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P.R. Subrahmanyam

WHITHER INDIA?

By
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

a very wonderful book giving lucidly
in a few pages the case for Socialism
in this country and elsewhere. His
exposition of Capitalism as a vicious-
circle is highly logical as well as
equitable. It is the only remedy for the
economic crippling of our Motherland even
before the influence of Capitalism
is felt. Mahamed Ghoni could be pardoned
but not British Imperialism. The former's

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ALLAHABAD AND LONDON

raid on the temple of Somnath was a
with a religious fervour - the latter
latter raping the Indian Peasantry

of their wealth and happiness is highly selfish and typical of the British. Those of our own countrymen who are were and are abetting this crime, stand condemned by their own shame which will come upon them when India becomes energetic.

The vision of Nehru is not far off and those of us who can reach their hearts can hear the call even now. It is not by conversion this purpose is going to be achieved but by revolution - not a revolution in blood but a non-violent and very dynamic one taught to us by a great leader of men, Mahatma Gandhi.

P. R. Subrahmanyam
P. R. March '39.

WHITHER INDIA?

The newcomer from prison has long been cut off from the rough and tumble of life and politics, and yet he has a certain advantage on his side. He can take a more detached view; he is not so much wrapped up in the controversies of the moment; he may be able to stress principles when others argue about petty tactics; he may actually see the realities under the surface of ever-changing phenomena.

Many people ask: What are we to do? The mouths of most of those who could answer, or help in framing the answer are shut either in prison or outside. But free advice, often accompanied by threats, comes to us in an unending stream from those who rule us and their faithful followers in this land. They warn us and threaten us and cajole us and offer us good advice by turns, anxious to influence us and yet uncertain of the right approach to us. Let us leave them and their advice for the moment; such gifts, even when free, are apt to be suspect.

Right action cannot come out of nothing; it must be preceded by thought. Thought which is not meant to lead to action has been called an abortion; action which is not based on thought is chaos and confusion. It is worthwhile therefore to clear our minds of all the tangled webs that may have grown there, to forget for the moment the immediate problems before us, the difficult knots we have

to unravel, the day to day worries, and go back a little to basic facts and principles. What exactly do we want? And why do we want it?

I write with diffidence because I have for long been cut off from the nationalist press, but I have a feeling that little attention is paid to these basic facts and principles. The censorship may be partly to blame for this, or the fear of it, but even that, I think, is not a sufficient explanation. Attention seems to be concentrated on the most trivial of issues and vital matters are ignored. Should Gandhiji see the Viceroy or not? Will Stanley Baldwin triumph over Winston Churchill? What has Sir Samuel Hoare said or not said? Are we going to get that wonderful thing called "Central Responsibility" or not? Hardly a reference to what we are driving at, hardly a thought of real issues.

Never in the long range of history has the world been in such a state of flux as it is to-day. Never has there been so much anxious questioning, so much doubt and bewilderment, so much examining of old institutions, existing ills and suggested remedies. There is a continuous process of change and revolution going on all over the world, and everywhere anxious statesmen are almost at their wits' end and grope about in the dark. It is obvious that we are a part of this great world problem and must be affected by world events. And yet, judging from the attention paid to these events in India, one would not think so. Major events are recorded in the news columns of papers but little attempt is made to see behind and beneath them, to understand the forces that are shaking and reforming the world before our eyes, to comprehend the essential nature of social, economic, and political reality. History,

whether past or present, becomes just a magic show with little rhyme or reason, and with no lesson for us which might guide our future path. On the gaily-decked official stage of India or England phantom figures come and go, posing for a while as great statesmen; Round Tablers flit about like pale shadows of those who created them, engaged in pitiful and interminable talk which interests few and affects an even smaller number. Their main concern is how to save the vested interests of various classes or groups; their main diversion, apart from feasting, is self-praise. Others, blissfully ignorant of all that has happened in the last half century, still talk the jargon of the Victorian Age and are surprised and resentful that nobody listens to them. Even the nasmyth hammer of war and revolution and world change has failed to produce the slightest dent on their remarkably hard heads. Yet others hide vested interests under cover of communalism or even nationalism. And then there is the vague but passionate nationalism of many who find present conditions intolerable and hunger for national freedom without clearly realising what form that freedom will take. And there are also here, as in many other countries, the usual accompaniments of a growing nationalism—an idealism, a mysticism, a feeling of exaltation, a belief in the mission of one's country, and something of the nature of religious revivalism. Essentially all these are middle class phenomena.

Our politics must either be those of magic or of science. The former of course requires no argument or logic; the latter is in theory at least entirely based on clarity of thought and reasoning and has no room for vague idealistic or religious or sentimental processes which confuse and befog the mind. Personally I have no faith in or use

for the ways of magic and religion and I can only consider the question on scientific grounds.

What then are we driving at? Freedom? Swaraj? Independence? Dominion Status? Words which may mean much or little or nothing at all. Egypt is "independent" and yet, as everybody knows it is at present little better than an Indian State, an autocracy imposed upon an unwilling people and propped up by the British. Economically, Egypt is a colony of some of the European imperialist Powers, notably the British. Ever since the World War there has been continuous conflict between Egyptian nationalism and the ruling authorities and this continues to-day. So in spite of a so-called "independence" Egypt is very far from even national freedom.

Again, whose freedom are we particularly striving for, for nationalism covers many sins and includes many conflicting elements? There is the feudal India of the princes, the India of the big zamindars, of small zamindars, of the professional classes, of the agriculturists, of the industrialists, of the bankers, of the lower middle class, of the workers. There are the interests of foreign capital and those of home capital, of foreign services and home services. The nationalist answer is to prefer home interests to foreign interests but beyond that it does not go. It tries to avoid disturbing the class divisions or the social *status quo*. It imagines that the various interests will somehow be accommodated when the country is free. Being essentially a middle class movement, nationalism works chiefly in the interests of that class. It is obvious that there are serious conflicts between various interests in a country, and every law, every policy which is good for one interest may be harmful for another. What is good for the Indian

prince may be thoroughly bad for the people of his State, what is profitable for the zamindar may ruin many of his tenants, what is demanded by foreign capital may crush the rising industries of the country.

Nothing is more absurd than to imagine that all the interests in the nation can be fitted in without injury to any. At every step some have to be sacrificed for others. A currency policy may be good for creditors or debtors, not for both at the same time. Inflation, resulting in a reduction or even wiping off of debts, will be welcomed by all debtors and by industry as a rule, but cursed by bankers and those who have fixed incomes. Early in the nineteenth century England deliberately sacrificed her agriculture for her rising industry. A few years ago, in 1925, by insisting on keeping the value of the pound sterling at par she sacrificed, to some extent, her industry to her banking and financial system, and faced industrial troubles and a huge general strike.

Any number of such instances can be given; they deal with the rival claims of different groups of the possessing classes. A more vital conflict of interest arises between these possessing classes as a whole and the other; between the Haves and Have-Nots. All this is obvious enough, but every effort is made to confuse the real issue by the holders of power, whether political or economic. The British Government is continually declaring before high heaven that they are trustees for our masses and India and England have common interests and can march hand in hand to a common destiny. Few people are taken in by this because nationalism makes us realise the inherent conflict between the two national interests. But nationalism does not make us realise the equally inherent and funda-

mental conflict between economic interests within the nation. There is an attempt to cover this up and avoid it on the ground that the national issue must be settled first. Appeals are issued for unity between different classes and groups to face the common national foe, and those who point out the inherent conflict between landlord and tenant, or capitalist and wage labourer are criticised.

We may take it that the average person does not like conflict and continuous tension; he prefers peace and quiet, and is even prepared to sacrifice much for it. But the ostrich-like policy of refusing to see a conflict and a disorder which not only exist but are eating into society's vitals, to blind oneself to reality, will not end the conflict and the disorder or suddenly change reality into unreality; for a politician or a man of action such a policy can only end in disaster. It is therefore essential that we keep this in mind and fashion our idea of freedom accordingly. We cannot escape having to answer the question, now or later, for the freedom of which class or classes in India are we especially striving for? Do we place the masses, the peasantry and workers, first or some other small class at the head of our list? Let us give the benefits of freedom to as many groups and classes as possible, but essentially who do we stand for, and when a conflict arises whose side must we take? To say that we shall not answer that question now is itself an answer and taking of sides, for it means that we stand by the existing order, the *status quo*.

The form of government is after all a means to an end; even freedom itself is a means, the end being human well-being, human growth, the ending of poverty and disease and suffering and the opportunity for every one to live the "good life," physically and mentally. What the

"good life" is, is a matter we cannot go into here, but most people will agree that freedom is essential to it—national freedom so far as the nation is concerned, personal freedom so far as the individual is concerned. For every restriction and inhibition stops growth and development and produces, apart from economic disorders, complexes and perversions in the nation and individual. So freedom is necessary. Equally necessary is the will and the capacity for co-operation. Modern life grows so complex, there is so much interdependence, that co-operation is the very breath that keeps it functioning.

The long course of history shows us a succession of different forms of government and changing economic forms of production and organisation. The two fit in and shape and influence each other. When economic change goes ahead too fast and the forms of government remain more or less static, a hiatus occurs, which is usually bridged over by a sudden change called revolution. The tremendous importance of economic events in shaping history and forms of government is almost universally admitted now.

We are often told that there is a world of difference between the East and the West. The West is said to be materialistic, the East spiritual, religious, etc. What exactly the East signifies is seldom indicated, for the East includes the Bedouins of the Arabian deserts, the Hindus of India, the nomads of the Siberian Steppes, the pastoral tribes of Mongolia, the typically irreligious Confucians of China, and the Samurai of Japan. There are tremendous national and cultural differences between the different countries of Asia as well as of Europe; but there is no such thing as East and West except in the minds of those who

wish to make this an excuse for imperialist domination, or those who have inherited such myths and fictions from a confused metaphysical past. Differences there are but they are chiefly due to different stages of economic growth.

We see, in north-western Europe, autocracy and feudalism giving place to the present capitalist order involving competition and large-scale production. The old small holdings disappear; the feudal checks on the serfs and cultivators go, and these agriculturists are also deprived of the little land they had. Large numbers of landless people are thrown out of employment and they have no land to fall back upon. A landless, propertyless proletariat is thus created. At the same time the checks and the controlled prices of the limited markets of feudal times disappear, and the open market appears. Ultimately this leads to the world market, the characteristic feature of capitalism.

Capitalism builds up on the basis of the landless proletariat, which could be employed as wage labourers in the factories, and the open market, where the machine-made goods could be sold. It grows rapidly and spreads all over the world. In the producing countries it was an active and living capitalism; in the colonial and consuming countries it was just a passive consumption of the goods made by machine industry in the West. North-western Europe, and a little later, North America, exploit the resources of the world; they exploit Asia, Africa, East Europe and South America. They add vastly to the wealth of the world but this wealth is largely concentrated in a few nations and a few hands.

In this growth of capitalism, dominion over India was of vital importance to England. India's gold, in the early

stages, helped in the further industrialisation of England. And then India became a great producer of raw material to feed the factories of England and a huge market to consume the goods made in these factories. England, in her passionate desire to accumulate wealth, sacrificed her agriculture to her industry. England became almost a kind of vast city and India the rural area attached to her.

The concentration of wealth in fewer hands went on. But the exploitation of India and other countries brought so much wealth to England that some of it trickled down to the working class and their standards of living rose. Working class agitations were controlled and soothed by concessions from the capitalist owners, which they could well afford from the profits of imperialist exploitation. Wages rose; hours of work went down; there were insurance and other welfare schemes for the workers. A general prosperity in England took the edge off working class discontent.

In India, passive industrialisation meant an ever growing burden on land. She became just a consumer of foreign machine-made goods. Her own cottage industries were partly destroyed forcibly, and partly by economic forces, and nothing took their place. All the ingredients and conditions for industrialisation were present, but England did not encourage this, and indeed tried to prevent it by taxing machinery. And so the burden on the land grew and with it unemployment and poverty, and there was a progressive ruralisation of India.

But the processes of history and economics cannot be stopped for long. Although general poverty was increasing, small groups accumulated some capital and wanted fields for investment. And so machine industry grew in

India, partly with Indian capital, very much more so with foreign capital. Indian capital was largely dependent on foreign capital and, in particular, could be controlled by the foreign banking system. It is well known that the World War gave a great push to Indian industry and afterwards, for reasons of imperial policy, England changed her policy towards Indian industry and began to encourage it, but mostly with foreign capital. The growth of so-called swadeshi industries in India thus represented to a very great extent the increasing hold of British capital on India.

The growth of industries and nationalist movements in all the countries of the East checked Western exploitation and the profits of Western capitalism began to go down. War debts and other consequences of the war were a tremendous burden for all the countries concerned. There was not so much money or profits of industry to be distributed to the working class in the West, and the discontent and pressure of the workers grew. There was also the living incentive and inspiration of the Russian Revolution for the workers.

Meanwhile two other processes were working silently but with great rapidity. One was the concentration of wealth and industrial power in fewer hands by the formation of huge trusts, cartels, and combines. The other was a continuous improvement in technique in the methods of production, leading to greater mechanisation, far greater production, and more unemployment as workers were replaced by machinery. And this led to a curious result. Just when industry was producing goods on the biggest mass scale in history, there were few people to buy them as the great majority were too poor to be able to afford them. The armies of the unemployed were not earning

anything; so how could they spend; and even the majority of those earning had little to spare. A new truth suddenly dawned on the perplexed minds of the great captains of industry (this dawning process has not yet taken place among the leaders of industry in India), and the truth was this: that mass production necessitates mass consumption. But if the masses have no money how are they to buy or consume? And what of production then? So production is stopped or restricted and the wheels of industry slow down till they barely move. Unemployment grows all the more and this again makes consumption diminish.

This is the crisis of capitalism which has had the world by the throat for over four years. Essentially it is due to the ill distribution of the world's wealth; to its concentration in a few hands. And the disease seems to be of the essence of capitalism and grows with it till it eats and destroys the very system which created it. There is no lack of money in the world, no lack of food stuffs, or the many other things that man requires. The world is richer to-day than it has ever been and holds promise of untold advance in the near future. And yet the system breaks down and while millions starve and endure privation, huge quantities of food stuffs and other articles are destroyed, insect pests are let loose on the fields to destroy crops, harvests are not gathered, and nations meet together to confer how to restrict future crops of wheat and cotton and tea and coffee and so many other articles. From the beginning of history man has fought with nature to get the barest necessities of life, and now that nature's wealth is poured out before him, enough to remove poverty for ever from the world, his only way of dealing with it is

to burn and destroy it, and become poorer and more destitute in the process.

History has never offered a more amazing paradox. It seems clear enough that the capitalist system of industry, whatever its services in the past may have been, is no longer suited to the present methods of production. Technical advance has gone far ahead of the existing social structure and, as in the past, this hiatus causes most of our present-day disorders. Till that lag is made up and a new system in keeping with the new technique is adopted, the disorders are likely to continue. The change over to the new system is of course opposed by those who have vested interests in the old system and though this old system is dying before their eyes, they prefer to hold on to their little rather than share a lot with others.

It is not, fundamentally, a moral issue, as some people imagine, although there is a moral side to it. It is not a question of blaming capitalism or cursing capitalists and the like. Capitalism has been of the greatest service to the world and individual capitalists are but tiny wheels in the big machine. The question now is whether the capitalist system has not outlived its day and must now give place to a better and a saner ordering of human affairs, which is more in keeping with the progress of science and human knowledge.

In India, during this period, the tremendous burden on land continued and even increased, despite the growth of industry in certain areas. Economic discontent increased. The middle classes grew up, and finding no sufficient scope for self-development, demanded political changes and took to agitation. More or less similar causes worked all over the colonial and dependent East. Especially

after the War, national movements grew rapidly in Egypt and most of the countries of Asia. These movements were essentially due to the distress of the masses and the lower middle classes. There was a strange similarity even in the methods employed by these movements—non-co-operation, boycotts of legislatures, boycotts of goods, *hartals*, strikes etc. Occasionally there were violent outbreaks, as in Egypt and Syria, but stress was laid far more on peaceful methods. In India, of course, non-violence was made a basic principle by the Congress at the suggestion of Gandhiji. All these national struggles for freedom have continued till now and they are bound to continue till a solution of the basic problem is found. Fundamentally, this solution is not merely a question of satisfying the natural desire for self-rule but one of filling hungry stomachs.

The great revolutionary nationalist urge in Asia of the after-war years gradually exhausted itself for the time being and conditions stabilised themselves. In India this took the form of the Swarajist entry into the Assembly and the Councils. In Europe also the middle nineteen-twenties was a period of settling down and adaptation to the new conditions created by the World War. The revolution that had hovered all over Europe in 1919 and 1920 failed to come off and receded into the background. American gold poured into Europe and revived to some extent the war-weary and disillusioned people of that continent and created a false appearance of prosperity. But this prosperity had no real basis and the crash came in 1929 when the United States of America stopped lending money to Europe and South America. Many factors, and especially the inherent conflicts of a declining capitalism, con-

tributed to this crash, and the house of cards of after-war capitalist prosperity began to tumble down. That process of tumbling down has been going on at a tremendous pace for four years and there is no end to it yet. It is called the slump, trade depression, the crisis, etc., but it is really the evening of the capitalist system and the world is being compelled by circumstances to recognise this. International trade is reaching vanishing point, international co-operation has failed, the world-market which was the essential basis of capitalism, is disappearing, and each nation is trying frantically to shift for itself at the cost of others. Whatever the future may bring, one thing is certain: that the old order has gone and all the king's horses and all the king's men will not set it up again.

As the old capitalist order has tottered, the challenge to it by the growing forces of labour has grown more intense. This challenge, when it has become dangerous, has induced the possessing classes to sink their petty differences and band themselves together to fight the common foe. This has led to fascism and, in its milder forms, to the formation of so-called national governments. Essentially, these are the last ditch efforts of the possessing classes, or the "kept classes" as they have been called by an American economist, to hold on to what they have. The struggle becomes more intense and the forms of nineteenth century democracy are discarded. But fascism or national governments offer no solution of the fundamental economic inconsistencies of the present-day capitalist system and so long as they do not remove the inequalities of wealth and solve the problem of distribution, they are doomed to fail. Of the major capitalist countries the United States of America is the only place where some attempt is being

made to-day towards lessening to a slight extent inequalities in wealth by State action. Carried to a logical conclusion, President Roosevelt's programme will lead to a form of State socialism; it is far more likely that the effort will fail and result in fascism. England, as is her habit, is grimly muddling through and waiting for something to happen. Meanwhile she has derived considerable help from India's gold and resources. But all this is temporary relief only and the nations slide downhill and approach the brink.

Thus, if we survey the world to-day, we find that capitalism, having solved the problem of production, helplessly faces the allied problem of distribution and is unable to solve it. It was not in the nature of the capitalist system to deal satisfactorily with distribution, and production alone makes the world top-heavy and unbalanced. To find a solution for distributing wealth and purchasing power evenly is to put an end to the basic inequalities of the capitalist system and to replace capitalism itself by a more scientific system.

Capitalism has led to imperialism and to the conflicts of imperialist powers in search for colonial areas for exploitation, for areas of raw produce and for markets for manufactured goods. It has led to ever-increasing conflicts with the rising nationalism of colonial countries, and to social conflicts with powerful movements of the exploited working class. It has resulted in recurrent crises, political and economic, leading to economic and tariff wars as well as political wars on an enormous scale. Every subsequent crisis is on a bigger scale than the previous one, and now we live in a perpetual state of crisis and slump and the shadow of war darkens the horizon.

And yet it is well to remember that the world to-day has a surfeit of food and the other good things of life. Terrible want exists because the present system does not know how to distribute them. Repeated international conferences have failed to find a way out because they represented the interests of vested interests and dared not touch the system itself. They grope blindly in the dark in their stuffy rooms while the foundations of the house they built are being sapped by the advance of science and economic events. Everywhere thinkers have recognised the utter inadequacy of the existing system, though they have differed as to the remedies. Communists and socialists point with confidence to the way of socialism and they are an ever growing power for they have science and logic on their side. In America a great stir was caused recently by the Technocrats, a group of engineers who want to do away with money itself and to substitute for it a unit of energy, an erg. In England the social credit theories of Major Douglas, according to which the whole production of the nation will be evenly distributed to the whole population—a kind of “dividends for all”—, find increasing acceptance. Barter takes the place of trade both in the domestic and the international market. The growth of these revolutionary theories even among the well-to-do classes, and especially the intellectuals, is in itself an indication of the tremendous change in mentality that is taking place in the world. How many of us can conceive a world without money and with the invisible erg as its measure of value? And yet this is soberly and earnestly advocated not by wild agitators but by well-known economists and engineers.

This is the world background.

The Asiatic background is intimately related to this and yet it has its peculiar features. Asia is the main field of conflict between nationalism and imperialism. Asia is still undeveloped as compared to Europe and North America. It has a vast population which can consume goods if they had the necessary purchasing power to do so. To the hard-pressed imperialist Powers seeking frantically for areas of economic expansion, Asia still offers a field, though nationalism offers many obstructions. Hence the talk of a “push to Asia” to find an outlet for the surplus goods of the West and thus stabilise Western capitalism for another period. Capitalism is a young and growing force in the East; it has not, as in India, wholly overthrown feudalism yet. But even before capitalism had established itself other forces, inimical to it, have risen to challenge it. And it is obvious that if capitalism collapses in Europe and America it cannot survive in Asia.

Nationalism is still the strongest force in Asia (we can ignore for our present purpose the Soviet territories of Asia). This is natural as a country under alien domination must inevitably think first in terms of nationalism. But the powerful economic forces working for change in the world to-day have influenced this nationalism to an ever-increasing extent and everywhere it is appearing in socialistic garb. Gradually the nationalist struggle for political freedom is becoming a social struggle also for economic freedom. Independence and the socialist State become the objectives, with varying degrees of stress being laid on the two aspects of the problem. As political freedom is delayed, the other aspect assumes greater importance, and it now seems probable, especially because of world conditions, that political and social emancipation

to DECEMBER 25th

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22

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will come together to some at least of the countries of Asia.

That is the Asiatic background.

In India, as in other Asiatic colonial countries, we find a struggle to-day between the old nationalist ideology and the new economic ideology. Most of us have grown up under the nationalist tradition and it is hard to give up the mental habits of a lifetime. And yet we realise that this outlook is inadequate; it does not fit in with existing conditions in our country or in the world; there is a hiatus, a lag. We try to bridge this hiatus but the process of crossing over to a new ideology is always a painful one. Many of us are confused and perplexed to-day because of this. But the crossing has to be made, unless we are to remain in a stagnant backwater, overwhelmed from time to time by the wash of the boats that move down the river of progress. We must realise that the nineteenth century cannot solve the problems of the twentieth, much less can the seventh century or earlier ages do so.

Having glanced at the general background of Asia and the world we can have a clearer view of our own national problem. India's freedom affects each one of us intimately and we are apt to look upon it as a thing apart and unconnected with world events. But the Indian problem is a part of the Asiatic problem and is tied up with the problems of the world. We cannot, even if we will it, separate it from the rest. What happens in India will affect the world and world events will change India's future. Indeed it may be said that the three great world problems to-day are: the fate of capitalism, which means the fate of Europe and America, the future of India, and the future of China, and all these are inter-related.

India's struggle to-day is part of the great struggle

which is going on all over the world for the emancipation of the oppressed. Essentially, this is an economic struggle, with hunger and want as its driving forces, although it puts on nationalist and other dresses.

Indian freedom is necessary because the burden on the Indian masses as well as the middle classes is too heavy to be borne and must be lightened or done away with. The measure of freedom is the extent to which this burden is removed. This burden is due to the vested interests of a foreign government as well as those of certain groups and classes in India and abroad. The achievement of freedom thus becomes a question, as Gandhiji said recently, of divesting vested interests. If an indigenous government took the place of the foreign government and kept all the vested interests intact, this would not even be the shadow of freedom.

We have got into an extraordinary habit of thinking of freedom in terms of paper constitutions. Nothing could be more absurd than this lawyer's mentality which ignores life and the vital economic issues and can only proceed on the basis of the *status quo* and precedents. Too much reliance on past practice has somehow succeeded in twisting the lawyer's head backwards and he seems to be incapable of looking ahead. Even the halt and the lame go slowly forward; not so the lawyer who is convinced, like the fanatic in religion, that truth can only lie in the past.

The Round Table scheme is almost as dead as Queen Anne and hardly deserves notice. It was not meant to give an iota of freedom to the Indian people; it sought to win over certain Indian vested interests to the British side and in this it succeeded. It answered, to the satisfaction of its votaries, the question I had formulated at the beginning

of this essay: whose freedom are we striving for? It gave greater protection and assurance and freedom to the British vested interests in India. It was Home Rule for the Viceroy as Mr. Vithalbhai Patel said. It confirmed the interests of British capital and British services and, in some cases, gave them even more than they have now. It tried to perpetuate the alien military occupation of India. Further, it gave greater freedom and importance to the vested interests of the princes and the semi-feudal magnates. In brief, the whole scheme was meant for the protection and perpetuation of the numerous vested interests that exploit the Indian masses. Having done this useful and, to themselves, profitable piece of work, the originators of the scheme told us that autonomy was a costly affair and would mean the expenditure of many extra millions for each province! Thus not only were all the old burdens on the masses to be continued but many new ones were to be added. This was the ingenious solution discovered by the wise and learned men who foregathered at the Round Table Conference. Intent on protecting their class privileges they happened to forget an odd three hundred and fifty million people in India.

Even a child in politics can point out the folly of this procedure. The whole basis and urge of the national movement came from a desire for economic betterment, to throw off the burdens that crushed the masses and to end the exploitation of the Indian people. If these burdens continue and are actually added to, it does not require a powerful mind to realise that the fight must not only continue but grow more intense. Leaders and individuals may come and go; they may get tired and slacken off; they may compromise or betray; but the exploited and

suffering masses must carry on the struggle for their drill-sergeant is hunger. Swaraj or freedom from exploitation for them is not a fine paper constitution or a problem of the hereafter. It is question of the here and now, of immediate relief. Roast lamb and mint sauce may be a tasty dish for those who eat it but the poor lamb is not likely to appreciate the force of the best of arguments which point out the beauty of sacrifice for the good of the elect and the joys of close communion, even though dead, with mint sauce.

India's immediate goal can therefore only be considered in terms of the ending of the exploitation of her people. Politically, it must mean independence and the severance of the British connection, which means imperialist dominion; economically and socially it must mean the ending of all special class privileges and vested interests. The whole world is struggling to this end; India can do no less, and in this way the Indian struggle for freedom lines up with the world struggle. Is our aim human welfare or the preservation of class privileges and the vested interests of pampered groups? The question must be answered clearly and unequivocally by each one of us. There is no room for quibbling when the fate of nations and millions of human beings is at stake. The day for palace intrigues and parlour politics and pacts and compromises passes when the masses enter politics. Their manners are not those of the drawing room; we never took the trouble to teach them any manners. Their school is the school of events and suffering is their teacher. They learn their politics from great movements which bring out the true nature of individuals and classes, and the civil disobedience movement has taught the Indian

masses many a lesson which they will never forget.

Independence is a much abused word and it hardly connotes what we are driving at. And yet there is no other suitable word and, for want of a better, we must use it. National isolation is neither a desirable nor a possible ideal in a world which is daily becoming more of a unit. International and intra-national activities dominate the world and nations are growing more and more inter-dependent. Our ideal and objective cannot go against this historical tendency and we must be prepared to discard a narrow nationalism in favour of world co-operation and real internationalism. Independence therefore cannot mean for us isolation but freedom from all imperialist control, and because Britain to-day represents imperialism, our freedom can only come after the British connection is severed. We have no quarrel with the British people, but between British imperialism and Indian freedom there is no meeting ground and there can be no peace. If imperialism goes from Britain we shall gladly co-operate with her in the wider international field; not otherwise.

British statesmen of the Liberal and Labour variety often point out to us the ills of a narrow nationalism and dwell on the virtues of what used to be known as the British Empire and is now euphemistically called the British Commonwealth of Nations. Under cover of fine and radical words and phrases they seek to hide the ugly and brutal face of imperialism and try to keep us in its embrace of death. Some Indian public men, who ought to know better, also praise the virtues of internationalism, meaning thereby the British Empire, and tell us in sorrow how narrow-minded we are in demanding independence,

in place of that wonderful thing (which nobody offers us) Dominion Status. The British, it is well known, have a remarkable capacity for combining their moral instincts with their self-interest. That is perhaps not unnatural, but it is remarkable how some of our own countrymen are taken in by this unctuous and hypocritical attitude. Even the light of day is wasted on those who keep their eyes shut. It is worth noting however that the foreign policy of England has been the greatest stumbling block to international co-operation through the League of Nations or otherwise. All the European and American world knows this but most of us, who look at foreign politics through English spectacles, have not grasped this fact yet. Disarmament, air-bombing, the attitude to the Manchurian question, are some of the recent witnesses to England's attitude. Even the Kellogg-Briand Pact of Paris, which was to have outlawed war, was only accepted by England subject to certain qualifications and reservations regarding her empire, which effectively nullified the Pact. The British Empire and real internationalism are as the poles apart and it is not through that empire that we can march to internationalism.

The real question before us, and before the whole world, is one of fundamental change of regime, politically, economically, socially. Only thus can we put India on the road to progress and stop the progressive deterioration of our country. In a revolutionary period, such as exists in the world to-day, it is foolish waste of energy to think and act in terms of carrying on the existing regime and trying to reform it and improve it. To do so is to waste the opportunity which history offers once in a long while. "The whole world is in revolution" says Mussolini.

"Events themselves are a tremendous force pushing us on like some implacable will." Individuals, however eminent, play but a minor role when the world is on the move. They may divert the main current here and there to some slight extent; they may not and cannot stop the rushing torrent. And therefore the only peace that can endure is with circumstances, not merely with men.

Whither India? Surely to the great human goal of social and economic equality, to the ending of all exploitation of nation by nation and class by class, to national freedom within the framework of an international co-operative socialist world federation. This is not such an empty idealist dream as some people imagine. It is within the range of the practical politics of to-day and the near future. We may not have it within our grasp but those with vision can see it emerging on the horizon. And even if there be delay in the realisation of our goal, what does it matter if our steps march in the right direction and our eyes look steadily in front. For in the pursuit itself of a mighty purpose there is joy and happiness and a measure of achievement. As Bernard Shaw has said: "This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature, instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

SOME CRITICISMS CONSIDERED

My articles entitled "Whither India?" have had a mixed welcome. But they have amply justified the labour spent on them for they have directed the public mind to certain basic problems which are seldom considered in India, and have perhaps made some people think on novel lines. There have been two types of criticisms: the left criticism which accepted the main line of thought but said that it did not go far enough, and the right criticism which attacked the very premises of my argument and rejected with anger my conclusions. On both sides the personal element was brought in and my seeming contradictions and weaknesses were pointed out.

I had attempted to deal with the problem as impersonally and objectively as it was possible for me and I had hoped that it would be so considered. Personalities count in politics but they should not intrude themselves when world problems and world forces are analysed and a meaning is sought to be drawn from them. It is therefore desirable that my many failings and deficiencies might be forgotten for a while for they do not affect these problems. Personally I am not conscious of any glaring inconsistencies in my ideas or activities during the last thirteen years or so but no doubt I am a partial observer. It is perfectly true that I have grown mentally during this

period and many a vague idea has taken shape and many a doubt has been removed. It is also true that as an active politician, having to face day to day problems, I have sometimes had to make compromises with life and the conditions that I found existing at a particular moment. But even so I am not aware of any betrayal of the ideal that drew me on or the principles I held.

I have not seen all the criticisms of my articles and even those that I have seen are too many to be dealt with here. I shall therefore confine my reply to two lengthy and anonymous criticisms—one by "G" which appeared in a number of newspapers in Northern India and the other entitled "Into the Pit..." which was published by *The Pioneer*. Both these deal with the problem from the extreme "right" point of view. I have already replied separately to the "left" criticism.

Reading these two anonymous articles I marvelled at the extreme ignorance of the writers of the accepted commonplaces of history and economics and modern thought, and the amazing confusion that existed in their heads. I am not vain enough to imagine that I shall succeed in illumining the dark corners of their brains or make them understand the most obvious and elementary facts. But I should like to inform them that there was nothing novel in my survey of history and present day conditions, although to them it might have appeared strange enough; it was a repetition of what practically every thinker and intelligent writer of to-day says. The conclusions drawn from this survey might differ, but the facts themselves are beyond dispute for all except those who have a horror of facts or an incapacity or unwillingness to see straight. *The Statesman* is no friend of communism or socialism.

It has given me fair warning that if I carry on in the way I am doing I shall have to be suppressed. And yet *The Statesman* said, after reading the first two of my articles: "With the Pandit's analysis of the problem we are largely in agreement, indeed substantially the same picture has often been presented in these columns." When, however, *The Statesman* saw my third article, in which an attempt was made to apply the conclusions it had largely accepted to India, it drew away in fear and anger.

I have been told that the "programme" I had laid down in my articles was wanting in clarity and details. As a matter of fact I had laid down no programme at all, much less a detailed programme, although a certain programme would follow inevitably if my premises and argument were correct. I had merely endeavoured to trace the course of historical development of capitalism and to point out how economic forces were dominating and changing the world. Both the criticisms I am dealing with have ignored this and have branched off into wholly irrelevant questions. What has the Gandhi-Irwin Pact to do with the subject I was considering? Soviet Russia, like King Charles' head, also seems to have become an obsession with the two anonymous critics and this nightmare has, I am afraid, seriously diminished their capacity for clear thought.

I have not defined "Capitalist" or "Capitalism," I am told, and, mortal sin, I have assumed the existence of British imperialism without proving it! I plead guilty to the charge and await sentence. Science is a revolutionary product (I agree) and must be avoided, and is not to-day's magic to-morrow's science? In any event my science is nescience leading straight "to a Soviet hell." "Into the

Pit . . . " of this close reasoning let us for the moment leave the author of this rigmarole.

But "G" runs him close. In a "scientific" world we are told "the wife may be regarded as sheer luxury." History has been ransacked by him to show that "no example could be produced to prove that the lot of the masses has ever been improved by violent means." It would be interesting to find out where "G" derived his knowledge of history. Then we are given an insight into European politics by being told that Germany and Italy have adopted Bolshevik methods. We await enlightenment as to what these methods are. But to judge of the efficacy of these methods we must wait for another hundred years! It is some comfort to know that we are in a position to judge of the effects of the French Revolution now.

It is a little difficult to say much about this ignorant jumble of crude ideas and prejudices. But we can draw this conclusion from it that when interests are at stake the mind and the intellect are forced into the background and passions hold the field. "There is nothing so passionate," says Yeats, the Irish poet, "as a vested interest disguised as an intellectual conviction."

When the word "capitalism" is used intelligently it can mean only one thing: the economic system that has developed since the Industrial Revolution which began in England a century and half ago. It means industrial capitalism. To give a recent definition (by G. D. H. Cole): capitalism means the developed system of production for profit based on private ownership of the means of production. It makes fundamentally for scarcity and not abundance, though the capitalist is often led to seek

ways of cheapening individual products. For it the making of profits is the end of production, and it necessarily treats wages as a cost to be kept down as low as possible, and therefore tends to restrict mass purchasing power.

It is this system that we have to consider and not the merits of individual capitalists, some of whom according to "G," are even prepared to make a big sacrifice, but with a proviso attached. I endeavoured very briefly to trace in my previous articles the growth and decline of this system and to point out that it was breaking up to-day. This process of disruption, owing to economic causes, has nothing to do with the goodness or otherwise of capitalists or our own wishes in the matter. If the diagnosis is correct then the disease must have a speedy and a fatal end however much some of us might desire a continuation of the present system.

The anonymous gentleman (or is it a lady?) from the Pit appears to think that the French Revolution and the Russian Bolshevik Revolution were the same kind of phenomena and represent an identical or similar conflict between social forces. There could be no greater error. The French Revolution was a continuation on a more thorough and far-reaching scale of the English Revolution which cost Charles I his head and James II his crown, and which brought the middle classes to the seats of power. These middle class revolutions largely ended the feudal period when political power was an inherited privilege.

In England the process was not as thorough as in France and hence relics of feudalism still linger in England and there are more class distinctions in England to-day than in almost any country of Europe or America. Napoleon carried on the work of the French Revolution

and was instrumental in establishing the capitalist middle class regime all over Western Europe. The whole of 19th century civilisation in Europe was based on the ideology of the French Revolution. This ideology in its turn derived from the ideas of Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopædists that is to say from the period before the Industrial Revolution. This ideology, with its slogan of political liberty, equality and fraternity, became completely out of date with the growth of industrial capitalism.

Political liberty brought the vote but it was gradually discovered that this was of little use when there was so much economic inequality. A starving man could do little with his vote and could be easily coerced and exploited. This gave rise to new theories and ideas based on the economic relations of various groups, and socialism saw the light of day. A vague and idealistic socialism developed later into the scientific socialism of Karl Marx. The Russian Revolution was the direct product and justification of the Marxist theory—the first revolution of March 1917 being a middle class turn over, the second one in November 1917 a proletarian victory.

The French Revolution was based on the idea of the sacredness of private property. The writer in *The Pioneer* does not seem to approve of the *sansculottes*. Perhaps it will surprise him to learn that they fought for the Declaration of the Rights of Man which in Article 17 declared: "La propriété étant un droit inviolable et sacré, nul ne peut être privé de ses propriétés. . . ."

It became evident, however, during the 19th century, that a theoretical equality before the law or the possession of a vote did not bring real equality. Economic inequa-

lity, the maldistribution of wealth, which capitalism progressively increased, made equality impossible of attainment and exploitation of man by man and group by group increased. Thinkers therefore came to the conclusion that economic equality should be aimed at and at the root of this was the control of the means of production by society as a whole and the severe restriction of private property.

No one has said, as *The Pioneer* article seems to imagine, that all men are physically or mentally equal, or that all nations, are similarly situated. What has been said, and what is admitted by the great majority of intelligent men, is that all human beings should have an equality of opportunity. The present capitalist system does not and cannot in the nature of things provide this equality of opportunity.

The famous 19th century saying about "government of the people, by the people and for the people" failed to materialise in practice because under the capitalist system the government was neither by the people nor for the people. It was a government by the possessing classes for their own benefit. The people, according to them were themselves: all others were in the outer darkness. A real government by the people and for the people can only be established when the masses hold power, that is under socialism when all the people really share in the government and the wealth of the country.

The Pioneer writer informs us that if the State becomes the sole capitalist then the lot of the workers will be worst of all because the State will exploit them mercilessly. This is a remarkable argument. What is the State under socialism and who benefits by the exploitation? If

the people as a whole choose to exploit themselves they are perfectly welcome to do so, but even so the benefits go to them as a whole and not to selected groups or individuals.

Where will the surplus go, he further asks in an agony of apprehension? He cannot get out of the old rut of thinking along the lines of the capitalist economics of scarcity. There will be no surplus in a properly ordered and planned society and whatever is produced will go towards raising the standard of living of the people. Certainly, a man should be allowed the fruits of his labour. It is because these fruits are forcibly taken away from him under the capitalist system that we object to that system. Only under socialism will he have the full enjoyment of these fruits of his toil.

It is perfectly true that there can be no perfect freedom for an individual or nation when there is co-operation or interdependence with others. Every form of social life involves a restriction of individual freedom. But it is the merest quibbling to say that there can be no such thing as national freedom within the framework of an international socialist federation. When a measure of national freedom is given up willingly for the purposes of international co-operation this is not usually considered as a loss of freedom for the individual or the group. Is Wales less free because it forms part of Great Britain?

"G" tells us that the "very idea that the interests of the upper and middle classes conflict with those of the peasantry and the workers seems to be untenable." And yet, strange to say, this untenable idea is held by almost every thinker or intelligent person in the West where a great deal of thought has been given to this subject. If he will study a little history or any modern book on the

subject it may help him to clear up his ideas. Or it might even be helpful to visit a factory and find out what the owners and the workers think about each other's interests.

Both the critics seem to be greatly interested in my views on non-violence. Am I for coercion or compulsion? "G" seems to thunder out, and he tells me, quoting Gandhiji as his authority, that the method alone is the deciding factor. I was not aware that Gandhiji had made any such one-sided statement although he has always laid stress on the methods to be employed.

None of these questions arises from my articles for I had dealt only with a historical process and the ideal to be aimed at. I had not referred to any methods. But it is desirable none the less to answer the questions.

However important the method may be I entirely fail to understand how it can take the place of the objective. It is essential to have the objective and know the direction before a single step can be taken. As for the method, I might clear the ground by saying that, so far as I am concerned, it does not consist of preaching religion or philanthropy. I have no use for either and I have often found that they cover the rankest hypocrisy and selfishness. I certainly believe in ethics and morality and truthfulness and many other virtues but my belief in them does not turn them into methods; they can only be attributes of a method.

Coercion or conversion? What is the whole principle of the State based on? And the present social system? Is not coercion and enforced conformity the very basis of both? Army, police, laws, prisons, taxes are all methods of coercion. The zamindar who realises rent and often many illegal cesses relies on coercion, not on conversion of

the tenant. The factory owner who gives starvation wages does not rely on conversion. Hunger and the organised forces of the State are the coercive processes employed by both. Is a lock-out or an attempt to reduce wages a method of conversion? It is well to realise that those who belong to the favoured and possessing classes retain these positions by methods of coercion alone and it does not lie in their mouths to talk of conversion. The principal moral argument against the present system and in favour of socialism is that the latter reduces the element of coercion and will, it is hoped, ultimately do away with it altogether.

How are we to change over to a new system based on co-operation? And how are we to divest vested interests? We are told by *The Pioneer* writer, and I think rightly, that the capitalist will not "tamely submit to be robbed of his wealth, or vested interests tamely submit to be divested." History also shows us that there is no instance of a privileged class or group or nation giving up its special privileges or interests willingly. Individuals have done so often enough but not a group. Always a measure of coercion has been applied, pressure has been brought to bear, or conditions have been created which make it impossible or unprofitable for vested interests to carry on. And then the enforced conversion takes place. The methods of this enforcement may be brutal or civilized.

I have no doubt that coercion or pressure is necessary to bring about political and social change in India. Indeed our non-violent mass movement of the past thirteen years have been powerful weapons to exercise this pressure. Undoubtedly they convert stray individuals from the opposing group and partly weaken the resistance of that group

by removing the moral justification for domination and repression. But essentially they are processes to coerce the opposing nation or group.

It is perfectly true that this method of coercion is the most civilized and moral method and it avoids as far as possible the unpleasant reactions and consequences of violence. I think that it does offer a moral equivalent for violent warfare and, if civilization does not collapse, it will gradually adopt this peaceful method of settling its disputes. But it seems to me a fact that cannot be disputed or challenged that a non-violent mass struggle coerces and is meant to coerce the other part. The boycott of goods is an obvious instance.

Personally I have accepted the non-violent method because not only did it appeal to me in theory but it seemed to be peculiarly suited to present conditions in India. That belief has grown in me. But I have made it clear on many occasions that non-violence is no infallible creed with me and although I greatly prefer it to violence, I prefer freedom with violence to subjection with non-violence. That choice does not arise for me to-day because I believe that for a long time to come our most effective methods must be non-violent. I might add that I do not look upon non-violent non-co-operation or civil disobedience as a negative and passive method, a kind of pious and static pacifism, but as an active dynamic and forceful method of enforcing the mass will.

The question of violence or non-violence may arise, and indeed is bound to arise, in another form after the conquest of the State power. There may be attempts to upset the new form of government by reactionary groups. Will "G" advise the new government to use the resources of the

State to coerce these elements into submission or does he think that the religious and philanthropic argument should be used to convert them? Then again the new government may pass laws which, carrying out the will of the great majority of the people, seek to divest privileged groups. Will "G" then advise these groups to submit to the majority opinion or to resist, and if the latter, how should their resistance be met?

There is one other subject on which I should like to touch and that is khaddar. I believe in industrialisation and the big machine and I should like to see factories spring up all over India. I want to increase the wealth of India and the standards of living of the Indian people and it seems to me that this can only be done by the application of science to industry resulting in large-scale industrialisation. Quite apart from my own desires, I think that present day conditions are bound to result in the progressive industrialisation of the country. And yet I support hand-spinning and khaddar under existing conditions in India.

For me this has to-day an economic, a political and a social value. It fits in with the present peasant structure, brings them some relief and makes them self-reliant. It helps to bring us into touch with the peasant masses and to organise them to some extent. It is an effective political weapon in that it helps in the boycott of foreign cloth, and at the same time it acts as some check on the Indian mills, preventing them raising their prices too much. During the Great War foreign imports of cloth fell greatly and there was a cloth famine. Indian mill-owners made vast profits by raising their prices and exploiting this more or less protected market. They will no doubt exploit every such opportunity.

But khaddar can now fill the gap during times of crisis and prevent this exploitation to a large extent. There can be no doubt that khaddar has justified itself in some ways. At the same time it is equally true that it is an out-of-date form of production and it will not be possible, through it, to increase the wealth of the country greatly or raise the standard of living of the masses. Therefore, I think that the big machine must come and I am sure that khaddar will not prevent its coming. It may be that the big machine itself gets decentralised to a large extent in the course of the next few years. The enormous growth in the use of electric power has revolutionised world industry during the last thirty years and it will no doubt revolutionise it still further.

In conclusion may I assure the writer in *The Pioneer* that I have not the least desire to get England *strafed*. I have too much regard for many of the fine things that England has stood for to nurse any such wish and I believe that the great majority of the English people are themselves exploited by small groups. But I do believe that natural laws will speedily put an end to the British Empire and imperialism and capitalism and I wish to help in the process.

FURTHER CRITICISMS

It is well to bear in mind that news agencies and newspapers are functioning to-day in a peculiar way and live in continual fear of government displeasure. They seldom publish all the news sent to them and it is very unsafe to pass judgment on the incomplete data provided by them.

Under present circumstances I am wholly opposed to a withdrawal or suspension of direct action because this

inevitably means liquidating our present struggle and turning mass attention to some form of compromise with British imperialism. I think that under present conditions in India and the world this would be a betrayal of the cause. Small groups here and there who talk in terms of an advanced ideology will have little, if any, effect on the mass demoralization which will be produced by our abandoning the civil disobedience movement. We would then drift away from the current of world change, which grows more powerful day by day, and settle down in a stagnant backwater. The opportunities that may come over way will find us lacking and unprepared.

Even from the point of view of consolidating and preparing our organizations and position for a mass struggle, it seems to me to be folly to expect that a withdrawal of the movement will give us this opportunity unless this consolidation means parlour talk and no action. Surely, the Government will not willingly give us a chance of building up our strength and will pick out all our active and effective workers and try to disable them. This process of individual disablement, added to the loss of morale involved in a giving up of the present struggle, must result in utter mass demoralization and an inability to do anything effective for a considerable time. It is far easier to build up and consolidate our position and develop an ideology in course of a struggle than in the demoralized condition that follows an ending of it. Events teach the masses more than individual effort, and a struggle, whether national or social, produces these mighty teachers. But, of course, there must be right direction.

I am quite sure that the only alternative to a continuation of our present struggle is some measure of co-operation

with imperialism. Individuals and groups here and there may talk bravely but their talk will end in empty nothing so far as mass action is concerned. Personally, I am not prepared, and there are many who think like me, for any such compromise, whatever happens. It is better for the cause, I am convinced, that we should carry on the fight and even be crushed to atoms rather than that we should compromise with imperialism. But we have no intention of being crushed.

An ideology is presumed to lead to action and action on a mass scale. If such action is meant for the whole of India, the ideology cannot (except as the ultimate aim) ignore present day objective facts and conditions all over the country. The question each one of us has to answer is this: Are we to prepare for some distant future struggle for a problematic freedom in the hereafter, or do we consider that objective conditions in the country and the world are such that the struggle is here and now, or in the near future, and we have to face it. If we adopt the latter answer, as I think we must, then we must carry on the struggle and try to shape it and try to develop a new ideology through it and in the course of it.

World events of the past decade or more have many lessons to teach us. There is the pitiful and miserable failure of social democracy in England, Germany and other countries. There is also the failure to make good or to rouse the masses, in spite of suitable economic conditions of the communist parties of various countries (excluding the Soviet Union). In most countries communism is represented by three or four different groups or parties, each cursing and slandering the other, wholly incapable of united action, and often forgetting the

common foe in their mutual hatreds. It is perfectly clear that however correct the ideology of the Communist International may have been, their tactics have failed.

In India we see, during the past thirteen years, a subservient and demoralised people incapable of any action and much less united action, suddenly develop backbone and power of resistance and an amazing capacity for united action, and challenge the might of a great and entrenched empire. Is this a little thing that we have achieved? Or is it not one of the most remarkable examples of mass regeneration? And are we not entitled to claim that the methods that brought about this great change were worthy and desirable methods? Those who criticise these methods might well compare the achievement of India during these years with that of any other colonial and semi-colonial country. They might also compare the achievements of others in India trying to work differently or with a braver ideology.

It would be a good thing if some of our critics made a grand tour of India from the Khyber pass in the north to the south and east and west and studied the situation for themselves. They would find that the Congress is not only not defunct but is very much alive and functioning in many areas, and is going to function despite anything that might happen. They would discover the strange ferment in the peasantry and the new temper of the army. One is a little apt to misjudge India by conditions prevailing in a city, especially when our newspapers do not even publish the news. How many people know of the recent extraordinary happenings in the Frontier Province? Or of the fact that about eight hundred people have gone to prison in Behar alone during the last two months or so?

Or of the stream of individuals that are offering civil disobedience in other provinces? Or of the *sarkar salaam* and other barbarities that are taking place in Bengal? I could add to the list. The mere fact that these amazing methods of repression are being resorted to still is proof enough of the strength of our movement and the nervous and fearful state of Government. Why should it resort to these extraordinary methods if it felt that there was no life in our movement?

I have been told that I stand for a federation with the princes and feudal lords without in any way questioning their despotism. This is a somewhat remarkable interpretation of what I have said. Certainly I think that a federation is likely to be established in the India that is to be, but I cannot conceive of any stable federation certainly not one to which I can agree, to which the feudal chiefs are parties. I believe that the whole Indian State system must go root and branch.

Probably reference was made to the Delhi Provincial Settlement of 1931. A Federation was certainly agreed to there but the nature of it was not defined. In any event the Delhi Settlement is no more. The Government has put an end to it and we are no longer bound by its terms.

It might be as well to remember that I am not the Congress and the Congress is not Jawaharlal Nehru. It has been my great privilege to work in the Congress for the best years of my life and perhaps sometimes I have had a little influence over its decisions. But I am not presumptuous enough to imagine that I can carry the Congress with me wherever I will. I have long felt that the Congress is far the most effective radical organisation

in the country and it is easier to work great changes in the mass mentality through it rather than through any other means. So long as I feel that I shall gladly and most willingly work with this great organization, which has done so much for the country, even though it may not go far enough from my point of view. And so long as that is the case no question can arise of my thinking of another organization.

People forget sometimes that we are functioning abnormally. They discuss the constitutional issue in terms of normality or they criticise the Congress for its seeming inactivity, forgetting that the Congress has arrived at a certain stage of historical growth. It is not at present a constitutional or legal body and many of the safe and brave deeds that are performed on public platforms are no longer in its line. Constitutionalists naturally dislike this; they cannot function in an illegal atmosphere. But why should those who think in terms of revolutionary change object to this inevitable and desirable development?