psychology, social, political and economic ideas and relations, all are changed. It is a

complete reversal not only of the old order but of all the old values. A new human mind with a brand new psychology is in the process of making, if not already fashioned.

If all this that is claimed for scientific socialism, is true, it is no wonder, that some whose faith in the old values is not as yet altogether destroyed, get apprehensive. They are apprehensive not at the passing mention but at the powerful advocacy by which socialism and a particular variety of it is repeatedly kept before the country, as the only possible remedy for the ills that afflict humanity. Nay, it is said that it is imposed upon us by historical necessity, and those who do not recognise the need and the urgency of it are conservative and reactionary.

There is however, little doubt that many of those who in India and elsewhere attack socialism, are socially and politically reactionary. They are the conscious or unconscious, the paid or unpaid agents of vested interests. They are not only against socialism but against all reform, however introduced, that seeks to render any degree of justice to the disinherited of the earth.

But to confound these two groups of critics is to confound the reformer with the reactionary, the friend with the foe. This confusion may needlessly weaken the ranks of those fighting for justice and liberty. In a national struggle, such policy would only strengthen the foreigner. It will fail to combine all the anti-imperial forces in the country. It is of course assumed, that for purposes of effective national union and action, imperialism and capitalism are kept apart. If, however, this distinction is obliterated, phrases like "common front", "combining all anti-imperial forces", "Politi-

cal independence which alone can be our first and foremost concern", would lose all meaning. The national struggle in that case will merge in the class struggle. On one side will be the proletariat of India, on the other the British nation and all those classes of Indians, who unfortunately neither are of the proletariat nor are de-classed, but who inspite of these handicaps, are prepared to struggle and sacrifice to free the country from the foreign yoke and render justice to the masses. This necessary distinction for purposes of the national struggle is often forgotten by the socialist friends. If they admit it in words, they forget it in actions. Some of them have brought amendments to the Congress Constitution, declaring the Congress goal to be the proletarian rule.

This point therefore needs to be cleared. It needs clearing both for the non-socialist Congressmen and for those who call themselves socialists. The clarification is the more necessary in the interests of the latter, as they always consider imperialism synonymous with capitalism, and thus confuse the straight issue of national independence with class struggle and class war. In India every Indian by reason of his colour and nationality is a slave, whether he be prince or beggar, zamindar or tenant, capitalist or labourer. The only free are those who are struggling to free the country.

"To some extent the premises are accepted by the most ardent socialist, for he admits that political freedom is the first essential objective for us to-day. Everything else must follow it." The most ardent socialist admits all this, but alas, in theory. In practice "the way of looking even at this common objective is not the same." Practical difficulties must then arise, and they do arise. Unless, therefore, some method is found either of elimi-

nating or minimising the effects of these difficulties, we are bound to be ineffective, being engaged mostly in criticising each other's thought and action.

There appear to be but two ways of avoiding this conflict in practice. Either (1) The first must be put first and no overemphasis placed on the distant and the distinctive. All emphasis must be put on the common measure of agreement ; or (2) Concrete items of work which could be carried out in co-operation with each other be found or evolved. If we are to accomplish our political emancipation in any measurable time, no third alternative suggests itself. In the absence of any of these, work is bound to suffer, and not only the political but the social goal in favour of which the risk of division is sought to be taken, will grow distant. If the programme of the parties entirely or even mainly consists of creating different ideologies, there is bound to be clash. Whether this division will be to the advantage of the nation or otherwise is a matter which can neither be decided *a priori* nor even entirely from past examples. Past examples are so much embedded in local circumstances of the time, that any generalization may lead astray. In politics a hasty or a wrong generalization may involve a set-back spelling misery and ruin to thousands. It may not stand in the way of the ultimate achievement of our goal but it may dangerously retard our progress.

He will be a bold man, who would say that the nationalist ranks dividing themselves in rival camps of the moderates and the extremists in 1908, was good for the parties or for the country as a whole ! It made the moderates ineffective. The extremists were suppressed with the public opinion of their political rivals

at the back of the Government. The country was disorganized. Only one party gained by this premature and ill-conceived break, and that was the bureaucracy. Any split at the present juncture is more likely to have similar results, rather than those that followed the imperceptible division at the time of the Home Rule agitation or the break up of parties after the inauguration of the C. D. movement. Time, place, circumstances, our forces and the enemy's forces are, therefore, to be carefully considered and measured before any step is taken to force issues that are likely to divide nationalist groups. We hope, there will be no occasion for the so-called right and left wings of the Congress to divide, but if and when the occasion arrives, all the relevant factors and the respective strength and the position of the parties in the provinces, and in the country in general, will be considered before a rupture is forced. If the rival groups consider that they cannot do without each other, and only in their union lies their and the country's strength, they will have the political sagacity to evolve programmes of work and policies of action that will minimise friction. Efforts should ever be made to bridge over even natural and inevitable divisions, born of different temperaments and ideologies. Any other way will be the way to political disaster and suicide.

“It is clear that we must concentrate on the political issue, the independence of India. That is of fundamental and primary importance for us, and any ideology which blurs the issue is undesirable, and not to be encouraged. . . . Why then this talk of Socialism. . . . The Socialist outlook helps in the political struggle. . . . It makes us realize what the real political content (apart from the social content) of freedom must be.”

True, the socialist outlook makes us realise the political content of freedom. But it may humbly be pointed out that this outlook is not the same thing as socialism. It does not claim to solve all problems. It is influenced by socialism, but it does not style itself scientific socialism nor is it necessarily Marxian. The impetus to it might have been given by Marx and his companions, it might have been based upon scientific, sociological, and economic study but it is not socialism of any variety. It is reformatory. It does not claim to regulate the whole life of an individual or a group. It merely gives a turn primarily, and preponderatingly, to the economic relations of individuals. As such, it has been adopted even by some of the conservative groups and governments. If all that is wanted is this socialist outlook, I submit, it is already there in the Congress policies and programmes. For this purpose it is quite sufficient to quote the concluding portion of Gandhiji's speech<sup>1</sup> at the R. T. C. or to mention the resolution<sup>2</sup> of the summer of 1929 passed in Bombay

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<sup>1</sup>“Above all the Congress represents in its essence the dumb semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its 700,000 villages, no matter whether they come from British India or what is called Indian India. Every interest, which in the opinion of the Congress is worthy of protection, has to subserve the interests of these millions : and so you find now and again apparently a clash between several interests. And if there is a real genuine clash I have no hesitation in saying, on behalf of the Congress, that the Congress will sacrifice any interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions.”

<sup>2</sup>“In the opinion of the Committee the great poverty and misery of the Indian people are due not only to the foreign exploitation of India but also to the economic structure of society which alien rulers support so that their exploitation

by the meeting of the A.I.C.C. If "few Socialists could improve on the general declaration of policy and outlook" why try to confuse issues by bringing in terms, whose import and meaning are wider than what the Congress has ever contemplated? Why depress friends and colleagues in the national struggle, who have not yet taken a plunge and become definitely socialists? Or why on the other hand give handle to enemies, who are ready to exploit our language for their own nefarious purposes of suppression and repression.

The resolution of 1929 talks of only such "revolutionary changes in the present economic and social structure" as would "remove the gross inequalities". By passing this resolution "it would be absurd to say that Congress had gone Socialist." This is perfectly true. But if it is so, Socialism must be something different in its quantitative and qualitative contents. It is this Socialism that is likely to create divisions in our ranks and take away that concentration on the political issue for which the Congress and Gandhiji have stood all along. This does not imply any appraisal of Socialism. It only means that the Congress for the time being, has advocated some of the concrete proposals and reforms that have come to be called Socialistic, but it has nothing to do with Socialism as such. Its main effort and therefore its emphasis to-day is on the political issue. It does not neglect economic reform. But it has not accepted the Socialist doctrines governing economic life. What the Congress will do after the

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may continue. Therefore to remove this poverty and misery and to ameliorate the condition of the Indian masses it is essential to make revolutionary changes in the economic and social structure of society and to remove the gross inequalities."

political struggle is fought and won has also been indicated by the Congress—The Constituent Assembly.

“Socialist outlook stresses (what Congress has been emphasizing in varying degrees during these past fifteen years) that we must stand for the masses and that our struggle should be of the masses.” Now if this is the object, would it not be a better course, at least for principal leaders in the Congress, to emphasize what the Congress has stood for, for the last fifteen years in the words of the Congress itself, especially when the words used in some of its resolutions are unambiguous? Why put in phrases and terms, which, not to talk of school boys, even some of the veteran Congress leaders fail to understand? Surely this is not the way to combine all anti-imperialist forces in the country!!

“Dr. Bhagwandas with a most commendable persistence has been demanding for many years that Swaraj should be defined. I do not agree with him in some of his views, but I do agree with him that we cannot go on talking vaguely about Swaraj, without indicating, however roughly, what kind of Swaraj we are aiming at.” There is evidently a difference of opinion about the definition of Swaraj between two great men. Is it not quite possible, that any rigid definition at this stage of our struggle, may involve us in needless, unprofitable, and subtle philosophic discussions about the future, which we can but dimly envisage? Dr. Bhagwandas raised this question at the time of the C. D. movement of 1921. If at that time, there had been a general discussion, there would have been a sharp difference of opinion about the content of Swaraj, not only between Jawaharlalji and Dr. Bhagwandas, who both were

participators in the struggle, but lesser luminaries without much understanding of the problem, would have joined the fray. The C. D. movement might have had in that case to wait. It was, I believe, some such consideration that made Gandhiji and other prominent leaders including Jawaharlalji to refrain from responding to the very "commendable persistence of Dr. Bhagwan-das". I believe at this stage of our struggle, we can give but a rough idea of the content of liberty, and I claim ; and it is admitted, that the Congress has done this often enough. As late as 1934 and as soon as the Congress was allowed to function as a lawful association after the last struggle, in one of its resolutions reiterating its determination to win 'Purna Swaraj', the Working Committee laid down "Congress is nothing if it does not progressively represent and serve the masses." So far as a rough indication goes, it is there and in words which none can mistake or misunderstand.

Then, is the content of the word Socialism any less vague than the content of the many Congress resolutions on the subject, including the famous Karachi resolution about the "Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme"? If in place of these resolutions the Congress were to use the comprehensive term Socialism as some of our friends would wish, the fight will yet continue. What kind of Socialism? Even the Marxian variety has different shades and each self-styled orthodox Marxian calls the other, if he disagrees with him, bourgeois, reactionary, anti-revolutionary. I think the phrases used will be different, but the fight will continue. There will ever be a demand for a more definite, and more unambiguous declaration, of the content of the Congress goal of Swaraj. Put it as 'Purna Swaraj', and the cry

will be why not explicitly state severance of British connection ! Put it as severance from the British, the cry will be why not enmity with England ! Put that, and the new cry may be, let us rule over and exploit England for as long as it has ruled over and exploited India. Such a process can have no end specially among the Indians who are proverbially so metaphysical.

One need not question the greatness of Marx or the superiority of his method of approach to history, for the investigation of social phenomena. We may admire Marx and his life work, without accepting all his conclusions. Science is a process or a method of arriving at truth, as also the results or conclusions of that process. One may agree that a particular process or method of investigation is correct without wholly accepting the conclusions which a particular investigator might have arrived at by his investigation. This is true in physical sciences. But it is much more true in social sciences, where the field of investigation is immensely wider, and experiments can neither be made nor multiplied at the will of the investigator, and the disturbing and special causes innumerable. Newton and Einstein, both used the same scientific method and yet their conclusions, how far apart ! This does not falsify the method. It only illustrates the limits that time, circumstances and the state of human knowledge impose upon the investigator. If this is so with exact sciences, how much more so will it be, with the social sciences which deal with human material endowed perhaps with free will.

Many prophets and reformers in the past, made revolutionary contributions to the thought of their generations. It does not take away a bit from their credit and greatness, that some of their most vital doctrines,

about which they and their followers had no doubts and for the defence of which their followers were not only prepared to cut other people's throats, but also to lay down their own lives as willing offerings, in the service of the Truth, are accepted to-day not only by humanity, but even by their later followers, in extremely modified forms. So to recognise the greatness of Marx and Lenin, it is not necessary for the thoughtful to accept all their partial conclusions. We can admire without being converted. The field of knowledge and investigation has not come to a sudden end. With every new investigation this field has naturally been broadening. Fanaticism is to be deprecated as much in politics as in religion, more so in politics because of the lack of restraining influences, which, religion with its humility and self-surrender, sometimes imposes upon its votaries.

## XI

### THE NEW DISPENSATION

*(February, 1935)*

THE present day hope of the proletariat, in spite of the show of realism behind it, is idealistic. It arose from the gospel preached by Marx. He and his companions with some show of reason changed old values. The new values they created are proved with a wealth of historical reasoning that appears conclusive.

The Christ had kept the Kingdom of Heaven for the weak, the miserable, the down-trodden, for the tax-gatherer, the fornicator and the harlot. The rich and

the powerful, the scribe and the pharisee were excluded therefrom. It was as difficult for them to enter the Kingdom as for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle. What Christ did for the poor, the maimed, the blind and the halt, in the spiritual field, has been done by Marx and his followers for the disinherited of this earth in the material and the mundane sphere. The new kingdom of the proletariat heaven is to be established here and now on this terrestrial globe of ours.

Christ, when he proclaimed his kingdom, told the poor that theirs was the Kingdom of Heaven. He told them "Ye are the salt of the Earth." Marx and his apostles tell the proletariat that they are the producers of all wealth. They are the backbone of all industry, agriculture and commerce. The whole structure of modern civilization with all its capital, grandeur, refinement, religion, morality, law, government, state, all the sciences, philosophies and arts, is built on their toil and exploitation. They are the living race. The bourgeoisie are effete, dead and dying. They are of yesterday. The proletariat is of tomorrow. The future is with them. From them proceed industry, thrift, justice, sympathy, fellow-feeling and all those qualities that are considered good. If among them are also found theft, violence, illiteracy, vulgarity, selfishness and meanness, how does that matter? These values are not of their creation. They have been super-imposed upon them by their masters for the protection of their ill-begotten wealth and for the suppression of the proletariat. But do these masters act up to the morality they have created? They indulge in all the so-called vices; only they indulge in them on a bigger scale, taking care to give the vices honourable names. Their

stealing and exploitation go by the dignified names of profits, rent and interest. Their violence is the maintenance of law and order, of the rights of nationalism and imperialism. Their illiteracy is a learned ignorance. Their selfishness and meanness are the evolutionary principles of free competition and the law of the survival of the fittest. Their snobbery and vulgarity are drawing room manners. Like the scribes and pharisees of old, they are critical of the mote in the neighbours' eye, not caring for the beam in their own. Therefore, in the voice of the old prophets, the new reformers warn the holders of power and tell them, "O ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel! O ye generation of vipers! O ye hypocrites! when the thunderbolt of proletarian justice shall, like the wrath of an avenging Jehovah, descend on you, what shall it avail you, all this wealth and power? Upon that Day of Judgment, you shall call upon your god of Mammon, upon your slaves and retainers and your instruments of war and exploitation, in vain. Your destruction in that hour shall be complete. Therefore, repent ye in time. Leave your gift before the altar and go your way, and first make your peace with the rising proletariat—Get de-classed."

There came a rich man to Christ and said unto him, "Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" The master told him to keep the Mosaic Commandments. The man said he had kept them. What more was he to do? The master said, "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor." A present day capitalist or landlord, even if he were to say that he had kept the provisions of the old, bourgeois morality of justice, charity and mercy, even the

Gandhian law of trusteeship, the Rabbis of the new faith will tell him, "All this will avail you not. You must begin thinking in terms of nationalisation. You must no more think in terms of private property, which is the new sin against the Holy Ghost, the sin of sins under the new Dispensation. You need not give up your property, that is all Gandhian renunciation with which scientific socialism has nothing to do. We want levelling up, not levelling down."

The Christ said, "I come to fulfil and not to destroy the Law." These new masters say with him, "Lo and behold! we come not to destroy but to fulfil the Law. The law of the evolutionary process, the law of the historical progress, these you have misunderstood and misinterpreted. The true interpretation is the economic interpretation of all history and its natural corollary—the Class War. If the Indian and Asiatic histories lend no support to our theories, so much the worse for them. Our theories cannot be wrong."

The Christian faith was preached for the lowly and the poor, for the tax gatherer and the sinner. The present communist faith is likewise preached for the suppressed and the oppressed of the world. The old faith was persecuted in the name of law and order. So is the present faith persecuted by the states of to-day.

Christ believed in peace and goodwill on earth and non-violence. The new faith also believes in peace, goodwill and non-violence—only these cannot be established till the new word and the new Mantram are accepted by humanity. The clergy of the old faith showed marvellous patience. They irrigated and watered their church with the blood of the martyrs.

They gave the other cheek. All this when they were low and down. When they had the power, they like the mighty, though in all humility, indulged in violence only for the sake of non-violence. They were intolerent, only for the sake of toleration. They hanged and burned and had their *auto-da-fes* of the bodies of men, only in the name of their souls—the souls alone counted, the bodies counted not. As long as there were degenerate souls, how could there be peace and goodwill and non-violence? Did not the master himself say ‘Think not that I have come to send peace on earth. I come not to send peace but a sword. For I come to set a man at variance against his father and daughter against her mother, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.’” The priests but followed his footsteps—the footsteps of the Prince of Peace.

The triumphant Bolshevic too speaks in the same tongue. He suppresses individual liberty in the interests of individual liberty. He suppresses free expression of opinion by his censorship only as a measure of protection. The new revolution has got to be guarded against hostile attacks and subversive internal sabotage. When the revolution is triumphant, freedom of expression will be restored. The Bolshevic too, like the priest of old, slaughters, hangs and quarters and has his reign of Red Terror: All this, so that ultimately with the establishment of a classless society there may be peace, goodwill and non-violence.

Only thus will his Kingdom of Heaven and the Ram Raj imagined by his prophets and written about in his books, be established on earth. He tells us ‘Have faith.’ This negation and destruction that you see to-day are but a temporary phase. We have our

positive side of Bhakti, Devotion and Self-surrender. "Behold, we have our electrification, our five year and ten-year plans. We have our histories, philosophies, our science, our poetry, literature and the fine arts. Faith shall move mountains ; and have we not already moven mountains ? True, we are as yet poor, but are we not rich in the service of our master, the rising proletariat ? Blessed is such poverty. It will be sanctified by the law of evolution. It is all in accordance with Material Dialectics. It fulfils the law of Thesis, Anti-thesis and Synthesis. You ask what next? What after the proletarian Synthesis has itself become a Thesis ? On Ye of little faith ! Don't you see our masters are wisely silent upon this point ? For the man of faith one step is sufficient. Can you ask a devout Christian, what after the Kingdom of Heaven ? Let him reach that and his God in his infinite wisdom will push him on to the next stage, whatever that may be. Our God of history and Evolution will do the same for us."

The new Hope of the proletariat is a new Faith. It is a new Dispensation inspite of its seeming Materialism and Realism. Christianity changed the old aristocratic values of Paganism. The new faith seeks to change whatever of these aristocratic values remained inspite of Christianity. The Pagan world was transvalued and fulfilled in Christianity. Christianity is being to-day transvalued and fulfilled in Communism. Thus is every law fulfilled by its going beyond itself, by its abrogation. Thus is life fulfilled in death, which seems an end but is only a beginning.

## XII

### INDIA AND BRITISH LABOUR

(*April, 1936*)

IT is reported in the press that Mr. Masani has returned a sadder and wiser man, from his recent visit to England. What did he expect from Labour there? One would have thought that Congressmen had renounced all hope of any party in English politics helping India in her struggle for freedom, when once they parted company with the Liberals and accepted the lead of Gandhiji, and put their faith in Satyagraha and direct action. But old ideas have a habit of persisting. Here, not the Congress but its left wing, seems to have built some hope upon the Labour parties in England. With this old hope new-born in his breast, Mr. Masani went to England, and returned disillusioned. He has lost no time in warning his countrymen. But weak people have the tendency to rely on others. The old habit, decended from an earlier generation, however, continues to persist in one form or other.

We, Indians, think that nations are philanthropic, missionary institutions, waiting for opportunities to help and render service to other people, provided, they get or are given the requisite knowledge of their woes. The old Congressmen pinned their faith in the "Mother of Parliaments". When proposal after proposal of reform was rejected, when the India debates found the benches in Parliament empty, when admitted wrongs were not redressed, this faith was transferred from

Parliament to the liberty-loving English democracy. Our forbears could not see, that this democracy was neither clever nor intelligent, nor even powerful to redress its own wrongs. But the facts for the faithful are nothing. It is something mysterious within them that rises superior to facts. Great hopes were entertained from the Liberal party, then from Labour. The new hope seems to have centred in the Independent Labour Party which when it comes to power, will give us a chance. It will not only establish Socialism in England but help to introduce it in India. Was Mr. Masani disillusioned by this party? He scarcely could have any hope in official Labour! As a matter of fact, official Labour could not have met him. It is no less bourgeois and priggish than the old orthodox parties.

One would have thought that our Socialist friends who are reputed to be such keen students of international politics, would be the last to build hopes upon any variety of Labour in England. Labour there, as is plain to any student of economics and politics, is Imperial in its character. Its interests as those of every strata of English society, centre in the Empire. But for the Empire, the market that provides them with work would disappear. The poor and the starving are the least idealistic, specially so in John Bull's own land. Labour in England may not be expected to forego its profits. In its case, it will not be a question of profits but of the standard of living, employment and existence. It was, therefore, no accident or any "regrettable convolutions" in MacDonald's brain that made him stick to national, rather than to international Socialist politics, in spite of his principles and party. It was the study and recognition of objective facts as they faced

his particular portion of land, wherein he happened to be born and in whose tradition and culture he was brought up and took pride in spite of his socialism. Mere defection and apostasy cannot account for his conversion. His changed outlook seems to have ruined his reputation and career for the time being, but he is sure to find an honourable place in the gallery of English patriots like Clive, Hastings, Cecil Rhodes and others. He served his country at a critical time and saved it from bankruptcy by following a national policy at the expenses of his party, even though that party happened to represent the masses of England. It was after all not the whole of England.

Except a few cranks without any political or social influence, Labour in England knows the implications of Socialism. They know that to-day there can be no operative Socialism, except what is called Scientific Socialism, Marxism or Communism. This is international in character. True and full communism can only be established, when all nations have accepted its doctrines and established it within their territory. In the meantime, only a few favourably placed nations can adopt it in some diluted form with many modifications and dangerous compromises. The Englishman knows that England can ill afford to toy even with this modified Communism.

The English are traditionally jealous of their personal liberty. When they, for the time being, consent to be governed by a dictatorship, it is a national rather than an individual or party dictatorship. The last National Government was such a one. The dictatorships during and after the world war were also such. This is the genius of the people. They do not seem

to care much for the liberty and the comfort of the ant-hill.

Then again the English are not a revolutionary people. They pride themselves on their conservatism. Things may change rapidly on the continent but the Englishman goes on in his wonted way. Everything there broadens from "precedent to precedent". Even Communism may go to England without touching its pocket and its Empire. In no other garb will the English accept it.

Moreover, the Englishman is a thorough realist. The world to-day is divided into territorial, national groups at economic war with one another. It lives in armed, unstable political neutrality. It is not possible for a small, non-agricultural nation with a fairly thick population to adopt Communism with any chance of success. For Communism to succeed, under the present politico-economic world circumstances, a country must be big enough to be pretty independent of the world's commercial and industrial machinery. It may have contacts but it must be in a position to be self-sufficient and self-sufficing in the matter of at least the primary necessities of civilized life. Imagine a small country like England going Bolshevick, with her commerce and industry heavily handicapped by the tariff policies of other nations! It has no raw materials to feed its industry. It has no agriculture worth the name to feed its population. To-day it functions because it has at its disposal the resources of a vast Empire. If the Empire disappeared, it would be pretty much in the same position as some of the small countries in Central Europe that have no colonies. It will not produce enough to maintain at the present standard of living, any section of

its population of 45 millions congested in that small space, England. Contrast this with Russia. It has vast, undeveloped territories in Europe and Asia. It is thinly populated. It has all the food and the raw materials it needs for itself. It has or can have a vast, internal trade. It can exist in some kind of ease and comfort even without external commercial and industrial contacts. Even then it found itself in a tight hole from which only the national faith, idealism and sacrifice of its people could pull it through.

The objective facts in Russia and England are absolutely different. Yet even Russia could not live apart from the world. It had to enter into commercial and industrial relations with other nations. It had to make reciprocal, defensive alliances. It had to enter into the "League of Robbers." It had even to shout through its representative, the almost Czarist national cry of England, "God Save the King." If the Bolsheviks had to enter into commercial treaty with Germany, they would unhesitatingly and unblushingly cry "Hail Hitler."\* In India, it is well-known that they have asked their friends to join the Congress, a national, and from their view-point, a capitalist organization consisting of such "non-official allies" of the British Imperialism as the old Congress leaders. The justification for all this naturally is "objective facts." What may not be done or justified in the name of this omnipotent new god of the Godless? This new god, however, behaves as whimsically as the old dethroned one. It prescribes one set of rules for one set of its votaries and a different set of rules for another, for has it not, like the God of old, many facets? The prophets and the chosen, in

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\* Refer to the Russo-German treaty of August 1939.

various lands, may interpret it variously, the fanatics may quarrel, but the Catholics and mystics of the faith will say "though different nations worship Thee differently yet art Thou the same, the one, the Undifferentiated and the Omnipotent."

To expect England then whether under Labour or Independent Labour, to help India, is to turn back the hands of the clock. It is to live in the faith of the old Congressmen. Between Congressmen and Liberals, the latter say there will be no difference after acceptance of office. The Liberals may well congratulate themselves. Their old doctrines are succeeding in unexpected quarters. People with faith in direct action are turning into constitutionalists, and the Left wing in Congress is looking to Independent Labour for help in the fight for freedom. If Independent Labour fails, there is yet Bolshevich Russia for the faithful! The Liberal politics in India are, indeed, based upon unchanging eternal verities!

### XIII

#### SYMPATHY WITH ABYSSINIA

*(August, 1935)*

I HAVE been invited often by my socialist friends to speak about the War between Italy and Abyssinia. On such occasions I have felt rather bewildered. What is the good of condemning Italy? All nations of the world including India stand condemned. They have always exploited the weaker people inside or outside their borders. Whenever a nation could, and had the requisite strength, it went on conquering weaker nations.

There is nothing new in what Italy is doing that needs a special expression of our opinion. I am afraid in condemning Italy to-day we would be taking our clue from some of the western nations who have been condemning it for purposes of their own but who, when they had the opportunity, have done like-wise and justified and praised it. When Japan swallowed Manchuria, these same nations were silent. Then also the prestige of the League of Nations and its existence were at stake ; then too, a weaker nation was being strangled ; but those who in Europe howl to-day were mum. We too were silent then. I therefore can't see how we are specially called upon to open our lips to-day. It is best that those who are down and low, maintain sullen silence rather than join in the chorus created by some capitalist nations because their own Imperial interests in Africa and in the Mediteranean are endangered by the action of Italy. Then, who are we to condemn ? It lies ill in the mouth of an Indian, this condemnation. After all the Italians are contemplating making slaves of a foreign nation. Here we are ever keeping our own fellow Indians and fellow Hindus in perpetual slavery. I am sure even if Abyssinia is conquered by Italy, the fate of the conquered will not be as bad as the fate of our Harijan brothers. For such as we, there is no point in condemnation. Italy might as well tell us, as it is telling all the western Nations, "Doctor, heal thyself." If we really are in earnest in our condemnation, let us first eliminate tyranny from our lives and the national life. Not till then, and only to the extent we do it, can we have the moral right to condemn injustice. Let all thought and energy be used to clear our own stables.

We may, however, be expected to sympathise with Abyssinia without condemning Italy. We do, but had we not better reserve all sympathy for ourselves? Abyssinia conquered will never be in the position we are. Italy has not a vast empire's resources to exploit, crush and humiliate. And then the Abyssinians are a brave, hardy and warlike people. Even if they are conquered because of the scientific war machines of the Italians, the Italians may find it as hard to hold Ethiopia as the British found it hard to hold Afghanistan. We had better, therefore, think of ourselves.

Moreover, if ours were a free country, we would think twice before we delivered judgment upon others. Free nations tolerate much injustice in their neighbours. They have neither the time nor the energy nor the inclination to bother themselves about other people's affairs. They keep silent. Any adverse expression of opinion may be taken as an act of hostility. There may be needless complications. Nations of the world are not philanthropic associations that would go out of their way to redress wrongs. They, including Russia, are not the Don Quixotes that we credit them to be. If England is out to decry, you may be sure that as much of its imperial interests are involved as when it fought Germany for the ostensible reason of saving Belgium. If the western nations were really genuine it would be more worth their while to save China with her hoary past and her civilisation from the paws of Japan or, better still, release some of the nations from their own Imperial yoke. Genuinely disinterested nations, when their conscience is roused, do this or keep quiet. Their own problems are too much for them to embroil themselves with their neighbours' affairs. But we Indians

have the habit of minding everybody else's business, than our own. If we were a free and independent nation, this idea of public sympathy would not occur to us for then, if we sympathised we would be bound to take sides and help so far as we could. We would oblige our government to take steps against the offending state. This would be noble, only it is not done.

Even then seeing that injustice is being done, we may be tempted to sympathise. However, the imperial ambitions of England make such a bold expression of opinion on our part rather difficult. We know if England goes to war with Italy, it will not be for the sake of Abyssinia or the League or for Justice but to safeguard or advance its own imperial interests. It may then decide to march Indian troops against Italy. At that time we would find ourselves tongue-tied. Already some wise Legislators in our Assembly have been asking that Indian soldiers be sent to help Abyssinia. We don't want any Indian money or Indian life, to be wasted in other people's quarrels, however just ; much less to safeguard or advance any imperial interests of people who have learnt to perfection the art of giving altruistic reasons for their selfish ends. We know every Indian life and every Indian rupee is needed for greater and more pressing indigenous purposes. It would be bad economy and worse philanthropy to think of others when our own house is in utter and hopeless disorder. Charity here, may well begin at home. Our socialist friends who are Internationalists may indulge in condemnation, but not the Nation as a whole. Though all this is true I would welcome any volunteer movement on the part of those Indians who felt for Abyssinia and offered their services to it. I may consider their zeal

and philanthropy misplaced, but would certainly have respect for them. As I myself am not prepared to suffer for Abyssinia, I can only keep quiet, especially when I know that my expression of sympathy may be exploited and purposely, wrongly interpreted as my desire that Indian soldiers be sent abroad to fight or Indian money be spent on a war outside our borders. If Indian soldiers and money are to be used, I would wish them to be used for the liberty of our common hearth and home. Indian Legislators would be well advised to suggest this to the Government rather than to ask it to send troops abroad for however just and laudable a cause. But our Legislators would do no such thing, knowing fully well the implications of what they would be asking.

Yet without our expressing it, the world knows quite well where our sympathy lies. Belonging as we do, to a slave nation our sympathy is bound to be with Abyssinia. What wonder is it that Indians under foreign yoke should sympathise with those who are the victims of injustice? Did not Italy in the days of her great prophet patriot sympathise with all the down-trodden of the world? When one is down and low, one always feels sympathy for those who are in the same plight. The test comes when one gets power. We Indians might sympathise to-day with Abyssinia, but I am not sure that if we were free and powerful as Japan and western nations are, we would not try to swallow other people's lands and consider it just.

We may yet condemn war in general. As votaries of non-violence we are, however, on the horns of a dilemma. Till non-violence is accepted and prevails,

the nations of the world will be perpetrating injustice and running at each other's throat. Not unoften it happens that this cut-throat, armed competition between the powerful, is the only chance for the weak. Nature's ways are mysterious. To advocate the elimination of war before non-violence is accepted or established, may be to perpetuate the present political and economic exploitation of weak nations by powerful imperial nations. It is because of this that suppressed nations, communities and groups, very often wistfully look for a war among the imperial nations for their salvation. How many of the oppressed of the world secretly wish this war to develop into a world war! The last war overthrew so many tyrannies, native and foreign. The next world war may be the only chance for the down-trodden against imperial nations. It appears almost impossible for conquered nations to resist the organised and scientific might of modern Governments. Only when the robbers fall out among themselves, there may be a chance for the honest and upright.

It is, however, quite possible that a world war may imperil the very existence of the present civilisation. How are the disinherited and the downtrodden to be frightened by this contingency? They well might think what is their gain from this civilisation! They are placed so low, that it would be adding insult to injury, to talk of the benefits accruing to them. You may as well talk of Indian Advait to the Harijans telling them, they are all Divinities, or you may quote to them the Gita that, he is a wise one, who looks upon an elephant, a dog and an outcast with an equal eye. The honourable and the sensitive among them rightly feel, that it were better that this civilisation perished, than they

remained where they are for want of a war between the mighty.

All this should make us to pause before giving our opinion, one way or the other. The world affairs on account of inter group selfishness and violence, are in such a mess that one may not even wish for peace on the existing basis. Any re-shuffling that is more equitable and just would appear to be through the quarrels of the mighty ! It is a dangerous philosophy, but it appears that only through evil, will any good come about. The world must drink the cup of violence and misery to the dregs, before it finds any peaceful and non-violent solution for its self-inflicted woes and troubles.



*PART III*

**RIGHT WING CRITICISM**



## XIV

### OFFICE UNDER THE NEW CONSTITUTION

(*August, 1935*)

THE question agitating the different political parties in India is that acceptance or rejection of office in the provinces under the new constitution. Much heat is generated in the controversy, specially in the ranks of Congressmen. The well wishers of the Congress are also not slow to tender their advice to the largest and the most representative party in the country. The Right Honourable Shastri and Mr. Jayakar have spoken.

The question cannot, however, be decided on first principles as the disputants sometimes seem to think. It is not a theoretical question, but a question of practical politics where profit and loss are carefully computed. There is nothing fundamentally right or wrong about acceptance or non-acceptance of office. There are advantages and dis-advantages in any course adopted.

Congressmen who advocate non-acceptance take their stand upon the fact that the Congress has rejected the constitution and it, therefore, cannot accept office under the new constitution. Rejection would be meaningless if they identified themselves with, and allowed themselves to be parts of, the administrative machinery devised by the new constitution. This argument was advanced at the time of the Council entry question also. It is based upon the political theory and practice in democratic countries in the last and the beginning of the present century. It holds that all parties in a democracy accept the fundamentals of the

constitution under which they function. All parties believe that the constitution under which they serve or fight, is suited to serve the best interests of the country. The difference between them concerns minor changes in the constitution and the day-to-day programmes that have got to be worked out in the interest of the country. This means that there is no party that is revolutionary and that wants to scrap the very basis of the constitution. Under such circumstances the Opposition serves the constitution as much as the party in the power. The latter serves the constitution by accepting office and carrying out policies ; the former, by acting as Opposition, keeps the party in power in good trim by its criticism and seeks office if it gets the majority. Both are the limbs of one administration. The Opposition is styled in England where this practice originated, as the King's Opposition. At all critical times the ministry in power is by convention bound to consult and give due weight to the counsels of the Opposition. At critical times all parties would combine and carry out a common policy. Local differences would at such times sink into insignificance before the great and common danger, for example when the political independence of the country is threatened or the foundations upon which society rests, are threatened. As soon as the common danger is over the parties again separate and carry on their respective policies and constitutional battles. All the parties act under the constitution and the fundamental laws evolved by the constitution. None of them is revolutionary in its aims or methods.

This was good politics and wise practice under circumstances, economic and political, that were more

or less stationary and when the basic foundations of society were not questioned. After the great war, in all democratic countries, there have grown up parties that question the very fundamentals of the constitution. In many cases parties question the very foundation on which the political, social and economic structure of the State is based. They are revolutionary parties. They are democratic only so far as they seek the popular vote to enter the legislatures. Such parties, when they consider themselves powerful, accept office too. But their object is the revolutionary re-adjustment of the constitution or of society. They don't accept the fundamentals of the constitution or the values upon which society is based. They frankly go to the legislatures to be in a favourable position to capture power by constitutional means or by some kind of coup. They accept office only when they think it serves their purpose. They have no respect for the existing constitution as such. They don't consider it sacrosanct. They may or may not believe in democracy. Generally they don't. They know for any fundamental change in Government or society, power is necessary. They believe or bring themselves to believe that they are the guardians of the public good and must capture power by democratic forms if possible, or in spite of them, if necessary. The recent Dictatorships of the Bolshevic variety or the Fascist or the Nazi variety, all acquired power not by respecting the fundamentals of democracy or of their respective constitutions but by violating them. Public good as they conceive it, is the guiding principle, not the rules of the political game of democracy. Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler all acquired power by violating the constitution. The Italian dictator found it convenient to keep some forms of democracy. The Bolshevics and

the Nazis made no such pretence. Lesser dictatorial lights have done the same. De Valera in Ireland entered the legislature and took office under the constitution not to work under its limitations but to scrap it as soon as opportunity presented itself. The dictators and the revolutionary parties believe, and perhaps rightly too, that a constitution is not an end in itself. It is a means for the public good, and if it stands in the way of that good it must be scrapped. So the old theory on which democracies in Europe work, that all parties in the State accept the fundamental principles of the constitution, no more holds good in these changed and revolutionary times. It may be that this is negation of all democracy, but even democracy, the reformers feel, is but a means to an end. It cannot be installed in place of the end which is the good of the people. One may or may not agree with the new philosophy, but one cannot deny the fact that there is logic and consistency in it. The new philosophy may serve the purposes of a reformer or of a tyrant. That is immaterial. All things that serve the good, come to be useful instruments to the bad also ; but their efficiency cannot be, therefore, questioned. Under such circumstances the justification of a policy can only be derived from the results achieved. When Congressmen, therefore, go into the legislatures, they cannot be judged from the old mid-victorian viewpoint. They can be judged only by revolutionary logic and not by constitutional logic. The acceptance of office must also be judged from this viewpoint.

It is quite possible to make out a case from the revolutionary viewpoint that entry into the councils is not in the best interests of the country. So also acceptance of office under the new constitution. But

such things cannot be settled by an appeal to first principles. To-day it is generally believed that entry into the councils by Congressmen is, when profits and losses are calculated, decidedly for the good of the Congress and the country. The controversy to-day ranges round office.

In one of his recent speeches the Right Hon. S. Shastri is reported to have said : “ It is the very essence of Democracy that if you are in a majority you must assume office and you cannot run away from it. If people entrust you with power upon your own solicitation, you should not turn it on them and say—I am not going to take power.” In arguing thus the speaker is not true to facts and appeals to democratic theory and practice which to-day no more hold good. First he says that the essence of democracy is that the majority party must accept office. This would imply that the new constitution is a democratic constitution. It is not democratic either in substance or in form. True, it employs some forms of democracy such as the franchise but it sets aside many principles of democracy when the vital interests of the foreigner are concerned. In substance, it is an unmitigated autocracy. Nor is it again a fact that the Congress or for the matter of that, any political party worth the name has accepted the fundamentals of the new constitution. Every national party believes that the new constitution instead of advancing the best interests of the nation will retard progress, and instead of bringing democracy near, will make it recede further and further. So the rules of democracy do not apply. Only the dynamic logic of revolution can decide the issue.

Further, Congressmen seek the vote of the people not to work the constitution. They seek it to implement

their determination to reject the constitution. On the best way of implementing this rejection opinions may differ, but Congressmen by their pledges to their constituencies, are not bound to accept or reject office. They are free to do the one or other to carry out their aims. Therefore, the issue can only be guided by practical wisdom. Congress will have to calculate the possibilities and decide which method will most effectively achieve the end in view. Some Congressmen seem to have made up their mind. Syt. Satyamurti and some others have no doubt that acceptance of office is the best, the speediest and the surest way of achieving the aim—namely, rejection of the constitution in which lies the good of the country. Others, notably the Socialists, are equally emphatic. They think that the best way to reject the constitution and serve the country is not to accept office. The Working Committee has wisely at this stage refrained from taking sides. It thinks that the time is not yet, when the calculation of profit and loss can be conclusively made. The Working Committee also appreciates that the position is delicate, and both the views may be honestly held ; under such circumstances when the two sides are so nicely balanced, it is best to take time and leave the country to decide the issue. It has, therefore, wisely left the question to be decided by the open session of the Congress. The Committee also does not want the country's energies to be needlessly wasted in a barren controversy before the time for decision has come. The members of the Committee have, in the meantime, passed upon themselves a self-denying ordinance of silence. They also are anxious not to sway the opinion of the country one way or the other by the weight of their undoubted political position and prestige.

## XV

### CONSTITUTIONAL DEADLOCK

(April, 1937)

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A SECTION of Indian politicians have all of a sudden developed a great desire that the Congress should accept office. They have filled the columns of Indian and Anglo-Indian papers to prove to us that the salvation of the country lies in Congress accepting office. They are surprised that Congress leaders are not disturbed by the refusal of the Governors to make the gentlemen's agreement. Not only those opposed to office but even those in favour of it in the Congress, do not seem to be much bothered about the refusal of the Governors to accede to the conditions laid down in the Congress resolution. Congressmen do not seem to be perturbed even by the appointment of minority Ministries consisting of political reactionaries. From this the opponents of the Congress straightway conclude that the Congress never wanted to accept office and the Delhi Resolution was just an eyewash. It was passed to delude the public. It was passed merely to cast the blame on the Governors for refusing to contract themselves out of their legal obligations under the Act. Even after the clear and lucid statement of Gandhiji, our friends do not seem inclined to believe that Congress was honest in its desire to accept office.\*

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\* The honesty of the Congress was since proved.

Why are these non-Congress politicians so anxious that the Congress should accept office? They were not friendly at the time of the elections! Why then this sudden affection and anxiety? Is it that they have been converted by the Congress success achieved at the polls? Has it changed their antipathy into affection? Let us examine the psychology of this conversion a little closely.

It is no love of the Congress that has inspired the anxiety that Congress should not refuse office. It is rather their inveterate constitutionalism. If the majority party does not accept office the Constitution breaks down. If there is no Constitution or if it breaks down, what becomes of the constitutional means, the sole lever for the transference of power and the only weapon for bringing about the liberal variety of Indian Swaraj? The Constitution must be saved at all costs. Bad as it is, it must be worked, however humiliating the conditions.

The liberal, legal pandits at Allahabad, Bombay, and elsewhere are therefore at pains to prove from the provisions of the Act that the Governors cannot possibly contract themselves out of the Act and that the demand of the leaders of the Congress party is not constitutional. One of them has gone so far as to opine that the Governors are entitled by the Act to appoint minority ministries. Our friends once again, as is usual with them, are anxious to justify the ways of the Government to the dull heads of Congressmen, who, they think, have neither understood the Constitution nor its legal implications.

But is it really so? Congressmen understand the Constitution and its legal implications as well as any of the legal luminaries in other parties. The fact is

there is a fundamental difference between the outlook of the Congress and these constitutionalists, and this the latter lose sight of amidst the legal and constitutional cobwebs of their own creation. While they think in terms of law and constitution, Congressmen are thinking in extra-legal and extra-constitutional concepts, in terms of politics, democracy and the will of the people as expressed by their vote. A Congress lawyer may join issue with a lawyer of any other party about the legal and constitutional position, but he is not worried by that. He believes that the Governor can give the undertaking asked for, within the terms of the Constitution, if only it is not legalistically and formally interpreted. He, however, knows that it may be argued otherwise. If the Governor cannot, he must refer the matter to his principals, to those who have power over him and who in their interpretation are not handicapped by legal forms but are guided by political considerations. As a matter of fact it is an open secret that the legalistic interpretation under which the Governors have taken refuge, is only an eyewash. They have their orders from their masters at Whitehall. The masters wanted the Governors to take refuge under the legal forms provided by the Constitution, simply because they were not at this stage prepared to hand over the least little bit of their power in the provinces to the popular representatives. Whitehall, therefore, directed the Governors to insist upon the pound of flesh to which they were entitled, in terms of the New Constitution. Mahatmaji had devised the condition deliberately to test the intentions of those in power. The possible, legal difficulties were not absent from the legal region of his mind. Even if they were, they must have been brought to his notice by the

pandits of law of whom there is no dearth in the Councils of the Congress. Gandhiji must have satisfied his companions by taking them beyond the legal difficulties and put before them the pure, political question. The political issue is whether the cabinet is willing to hand over even partial power to popularly elected ministers. The reply is an emphatic no. This clear issue is sought to be clouded in legal subtleties which may deceive the liberal mind but do not deceive the political common-sense of the Congress.

But our opponents say that the Congress should have seized the opportunity of office and not allowed it to slip. As if by seizing apparent opportunities the Congress can gain any position of real power ! It would have been in office for a few days or a few months. But that would have been so much time wasted, postponing the ultimate struggle. It would not have been time saved, but time lost.

Our friends still argue that the Congress even in that little while would have done something to mitigate the lot of the peasant. The Congress, however, is quite confident that the little they could have done in office will now be done by the Chhataris, Raos and Reddys. This is proved by the published programme of the European group in Bombay. It calls itself the Progressive Party and stands for "progress as against Congress." The main policy of the party will be to raise the standard of living of all classes, rural and urban, and to that end they will try to develop the resources of the Presidency. They say, there is demand for reduction of land revenue which is a justifiable demand. Part of the policy of the party will be to undertake the

early revision of settlements so as equitably to adjust the incidence of land revenue, etc., etc. Not to talk of minority parties, even if the Governors took up the reins of Provincial Governments, without the camouflage of minority ministries, they will have to introduce all these mild and moderate reforms which the Congress Party would have undertaken but which they may not have been able to carry through, because of the special reserved and discretionary powers of the Governors. Therefore, ministry or no ministry, the little good to the masses, is guaranteed to them by the mere fact that they have returned the Congress in a majority to the legislatures.

However, it is held that the Congress has committed a tactical blunder in not accepting office. This, time alone can prove. Congress does not believe in mere tactical advantages. It knows that the British Imperialism that crushes life out of the Indian people cannot be dislodged by mere tactical and temporary advantages. Tactics must, therefore, hold a subordinate place in its programme.

Apart from this, if constitutionalism were the only sheet anchor of the Congress as it is of the liberals, it would not allow such little tactical advantages to slip by. The Councils are but a part and a minor part of the Congress programme. The best from it that can be got namely, the reaching to the masses, rousing and organising them, was done at the time of the elections. The little more that remains will be done by their opponents with the sword of the majorities ever hanging over them. The Congress could have gone beyond, only if the Congress had been allowed by Whitehall to give the undertaking asked for. As this has not been forth-

coming, the Congress naturally remains unperturbed. Acceptance of ministries is not an end in itself for Congressmen.

The Congress still has the temerity to believe that real power can flow to the people only as the result of a grim struggle where power is pitched against power, unless of course, Imperialism wishes it otherwise. The test that it wishes otherwise was provided by the proviso attached to the A.I.C.C. resolution. They have rejected it and thereby rejected the constitutional game of rule by majorities. The only thing left for them is, as Gandhiji says, the rule of the sword.

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IN spite of what Prof. Keith says about the constitutional deadlock and the interim ministries, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru argues still. Sir Sapru quotes what the Professor had said before about the Constitution. It is immaterial what Prof. Keith said before. He had not contemplated the formation of minority ministries. He could not have in anticipation thought that an assurance such as was asked for by the Congress would be refused. His present opinion is based upon the situation as it is to-day. He says that the forms of responsible Government should not be prostituted to conceal the breakdown. He considers the formation of minority ministries as a negation of responsible Government. A professor of his eminence cannot but know that it is theoretically open to the Governors, as it is theoretically open to the King of England, to call anybody to help him in the formation of ministries. What Prof. Keith has in mind is that

deliberately to call those in minority to form a ministry in order to cheat the citizens out of their democratic rights, is the negation of responsible Government. It is no use pointing out to him that theoretically and according to the letter of the law, anybody can be called to form a ministry. His reply would be that it could be done but it will not be constitutional and political morality in terms of democracy. When he gave his previous opinion he did not know that in working the Constitution political chicanery and fraud would be practised and political blacklegs requisitioned to defeat the will of the electorate so unambiguously declared.

Prof. Keith pays a tribute to Gandhiji and the Congress and declares that they possess the essential merit of having studied the principles of responsible Government and realised what Sir Samuel Hoare never grasped that responsible Government is wholly incompatible with executive safeguards. We would only add that Sir Samuel knew, as well as Gandhiji and the Congress, the pre-requisites of responsible Government. Only he wanted to play upon the people of India a political sleight-of-hand which in the present instance deceived nobody. Yet those whose sheet anchor is constitutionalism, must submit, and in the present instance insist upon others to submit, to any political indignity to save the constitution, however dishonest and vicious. That the present Constitution is vicious and dishonest is brought out by Prof. Keith when he says that the India Act has suffered at the outset from the grave defect that it made responsibility unreal by placing special responsibilities on the Governors. He says sympathy, help and co-operation promised by the Governors are meaningless, for the Act itself gives powers and

imposes duties on the Governors which reduce ministerial responsibility to a farce. Yet our friends have been all the time advising us to accept the meaningless farce lest the Constitution break down. Prof. Keith is, of course, not weighed down by such considerations. The Congress from a different viewpoint is not worried by the breakdown, rather such a consummation of events is to be devoutly wished for.

Prof. Keith moreover says, "*it is regrettable that the Governors were not authorised to give much more definite pledges.*" He knows that Governors, however important in their own eyes and in the eyes of their subordinates and *jo hoozurs*, are yet too minor officials to make the agreement asked for by the Congress. Prof. Keith, therefore, advisedly uses the words "were not authorised to give". If anybody thinks that the Working Committee did not understand this position, he is imputing his own intellectual imbecility to his political opponents. The Working Committee not only knew that the Governors could not make the agreement, but it also knew that they could not even refuse it without a reference to their bosses in London. It also knew that even the Governor-General could not authorise consenting to or refusing the condition without reference to his masters at Whitehall. The Working Committee knew fully well that the matter would be referred to London, as it was not a purely legal or constitutional issue but pre-eminently a political issue involving a partial transfer of political power. If the issue had been purely one of law and constitution, the Governors or the Governor-General need not have referred the matter to Whitehall. He must be a political ignoramus who can believe that the refusal to ~~make~~ the agreement was made merely on

the Governors' or the Governor-General's initiative. They are legally competent to refuse but politically, on a first class issue, they cannot decide without reference to their masters.

As the Constitution stands to-day, it can be liberalised either by legislation or by interpretation. The Working Committee knows that legislation at this late hour is out of the question. The only way to liberalise it is by way of interpretation. No Court of Law here or in England can liberalise the Constitution in the way asked for. It could be done by Parliament alone. The English Constitution has no Supreme Court for the interpretation of the Constitution as is the case in America. The highest courts can only interpret the details of a constitutional statute. What the Congress asks for is the interpretation of some of the fundamentals of the Constitution involving transference of political power. This could be done by Parliament alone through its mouthpiece, the Cabinet. We hold that even the Secretary of State could not have refused as he has done, or accepted the Congress condition, without reference to his colleagues, at least the Prime Minister. The constitutions made by the English Parliament for the Colonies to begin with, provided many special powers to their Governors. But the ministry of the day always advised that these powers be not used. Most of them have now disappeared simply because they were not used under the advice of successive British Cabinets.

Though Congress knew all this, it could only ask for the agreement from the Governors for they were inviting the leaders of the Congress majorities to accept office. We are sure if the talks between the leaders and

the Governors were published it would be found that the leaders suggested to the Governors to refer the matter to their principals from whom they derive their temporary authority.

The Governors have formed minority ministries. The apologists of the Government support this by requisitioning to their help the theoretical provisions of the law as it stands to-day. The Government in the six provinces concerned do not propose to call legislatures for a few months. We take it that this too is theoretically in the bond. It is about such justifications that the Prophet once said "the letter killeth and the spirit saveth." The political wisdom of our opponents is killed by the letter of the law. Whatever the law may be, we hold that appointing ministries and keeping them in power for six months by not calling legislatures is political dishonesty of the deepest dye.

Those who twit us with betraying the electorate, have nothing to say against this political goondaism. Nay, they use their legal and forensic skill, to justify it. Yet if anybody called these friends the enemies of the country they would protest that they are as good patriots as any Congressman and that the Congress has no monopoly of patriotism. If the Congress has really betrayed the electorate let the legislatures, if the Governors dare, be dissolved on this plain issue of the condition imposed by the Congress. The Congress will be content to abide by the verdict, whatever that be. Will Chhatari, Rao, Reddy, and Company accept the challenge? Will the Governors accept the challenge? If they do, it will not be in keeping with the history of the British rule in India, which has never hesitated

to use political fraud and chicanery whenever it has suited its political and economic ends.

*iii*

HIS Excellency the Governor of U.P. in the course of the reply made through his Secretary, to Sri Purshottam Das Tandon, the Chairman of the Conference of the U.P. Legislators held recently at Lucknow, is reported to have said "when those who command this majority themselves refuse—*whatever may be the ground of their refusal*—to form the Ministry and indicate their decision not to allow an alternative Ministry to function the principle of the constitution is threatened."

To say that whatever the circumstances, the majority party must accept office when called upon to do so, is to overstate the constitutional position. Occasions may arise which may oblige the majority party to refuse to shoulder the responsibilities of office unless certain hindrances to the smooth working of its policy are removed. Instances are not wanting in the constitutional history of England and other free countries in Europe and America when the leader of the majority party has refused to accept office unless some definite acts were done or some specific conditions fulfilled by the nominal executive head. In the absence of such assurances, the leader of the majority party always refused to form the Government. Such refusal has never implied that the majority party would support any minority party that had the hardihood to accept responsibility. Rather the functioning of such a minority ministry has always been made impossible so that the head of the administration

is obliged to accept the conditions put forward by the majority party and allow it to form the ministry. Nowhere has it been held that such conduct of the majority party constitutes a threat to the constitution. The threat to constitutional principles and practice comes when the formal head of the executive refuses to consent to the conditions of the majority party and calls upon a minority party to form a ministry and keeps it in power by the artificial means of not calling the legislatures for as long as he possibly can. His Excellency has therefore, instead of blaming the majority party, to thank himself and his masters at Whitehall for the constitutional deadlock and all its consequences.

## XVI

### THE LIBERTY THAT INDIA WANTS

(November, 1935)

THE *Times of India's* brain seems to be full of my speech at Vizagapatam. It has devoted a second lengthy editorial to it. It is surprised that I still say that the Congress is waiting for the uprising of the nation's spirit to start Satyagraha. It is also surprised that we want complete liberty for this nation.

I have invariably found it hard for an Englishman to understand the Indian point of view. It appears he will understand us only when his country is conquered by the foreigner, ruled, exploited and humiliated by him. Ruling nations cannot understand the feelings of the ruled and conquered nations. We Indians are often surprised to find that an Englishman, who is so jealous of his liberty as to lay down his life for his nation, fails to understand this legitimate ambition in us. Wherever political liberty is denied to other people and injustice done, the Englishman feels indignant. But when it is India he feels indignant that Indians should resent foreign rule and not find in it a New Dispensation.

The *Times*, quoting my words : "Congress stands for complete freedom for this nation," very impertinently asks : "what form of complete freedom for this nation does the Congress Secretary want ?"

Sir, be it plain to you and all of your colour, your nationality and your mentality that not only the Congress

Secretary but every self-respecting Indian wants that liberty here which you have in your own home ; that which your white Colonials have in homes not their own; that which Germany has within its borders, that which France, Italy and other nations in the West and the East have within the borders of their lands. Gandhiji may call this ‘ substance of independence,’ the Liberals may call it ‘ Dominion Status ’. But make no mistake that by whatever name it may be called, it is the very identical thing you have in England of which you are so rightly jealous, over which you are so proud, and for which (all honour to you) you will be prepared to lay down your life. We want that and nothing less.

Let me add that, by whatever name this elusive and undefinable thing, National Liberty, may be called, it is not provincial autonomy. It is not the Federation which is described in the pages of the White Paper, the Parliamentary Report and the Act based upon these. To the meanest student of politics, the constitution that your wise men have produced in these documents is of the mongrel and the mule type. It is as the Bengali would say a ‘ Horse’s egg.’ It is neither political fish nor foul nor even honest ‘ Dal Bhat.’

You say : “ The present Councils have give Indian publicmen training in the art of Government which they could not possibly have obtained otherwise.” Let me tell you Sir, it is too late in the day to talk of political training. The Englishman’s presumptuousness can give that training to everybody, to the German, the French, the American and to all on earth ! Have not your historians always boasted that democratic and parliamentary institutions went the world over from

your liberty-loving shores ? If that is so, had you to conquer all these nations, exploit and humiliate them in order to give them this precious gift of yours ? Had India to conquer Burma, Siam, China, Japan and the Eastern Islands in order to give them its religion and its culture ? The fact is, no country need conquer and rule and exploit another in order to give it the best it has. Intellectual and moral gifts are not given at the point of the sword. Many Imperial people before, have boasted of benefits accruing to subject people from their rule. But when, after years, the historian sits to compute profit and loss, it is not unoften found that the conquerors received more moral and intellectual gains from the conquered than they ever gave. It was conquered Greece that gave conquering Rome much of its learning and culture.

But you have been teaching us this art of governing, by all the reforms you periodically have been giving us for so many years. Surely you must be supremely stupid teachers, yet to talk of training. Hands off ! There is but one royal road to learning and that is by making mistakes or by muddling through, as you have it. Thus did your ancestors learn the art of self-government. Every nation has learnt it the same way. For us, too, there can be no other. That is the way of the individuals and that is the way of the nations.



*PART IV*

CONGRESS AND LEAGUE



## XVII

### CONGRESS AND THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

(June, 1937) *meas 1*

THE permanent head of the Muslim League has been talking and writing now often enough, but nowhere has he made clear what actually he wants. He sometimes talks of the Muslim minority and sometimes of the minorities in general. Often his utterances give the impression that if the Congress satisfies the Muslim in whatever be their particular and peculiar demands, the problems of the country will be solved. Sometimes he talks of the majority party satisfying the minorities, giving an impression that he speaks not only for the Mussalmans but for other minorities as well. May we know whom he definitely represents, the Mussalmans or all the minorities? May we also ask whether he wants the peculiar demands of the Mussalmans or the demands of all the minorities to be satisfied?

Who is to satisfy these vague demands? The majority community or the Congress? Mr. Jinnah has never presented his demands to the organisations that claim to present the majority community. Congress is not an organisation of any one community, majority or minority. It is a national organisation. It is purely a politico-economic organisation. Unlike Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Christian and other denominational organisations, whose doors are open only to members of their respective communities, the Congress membership is open to all Indians irrespective of caste, creed

or religion. Nay, it is open to non-Indians even, if they work for the country and accept its creed. Some of the greatest Hindus, Muslims, Parsees and Christians and non-Indians of the age have subscribed to its aims and been its members and its honoured office-bearers. Has a non-Hindu been or can he even be a member of the Hindu Sabha? Has a non-Muslim ever been a member of the Muslim League? Are these denominational organisations open to members of other communities on the basis of political and economic views and ideologies? Various and differing political opinions may be and are held by members of the same community, but membership of these organisation is not open to all those who hold the same political views but confined only to those who are born in a particular religion or join its fold by conversion. Unlike these, Congress is a purely political and national organisation, consisting of members of all communities who accept certain politico-economic ideals. Greater political consciousness in a particular community, may have provided the Congress with greater membership from that community but this can never be a cause of complaint against that community. Nor can a national organisation with national political aims equally open to all communities, become communal simply because a particular community preponderates on its membership rolls. The soul of an institution is in its aims, ideals and its creed, and not in its ever shifting membership. It can scarcely be the fault of a community that its members are more politically and nationally inclined than members of some other group. It would be no fault in certain Hindu or Muslim communities that their members are better businessmen than members

of the non-commercial communities. If such commercial communities preponderate in commercial chambers, such chambers do not cease to be commercial organizations. They will be commercial because of their aims and objects, inspite of the religion of their members.

In the past the greater political awakening of the Hindus, instead of conferring any advantage on its members, has entailed upon them heavy losses in what are considered immediately desirable goods of the world. The members of the Hindu community have suffered more hardships and financial losses in the various national movements in India than members of any other community. They have contributed more than their share of men and money to the national cause. Theirs have been the greater suffering and sacrifice. Naturally such sacrifice must bring some moral strength, but such moral strength is the proud privilege of all those who suffer and sacrifice in a good cause. In the days of the Khilafat movement the Ali Brothers always reminded their audiences that there was only one rivalry between the Hindus and the Muslims and that was the rivalry of national service and sacrifice. The service and sacrifice of individual Hindus (for among them too there are many sycophants and toadies) do not make the Congress a Hindu organization. This is borne out by the fact that denominational organisations like the Hindu or the Sanatan Sabha refuse to recognise the Congress as representative of Hindu interests. These organisations have always declared that the Congress is afraid of the Muslims and is partial to them. The Hindus have been warned against the activities of the Congress as anti-Hindu. The Muslim organisations on the other hand have always

dubbed the Congress a Hindu organisation and warned Muslims against its influence. Surely both these statements can hardly be true. If, therefore, Mr. Jinnah wants any assurance from the majority community he is welcome to it. But in that case he must approach the proper parties, the Hindu Sabhas and Sangathans, and not the Congress.

Mr. Jinnah of all persons must know that in the past, talks of Hindu-Muslim unity have failed partly because the Hindu Sabha members have refused to recognise the Congress as representative of Hindu interests. They have in addition refused to follow the lead of the Congress. True, the Congress enjoys a position of great respect and influence among the Hindus but it does not have the same position as denominational organisations for their narrow sectional interests. It being so, the Congress can give no more than ample general guarantees to all faiths, cultures and languages. This it has done in its famous Karachi resolution. Anything beyond that may be demanded of the majority community itself. The Congress will be happy if the denominational organisations yield such advantages to the Mussalmans and other minorities as will satisfy them and allay their real or imaginary apprehensions.

Mr. Jinnah once presented his fourteen famous demands. Almost all were granted by the Government in the new reforms. They were conceded not out of love for the Mussalmans, nor because of their inherent justice, but because the Government wanted to placate the Mussalmans and consolidate its power by the traditional policy of divide and rule. After all, the Government was losing nothing and the country was being divided into water-tight compartments. National India

holds that the so-called communal award has done no good to the country. A section of Mussalmans holds that it has done no good to their community either. The bulk of the Mussalmans through their spokesmen, however, hold that the communal decision has given them certain advantages which they must retain.

What has been the attitude of the Congress? It has never disguised the fact that the decision has injected the poison of disunion in the body politic. But it is not prepared publicly to agitate for the removal of the poison. Violating national and logical consistency, it passed its resolution of non-acceptance and non-rejection. Whatever verbal alterations may have been introduced in subsequent resolutions, the Congress attitude has remained the same, that it will not carry on any public agitation against what the Mussalmans rightly or wrongly, from the Congress viewpoint wrongly, hold to be an advantage. It has decided that it will get the decision replaced by an agreed settlement. It has eschewed public agitation creative of bad blood between the communities. In adopting this attitude the Congress has not hesitated to act against the wishes and advice of some of its oldest and tried workers. Until recently this attitude of the Congress was much appreciated by the Muslim League.

The most important of Mr. Jinnah's fourteen points (one would have thought they were exhaustive) have been granted by the foreign Government and in a sense guaranteed by the Congress until the Muslims relinquish them voluntarily. May we ask what more is needed? Perhaps the approval of the majority community through their communal organisations. If it is so, were it not better for Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim

League to approach the Hindu Mahasabha? Why should the two premier organisations of the two premier communities despair of each other, especially when both protest vehemently, that they are intensely patriotic and non-communal and as anxious for the political and economic salvation of the country as the Congress, and that Congressmen Hindu and Mussalmans have no monopoly of patriotism? With such great, common background of patriotism and such basic identity of interests it should not be impossible for them to come to an agreement. In the past they have shown that they can combine. The Sarada Act was opposed both by the Hindu and Muslim orthodoxy. Why should a constructive effort at an agreed solution be impossible for them? This will also be the measure of their patriotism.

Individuals and communities can have many loyalties. When such loyalties conflict they have to make their choice. Congress at many critical moments has made its choice. Its quarrel with foreign imperialism is more fundamental than its differences with other groups in India, political or *quasi* political and *quasi* religious. If in the last resort the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other denominational organisations consider their quarrel with the foreign Government as more fundamental than their quarrel with each other, the solution of the communal problem will not be difficult. The Congress stands for Swaraj but at a pinch it will prefer any sectional *raj* to foreign *raj*.<sup>\*</sup> Such a *raj* will leave many of the major problems of the nation unsolved but it will any day be more self-respecting

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\* As a matter of fact the Congress agreed in 1942 to power being handed over by the British to the Muslim League.

than foreign rule. In no case can it be worse than foreign domination and exploitation. This is the viewpoint of Congressmen. It is the view also of the denominational organisations? Mr. Jinnah has told us that he is not prepared to bow his head either before the Government or before Anand Bhawan! All the importance of Anand Bhawan is derived from its proximity, nay from its identity with Swaraj Bhawan. Even if Anand Bhawan had as independent an existence as a certain house on the Malabar Hill, Bombay, Congressmen would ever prefer to bow there rather than at New Delhi. It is because of this that important Congress leaders have often declared that they are prepared to give a blank cheque to the Mussalmans. This attitude of theirs has been resented and criticised by Bhai Parmanand, Dr. Moonje and others of the Mahasabha. The Congress may still stand by that, but the trouble is that the quarrel is not between the Congress and the different communities. The quarrel is between the various communities whose narrow, sectional interests conflict with and over-ride the national interests or even the real interests of their masses. They all want advantages which they are not prepared to concede or concede in a like measure, to others. In their narrow, sectional intolerance and fanaticism they have forgotten the Golden Rule. As a matter of fact, if all the fanatical demands of the different communities are pooled there may be no rights left for the common citizen to enjoy. India will then present the picture of a society in the natural state, so graphically described by Hobbes, in which each wars against all and all against each. That perhaps will be the fitting consummation of this Bedlam in which we seem to be living to-day.

## XVIII

### MR. JINNAH'S POLITICS

(*June, 1937*)

*i*

THE President of the Muslim League, Mr. Jinnah, having no new points to add to his famous fourteen, is rather vague about his communal demands. He is, however, quite explicit about the political differences between the Congress and the Muslim League. The Muslim League wants to work the Reforms for what they are worth and the Congress stands pledged to reject them. Unless a settlement is arrived at on this issue we are told, there can be no Hindu-Muslim unity and consequently no progress for the country. Does Mr. Jinnah want us to understand that working the constitution is also a minority demand and as such a condition precedent to unity? We hope Mr. Jinnah in this matter is not representative of the entire Muslim community. We know of Muslim individuals and organisations who have declared that they will have nothing to do with the working of the present constitution. They stand for rejecting it. But supposing the Muslims as a community hold that they must work the constitution, is the Congress on that account to change one of its fundamental policies? Changing of national and political policies out of such considerations would ruin any political party. It would ruin any national move-

## MR. JINNAH'S POLITICS

ment. Such a procedure will not only fail to achieve communal unity but will make the achievement of national liberty well-nigh impossible.

To-day it is the Muslim League, (we are sure it is not the Muslim community) tomorrow some other minority league speaking in the name of another minority, may turn round and say that it does not fancy the basic principle of non-violence of the Congress. Is the Congress to satisfy this demand also, to purchase unity? Another community may object to direct action being employed in our struggle for freedom. Are we to abandon this, our weapon, to achieve communal goodwill? Supposing the Anglo-Indian community were to demand the cessation of our anti-imperialist activity on pain of communal disharmony, are we to abandon our struggle to reconcile the Anglo-Indian minority? This too, is an Indian minority! If Congress went on like this satisfying the political demands of the minorities it may as well shut shop and declare a political hartal. It takes one's breath away when such demands are seriously put forward by people who claim that their patriotism and political wisdom are no whit less than of any Congressman. The Congress we are sure will compromise on no such issue.

Here is, however, a good opportunity for Mr. Jinnah to come to terms with the organisations of the majority community. The Hindu Mahasabha guided by Bhai Parmanand, Dr. Moonje and its new light Dr. Narang, stands for working the constitution for what it is worth. Here is a fundamental unity. We present it to Mr. Jinnah and Bhai Parmanand and their respective organisations for a heart to heart fraternisation. If

## THE GANDHIAN WAY

ch common political bonds cannot unite them, no efforts of the Congress can ever bring them together. May we also ask Mr. Jinnah to open negotiations with the Liberals? They too believe in working the constitution. This unity of policy will be an excellent working basis. If the leaders and the parties who believe in working the constitution come together and rub shoulders with each other in a common patriotic effort, soon a more fundamental unity will be evolved which may make permanent unity an accomplished fact. The present line of approach, therefore, appears to us to open fruitful vistas of future accomplishment. May we hope and pray that this fundamental unity may be fully exploited? Such an opportunity once missed may not present itself soon again. We present it to the leaders and the parties concerned and wish them all God speed.

### *ii*

During the course of a lengthy statement criticising the Congress attitude in refusing to form ministries in provinces where it commands majorities, the Chief Minister of the Punjab has taken occasion to refer to my recent statement against Mr. Jinnah's position—that the Congress, if it wanted Hindu-Muslim unity, must negotiate with the Muslim League about its political programme. The Chief Minister has not condescended to quote any portion of my statement. He simply styles it as “arrogant” and says that it shows “unveiled hostility to minority interest.” May I ask the Hon'ble Minister to point out any portion of my statement which can even remotely imply the least hostility to the real or

fancied interests of the minorities ? All that I said is this, that the Congress cannot afford, at the instance of denominational organisations, to change any of its major political policies which are all directed against British Imperialism and not against any special minority interests. I have challenged anybody to prove that working the Constitution which is the League position as against the Congress position of not accepting it, is the position of the Muslim community as a whole. The Hindu Mahasabha also wants to work the constitution and not to 'wreck' it. Can it, therefore, be called the Hindu position ? I have pointed out that many important leaders of the Muslims and some Muslim organisations are at one with the Congress in the matter of not accepting the Constitution. I hold that the Congress cannot afford to allow any denominational group, minority or majority, to dictate to it its anti-imperialist policy. No specific rights of minority or majority communities should, therefore, be in question. I hold that if all the denominational organisations were against the fundamental policies of the Congress, the Congress must follow its own course. The struggle may become harder entailing more sacrifice, but the real servants of the country cannot be deterred from their national duty by the difficulties created by denominational organisations even as they cannot be deterred by the frowns of the powers that be. I have given other examples wherein the Congress cannot afford to change its major political policies or its principles to suit sectional convenience. I have given the example of the Congress creed of non-violence. It is quite possible that a community, majority or minority, may not fancy the creed. Is the Congress to change it ? For a sectional group

not to confine itself to its particular interest but to make excursions in political fields and to dictate terms to the Congress in its fight against imperialism, is to overstretch the meaning of minority interests. I hold that the Congress will not be worth its salt if it changes its major political policies and programme to placate sectional organisations and purchase unity. It will be committing political suicide. I do not see how any specific minority rights are threatened by this attitude of mine. Have the Muslim organisations that have passed resolution for 'wrecking' the Constitution as against working it, injured the Muslim interests? If they have, I feel that I am sinning in good company.

## XIX

### FRONTIER POLICY AND THE CONGRESS

(July, 1937)

A FEW days ago I made a statement about the fundamental unity of aim between the communal organisations and annoyed the Muslim League. I made another statement and annoyed the Hindu Sabha. The latter statement was in connection with the Frontier Day organised by certain associations. The Faizpur Congress passed a resolution condemning the Frontier policy of the Government. By asking Congressmen to join the demonstration against that policy I thought that I was only discharging my duty. I had no idea that I would be annoying my friends of the Hindu Sabha. My appeal was directed only to Congressmen who believe in Congress policy and programme.

The Congress resolution gives five grounds for condemning the Frontier policy of the Government. These are :—

- (1) The policy so far pursued is wrong and has failed.
- (2) It is being pursued in the interests of imperialism.
- (3) It is to justify the high and mounting military expense.
- (4) It provides the imperial troops with training in semi-war conditions and
- (5) The methods employed are cruel, uncivilised and barbarous.

All the reasons given are based upon undisputed facts. The policy has been followed for well-nigh a hundred years and has neither given security to India nor tamed the tribes and made them friendly. That the policy is followed in pursuance of imperial interests, needs no proof. That it provides a plea for enhancing military expense is proved by the annual budget speeches justifying military expense. Most of the military expenditure is incurred in that area and most of the troops are massed there. The fact that Frontier provides training to Imperial troops in semi-war conditions is admitted in official evidence and documents. It is borne out by the fact that most of the troops stationed in England take their turn of service in India and get their training at one time or other on the Frontier. That the methods employed are uncivilised, cruel and barbarous is admitted by the British themselves. They as a nation and their Government have condemned air bombing in Spain. They have expressed their abhorrence of this method of warfare.

The Congress, therefore, condemns the Frontier policy upon facts that are admitted by the Government itself. This condemnation of the Government does not mean any approval of the methods used by the tribes or any action taken by them. The two questions stand apart. This much, however, is certain that we believe it is quite possible to tackle this problem by peaceful methods. After all the same tribes live beyond the borders as have their home in the Frontier Province. If the latter can and do live in peace one cannot understand why their cousins living a few miles beyond, cannot live in peace. We believe that if we were an independent people, it would not be difficult for our Swaraj Government to tackle this problem peacefully. Similar tribes inhabit the southern border of Russia. They have been civilised and made useful and peaceful citizens in an incredibly short time. But supposing the Border tribes are too turbulent to be reformed, it does not require a century to conquer them (of course, we abhor all such conquest of foreign territory). The might of the British Empire has carried out greater and more arduous tasks without air bombing which the British condemn. Surely they are not deterred from incorporating the tribal territory in British India by Indian public opinion! No such scruples guided them in their other conquests. Indian public opinion was against the conquest of Burma. Burma was not saved on that account. But the fact is that if peace is resorted in the border-territory the justification for bloated military budgets will disappear and with it the training ground for imperial troops.

These are fundamental questions. The harrassment of the Hindus is only a by-product of the policy

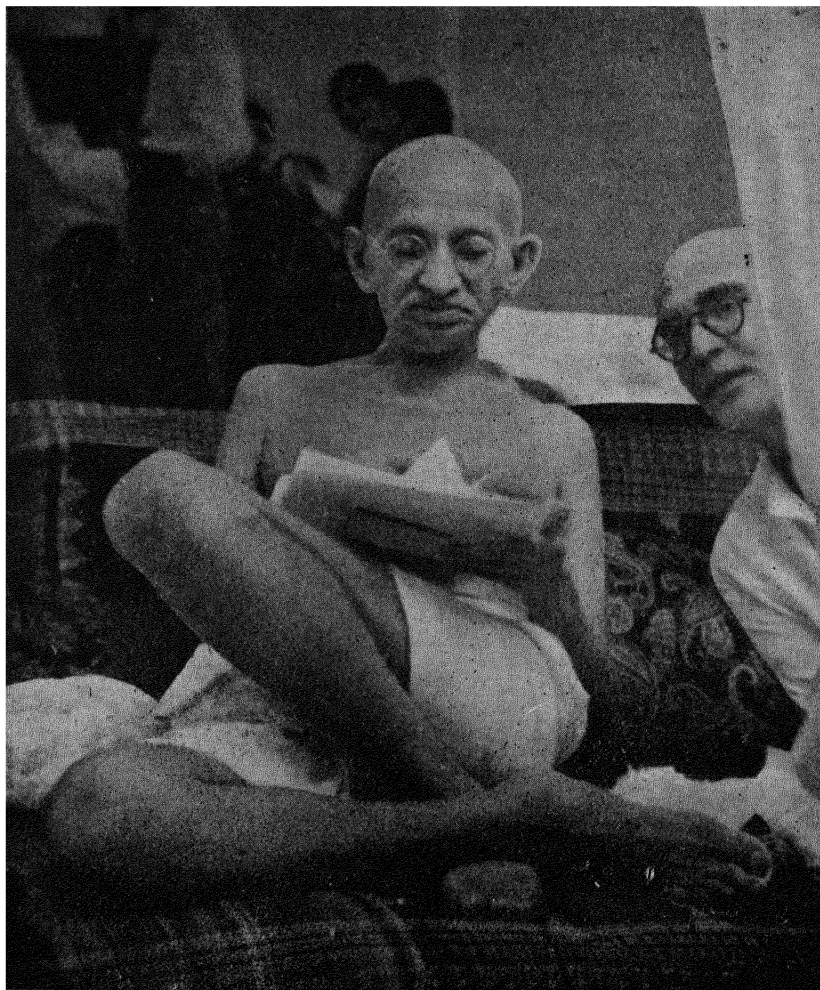
pursued in imperial interests. If the Government by their policy of well-nigh hundred years has afforded no relief to the Hindus residents in the frontier the Hindus must, if they are wise, look for relief somewhere else. We hold that the relief that they sorely need can come only with the political emancipation of India through Swaraj. If there was any possibility of this relief coming from the Government, the Government would have by now made possible the restoration of the kidnapped Hindu women even as they did in the case of a European woman that once was in the same plight. It is useless for Hindus to look for protection to the Government which wants them to live in perpetual dread of the Pathan.

The Hindu Sabha, instead of condemning me for having issued my recent circular, should be happy that some of their co-religionists are in politics, able to distinguish between the essentials and the accidents of a situation and look at objective facts without being prejudiced by their natural, communal feelings and sentiments. We put first things first. After all the essence of morality as also of political wisdom consists in the ability of assigning its proper place to every human action. I am sure the agitation started on behalf of the Frontier Hindus by the Hindu Sabha is neither wrong nor bad in itself. It is good and patriotic. But it only misses to assign proper values to things, confuses essentials with accidents and fails to put first things first. It stands to the credit of the Congress that it does not miss or lose sight of the proper perspective and the necessary hierarchy of human values.



*PART V*

**THE SYNTHESIS**



Mahatma Gandhi

## XX

### SPIRITUALITY AND THE CONGRESS

(July, 1937)

QUACK doctors when they have given a name to a disease, think they have diagonised it. Pseudo scientists likewise think they have explained a phenomenon when they have given it a name. There are some political individuals and parties who indulge in similar uncritical attitude, when passing judgment upon political and economic policies and programmes. Instead of proving or disproving the wisdom, utility, and practicability of a particular policy or programme they use certain adjectives, and felt they have effectively disposed of the question. Call a policy revolutionary, and you have proved it to be scientific, based upon undisputed facts, dictated by the inevitable historical necessity, and therefore bound to succeed if not immediately, then in the near future, if you have only the necessary faith. Call the policy of your opponents as reformatory, romantic and reactionary, and you have no further need for proof or analysis. Straightway you have demonstrated that the policy is neither based upon facts nor is scientific, nor dictated by historical necessity. It is therefore bound to fail. If it appears to succeed that is only a delusion and a snare.

Often the official Congress policies and programmes have been dubbed by those not in agreement with them as medieval and reformatory. The critics have described their own policies or even the absence of them, as revolutionary. Something like this was done recently by Comrade Roy, in his presidential speech to

the Youth Conference at Sitapur. The word 'reformatory' having perhaps by now lost its freshness and charm the new word that found favour with him is 'spiritual.' The Congress ideology is 'spiritual.' No further analysis is necessary. The speaker thinks he has effectively demolished it. If it is spiritual it must be politically reactionary. It is difficult to know the exact connotation of the word "spiritual." For the fanatic Hindu or Muslim it may mean music before mosque, cow-worship and cow-slaughter. For the ignorant it may stand for any conception however rude, crude or material. For the savant and the mystic it may be a body of philosophic and psychic truths.

One is, therefore, at a loss to understand a critic, who thinks he has effectively demolished a theory or a programme when he calls it spiritual. Does the critic mean by the word spiritual, unpractical and unscientific? But spirituality is not always unpractical. Sometimes it is and has been very disastrously practical. Nor has religion always been unscientific. There was a time when the priest was the repository of all the Science that there was in the world. Therefore it is always best to use terms of more or less exact connotations, when criticising plans and policies of a responsible organisation claiming the allegiance of masses of people. Even if the term spiritual were not vague, a policy can be spiritual without being economically and politically reactionary or bad. In the past spiritual policies have not been always politically bad. Therefore not for a moment admitting that spiritual policies are necessarily bad politically, we may examine how much of pure spirituality there is in Congress aims, methods, programmes and personalities.

The Congress goal broadening with time, has always remained political and economic. In the beginning the Congress specifically excluded religious and social reform from its purview. To-day, the 'Purna Swaraj' that the Congress wants, has little to do with any spiritual or individual self-control, self-mastery, or self-realization. It merely lays down the political aim of India as an independent national entity.

The means of the Congress have also been changing and broadening. The Congress began with prayer, protest, and constitutional agitation. To-day it has added a new weapon to its armoury—the weapon of satyagraha or non-co-operation. Again the satyagraha that it has accepted, is neither individual, nor spiritual, but political, economic and collective. The word satyagraha as the word Swaraj has a spiritual derivation, but as accepted by the Congress for the Indian nation it is not a weapon of spiritual salvation or self-realisation. It is direct action of a non-violent type for the redress of political and economic wrongs and injustice. It eschews violence in politics on practical grounds. Personal non-violence is more a psychological than a physical and external concept. Group non-violence does not exclude individual non-violence. But the two do not always coincide. In individual conduct the essence of human action lies in the psychic motive and the spring of action and not merely in the physical manifestation or its results, in time and space. In group conduct, while motive is important, the main emphasis is upon external action, creative of external consequences. Individual non-violence takes many and various forms, differing from individual to individual, religion to religion, and community to community. The average Muslim and

Christians do not think non-vegetarian diet as inconsistent with non-violence. The average Hindu considers it otherwise. A Jain goes still further. All such various types and expressions of non-violence find no place in satyagraha as accepted by the Congress. All that it expects is that Congressmen use no external violence for the achievement of their political and economic goal. If sometimes emphasis has been laid on the psychological side, it is on practical grounds. The supposition is that those observing non-violence in thought and word, are less likely to fail at critical moments in fulfilling their external and group obligations. Whatever may have been the historical origin of non-violence the Congress has accepted only the external physical and collective aspect of it. Efforts to make the Congress accept any other have ever failed. Rightly or wrongly the Congress has refused to substitute "non-violent" for "peaceful" means, because it has rightly felt that the former has a wider connotation than the latter. The word "non-violent" has also a more individual and spiritual implication.

Another element of Satyagraha as conceived by Gandhiji is truth. But the Congress has refused to accept or use this word. It has contented itself with the more modest and less ambitious expression "legitimate." So the means, by which the Congress has ever proposed to achieve its ends whether constitutional or legitimate and peaceful, are all political. They have very little to do with any spiritual, religious or individual effort or idea. Of course, the weapons are such that they can be used by individuals, morally and spiritually inclined. This instead of taking away from their efficiency adds to it. The word as it is to-day, has not discarded everything

that smacks of spiritual values. Much less is it so in India. The general human mind with the exception of a few groups here and there, does not discard a political weapon simply because it also is a spiritual weapon useful for personal aims. That the Congress creed, "peaceful", is accepted by even groups of Indian Socialists, clearly proves that the non-violence to which the Congress is pledged is of a political variety. Its "legitimate" means exclude only narrow diplomacy and opportunist and Machiavellian tactics. These are excluded from any wise, farseeing, fundamental statesmanship. History records of no instance where major problems of a nation were solved by diplomacy and opportunism. For a slave nation any use of such methods would, instead of raising the morale and character of the people, depress it. Therefore apart from any spiritual, purely on political and practical grounds these methods are rightly eschewed by the Congress. In a country suffering from slavery for centuries, every political and economic programme inevitably raises the moral backbone of the nation and the individuals. But that does not make the programme spiritual in any narrow sectarian or formal sense. Congress also does not believe in the convenient theory that "The end justifies the means." But this can scarcely make it spiritual. Many spiritual sects have held, and do hold such doctrines. But the Congress, not on any spiritual but on moral, practical, utilitarian grounds, has rejected the convenient theory productive of fanaticism, cruelty, bloodshed and destruction in the world. Congress methods of work are not anti-moral. When they are not a-moral, they are ethical. Ethics is mainly concerned with just, right and brotherly conduct between neighbours. Neighbour includes the opponent

and the criminal. Ethics, even as law, accords the latter a definite place in its scheme and sees to it that they are spared unnecessary hardship and avoidable cruelty. But Ethics and law must be distinguished from spirituality in any scientific discussion. ✓

The concrete programme of the Congress consists of village work, village industries, labour and Kisan organisation, Khadi, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, spread of Hindustani and the Parliamentary activity. With the exception of untouchability none of these can be considered non-political and spiritual. For individuals they may be means of spiritual and moral advancement. But the Congress has accepted them for their political, economic and practical value and utility. Untouchability, as it exists in India to-day, is not a purely religious question. It is political, economic, and above all humanitarian. Without its removal the nation will be divided against itself, and its demand for independence will sound unreal and hollow.

The leadership of the Congress, neither in the past, nor in the present has laid any claim to spirituality. If, however, devotion to a cause that is not personal, sacrifice and suffering, constitute any claim to spirituality, the leaders have possessed these qualities in an ample measure. Beyond this, all of them with the exception of Gandhiji, were and are hard-headed practical patriots and politicians. Gandhiji, no doubt, is supposed to combine practical politics with spirituality. But nobody has ever suspected that he lacks practical and political ability. Lloyd George once said of him that he is the shrewdest politician going. Sometimes his opponents have found his politics so intriguing and shrewd that they have charged him with Machiavellian methods.

But to friends and impartial observers, he is transparently honest and means what he says, and ever lays his cards on the table.

So neither the aims, methods, programmes or personalities of the Congress lay any particular pretensions to spirituality. How then is it, that this charge is made by well-informed and responsible persons? There are two main causes for this. One is that for a school of socialists, everything that does not square with materialism and socialism, is medieval and therefore spiritual, for the motive force in the middle ages is considered to be primarily spiritual, rather than political. How far this view of the middle ages is correct, and based upon facts may not be discussed here. The second reason that makes for confusion is the use of words and phrases that are old and have some association with spiritual ideas. There is such a thing as the fallacy of words. Thinking and analytical capacity are very often paralysed and go astray by the confusion caused by language. Only with great care can one escape from this. Words like Purna Swaraj, Satyagraha, Ram Raj, Hartal, Village Industries, Khadi, raise in the modern mind ideas that appear medieval and therefore, spiritual. If, in place of these are substituted words like complete independence, non-co-operation, democratic rule, general strike, decentralisation of industry, the same ideas become modern, up-to-date, and purely political and economic. Whether the new words, very often in a foreign tongue, will be understood and appreciated by the masses, is a question which the critics of the Congress do not seem to bother about. India must line up with the language and thought of the West, otherwise there is political isolation and stagnation.

## SPIRITUALITY AND POLITICS

(*March, 1937*)

PUBLIC or patriotic service in India is the exception and not the rule. People are used to sacrifice for the family, the caste and the denomination. When sacrifice becomes customary it loses its significance as sacrifice. It is expected of everybody. Those who refuse are considered unsocial and subnormal. Human beings are ever undergoing innumerable personal inconveniences to live in society but such inconveniences are not termed sacrifices for they have become customary. In India service to the family, the caste and religion are customary, not so service to the nation.

National service involves no more inconvenience than other services, but because it is not done, all those who render it are considered superior beings. They undergo not the ordinary but the exceptional inconveniences. India knows only one superiority. A superior person must be a spiritual person. Spirituality whatever it might have meant in the past, to-day in India when it is not formal and ceremonial, means asceticism and mortification of the flesh. Every national worker must, therefore, conform to this standard.

In the west a national worker lives a normal life. He makes large sacrifices and even at times lays down his life, yet nobody assigns to him for all that a spiritual character. He is not expected to live like an anchorite. He lives the ordinary life of a citizen in food, dress and other necessities of physical existence. In

India it is not enough for a national worker to make large sacrifices in money and comfort, but he must also eschew all ordinary demands of physical nature. What in India specially among the Hindus is not a pleasure of the body ! A national worker may not go to a Cinema without public criticism. He may not visit a hotel if he is hungry. He may not smoke, he may not drink tea or coffee. If he is a Mussalman he must not shave. A Hindu national worker may not eat eggs, meat or fish without injuring the feelings of some sensitive souls. He may not enjoy his property. If he has any acquired by his former effort or left to him by his ancestors, approved rules require that he should give it up all. In the case of woman, all ornaments are taboo. The hair must be parted only in the orthodox fashion. In short, a patriot must be an ascetic for only such can enter the kingdom of national service. The popular prohibitions go much beyond what the Congress rightly as a national policy has proscribed,—liquor and foreign cloth and generally foreign goods.

When the Khilafat movement was at its height, it was incumbent on a Muslim patriot to cultivate the beard, and the conventional pious cut of the moustach. If his chin was without beard he could not get a hearing. If his lips were clean he could never be a fit servant of the country or the Khilafat. He must not pose for a photo. Often one heard the criticism in the life time of the great patriot, Motilalji, that he had not given up all his property and was yet living a life of comparative ease, comfort and even luxury. To-day the same criticism is not rare against his son, though for years he has lived behind prison walls. This criticism is not confined to the ignorant and the orthodox. Even the

educated indulge in this thoughtless confusion. Public workers are criticised for a pen, for a watch, for a safety razor, for anything that appears to any of the many orthodoxies, as a new or an impious thing or that is taboo to any of the many old and new puritanic sects.

If a public worker were to conform to the popular and the approved standards, he would be half-naked in dress, half-starved in body, with intellect ill-furnished with the problems, political and economic, facing the world or even India, with aesthetic and artistic sense atrophied, with emotions starved. Such a one would be an ideal patriot. He would be a fit servant in whom the country may well rejoice.

Ask an average Indian to render national service, however humble, his quick reply will be that he has not renounced the world, that he is a family man, that he yet wants to enjoy life. Living the ordinary normal life is considered not to be consistent with national service. A German, a Jap and an Englishman can, when occasion arises, face the cannon ; he can and does go direct from the dancing-hall, the cafe and the billiard room to the trenches, but the Indian is considered so soft of character that he will betray his country if he does not keep up to the ascetic standards.

It is no wonder, therefore, that one finds so few specially among the young coming forward for national service. When society keeps such unreal, false and high standards it should not be surprised that it is rewarded by an abundant production of pharisees and hypocrites. Earnest people, not being by training, temperament or conviction anchorites, start to engage in national work and find that at every turn they have to make com-

promises and sometimes they have to pretend. It is always dangerous for a public man to pretend. He lives in the public eye. Sooner or later what he does is known. The public and his friends are then needlessly shocked. If this were, however, the only mischief done, it would be a cheap price. What is worse, the public soon begins to suspect all of duplicity and loses faith and confidence in political workers. Much of the complaint against national workers is of this character.

Yet another thing. Every public worker in the Congress is supposed to have accepted the lead of Gandhiji in his life. Gandhiji is considered not only the political but also the spiritual Guru of national workers. Tell people that you have accepted only the politics of Gandhiji, they would refuse to take you at your word. You are supposed to observe the whole of his experimental morality. He claims no finality for himself. But the public and some of his admirers claim it for him. If you have promised to remain non-violent in politics you are expected to go further and love all humanity whether your capacity and evolution warrant your being on such high altitudes or not. It is not the law of your being that you have to follow but the law of Gandhiji's being or rather the caricature of it evolved by the public imagination.

The nations of to-day cannot afford to have a caste or class of fighters whether they be soldiers of the sword or of Satyagraha. National work must be done by all—high and low, rich and poor. They must, therefore, all perform the duties of citizens. If they are to do so, no extraordinary standards of conduct must be imposed upon them. Ordinary *gentlemanly* conduct should satisfy

the most critical standards. Political life must not be confused with spiritual life. As a matter of fact Politics can never be made spiritual. Politics is primarily concerned with group activity and external action. Inner motive and individual right judgment have great value but not the preponderating value that they have in spiritual life. Spiritual life, if it is not mere form and ceremony, is primarily concerned with individual and inner life, with the life of motive. Here the individual in his psyche is the most important. The group occupies a secondary place. The inner springs are more important than outward conduct. The evil eye is of the essence even when outward manifestation is wanting. If politics, law and social conduct made the inner springs and motives as their primary concern, public life instead of being purified and elevated would be confused.

Spiritual life if it means anything, means spiritual realization. This can scarcely be the goal of a group or a nation. The disciplines necessary for this realization are various and diverse. Sometimes they are so complicated and conflicting, that if a group dabbled in them for purposes of its collective life, it would be lost in confusion. For instance, it will be a sight to see a whole nation prostrating before an image or sitting in Samadhi or better still standing on its head. All such practices are common among individuals for the control of their emotions and passions to ensure spiritual advancement. The centre of spiritual life is the individual in his psychic life. The primary concern of politics is the group, therefore, necessarily the external social conduct. But even in religion the distinction is made between the Sanyasi, who has renounced

better substitutes for all the three methods and when we find them, I hope, following in the footsteps of Gandhi, who is ever willing to learn and is bound by no rigid and inflexible rules, we shall ever be found in the front rank of the fighters for the country's liberty. To that end, we hope, we have dedicated our lives and not to any particular doctrine or dogma.

Printed by G. G. Pathare at the Popular Printing Press, 103, Tardeo  
Road, Bombay 7 and published by M. K. Vora for Vora & Co.  
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