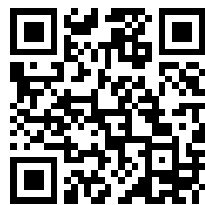


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THE AFTERMATH  
OF NON-  
CO-OPERATION

*(Indian Nationalist and Labour Politics)*

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*By*  
MANABENDRA NATH ROY

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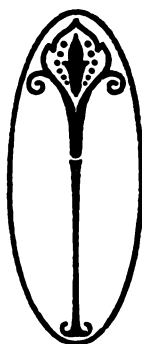
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# THE AFTERMATH OF NON- CO-OPERATION

*by*

MANABENDRA NATH ROY



LONDON 1926

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN  
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# INTRODUCTION



**T**HE articles published herewith were written during the year 1923—a period that marked the collapse of Non-co-operation and the rise of the Swaraj Party. They are not so many chapters of a book, but despite the variety of themes dealt with, there is an underlying continuity in them, because all the subjects treated are closely related and are of vital importance to the Indian movement.

Themes dealt with include such burning questions of our movement for freedom as the Programme of Nationalism, Tactics of Revolution, Constitutional Progress, Dominion Status, Communal Conflict, Mass Action, Class Antagonism and many other allied and minor issues. In short, the articles contain a critical study of the Nationalist Movement from every angle of vision as well as constructive suggestions on all the vital issues raised in the contemporary life of the Indian people. Therefore, though not a chronicle of facts, the following pages can claim to record the analytical history of the Nationalist Movement in the declining period of Non-co-operation.

It will be noticed that our criticism of the programme, tactics and leadership of the Nationalist Movement, which might have aroused resentment in certain quarters, was very correct. The tendencies of weakness, compromise and reaction, pointed out by us so often, have all, in the fullness of time, seriously hampered the development of the struggle for freedom in a revolutionary way. Their accumulated effects **killed a revolution.**

It may not be already forgotten that only four years ago India stood on the brink of a revolution. There must be many who mournfully look back on those days and wonder how it has been possible to slide down from that pinnacle of revolutionary fervour to the present state of passivity on the part of the masses and willing surrender of the leaders. A critical and realistic examination of events alone can give a



satisfactory answer to this query. Such an examination will show that such an imminent revolution was killed because the very ideology of the Nationalist Movement was counter-revolutionary, because the men who stood at the head of the movement were against a revolution. But for their active and conscious hostility to a revolution it would have been impossible for the British Government to survive the crisis of 1921-22.

More than one of the Nationalist leaders have admitted that towards the end of 1921 the movement was within an ace of success. "The mightiest government was almost on its knees." How were the tables turned? We have gone through the period of recrimination, when each held the other responsible for the débâcle. The responsibility, however, was not individual. It was not the action of any one leader or any one wing of the Congress that "bungled and mismanaged" the movement. The collective interests and efforts of an entire class did not allow the great popular upheaval to develop into a revolutionary outbreak.

In order to have a correct estimation of the situation, it should be kept in mind that the mass movement of 1921 was not defeated in the strict sense of the word. Repression failed to dampen the revolutionary ardour of the people until the morale of the Nationalist forces had been broken as a result of the Bardoli resolution. As a matter of fact, the Government was demoralised—a very good augury for a revolution. It felt the ground slipping under its feet. In that circumstance there was absolutely no necessity to hesitate, not to mention retreat. The only course was to push forward. Had the Ahmedabad Congress dared declare mass Civil Disobedience, the people would have responded enthusiastically. In fact the failure of the Ahmedabad Congress to give a courageous lead to the country demoralised the Nationalist forces. At the same moment when the masses were in a state of revolt—eager to go forward on the revolutionary way—the leaders failed them.

The counter-revolutionary policy adopted in those critical days is justified by the argument that a movement of mass Civil Disobedience would have been drowned in blood. It is only a hypothetical argument. Organised revolt of a great people cannot be crushed by repression. Those who put forward that argument and those who were convinced by it can

look at China. Had the programme of Non-co-operation and Civil Disobedience been carried out on the basis of mass action, a general strike all over the country would not only paralyse the civil administration; even military action would be rendered almost ineffective owing to the lack of transport facilities. The Government after all could muster at the most 150,000 white soldiers—the army and the civil volunteer forces taken together. With transport paralysed by means of a general strike on the railways, those forces would be like a drop in the ocean. Then there would be the Indian troops. A movement categorically committed to the abolition of agrarian conditions, which ruin our peasantry, would soon win the sympathy of the Indian soldiers who are all recruited from the poor agrarian population.

But the National Congress, as a whole, had never the intention of leading the movement in such a channel. From the beginning, the Non-co-operation programme was made impractical, on the one hand, by the emphasis laid on the cult of non-violence and, on the other, by divorcing it from any action on the part of the working masses. It is ridiculous to believe that the administration of a country can be paralysed by Non-co-operation, unless Non-co-operation means the suspension of the operation of all the productive forces. Non-co-operation could only realise its goal, if it were preparatory to a nation-wide general strike. But the quadruple boycott on which the programme of Non-co-operation was based did not call for any movement towards a general strike of the working masses. Then the programme as framed and propagated could never awake a sustaining action on the part of the working class because no consideration was given to their immediate grievances and remote aspirations.

Neither was the Non-co-operation programme any better adapted to the agrarian conditions of the country. On the contrary, it was precisely on the agrarian issue that the reactionary basis of the Congress was revealed. Although the Calcutta Programme did not have any clause relating to the peasantry which was rising in revolt all over the country, "non-payment of taxes" somehow came to be generally associated with the promised slogan of Civil Disobedience. It was never defined what was meant by a "non-payment of taxes." But subsequent events—the famous Bardoli Resolu-

tion—however, made it quite clear what it did **not** mean. The Congress had never intended to organise and lead an agrarian revolution. Obviously, taxes payable to the Government, and not rents due to the landlords, were to be suspended, should the problematical Civil Disobedience ever be launched. “Non-payment of taxes” would certainly be a revolutionary slogan; but its potentiality as a lever to inspire the peasantry is far inferior to that of the slogan of “non-payment of rents”—a slogan never mentioned. The taxes paid by the peasantry are to a great extent indirect, whereas land rent together with other measures of exploitation, that accrue from the tenure-systems obtaining in India, weigh heavily on the bent back of the cultivator. The payment of indirect taxes cannot be suspended. For example, the payment of salt tax cannot be suspended unless the peasantry stop buying salt. The same applies to all indirect taxation. But the payment of land rent can be suspended with visible benefit to the peasantry. Therefore, the latter put their own interpretation to the meaningless slogan of “non-payment of taxes.” They flocked under the banner of Non-co-operation with the hope that the movement stood for the redress of their grievances as regards the burden of land rent and other exorbitant exactions of the landowners.

Additional burdens put on them to meet the cost of the war, together with the soaring prices in the years following, had intensified the discontent of the peasantry to the point of rebellion. Historically, the Non-co-operation movement should have been the expression of this rebellion. In 1920-21 the masses (workers in the urban areas and poor peasants in the country) were in a state of spontaneous revolt. The Non-co-operation movement, as a matter of fact, had its origin in this acute mass discontent. But its formal inauguration marked the betrayal of the generating forces. A movement born entangled in such an unfortunate contradiction, could not have a happy ending.

In action, the Non-co-operation programme, as formulated by the Calcutta Congress, could not keep pace with the events. The action of those two social classes (workers and peasantry), left out of the purview of the Calcutta programme, became the predominating feature of the movement. The “hartals” during the Prince’s visit were such imposing successes largely because of the participation of the working

class. But mass strikes of purely political character always tend to develop revolutionary features. This happened in Bombay and subsequently in other cities. The Congress through its accredited spokesman, Gandhi, rushed to hold back, sabotage and finally denounce the logical development of the forces that were the dynamics of the Non-co-operation movement. One cannot dissipate the lifeblood and live hale and healthy at the same time. The movement reached its climax during the Prince's visit in November, 1921, and it was at this climax that its internal contradiction became evident.

Things were moving even faster in the countryside. The Non-co-operation programme failed to focus the agrarian situation. But the peasantry put their own revolutionary interpretation on the programme to the chagrin of the Congress. The belief that under Swaraj (which to the ignorant peasant was identical with "Gandhi-raj") there would be no rent, no exaction by the landlords, electrified the peasantry. Flames of agrarian revolt flared up on the horizon. Once again the Congress cut itself asunder from the source of its dynamic strength. It wrecked itself on the rock of the agrarian question. By virtue of the Bardoli Resolution it divorced itself from the rebellious peasantry.

Thus, the Non-co-operation movement fell a victim to its own internal contradictions. It was not defeated by the forces of repression. The Government stood before it in awe, until the pressure of these contradictions had dissipated, disintegrated and demoralised the Non-co-operation movement.

Out of the ruins of Non-co-operation rose the Swaraj Party which was the political crystallisation of the social tendency which had clashed with the revolutionary character of the Non-co-operation movement with such a disastrous consequence. It cannot be denied that the assassination of the revolutionary mass movement at Bardoli and its burial at Delhi simply prepared the way for the rise of the Swaraj Party. Divorced from mass action, Non-co-operation would degenerate into political impotency. The restive forces of national revolution, apart from the working class, must find a channel of expression. The Swaraj Party provided it in the programme of parliamentary obstruction. The Swaraj Party saved the Nationalist movement from being trans-

formed into a spinning guild or a prayer fraternity. The so-called constructive programme of Bardoli, which supplanted the original programme of militant boycott, could under no condition keep up a movement. With all its merit, the Swaraj Party was, however, essentially a move towards moderation. The most outstanding fact concerning it was that it replaced revolutionary mass action—even militant boycott—by parliamentary constitutionalism, as the weapon of the Nationalist struggle against imperialism.

To carry the warfare within the domain of the enemy was a method of fight certainly more energetic and more effective than the policy of leaving the enemy master of the situation. But a parliamentary fight is bound to be futile unless it were closely connected with and supported by extra-parliamentary action. It is much more so when the parliament is a mere sham as in India. The Swaraj Party, however, staked everything on parliamentary activities. The consequence of this blunder has been the present position, in which triumphant Imperialism insolently demands unconditional surrender of the Nationalist forces.

The tendencies of weakness, compromise and reaction, that "bungled and mismanaged" the great mass movement of 1921-22 and turned the spectacular parliamentary feats of the Swarajists into airy nothings, are neither accidental nor individual. Their roots are struck deep in the social background of the Nationalist Congress. They assumed definite forms of expression in proportion as the contradictions of class interest inside the Nationalist movement became sharper.

The strikes and demonstrations during the Prince's visit confronted the National Congress with the necessity to choose between the capitalists and labourers. The Congress decided in favour of the former, although without the active participation of the latter no effective action against imperialism was possible. Next the Congress had to choose between the landlords and the peasantry. By adopting the Bardoli Resolution it categorically took up the cause of the former, thus betraying the faith of the latter.

The rise and decline of the Swaraj Party also followed the same course. It came into being with the promise to win "Swaraj for the 98 per cent." but became the champion

of the 2 per cent. hardly before a year was over. Here again, the operation of class interest determined Nationalist politics. To make any show in the Legislature the Swaraj Party had to purchase the support of the moderate element. The price was to abandon all relation with the masses—to purge the programme of everything that did not exclusively stand for the interests of the bourgeoisie. The other alternative for the Swaraj Party would be to make parliamentary activities secondary to extra-parliamentary mass action. But the adoption of this course presupposed the faith in and the determination for a revolution. It was not the case with the Swaraj Party, which had been born in consequence of the repudiation of revolutionary mass action and from the very beginning had been pledged to constitutional progress as against revolution.

Those Nationalists, who up till now lead the movement, may not like—or even be hostile to—revolution owing to reasons of class interest; but imperialism knows that the Nationalist movement is objectively revolutionary. It is now confident of being able to handle any movement not based upon the masses and not prepared to wield the formidable weapon of mass action. In the earlier days, British Government was afraid of the Swaraj Party. It had apprehensions that the Swarajists were going to back up their parliamentary action by popular agitation, demonstration and revolt. But once inside the Legislatures, the Swarajists changed their attitude so noticeably that the Government foresaw their collapse and adopted the policy of marking time while the Swarajists let off their steam. Before long the futility of Swarajist tactics was exposed. Parliamentary procedures were obstructed to some extent; but they did not in any way shake the position of British imperialism which sat tight, always waiting for the opportune moment to strike.

The Swarajists had gone too far in the wilderness of parliamentary sham. They had roundly refused to organise any revolutionary action of the masses. At that moment, the Government acted in a real Machiavellian style. It declared its willingness to make economic concessions to the Indian bourgeoisie. Practical steps were taken in this direction. The Swarajists neatly fell in the trap. Imperialism began to work upon the feelings of the upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie through their pocket-book. Non-co-

operation had brought the country dangerously near revolution. Parliamentary obstruction had proved sterile. But co-operation was rewarded. The upper strata of the bourgeoisie, for whom the Swarajists had turned back upon the 98 per cent., looked upon the Swaraj Party as a disturbing element. The Parliamentary bloc with the Independents collapsed. The Swarajists were isolated. With the masses temporarily out of the political movement on the one hand, and the Liberals and Independents (even a section of the Swarajists) on the other hand eager to end the futile parliamentary deadlock, the opportune moment came for imperialism to go about the task of liquidating Swarajism with determination. It had only a beaten enemy to handle. The Swarajists, on their part, appreciated the precariousness of their position and began to throw out hints of their desire for "honourable co-operation." But it was too late. Imperialism demanded unconditional surrender. The peace must be made on the terms of imperialism.

Imperialism could succeed in the Machiavellian policy of disintegrating the Nationalist movement by virtue of its ability to bribe the upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie, on the basis of British monopoly concessions made to Indian capital. This policy is not likely to weaken the position of Britain in India, so long as political power remains in her hands. On the contrary, it will strengthen her position by reconciling the discontent of the Indian bourgeoisie. It is no longer profitable for Britain to hold India as a purely agricultural reserve. It will be more profitable to industrialise her. Industrialised India will offer lucrative investment for British capital; cheap labour and easily accessible raw materials will produce enormous profit; and the buying capacity of India will increase, thus helping British trade. The new economic policy of British imperialism demands an ally. The old allies—the decrepit feudal lords and landed autocracy—have become useless. Moreover, the function of the new policy will ruin them. The new ally is found in the upper strata of the Indian bourgeoisie—the bankers, manufacturers and big merchants together with their political spokesmen, the prosperous professional class. This unholy alliance is directed against the Indian people. Indian capital will be granted a junior partnership in the imperialist concerns in return for its meritorious services in helping the stabilisation of British domination over India.

**The debacle of bourgeois Nationalism on the one hand, and the new economic policy of imperialism on the other, push the working class to the forefront of the struggle for liberation.**

This is the fundamental thesis of the articles published herewith. It will be seen that events have taken the turn predicted by us. We do not pretend to be prophets. Marxist outlook on history and materialist interpretation of events enabled us to foresee which course Indian Nationalism was going to take.

The character of the upheaval—the course of a political movement—is not determined by any other agency than economic necessities. Indian people do not revolt against foreign domination to vindicate justice or honour or any other abstract principle. Economic necessities cause the revolt. The economic exploitation, however, is not felt uniformly by the entire Indian people. In the case of the bourgeoisie it has but a negative effect. British Imperialism has obstructed the capitalist development of India thereby injuring the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie. The latter do not do anything to produce the enormous profit that British capital makes by exploiting India. They are only deprived of that unearned income which would be their share, were the British not in India; while the real burden of exploitation falls on the masses. It is their labour that produces the profit for British capital.

Since imperialist domination affects two sections of the people so differently, there cannot be a uniform motive behind the Nationalist movement. Each class of Indian society carries on the struggle against imperialism egged on by its own economic necessity. The relaxation of the old policy of holding India in industrial backwardness greatly removes the grievances of the Indian bourgeoisie. They consequently become reconciled, at least temporarily, to British overlordship, especially when this overlordship protects India from a revolution which might challenge the system of exploitation of man by man. But there cannot be any reconciliation between the economic interests of the Indian masses and those of British Imperialism. They are mutually exclusive. Therefore, the political struggle of the Indian masses against British domination must be uncompromising. It must be a fight to the finish.



This being the case, the debacle of bourgeois Nationalism places the struggle for freedom on a different social basis. Henceforth the working class will not only be the dynamic force of the anti-imperialist movement (which they always have been), but will be the leading factor. And the vanguard of the working class—the industrial proletariat—will have the hegemony in the struggle. The proletariat cannot discharge this historical role creditably except through their political party. The party of the proletariat is the Communist Party.

The hegemony of the proletariat in the coming stages of the struggle for National Liberation, however, does not by any means eliminate numerous other social elements which will still play an important role. The hegemony of the proletariat consists of the ability of the proletarian party to make a close fighting alliance with all these forces of national revolution and place itself in the front ranks of a united anti-imperialist army. The proletariat will certainly perform this task, because it will fight uncompromisingly. "They have nothing to lose but their chains, and a world to gain."

September, 1925.



# The Aftermath of Non-Co-operation

## CHAPTER I.

### CONFUSION OF THE ISSUE.

THE row raised on the publication of the Civil Disobedience Committee Report has confused the real issue before us. The Committee was appointed to investigate the possibilities or otherwise of launching the revolutionary slogan of Civil Disobedience. Of course, the findings of the Committee were a foregone conclusion. Their burden was not to ascertain whether the country was ready for Civil Disobedience nor to elaborate a line of action calculated to create such a situation, but to prove that the country was not ready for it. This duty the Committee has discharged by giving a unanimous verdict against any revolutionary step. Civil Disobedience is not to be declared. We do not know if the Gaya Congress has corroborated this decision of the All-India Congress Committee. It can be taken, however, for sure that after a series of bureaucratic manœuvres the Congress has at last succeeded in dodging the burning question of revolutionary mass action. And the inevitable result of this action is the shifting of the storm-centre of its activities.

The present passionate controversy over the question of Council-entry indicates the breaking of the deadlock that was created in our movement, in consequence of the retreat called suddenly from Bardoli. But the year of depression that followed Bardoli has not been uneventful: it has been marked by the re-shuffling of forces behind the movement and the clarification of the social interests of the various elements participating in the campaign of Non-co-operation. The replacement of Civil Disobedience by Council-entry as the main issue shows which way the wind is blowing. It proves that the movement is heading towards the Right. The middle class political outlook has gained predominance over revolu-

tionary mass energy. The programme is to be determined according to the interests of the former, and the latter is to be courted in so far as it can be wielded as a tool without any independent significance. Hence so much talk about the masses. The masses are needed by the bourgeoisie in its struggle against British imperialism. But unfortunately this struggle is very half-hearted, as has been shown by the definition of Swaraj, given by many a representative Congress leader.

We have said repeatedly that we could not have a right line of tactics unless there was a definite programme before us. How our movement is drifting like a rudderless ship is proved by the fact that the revolutionary issue of mass Civil Disobedience is shelved in favour of the controversy over the utility of participating in the Councils. The relative merit of the tactics of entering the Councils in order to keep the loyal Liberals out of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of wrecking the Councils themselves, has its place in our scheme of action; but to give this question such an importance as to make the country forget the plan of Civil Disobedience is a great mistake. And this mistake is not of omission, but of commission. Anyone possessing a clear programme of National Liberation knows how ridiculous it is to make the question of Council-entry the pivot of our movement. None of the two methods of participating in the Councils will bring us freedom. Parliamentarism advocated by the Mahratta Party will be futile, and the policy of obstructing and wrecking will also remain ineffective if the action inside the Councils is not supported by revolutionary action of the masses outside. But our leaders fail to look upon the issue from this point of view because they have a different programme. Recent statements made by many of them do not leave us in doubt about the kind of Swaraj they strive for.

The issue that confronts the Congress to-day concerns the programme. It should not be shifted on to the realm of tactics. Neither the question of Civil Disobedience nor that of Council-entry can be solved in the proper way, unless it is looked upon as a certain line of tactics to be adopted in pursuance of a definite programme. First of all the Congress has to answer the question: Home Rule or Independence? This issue cannot be confused any longer. The future of our movement depends on the answer to this question.

Most of those advocating participation in the Council either to get the best out of them or to wreck them do not stand for a complete separation from the Empire. Naturally they can shelve the question of Civil Disobedience, which can be conducted only by revolutionary Nationalists.

Even Deshbandhu Das, who recognised that the Indian people could not be free without a revolution and who declared that we were in a state of revolution in every sphere of life, does not admit the necessity of a complete separation from the Empire. He says: "the Congress has nowhere declared that our Swaraj must be necessarily outside the Empire." Looked at from the point of view of this statement, Mr. Das' otherwise revolutionary programme of Swaraj loses all weight. It becomes all empty phrases full of noble sentiments which, however, will always remain unrealised so long as the political aspect of the programme is freed from the limitation of Dominion Government. How can Chittaranjan carry out his programme of social revolution (and his frank denunciation of bourgeois dictatorship in the guise of democracy commits him to a programme of social revolution) within the framework of Imperial Federation which is dominated by the British bourgeoisie? Is it not utopian to expect that that stronghold of bourgeois dictatorship, the British Parliament, will ever grant or recognise in India such an unrespectable form of government as that advocated by Mr. Das? Therefore, it is evident that complete freedom of the Indian masses (which Mr. Das stands for) cannot be realised within the framework of the so-called "British Commonwealth." Such a programme it behoves the constitutional democrats of the Liberal League to adopt, who think that every Indian P. C. is an indication of our freedom. That is, those Indians, who strive for the economic aggrandisement of the thin upper strata of our society, can have the programme of Home Rule, or Dominion Government, or Equal Partnership in the Commonwealth, or any other gilded version of Imperialism; but it is not a programme of National Liberation, because none of these half-way measures will improve the condition of the majority of the nation, not to speak of a Swaraj of the masses as contemplated by Mr. Das.

Even the programme of Parliamentary Democracy cannot be realised within the limits of the imperial connection.

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Britain will not insist on the maintenance of this connection unless it means something more than a sentimental one. This connection will impose restriction on the economic and cultural progress of the Indian nation. Therefore, real freedom demands an end to this connection and this cannot be realised with the sanction of the British Parliament. There is but one and only one way. It is a revolutionary struggle which transcends the limits of non-violence.

By making the question of Council-entry the storm-centre of its activities in the near future, the Congress is confusing the issue. In order to avoid the risk of putting itself on the road of revolution, it is side-tracking itself on an issue of an ephemeral nature, **which will inevitably lead to futile constitutional agitation hardly distinguishable from that advocated by the Moderates.**

First of all we need complete national freedom and the establishment of a government free from all external control or connection. All our tactics should be directed towards this immediate objective. Judged from this point of view, it becomes evident that, **instead of wrecking them, we will be wrecked by the Councils, if Congressmen enter them without carrying the banner of an Independent Indian Republic.**

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE EVE OF GAYA.

THE Thirty-Seventh Annual Session of the Indian National Congress at Gaya will be a landmark in the history of our national struggle. Last year the Congress met at Ahmedabad when the Non-co-operation Movement was at its highest. It had reached the pinnacle and was bound to decline if new measures were not adopted to push it forward to a more advanced stage. The period of agitation was over; that of action should have begun. But it was not to be. The adoption of such measures required a boldness and a revolutionary vision which our leaders did not possess. The inevitable consequence was the confusion and demoralisation that reigned in our camp since the beginning of the year. The Government, which was always on the alert, came down upon us with the heavy hand of repression as soon as the first signs of our internal weakness were revealed by the hesitating policy of the Congress.

In the Manifesto to the Ahmedabad Congress we sounded the alarm in these words :

“The greatest problem before the Thirty-Sixth Congress is how to enlist the full-hearted support of the people in the national cause; how to make the ignorant masses follow the banner of Swaraj. In order to solve this problem the first thing necessary is to know what is it that ails the masses? What do they want? What is needed for improving the immediate environment of their material existence? Because only by including the redress of their immediate grievances in its programme will the Congress be able to assume the practical leadership of the masses of the people.”

This was not done. The Congress gave the masses a stone instead of bread. It denounced their every revolutionary action. It upheld the interests of the landlords as against the surging tide of peasant revolt. Consequently what we predicted in our manifesto has come to pass. As a political body the Congress is dead. The Non-co-operation movement has lost all its potentiality. We said further in the same manifesto :

“If the Congress aspires to assume the leadership of the masses without founding itself upon the awakening mass energy, it will be relegated to the dead past in order to share the ignominy of its predecessor. To enlist the conscious support of the masses, it should approach them not with high politics and towering idealism, but with readiness to help them secure their immediate wants, then gradually to lead them forward . . . Failing to do so, with all its zeal for Non-co-operation, for all its determination to have the Sèvres Treaty revised despite its doctrine of soul-force, the Congress will have to give in to another organisation which will grow out of the ranks of the common people with the object of fighting for their interests.”

The Congress has failed to do so and the time has come for it to abdicate. This function will take place at the coming annual session. But where is the revolutionary element that is destined to step into the place thus vacated? The objective forces making for the crystallisation of such a new leadership of our movement are operating all over the country. They are being expressed through the ever-growing peasant revolts and strikes. What is needed is a political organ of these forces of social economics to bring them to bear upon the Congress. There must be a political party which will plant the national movement on a revolutionary foundation.

The Congress cannot remain devoid of all political potentiality as at present. Attempts will be made at Gaya to drag it out of this bog of metaphysical degeneration. Those who want to transform it into an organ of constitutional democracy are mobilising their forces. There is a great rift within the ranks of the Congress. It is an open secret. **The Right-wing of the Congress differs very little from the Liberals and Besantine Home Rulers. Its fusion with the latter is inevitable, sooner or later.** Before the united front of these pragmatic politicians the orthodox Non-co-operators will not be able to hold their ground. By their own mistake, committed willingly, the ground has been taken from under their feet. So if a third political faction, embodying the revolutionary social forces, does not appear on the scene, re-conquest of the Congress by the Moderates and the Besantine clique is a foregone conclusion or the Congress will cease to occupy the front ranks of the national army: a united bourgeois

party will usurp the position. The organisation of this third factor, the leader of the future, the standard-bearer of revolutionary Nationalism, is our task. The elements that are destined to go into its composition exist in every part of the country. They are in operation often without being aware of each other. They should be brought together into a national organisation, which should face the scheming politicians with a clearly formulated programme of action. The combination of the right elements will put forward a body of demands reflecting the interests of the upper and middle classes. We must meet them with a programme advocating the interests of the common people. If the vacillating orthodox Non-co-operators will have the courage and revolutionary idealism to subscribe to our programme we will stand behind them in their fight against the Liberals, representing the rich industrial and commercial class. If they fail to rise up to the situation, **which is very likely**, we will take up the fight and save the Congress from the threatened relapse into compromising Moderatism.

Revolutionary Nationalists, prepare for the fight, which is drawing near. The solution of the problem that confronts you, demands a realistic orientation of the situation. Neither sentimental idealism nor romantic conspiracies will do. We must take an increasingly aggressive part in the leadership of the movement. But to be able to do so we must have organic connection with the most revolutionary social elements. We must be their standard-bearers. We must become their means of political expression. What are these revolutionary social elements?

All the elements participating in the national movement are doing so impelled by their respective economic interests. The merchants and manufacturers want wider scope for the investment of their growing capital. National autonomy to them means a greater privilege of exploiting the natural resources and labour-power of the country, with the sole object of making more profit. Their programme is, therefore, protection to native industries—Fiscal Autonomy. The rich intellectuals want power and progress through the means of increased political rights. Therefore, they fight with the slogan of Provincial Autonomy and complete Indianisation of the Public Services. The semi-intellectual lower middle class strives to save itself from dire starvation in



which it is submerged and which leads to steady degeneration physically and morally. It does not find any hope in the programme of the upper class political parties; therefore, it advocates a more radical change in the present system. But its radicalism stops short of revolution and we find it talking of a vague Swaraj by which some mythical Golden Age is depicted. Timidity and irresoluteness make the lower middle class intellectuals become prophets of pacifism.

But there remains another section of society, a section that constitutes not only the overwhelming majority, but the productive power of the community. The toiling masses—the workers and peasants—stand in need of an all-round improvement of their economic as well as social conditions. This need cannot be satisfied by any economic concession made in favour of the native capitalist class nor by political reforms granted to satisfy the demands of the propertied classes. The lot of the working class can only be improved by a thorough change of the present social system, based on the right of exploitation of man by man. And since the salvation of their class can and will be worked out by the workers themselves, they are the only relentless and uncompromising revolutionary force. They may still be unconscious of their mission and ignorant of their interests, but the objective forces are latent in them. In fact, they have begun to feel the impulse and have initiated the historic struggle for freedom.

Those, who will carry the voice of these revolutionary factors within the precincts of the Congress, will merit the future leadership of the national movement. Before them everything else will succumb. By them only the struggle for freedom will be carried to its final goal. The revolutionary Left-wing in process of organisation must be the political leader of the social elements objectively most revolutionary.

The Left-wing must begin the fight by bringing forward a programme of action, a programme which will keep the Congress in close touch with the rising masses and which will develop the mass movement by all conceivable means. This programme must contain such clauses as the fight for higher wages for the workers, an eight-hour day, the recognition of unions, the right of strike, abolition of landlordism,

reduction of rents and taxes, strong measures for checking the excesses of the usurers and other measures that will correspond to the immediate grievances of the workers and peasants.

Let us go to Gaya, not to see the Congress resurrected as a political party of the bourgeoisie, but to indicate to it a revolutionary path. It will be a fight which can be fought only by those with determination and a clear revolutionary vision. It will be a fight against the most economically and politically advanced section of the people on the one hand, and against the social reactionaries on the other. We must save the situation. Let us prepare for the struggle.

## CHAPTER III.

### WHAT SHALL WE DO AT GAYA?

THIS pertinent question must be troubling our leaders on the eve of the annual session of the National Congress. The ability to answer it will depend on their readiness to confess the bankruptcy of the old tactics, on their willingness to take rude realities into consideration and on their courage to formulate a programme calling for revolutionary action. It is quite evident that those at the helm of the Congress are afraid to tackle the problem. The task seems to have grown too complicated for their mentality, running straight on the single-track line of metaphysical Nationalism. But this state of affairs cannot continue for ever. There must be an end to it. The country demands to know what is in store for it. By repeated adjournments, the All-India Congress Committee has tried to pigeon-hole the burning question of Civil Disobedience. But the annual session of the Congress will have all the outstanding questions before it to be solved. **From Gaya must come the verdict which will decide the fate of the Congress and the future of our movement.** Therefore the question "What shall we do at Gaya?" concerns all who are interested in rescuing our movement from the present depression.

We have been saying since the beginning of the year that the Congress cannot go further ahead without a programme. To see that this much-needed programme is discussed and adopted is precisely what should be done at Gaya. But who is going to see that this is done? Who is capable of bringing forward a programme which is needed, which will rally under the banner of the Congress the demoralised and scattered national forces? An analysis of the conflicting tendencies, which will be present at Gaya, is needed for answering this question.

First of all it is time for every Congressman to understand that the so-called "national unity" is an illusion, that the National Congress is not a cohesive political party and that within it are to be found social elements with diverse economic interests and consequently with incompatible social

tendencies, which must reflect upon their respective political aspiration. The whole national movement is divided into three camps, viz. the Right-wing, the Centre and the Left. The first contains the Moderates, Liberals or Co-operators; in the Centre stand the orthodox Non-co-operators; and the Left is composed of the oppressed lower middle class, pauperised intellectuals and the masses of workers and peasants.

If the Liberals, representing large vested interests, found it convenient to follow a policy of compromise with the imperialist exploiter, the Extremist Nationalists passing under the name of Non-co-operators in the last years have proved themselves unable and unwilling to risk a decisive struggle. Each of these political parties has taken its turn in leading the national struggle till the first was bought over by concessions and the second came to the end of its tether, owing to its socially reactionary character and the consequent confusion in political ideology. The time has come for the appearance of the third, that is, **a party voicing the sentiments and aspirations of those sections of our people whose interests have not been taken into consideration by any of the former political parties.**

The most outstanding feature of the contemporary stage of our movement is the decomposition of the Centre, with its nebulous theories and hesitating tactics. This decomposition will fundamentally strengthen the national struggle, although there may be a superficial setback, as a result of the probable reversion of the Congress to Liberal ideology, because it is sure that Gaya must see the abdication of the orthodox Non-co-operators from the Congress leadership, if the Congress is to continue its existence as the organ of national struggle. Now the question is, who is going to take the place thus vacated?

There are two prospects: first, the Liberal intellectuals, who are revolting against the metaphysical politics of orthodox Non-co-operation, may capture the leadership of the Congress under the banner of Rationalism which, however, in the political field will have little revolutionary reflection. Secondly, a Party of Revolutionary Nationalists may emerge representing the interests of the masses—interests which cannot be defended by any economic concessions or political adjustments. At the present moment, there is more likelihood of the first coming to power than the second, because

although it is certain that our movement for National Liberation can reach its ultimate victory only under the leadership of the latter, this revolutionary party of the people is not yet developed enough to contest the supreme leadership of the national struggle. Therefore, it is to be expected that in the period immediately following the Gaya Sessions, the leadership of the Congress will pass to the control of the Liberal intellectuals, who for the last two years fought within the ranks of the Non-co-operators whose socio-economic philosophy and bewildered tactics, however, failed to satisfy their progressive tendencies. **But this will mean the reversion of the Congress to a period of tameness; because the extremism of these progressive intellectuals falls far short of any revolutionary character. National autonomy preached or even demanded by them is hardly anything but the constitutional democracy of the Moderates, being the political enfranchisement and economic development of the upper and middle classes. But it should be noted that even these modest demands of the bourgeoisie cannot be realised without a struggle with the imperialists, and the middle class intellectuals cannot carry on this struggle single-handed. Hence the possibility that in their hands, the Congress will be ere long transformed into the organ of constitutional democracy engaged in negotiation and not struggle with the foreign ruler.**

To prevent this eventuality is the task of the advanced and conscious revolutionary element in our Nationalist movement. And this can be done only in one way: **by organising the masses, the workers and peasants, in their own class party advocating their own class interests.** Such a party will bring into the Congress the revolutionary outlook lacked by all those social elements who have so far controlled the national movement for their respective limited class interests. For example, the Rationalist intellectuals can only carry out their project of wrecking the Councils if they are assured of support from the revolutionary masses. But this support they are not in a position to enlist, because their socio-political philosophy and economic interests do not permit them to adopt such measures as are required to develop the revolutionary consciousness and activities of the masses—factors that are essential for any steady political action on the part of the latter. The Non-co-operation movement started and went through a short but spectacular career owing

to the fact that the accumulation of objective forces led to a widespread mass awakening. The failure of the Non-co-operation movement, which but a year ago was surcharged with revolutionary possibilities and constituted a positive menace to the ruling class, was due to its drifting away from the revolutionary forces. The intellectuals with their social rationalism, economic progressiveness and political extremism, will not fare any better than their non-co-operating predecessors if they do not have the support of the masses; and it is evident that their programme does not include the measures that can appeal to the imagination of the workers and peasants. Since a revolutionary mass party of the people is not yet formed which can contest the leadership of the national movement, the existing elements making for the inevitable and imminent rise of such a party, should begin their historical mission by serving as the connecting link between the masses and the progressive intellectuals. **We must go to Gaya in order to declare our intention to initiate this new stage of the movement, in order to bring forward a programme of action which is essential for the further development of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, and in order to invite the progressive intellectuals to subscribe to such a programme.**

So it is clear what we shall do at Gaya. First of all, it will be necessary to declare that one phase of our struggle has come to an end and this declaration should logically be followed by the formulation of a programme commensurate with the socio-economic needs and aspirations of the broad masses, and of a new set of tactics to be employed in the new stage of the struggle. This is the only way by which the integrity, even the very existence of the Congress as the traditional organ of our national struggle can be preserved. Left to the mercy of orthodox Non-co-operation, it will receive nothing but a solemn burial at Gaya, and under the exclusive control of progressive rationalism it will lose all that revolutionary potentiality which lies in its organic connection with the masses. The historic development of social forces destine the first to be overthrown by the second, which is the most revolutionary contribution of the upper and middle classes to the national struggle. The passing of the leadership of our movement into the hands of the progressive intellectuals will mark a step forward; because it will inevitably lead to a clarification of the ideology and conse-

quently the tactics of the struggle. But devoid of any organic connection with the masses, the political extremism of the progressive intellectuals will not lead the Congress very far. Therefore, we must endeavour to strengthen the position of the coming leaders by showing them the way by which the revolutionary masses can be more and more involved in the political movement led by the Congress. In order to do this effectively, **the revolutionary factions believing in mass action should form an Opposition bloc within the Congress**, with the object of criticising any attempt to lead the Congress away from the highroad of revolution, either in the name of philosophical pacifism or under the slogan of orderly progress and constructive action. This Opposition bloc, which will eventually grow into the revolutionary party of the people destined to be the leader of the final struggle, should put forth a programme calculated to give fresh impetus to the waning enthusiasm of the masses and thus draw them into the political struggle. The general lines of this programme have been indicated by us repeatedly since last year. The adoption of such a programme cannot be postponed any longer if the movement is to be carried forward. The sincerity of the various factions participating in the Congress will be tested by their readiness to subscribe to a programme calculated to intensify the struggle. The voice of the great majority of the Indian people should be raised in the Congress at Gaya and it should be made known that in the coming stage of our struggle this voice will have a decisive character. This voice can be raised through the medium of a programme which should be formulated and put forward by those revolutionaries who struggle for National Liberation, not to advance the interests of certain small sections, but in order that the way to progress and prosperity is laid open before the majority of the people.

**Gaya should mark the renaissance of the Congress.** We must go there to herald this new phase of our movement and begin to fight to base the national struggle on a really revolutionary foundation by making it a vital problem to the masses.

## CHAPTER IV.

### GAYA AND AFTER.

THE net result of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Session of the National Congress has been a split, the seriousness of which is not fully appreciated. This split has proved that the National Congress is not a united political party: it has burst the theory of homogeneous national interests. Apparently it is thought that the divergence of views expressed at Gaya does not affect the fundamental principles of the Congress, but concerns only tactical questions. The breach in the Congress ranks revealed at Gaya, however, is not so shallow. The conflict of socio-economic interests underlies it. In this article we will not enter into the deep social aspect of the situation, but will confine ourselves only to the tactical side.

The Gaya Congress was called upon to solve the question which gave birth to the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, and the tackling of which had been avoided as long as possible by the Congress leaders under all available pretexts. The question was, how to lead the movement out of the great crisis? The Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee postponed definite action as long as they could. At last the issue was forced upon the Congress in its annual session at Gaya. Not being a united political party following a clear programme, nor representing the interests of a cohesive social class, the Congress could not take one resolution. Different elements participating in it asserted themselves and two main paths have been indicated for the future. Both the factions advocate the tactics of Non-co-operation and protest their adherence to the principle of non-violence. One, the Pro-change, will include new fields of activity, while the other, orthodox No-change, will stick to the old methods of working the Constructive Programme with the object of preparing the country for Civil Disobedience. The tactics proposed by the new party, do not, however, promise to be comprehensive and objective enough to supply the country the badly-needed revolutionary impetus. As we will see presently, **the tactics of entering the Councils for wrecking them will not work out so smoothly as expected.** It can much rather be apprehended



that the result will be to the contrary; **the tactics will wreck the party.** Very little requires to be said of the die-hard "no-change" school. The futility of its tactics has already been proved.

Now let us see what the new party proposes to do. There are but two points in its programme which are concrete and constitute a departure from the old methods of working the Bardoli Programme. These are the Council-entry and organisation of workers and peasants. We already commented in our last number that it was very unfortunate that the Deshbandhu based the struggle on the secondary issue of Council-entry. Evidently neither Mr. Das himself nor any other prominent member of his party thinks that the battles for National Liberation will be fought and won in the Councils. Therefore, it was surely a mistake to force the issue on the necessity of wrecking the Councils. Now that the new party has staked its future reputation on this tactics, let us see how much chance there is for its success. There is very little. The tactics proposed by Mr. Das, which by itself is undoubtedly a very potential weapon of warfare with the bureaucracy, would have been very useful had it been resorted to from the very beginning of the Non-co-operation campaign. The popularity of the Non-Co-operators was so great in those days that they could have swept the polls in the first election. But an exaggerated dose of metaphysical abstractions and wildness of religious Nationalism prevented the Congress from following the practical lines of revolutionary politics; the field was left entirely at the mercy of precisely those loyalists and compromisers whom the government wanted to be in the Reformed Councils. Now the situation has changed. It is dangerous to over-estimate one's forces at a critical stage of the struggle. It must be admitted frankly that our movement is in a stage of depression. Had it not been so, there would not be room for the heated controversy between the pro-change and no-change party, a controversy that has rent the political horizon for the last half-year. So, as there is depression in the movement, the immediate task is to break this depression. Therefore, new methods of fight must be found, in order to awaken the enthusiasm of the people. Evidently, it is with this purpose that Mr. Das and his party advocate the tactics of Council-entry. They hope that the election campaign will provide ample room for agitation. It is correct to a certain extent.

But it does not by any means assure the success of the policy of wrecking the Councils. Because the possibility of wrecking the Councils, or even of carrying within them a policy of obstruction, pre-supposes the certainty of winning the elections. But is the new party sure on that score? Does it think that the Congressmen will capture a majority of the non-official membership? We cannot be optimistic about it. Why? The second elections are not going to take place in such an acutely revolutionary atmosphere as the first. The economic interests of the electors will assert themselves more definitely in the coming elections. The landlords and the Liberals are very actively re-organising their party machinery in order to capture the greater number of votes. If we consider the conditions which determine the right of suffrage within the limits of the Government of India Act, it becomes clear that a great majority of the electorate will have to vote under the coercion of the Government and the land-owning class. The small stratum of propertied bourgeoisie and rich intellectuals capable of voting independently, will surely return the Liberals. Consequently very little room will be left for the Congress candidates. The few that will be elected cannot be expected to carry on a successful obstructionist policy within the Councils, not to say anything of the project of wrecking the Councils. **So the logical consequences will be that neither the revolutionary tactics of wrecking nor of obstruction will succeed.** The candidates of the new party will be lost in the wilderness, and are sure to be merged into the ranks of the Mahratta "responsive-co-operators" who do not make any secret of their belief that the Reformed Councils can be useful. Therefore, no very spectacular result can be expected from one of the two main concrete departures suggested in the programme of the new party.\*

Now let us examine the second point, namely the organisation of the workers and peasants. On this question too, the new party promises very little, since it goes at the question with a completely wrong understanding. The very recognition of the necessity for organising the workers and peasants pre-supposes that these are to be organised with the object of defending their interests as against the aggression of some-

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\* Although the Swarajists won more seats than was expected, their position in the Councils and the Assembly has not been any different.

body. In other words, one cannot talk seriously and sincerely of helping the exploited wage-slaves and land-toilers in their struggle for economic emancipation, even betterment, without admitting the existence of class conflict and consequently the inevitability of class war. But the Congress-Swaraj-Khilafat Party (a very unwieldy name) does not like to look these ugly features of our society in the face; therefore, in spite of all its good intentions, it stands practically on the same ground as the reactionary no-changers.

We will have occasion to analyse extensively the programme of the new party; but here we content ourselves with some queries. Can you organise the poor peasantry without invoking the wrath of the landed aristocrats? Can you improve the economic position of the pauperised peasantry without hurting the interests of the landlords, land-speculators, grain dealers and moneylenders sucking the blood of the peasantry? Can you organise and educate the wage-slaves without challenging the absolutism of the employers? Can you secure better living conditions, higher wages and lesser hours for the workers without cutting into the profit of the capitalists? And, lastly, can you expect to win the confidence of the workers and peasants unless you prove by your words and actions, that you are ready to risk your affiliation with the propertied classes in the struggle for improving the economic condition of the exploited? An honest and courageous answer to these few of volumes of equally pertinent questions will force the recognition of class conflict and the inevitability of class war. There is no way out of it. The history of all human society is the history of class struggles. India is no exception. **The Party that refuses to recognise this axiom of history will never lead the working class anywhere but to servitude.** Let the new party, which has an idealistic programme, beware of wandering blindly in the wilderness of subjective prejudices.

As to the programme of no-change, we have expressed our views frequently and will do so again in the future. Civil Disobedience is revolutionary tactics, but by making it conditional upon the completion of the Constructive Programme the no-change party practically refuses to resort to it; because the Constructive Programme can never be fulfilled, being oblivious of the laws of economic determinism.

Such being the character of the leading factions of the Congress, we call for the organisation of a third party. At Gaya we have entered a period in which the Congress has lost its imaginary cohesion. In future it is going to be the rallying ground of all the political forces pitted against foreign domination. These forces will be reflected in the formation of individual parties with their own programmes based on the interests of the respective social elements represented by them. Since the freedom of our country cannot be won by the efforts of the middle class alone, and since the upper classes are definitely allied with the foreign ruler, the might of the working and peasant masses must be brought to bear upon the political arena. To mobilise these forces of revolution is the task of the third party, which will not only form an integral part of the National Congress, but will strive for and ultimately capture the leadership of the organ of national struggle.

## CHAPTER V.

### LABOURISM AND THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE.

THE organisation of an Indian Labour Party stands on the agenda of the third annual session of the Trade Union Congress. The programme of the projected party will be the criterion of its usefulness or otherwise; the methods it will propose to follow in the defence of the interests of the Indian working class will determine its success; and the attitude it will adopt towards the struggle for National Liberation will speak for its ability to lead the working class.

A political party of the working class is a historical necessity. It must come into existence, and a very important role awaits it. It still remains to be seen if the Labour Party, sponsored by the Trade Union Congress, is the political crystallisation of the revolutionary will of the masses, or if it is destined to be a reformist body, lending its services to the counter-revolutionary forces. The circumstances leading up to its formation do not permit us to be very optimistic and incline us to believe that the Indian Labour Party is being formed under the direct or indirect inspiration of its infamous British prototype. In that case, its activities can be safely anticipated, and the role it will play in the Indian movement can be counted upon as negative, if not positively injurious. If it copies the programme and tactics of its spiritual peer, namely the British Labour Party, it will do more harm than good to the Indian working class. "Labour politics" has been and still is one of the greatest enemies of the British working class. It has obstructed the revolutionary development of the British proletariat more than any other single factor. Therefore, one must think twice before importing into India its spirit, ideology and traditions. As if we have not had enough of British institutions, the Indian workers must have a taste of pernicious Labourism. We take it for granted that the protagonists of the Labour Party have honest intentions; but that does not prevent them from making a fatal political blunder.

It is very interesting that the Indian Labour Party is being born at a historical epoch which broadly corresponds to the circumstances in which the British Labour Party was

created. And the people leading the one are of the same character as those leading the other. The British Labour Party or to say more correctly, its predecessor the Independent Labour Party, rose after the collapse of the great Chartist Movement. The Indian Labour Party is being talked of (its actual organisation is still problematical) on the morrow of a similar social upheaval. The programme of the British Labour Party at its initiation stood for independent politics for the working class, independent of the Liberal Party. That of the projected Indian party appears to be almost the same. But, can the Indian working class have independent politics so long as the national struggle remains the predominating fact? Or, do the protagonists of "Labour politics" believe that the economic salvation of the Indian workers can be realised before the people become nationally free? We are not entering here in the discussion of the genesis of the British Labour Party; but supposing that it was a move in the right direction, can we think the same move can be applied in India? Undoubtedly not. Because so long as the country remains under imperialist domination, there can be one and only one set of politics, that of National Liberation. If the so-called Labour Party fails to recognise this imperious historical necessity, it will either be of no significance, or it will lead the Indian working class on the wrong way.

Since the National Congress has failed to recognise the importance of a revolutionary mass movement, since it is drifting every day towards the shallow waters of petty bourgeois reformism, since it lacks a revolutionary socio-economic outlook, it is inevitable that the toiling masses, whose welfare demands a radical change of the present politico-economic system, must have an independent organ of fight. In other words, the workers and peasants of India must be organised into a revolutionary party based on the interests of their class. But the first object of this party will be not to inaugurate Labour-reformism, but to mobilise the revolutionary energy of the toiling masses, in order to take up the fight deserted by the hesitating middle classes and betrayed by the compromising upper class. To realise this programme the revolutionary mass party must not part company with the National Congress, but bid for its leadership. The National Congress is the organ of national struggle, and all social factors, that do not desire to be isolated from this his-

toric struggle, should utilise this organ. The revolutionary party of the Indian workers and peasants should not be an organisation parallel to the National Congress; it must be a component part of it. It is **within** the National Congress that all the revolutionary forces making for National Liberation are united. We are waiting for the projected Labour Party to define its relations with the National Congress.

Judging from the class affiliation and political career of the men announced to be leaders of the new party, we cannot expect it to be a political organ of the working class. Men, who failed to support unconditionally a programme of national independence, cannot be looked upon as the leaders of the next stage of the movement, a stage which must be more revolutionary because of the fact that a more advanced social class will constitute its foundation. The political party of the workers and peasants will push the movement farther than the point at which it has been abandoned by the middle classes. Therefore, those who could not endorse fully even the partially revolutionary programme of the bankrupt petty bourgeois leadership, cannot be expected to go beyond it. Looked at from this point of view, the Labour Party promises to be a curious affair: an objectively revolutionary task undertaken by (to say the least) non-revolutionary elements. But we are attributing too much to the so-called Labour Party. What it wants is evidently a safe and sane way of "parliamentary politics" to improve the condition of the working class. But how can we have parliamentary politics without a parliament? If the fathers of the Labour Party find such a parliament in the Reformed Councils, then their efforts will be futile. Those who think that parliament is a cure-all must first of all fight to secure this boon; and what does that mean, but the struggle for National Liberation? So we again come to the same problem which cannot be avoided and which must be solved before anything else can be done. What will be the role of a Labour Party which does not take an active part in the Nationalist movement? To-day there are only two camps in India: one must be either on the side of the British Government or against it. The Labour Party must also define its position. If it is against the Government, then it must take an active part in the national struggle: and if it thinks that the national struggle does not concern the working class, it allies itself at once with the Government.

The dangerously slippery ground on which a constitutional and Conservative Labour Party stands is revealed by the statement of Johnson, the leader of the Irish Labour Party, on the execution of four prominent Republican leaders including Erskine Childers. The champion of Irish Labour declared the butchery of the Free Staters to be justified. India surely does not need the beginning of such a political party of the working class to add to all her troubles.

The workers and peasants of India need the overthrow of imperialism more than any other social element, because they are the most exploited. Therefore that will be their party which will lead them in the anti-imperialist struggle; they stand in need of that revolutionary leadership which will develop their fighting capacity and which will put them at the forefront of the national struggle. Such a party will not be an imitation of the imperialist British Labour Party, but a militant organ of the masses. The next stage of our movement does not need a Labour Party led by Liberal-reformists and eventually by trade union bureaucrats; what is needed is a revolutionary **People's Party** which is alone capable of defending the immediate as well as the ultimate welfare of the toiling masses.

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The foregoing was written before the reports of the National Congress reached us. The fragmentary telegraphic news received since then bears out our contention that Gaya marked the burial of the Non-co-operation Movement as a political power. The socially reactionary petty bourgeoisie, tied closely to the clergy and landholding interests, have gained ascendancy. The surrender of the Congress to pure-Gandhism demands the formation of a bourgeois National Democratic Party on the one hand and the organisation of a Revolutionary Mass Party on the other.

But will the projected Labour Party fulfil any one of these purposes? From the very name it is to be taken for granted that it does not pretend to be a bourgeois National Democratic Party, and what little is known as yet of its political programme fails to corroborate its pretensions of being the political leader of the toiling masses. It is intended to be a mere vote-catching machine, and that is what it will



be. The scanty news, that has been allowed to filter through the veil of mystery enveloping the conclave of our would-be Labourites, is that these redoubtable "champions" of the Indian proletariat (traditions of pure Labour politics inherited from the Fabian Imperialists do not permit our Labour fakirs to remember that there are nearly 50,000,000 land workers in India and the hundred million pauperised peasantry are hardly anything but wage slaves) are determined to enter the heaven of the Reformed Councils in order to proletarianise them; but they have not the moral courage, nor the social backing to enter this coveted Kingdom of Heaven hand in hand with the Liberals. Hence the necessity of a Labour Party free from the freaks of Gandhism. But India stands in need of a real working class party, which will take up the standard of National Liberation abandoned by the reactionary lower middle class semi-intellectuals. The workers and peasant masses will be the social basis of this party, the future leader of the national struggle. This party is already in the field and has taken up the fight first of all by issuing a programme which we gave the Congress the chance of considering and making its own if it so desired.

A new chapter of India's struggle for freedom opens up with the year 1923. The National Congress is dead. **Long live the National Congress** which must be henceforth led by

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE THIRD ALL-INDIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

THE long-postponed third annual session of the All-India Trade Union Congress has met at last. Those who expected a new leadership from this quarter have been disappointed. The gathering at Lahore was a working class affair only in name. The spirit that reigned there was one of pure nationalism and humanitarian idealism. Nationalist leaders, representing practically all the classes of our society except the working class, arrogated to themselves the role of "Labour delegates." Their monopoly was broken only by a few incipient Labourites who vehemently opposed any political action on the part of the trade unions. The gathering as a whole, however, acted from the beginning to the end as an adjunct to the National Congress, actuated partly by the pious desire to "uplift" the downtrodden masses and partly by the anxiety to find ways and means of enlisting the services of the working class in the cause of bourgeois Nationalism, whose triumph will signify the increased exploitation of the masses.

The following quotation from the "Nation," which breathes the spirit of the All-India Trade Union Congress, is a graphic picture of what the Lahore gathering was and what could be expected of it. On March 27th the "Nation" writes: "A huge fleet of motor cars drove up to the gate of the Bradlaugh Hall, and vociferous cheers greeted the arrival of the leaders. The hall was gaily decorated with wreaths of flowers. Several parties of musicians were present who sang national songs until the arrival of the President-elect. As soon as the Deshbandhu's car drove up, shouts of "Bande Mataram" and "Deshbandhu Das ki jai" went up from all quarters. . . . Many other ladies and gentlemen were present. . . ." And so on and so on went the description of the gathering, which was supposed to be composed of the representatives of Indian workers living on starvation wages, or at least of sincere reformers moved by the misery of the poor! To such an elite of intellect and opulence did the naive Deshbandhu preach his doctrine of "Swaraj for the 98 per cent!"

The president, whose Utopianism seems to be still struggling against the pragmatic politics of his rationalist associates, could not but feel a bit uneasy in the midst of this mockery, and in his concluding speech observed: "One criticism that has been levelled against us is that we have a Trade Union Congress in which there are not many workers. Let us hope in a few years the delegates will be the labourers themselves." A pious hope indeed; but do the present self-appointed Labourites permit us to share the hope of Mr. Das? If the Lahore gathering was unsoiled by the shadow of a dirty coolie or ryot, it is neither the ignorance nor the inertness of the latter that is to be blamed, as our Labour leaders and intellectual aristocrats are prone to do. Mr. Das, who deplored the absence of real workers' delegates in the so-called Trade Union Congress, himself pictured the truly proletarian and revolutionary atmosphere in which the previous annual session was held in the coalfields of Jheria. But what a long way this Trade Union Congress has gone since those days of 1921 when it came dangerously near to being a real working class organisation! It is not the workers who have to be induced to attend the Trade Union Congress, as Mr. Das appeared to mean in his remark quoted above, but on the contrary it is the Trade Union Congress which runs away from the filth and squalor of the field and factory, the mine and plantation. Seventeen months ago its second annual session was attended by six thousand working men and it was defended against the combined attack of the employers and the Government by an army of over fifty thousand rebellious workers, who by the force of a mass strike wrested from the reluctant capitalists at least the promise of a 20 per cent. wage increase. What a change this interval of seventeen months has wrought in the Trade Union Congress. In the place of ragged men straight from the coal pits, Lahore gaily welcomed a galaxy of bourgeois Nationalists and intellectual dilettantes who rolled luxuriously to the Congress in a "huge fleet of motor cars" to make speeches and pass resolutions in the name of the poor downtrodden "98 per cent." The "Western method of Labour organisation" as well as the corrupted capitalist civilisation of the West, which most of the leaders castigated and promised to lead the Indian workers away from, can hardly outdo such a mockery and such hypocrisy!

So much for the character and composition of this august assembly which calls itself the All-India Trade Union Congress. Now a few remarks about its accomplishment in this particular session. The first and foremost, of course, was the speech of Mr. Das, who once more pronounced the same views as expressed at Gaya, leaving out the treatise on constitutional law. His was a programme of pure and honest Nationalism tempered by humanitarian sentiments. He wanted "the uplift of the masses for culture and for the struggle for national freedom." It is a desire that can be shared by every honest Nationalist; but why deliver this speech in what is supposed to be a working class organisation? But Mr. Das, perhaps to break the monotony and make up for the mediocrity of the entire show, came out with something new in his concluding speech. This was his definition of "true Socialism" and an explanation of his views on private property. A devout believer in Hindu metaphysical philosophy, which lays down that the Supreme Being is with and without form at the same time, Mr. Das believes in private property and does not believe in it. This scholastic statement necessitated further elucidation which was: "the right of holding private property is useless and unjust unless it leads to a higher national interest." So, one of the principal planks in the programme of Mr. Das' party calls for the preservation of private property and accumulation of individual wealth, because it will lead to higher national interests. This was a very uncomfortable position for one preaching Swaraj for the masses from the presidential chair of a workers' congress. So Mr. Das took refuge in ethical abstractions, by which the actions of the ruling class in every age and every clime can be not only justified, but glorified. He argued that it is the evil in private property that we must fight against. "The selfish man will give up being selfish if he will think less of himself and more of humanity." But how is Mr. Das going to bring about this little change in human nature? A convinced Nationalist with a strong tendency towards cultural imperialism, he is, however, not to be daunted. He expects to stagger his audience by "the magnificent endowments of our temples, etc., etc." Well, certainly Mr. Das is not ignorant of the fact that the money spent on humanitarian endowments by a Rockefeller or a Carnegie is not less magnificent. Therefore, we can take it that Mr. Das approves of the huge

accumulation of wealth in the hands of these persons because they spend a part of it not only on higher national, but on international interests. Then, he must also approve of the method by which such accumulation takes place. And here Mr. Das proves himself to be a votary of the Western capitalist civilisation which, according to him, has no place in this holy land of ours!

Through such dangerous arguments Mr. Das came to the conclusion: "so when people say that the right of private property should be done away with, do not be misled. It is the evil in private property that should be done away with. This is true Socialism." According to this new theory Rockefeller, Carnegie, Ford and their like are not less true Socialists than those ancient Hindu monarchs and merchants who endowed magnificent temples for the best interest of the nation. Well may poor old Marx turn in his grave to hear himself quoted by one expounding such a new theory of Socialism!

The series of resolutions passed in this assemblage of respectable "ladies and gentlemen" is too long to be dealt with in detail. Nor is there anything deserving particular attention in those conventional resolutions. But we cannot pass by one curious detail. In its editorial on March 28th, the "Nation" mentions the adoption of a "sensational resolution demanding the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange." But it was in vain that we searched for this resolution in the reports of the Congress. We wonder what happened to it! Evidently, at the eleventh hour it had to be shelved in order not to alienate the support of the "ladies and gentlemen" that honoured the gathering with their presence. One must have something; the workers were already discarded. The displeasure of the propertied patrons could hardly be risked by bringing forward an academic resolution. But why fear? One need not risk his respectability in these days by simply advocating such resolutions. Has not the very British parliament been desecrated by Snowden? It is alright so long as you do not mean business, like the spiritual guides of the British Labour Party.

The days of Indian Labour are yet to come.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MASSES.

IN India to-day we hear everybody talk about the "masses." There is not a political group which does not claim to stand for the welfare of the common people. To talk approvingly of organising labour and uplifting the peasantry has become a fashion in political circles. The Congress has gone so far as to admit the necessity of giving serious attention to the Trade Union Movement and there is even a proposal to subsidise it out of the Congress Fund. The Gaya Congress has appointed a Committee to work out a scheme for this work. Ever since the Non-co-operation Movement, based only on the sacrifice and patriotism of the middle classes, became threadbare, our leaders suddenly remembered the existence of those more than eighty per cent. of our people whose needs, interests, power and potentialities did not enter into the calculation of those who planned to paralyse the Government by national Non-co-operation. A resolution was adopted at Nagpur vaguely referring to the working class; that resolution, however, not only remained a dead letter but in practice the Congress has always acted against the interests of the toiling masses. On every occasion that it had to choose between the propertied upper classes and the expropriated toilers, the Congress defended the cause of the former, notwithstanding the fact that the patriotism of the upper classes has always been half-hearted and that it was on account of the spontaneous action of the rebellious masses that the Non-co-operation movement ever attained any degree of success.

We have repeatedly pointed out, and can just as well do so once more, that the Congress started rapidly on the decline when it fatally denounced the country-wide mass action during the visit of the Prince of Wales, and after having camouflaged its real intentions by idle threats of Civil Disobedience at Ahmedabad, came out openly at Bardoli as the avowed champion of vested interests and landlordism. It was the spontaneous mass upheaval that brought the Non-co-operation movement to the pinnacle of its glory towards the end of 1921, and it was its terror of the rising tide of

revolution, its reluctance to countenance such a turn in the campaign, and its decision to denounce the rebellious masses in order to secure the promised financial support of the merchants, manufacturers and landlords that deprived the Non-co-operation movement of its involuntary revolutionary character and at last brought it down to the abyss of confusion, disintegration and demoralisation.

When one looks at this present tendency to talk of the "masses," to swear by the "masses," to invoke the sacred interests of the "masses" in order to justify one or the other political principle, and even to idealise the "masses" by discovering a "spiritual awakening" in the grim battles these poor devils are fighting against enormous odds—when one looks at this sudden love for the "masses" in the light of the last two years' experience, one cannot but be sceptical. There is a motive behind it all. History has taught our leaders some wholesome lessons. They have found out to their discomfiture that the property-owning and intellectual élite is after all not the salt of the Earth. It is gradually dawning upon them that the overwhelming majority of the nation, not belonging to the "politically minded classes," can only be left out of consideration to the detriment of the movement. Hence the sudden enthusiasm for the "masses." From the Government on the one hand, to the extreme Nationalists on the other, every political group engaged in the struggle for either maintaining or conquering power, is desirous of posing as the defender of the majority. The British Imperialists say that they cannot leave India, because in that case there will be no power to protect the interests of the masses against the depredations of the greedy landlords and moneylenders. The Liberals claim to save the masses from the disruptive propaganda of the Non-co-operators by means of such "democratic" institutions as the Aman Sabhas, Social Service League, Non-Brahmin Party, Civil Guards, 'Citizens' Welfare League, etc. The orthodox Non-co-operators propose to regenerate the masses by such magical feats as the crying down of industrialism, the revival of the Charka, the abolition of the drink habit and the removal of Untouchability by ethical persuasion. The political Extremists would defend the interests of the wage-earner by means of parliamentary action and the collaboration of capital and Labour, while the Romantic Nationalists plan to liberate the masses by reviving the Panchayets, which

they curiously look upon as the most advanced democratic institution ever created on the face of the earth. But only one motive inspires all these elements with their affection for the masses. Every one of them desires to enlist the tacit support of the "dumb millions," so that the articulate few comprising their own respective ranks can lay down the law in the name of the "majority." If both the principal factions in the Congress are talking of the "masses" and admitting the necessity of organising Labour, it is because they have found out that the National Struggle cannot be carried any farther ahead exclusively with the efforts, however powerful and disinterested, of the middle classes. They have also found out the injuriousness of calling upon the masses to sacrifice for the nation without doing anything to further their economic interests. This mistake gave the Government and the loyal Liberals a point of attack. When the Congress remained utterly indifferent to the economic struggle, into which the workers and peasants were forced by the pressure of circumstances, the Government and the Liberals resorted to various stratagems with the object of appearing as the champions of the everyday interests of the toiling masses. Had not the objective conditions been so entirely favourable to a spontaneous social upheaval, the designs of the Government, in league with the "law and order" loving Moderates and the reactionary landlords, would have succeeded in pacifying the country by means of some reformist labour and land legislation. But, unfortunately, this can no longer be done. The economic position of the Indian wage-earner and poor cultivator is undermined to such an extent that no patchwork can even superficially allay their miseries. Therefore, in spite of the wilful negligence of the Nationalists on the one hand, and the artful designs of the Government together with the loyalists on the other, the discontent among the workers and peasants will inevitably grow. This discontent is the objective factor making for a national revolution. The development of the national struggle depends upon the intensification of this factor.

We do not overlook the other objective factors that also contribute to the national struggle. These are (1) the vigorous growth of a native capitalist class, which constitutes a standing menace to the Imperialist monopoly over the economic and consequently the political life of the country; (2) the economic and political disabilities imposed upon



the progressive intelligentsia, whose development as a class cannot take place within the framework of a foreign bureaucracy and which, therefore, demands a national State; and (3) the pauperisation of the lower middle class, which must choose between degeneration or revolution. All these factors of national revolution have their respective value and have been playing their respective role in our history. The history of our National movement has, however, proved that owing to a peculiar combination of forces the first, which is most revolutionary of all, is bound to compromise with the imperialist domination; therefore, the other two, which are greatly dependent upon the first, are automatically deprived of much of their revolutionary significance. The Non-co-operation movement was the best that, under the given circumstances, could be expected of these two factors in our national struggle.

The new orientation towards the "masses" with whatever motive and under whatever guise it may be, proves that the social basis of the national movement must be extended—that it cannot succeed as a middle class movement. The fourth social factor, the most revolutionary of all, the one that is bound to be uncompromising and unrelenting in the struggle, because it has "nothing to lose, but a world to gain,"—must be brought to bear upon the situation.

During the last year we repeatedly pointed out this historical necessity and urged upon the Congress to widen its political vision. But many illusions had to be dissipated, many an experience had to be lived through before this bitter dose could be swallowed. To-day the country is ringing with the cry "to the masses." Some of the leaders go so far as to declare that the middle classes are not capable of carrying the Non-co-operation movement to its logical conclusion. All this is very encouraging; but the leopard does not change its spots. With all its desire to enlist the support of the masses, and with all its virtuous schemes of uplifting the down-trodden, **the Congress as a body will remain a bourgeois political organ.** It will never be able to lead the workers and peasants in the revolutionary struggle for national freedom. **The Gaya Resolution will go hardly any farther than its predecessor adopted at Nagpur.\*** But the fact remains that the

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\* The Coconada Congress has borne us out.

unwillingness of the propertied upper classes and the inability of the intellectual middle classes to fight resolutely the battles of national freedom have been exposed. Therefore, the organisation of a party of the workers and peasants has become an indispensable necessity. **The Communist Party of India** is called upon by history to play this role.

The middle class leaders have acknowledged their defeat; if not in words, they have done it in deed. Except the incorrigible reactionaries, all admit, in one way or another, that further development of the national struggle demands conscious action of the toiling masses. They are all in the market bidding for the support of the "masses." None of them, however, is going to get it, because their instinctive class affiliation prevents them from having a revolutionary social outlook. The very fact that even the most outspoken protagonists of mass action, as against petty bourgeois confusion, still shudder at the thought of class interests and class conflict, proves the incapability of any bourgeois party to assume the leadership of such revolutionary mass action as will drag the national struggle out of the present rut. No mass movement can be developed on the reactionary principle of class collaboration. The workers and peasants can be led consciously into a revolutionary fight only with such tactics as will intensify the discontent bred in their ranks by economic exploitation. The theory of class collaboration under the pretext of national interests will always lead us back to the fatal days of Bombay, Malagaon, Chauri Chaura, Guntur and Bardoli. The preservation of national interests always means the safety of vested interests. And any rebellion of the toiling masses cannot be made without threatening the safety of the vested interests. The British Government has won the loyalty of the upper classes by guaranteeing security of property; since the Congress has proved itself equally anxious for property rights, it cannot lead a revolutionary movement any more than the Government. Hence the talk about the "masses" warrants the appearance of a working class party as a factor in the National Struggle. Let all those join us who desire to see our country free, because without national freedom the conditions of the majority of the people cannot be improved. It is only under the banner of their class Party that the masses can be organised and led into the national struggle as the first stage of a great revolutionary movement for liberation. So, those who sincerely

stand for the interests and welfare of the toiling masses must swell the ranks of such a party, the leader of the workers and peasants—the **Vanguard** of National Revolution.

The programme of such a Party is already published. We fight under the banner of that programme which has driven terror into the hearts of the imperialists. Our first object is to secure **national freedom** for the people of India. We will fight as a part of the National Congress; by fearless criticism, vigorous agitation and constant propaganda we will endeavour to push the middle class Nationalists forward in the struggle; we will co-operate with every social element that is objectively antagonistic to the imperialist domination; and we will stand shoulder to shoulder with every political party so long as it carries on the struggle against foreign domination. Our watch-word is "**No Compromise.**" We will expose mercilessly all attempts to betray the national cause under such pretexts as "Equal Partnership," "Change of Heart" and the like. We will force the Congress to declare boldly for a **Republican India** completely separated from imperialist domination.

We will lead this fight under the slogan of "**Not the masses for revolution, but revolution for the masses.**"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DEFINITION OF "SWARAJ."

EVERY member of the so-called "politically-minded" classes of our people agrees that India must have National Self-government. But every one has his own conception of this common ideal. The great question is: "Within or without the Empire?"

This cardinal issue in our national struggle is not to be approached from a sentimental point of view, as is done by many a lower middle class romanticist; nor is any credence to be given those who whisper that all the Congress leaders want "complete and absolute" independence, but do not say so openly for reasons of policy. It is neither a question of sentiment nor of conspiracy. It is the essential feature of the programme of national struggle; hence of vital importance to the movement. It is to be approached with a clear understanding of the essence of imperialism on the one hand, and the class composition of the Nationalist movement on the other.

National independence is not a question of honour. It is not a **thing in itself**. A people rebel against foreign domination, because it imposes upon them various disabilities obstructing their progress. The English came to India to make profit. The sole object of the British Government is to see that British capital extracts the maximum amount of profit by exploiting India. In this, its essential character, imperialism constitutes itself an obstacle to our national development. Hence the necessity of rebelling against foreign domination. National independence cannot be realised, the economic and political disabilities imposed upon our people by British domination cannot be removed, until the national government is free from all control by the imperial overlord.

British domination has stood in the way of our national progress; it has held our society in a backward stage of economics; it has prevented the growth of advanced political thought and institutions; and, above all, by forcibly making India an agricultural adjunct to industrial Britain, it has sunk our toiling masses into a chronic state of abject poverty. These reasons gave birth to the national movement. The

desire to free ourselves from these artificially imposed disabilities inspires us with the ideal of national independence. All talk of "national honour," India's "cultural mission" and the like, is reared upon the background of a vital material urge. If the disgrace of being ruled by a foreigner was in itself revolting, every Indian would be actively connected with the national movement. But we know that there are people in India, who not only do not deem it disgraceful, but are thankful for the blessings of British connection, and even of "British inspiration." There is no use dismissing these unpleasant phenomena by a wave of the hand, by calling these people renegades. Surely an educated landlord or a member of the Liberal League is much better equipped to feel the stings of disgrace than the man in the village. Nevertheless, it is a well-known fact that these educated gentlemen, who not only know what is good or bad for them, but pretend to know what is good or bad for the "dumb millions" better than these themselves, are ardent loyalists and votaries of the British connection. Why is it so? This phenomenon can be explained only by looking through the sentimental superstructure of Nationalism deep into its material basis. British rule and British connection are conducive to the interests of the class to which these gentlemen belong; hence their loyalism and belief in the "Commonwealth of Free Nations" which the British Empire is to them.

The definition of Swaraj, therefore, has to be given, not from the point of view of sentiment, but of material necessity. It may not be noble to sell one's soul for a mess of pottage; but it is ridiculous to talk of the "soul" of a nation and be utterly indifferent to its material existence. A soul without a body may be a metaphysical conception; but in the realm of politics, in our national movement, it is an impossibility. If Swaraj does not mean complete independence, it fails to be anything essentially different from the self-government of the Liberals. A clear answer to the question: "Within or without the Empire?" cannot thus be evaded in the process of defining Swaraj.

Those belonging to and socially represented by the Liberal League have a clear answer to this question. They say that the ideal position for the Indian nation will be in the "Commonwealth of the British Empire." This answer has conclusively debarred them from any further claim to the leadership of the National Movement, which

directly or indirectly suggests that the Indian people must have an independent national existence. The logical consequence of this answer of the Liberals leads to the political philosophy of "co-operation" with the British Government. The extremist Nationalists pretend to challenge this position of the Liberals. But all they can do by way of distinguishing themselves from the Liberals is not to give an answer to the question: "Within or without the Empire?" They prefer not to risk a reply in so many words. Every deed of theirs nevertheless speaks eloquently of what they stand for.

The Swaraj of Mahatma Gandhi, the Swaraj of the Non-co-operators, has always been an enigma to many a faithful follower. But to a conscious revolutionary, it is as clear as daylight. The existing system of British Government does not accommodate the interests of that class of our society which is moulding the policy of the Congress to-day. The discontent of the Congress is not against imperialism as such, but against bureaucracy. It follows from this, that as soon as imperialism will mend its ways by removing the grievances of a particular class, everything will be settled, as far as the present leaders of the national movement are concerned, in just the same way as the Reforms Act did with the Moderates. The social element, leading our national struggle to-day, hopes to progress within the limits of imperialism; therefore, it does not consider that national independence and imperial connection necessarily exclude each other. No wonder that authoritative organs of the Congress denounce our programme of "Separation from all imperial connection" as a "seditious document," and take Reuter to task for having given publicity to it ("Bombay Chronicle"). Some are terrified at the very idea of Republicanism, which is as odious to them as "red ruin" ("Servant"); others consider "Universal Suffrage" a too hasty step, dangerous for India ("Mussulman"). A careful analysis of the violent reaction to our programme will convince every honest revolutionary Nationalist of the urgent necessity of an unequivocal programme of National Liberation. In other words, **Swaraj**, which vaguely is supposed to be the ideal of every Indian, **must be defined.**

The Congress has given its definition on more than one occasion. Its conception of Swaraj is known to everyone who does not pretend to be ignorant. One has only to read the speech of the Mahatma at Ahmedabad in opposing Hasrat

Mohani's resolution, and that of Rajagopal Acharya at Gaya combatting the same resolution, to be convinced that the Swaraj of the Non-co-operators, does **not** necessarily demand separation from the British Empire. The difference between the self-government of the Liberals and the Swaraj of the extremists is not qualitative, but quantitative. Both will be satisfied with the same boon; only the former will thankfully accept what is graciously given, whereas the latter will demand full Dominion status immediately. So soon as imperialism will find its way to extend the "measures of self-government" far enough to accommodate the interests of the upper middle class, the bottom will be knocked off the vague "Non-co-operation" slogan. The national struggle cannot be fought on such an insecure ground. Therefore, we insist upon a definition of Swaraj. The character of this definition will show if the Congress is capable of leading the national struggle any further. This definition is not needed for us. We never had any illusion about what the Non-co-operators wanted. But we insist upon this definition for the benefit of the rank and file of the Congress itself: for those sentimental revolutionaries who are blindly following its lead. We want to demonstrate that politics is a class affair, and that the Congress has all along been playing at purely class politics, and is ever ready to sacrifice national interests to class interests, in spite of its pretensions to be a super-class body and its virtuous cant against class interests.

We want to force the middle class politicians to show their true colours, not to weaken the Congress, but to strengthen it. The Congress cannot be a powerful organ, it cannot play its historic role of leading the revolutionary struggle for National Liberation, until it is dragged out of this ambiguous position. The leadership of an anti-imperialist movement cannot be safely left in the hands of a class **which is willing to compromise at the earliest opportunity.**

If the Congress, as at present constituted, does not declare "separation from all imperial connection" to be its political programme, it is not because it prefers to avoid legal complications. The attitude of the Congress on this essential point of a programme is not to be explained in such a mechanical way. There are deeper reasons involved in it. The economic grievances and political disabilities, under which the middle classes are smarting, can be mended by re-adjustment of the methods of imperialist exploitation.

Only those, whose position cannot be improved in any way by makeshift arrangements, can be expected to stand firmly for a revolutionary change. And the overwhelming majority of our people, nearly 90 per cent. belong to this category. Neither self-government realised progressively by constitutional means, nor "Swaraj" conquered by Non-co-operation will change the economic condition of these 90 per cent. of the people. Even full Dominion status, conceded overnight, would not give political rights to the workers and peasants. A Dominion Parliament controlling the entire policy of the Government would not protect the toiling masses from the exploitation of the capitalist and landowning classes. Such a parliament would defend the interests of the property-owners and would act at the beck and call of the moneybag. The nation would still remain in the bonds of slavery.

Therefore, the interests of the majority demand **complete separation from all imperial connection and the establishment of a Republican State** based on the democratic principles of **Universal Suffrage**. This programme cannot be any more put forward by the petty bourgeois parties than by the industrial capital represented by the Liberal League. This can be done only by the party consciously representing the interests of the exploited masses. In the interests of the majority of the people, Swaraj must be defined as **Complete National Existence free from any Imperial connection**.



## CHAPTER IX.

### ABOLITION OF LANDLORDISM.

THE previous chapter dealt with the imperative need for a clear definition of Swaraj. The first clause of our programme concerns this question. We have proved that real national independence cannot be realised within the framework of imperial connection, under whatever camouflage it may be maintained. An Indian Nationalist Government separated from all imperial connection, and free from any other foreign influence, must necessarily be democratic. It must be a democratic national State that will replace imperialist dictatorship. The Swaraj we are striving for will, therefore, be not any novel creation of the peculiar genius of India but an independent national government based on such progressive principles as will permit a free social and economic progress to the various social elements that are suppressed by the present regime.

This being the case, only those social classes, whose normal development is obstructed by imperialist domination, participate in the national struggle in some form or other, in varying grades of activity and with as much irreconcilability as suits their interests. The programme of the national movement, therefore, must be adapted to the objective aims and aspirations of these social classes. On the other hand, the social elements, whose economic position is not menaced by the foreign rule, cannot be expected to be on the side of the national movement. The backbone of our struggle for liberation is only those classes which stand for progress. These classes are pitted against the British rule, because it stands in the way to their full development. This realistic estimation of the social background of our movement helps us to know from the very beginning who are with us and who are against us; it dissipates the illusion about the supposed patriotism of those who have no reason to be patriotic.

If we start from the premises that the object of our national struggle is the establishment of a free democratic government, it becomes evident that the landowning class will never be favourable to this struggle. On the contrary,

the landed aristocracy is sure to be hostile to a democratic movement. The reason is simple. Feudal economy is destroyed by the rise of those progressive forces of production whose unrestricted development demands political democracy. In other words, the ultimate success of our national movement threatens the position of the landowning classes. Therefore, it is as logical for the landlords to be hostile to any national democratic movement as it is for the bourgeoisie and the masses to be the standard-bearers of a national revolution. British domination is harmful to the Indian people, because it obstructs their normal development. The possibility of a free economic development of our society menaces the position of the landed aristocracy. So the continuance of the British rule guarantees the security of the latter, which consequently cannot be friendly to a national revolutionary movement.

A democratic movement cannot begin without threatening the security of feudal absolutism. Our national struggle being essentially a democratic movement, it therefore challenges the existence of the landowning class. The former cannot count upon the support of the latter. On the contrary, the two mutually exclude each other, since they represent irreconcilably antagonistic social forces. Landlordism can continue in its existence only with the support of the British ruler; therefore, it is bound to be loyal. In fact, the entire political philosophy of this class, which represents a decayed social order—not less a fetter on our progress than imperialism—is defined by the one word “loyalty.” This being the case, no programme of national revolution can be potential without having for its principal demand the “Abolition of Landlordism.” It is more so in India; because in our country, besides being by itself a reactionary social force, the landed aristocracy constitutes the main prop of the British rule. Therefore, any movement directed against the British domination is inevitably hostile to the absolutism of the landed aristocracy; and, on the other hand, any movement, that fails to recognise in landlordism a reactionary force and does not declare war upon it, cannot be counted upon as positively hostile to imperialism. Such a movement is not even a democratic movement which in a certain stage of social development is a revolutionary force. Therefore, by failing to subscribe to our slogan of “Abolition of Landlordism,” the middle class parties within the Congress have proved

their non-democratic character. It follows from this that, owing to stunted economic development, our middle classes, especially the lower strata, have not yet been divorced from feudal reaction. But the struggle for National Liberation cannot be carried on through successive stages unless it is freed from the confused ideology and hesitating direction of a class so much connected with the most reactionary social force.

The theory of neutralising the landed aristocracy is wrong. The national movement, as any other political movement, is but the expression of a social readjustment. This readjustment takes place on the background of class conflict. No national movement worth the name became evident in India, so long as the country remained entirely agricultural. The rise of a class not depending on agriculture nor on landowning, marked the beginning of our national movement. Had there been no British domination, the rise of a new class owning higher means of production would have led to a democratic movement directed solely against feudal absolutism. Europe underwent this period of democratic evolution in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries. The great French Revolution was the classical example. The British conquest obstructed the normal development of the Indian people; consequently the evolution of democratic ideas and the bourgeois democratic revolution actuated by these ideas were delayed. But the progress of our people, the consolidation of the Indian nation, demand the enactment of a democratic revolution. None can steal a march upon history, although it is quite possible to accelerate the movement by taking advantage of the experience gained by other peoples. Therefore, a movement which will culminate in conquering a really free national existence for the Indian people must have two characters. It must be simultaneously directed against imperialist domination, which hindered the normal evolution of our society, and against those native forces of reaction which enjoy a prolonged life, simply because the growth of progressive socio-economic factors was not permitted in the interests of foreign capital. Revolutionary Nationalism will succeed by performing two historic functions, namely, the liberation of the Indian masses from the exploitation of imperialist capital and the vindication of the progressive social tendencies as against the absolutism of reaction embodied in

landlordism and all the economic backwardness, social prejudice, intellectual stagnation, religious bigotry, etc., that go with it.

The second of the two functions of revolutionary Nationalism is more fundamental than the first; because the first goal can be only realised if the second is triumphant. That is, the Nationalist movement must be essentially democratic, inspired with a revolutionary social vision and fighting under the banner of a progressive economic programme, if it is to be victorious. It must take into account the class antagonism pervading the social structure and know how to mobilise its forces and spot its enemies in view of this antagonism. Put on such a basis, our national movement cannot help taking up the slogan of "abolition of landlordism." If it does not do so, it only signifies that its social character still needs clarification, and that a more revolutionary outlook has to be infused into it by the militant action of the masses. But it must be said categorically that our Nationalist movement cannot be what it pretends to be without undertaking courageously the most important task it is called upon by history to perform.

Then, the tactical necessity of such a slogan is equally great. The fact that the bitter experience of the last two years has failed to impress this necessity upon the Congress leadership speaks for the latter's non-revolutionary, and to a great extent, socially reactionary character. The imaginary patriotism of the landed barons, as well as the hope of getting a few hundred rupees of subscription from them, do not by any means warrant the policy of repudiating a programme which corresponds to the interests of 80 per cent. of the population, and which alone can infuse enthusiasm into the peasant masses, without whom no liberation movement can be successful in India. The most outstanding social phenomenon in India to-day is the growing conflict between the landed aristocracy and the capitalists on the one hand, and the landlord and cultivator on the other. The former conflict is crystallising in the duel between the Liberals and landowners inside the Legislatures. It shows that the big bourgeoisie is delivering an indirect attack upon the citadel of imperialism. The object is to free the miserable peasantry, that they may become wage-slaves in the industrial centres. The second conflict, that between the landlord and the tenant, concerns us more; because nothing goes to strengthen the position of

the Government more than the clever exploitation of this conflict, which grows every day in spite of the injunctions of the Congress and the holy sermons to the landlords to be kind to their victims. Taking advantage of this conflict, the Government on the one hand poses as the protector of the masses and, on the other, can always threaten the undermined feudal reactionaries to make them do anything. If a class conflict, which is the dynamic force behind a great revolution, is left to benefit and strengthen imperialism, that is because of the reactionary nature of our national movement, which is even averse to the first principles of democracy. Class conflict supplies the impetus to every political movement. The failure to recognise it and the inability to adjust our ideology and tactics according to it, constitute the weakness of our national movement. But the national struggle must go on. It must be saved from the hands of those hopelessly tied to reactionary social elements. This task can only be performed by those feeling the stings of this conflict and will be unwittingly aided by the Liberals, who represent a class whose development cannot take place without ruining the landed aristocracy.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SCHEME OF SWARAJ.

THE draft programme of the Swaraj Party is one of those many attempts at Constitution-making which is the latest fashion in the Indian political world. It is everything but what it is supposed to be. It is no programme. It is a scheme, and a scheme is not a programme; but this first principle of politics does not seem to carry any weight with our leaders, irrespective of the parties, camps and factions into which the Congress is divided.

The document under consideration is a scheme of Swaraj. It is altogether free from any indication as to how this "ideal" is to be realised. It contains the sketch of a political structure which hangs in the air without any organic connection with society. If it is anything it is a Constitution, and a very confused Constitution at that. It is supposed to be the picture of free India; but not a word is to be found in the eight long chapters, which challenges imperialism or formulates in any way the fundamental issue of our national struggle. The fundamental issue involved in the movement for National Liberation is the necessity of overthrowing foreign domination as the first step. The so-called "programme" of the Swaraj Party, however, prefers to overlook this thorny question and goes on philosophically to the pastime of spinning out a fantastic Constitution.

The authors of the scheme appear to congratulate themselves upon having given to the nation something new, something which they consider very original. But there is hardly anything new it. The point from which the whole scheme starts is as old as the National Congress itself. It is the creed of the much-maligned Moderates, a creed which was repudiated by the inauguration of the Non-co-operation movement. In the introductory note we read: "the outline represents an ideal to be gradually worked up to, intermediate steps helping to change the present regime so as to realise the ideal at an early date." This is the foundation on which the whole scheme is reared. First of all, the outline remarkably fails to define the "ideal." It is evidently not National Independence; because there is no mention of it throughout the whole document. We are told that something is to be

realised "gradually." This something is "Swaraj" which, according to the concrete suggestions of the scheme, can be reduced to such simple formulæ as (1) local autonomy, (2) decentralisation of the State authority, (3) organisation of some sort of electorate, and (4) revival of the Panchayets.

Was it necessary to make such a row in order to end by presenting the country with a programme which is neither novel nor revolutionary nor workable? All these modest demands have been made by the Moderates ever since 1885, except the revival of the Panchayets. And this glorious goal is to be attained by "intermediate steps helping to change the present regime." The Moderates sought for a "change of heart" on the part of the foreign ruler. The method they adopted was petition and compromise. The Non-co-operators also worked for the same ideal only with a somewhat different and more romantic method—that of overwhelming evil by good. Now come the Swarajists with their "fighting programme" which prescribes a golden mean, that of negotiation, euphemistically called "Responsive Co-operation." So the mountain groaned and gave birth to a mouse!

Now to go into the merits of the ideal itself. As a whole it is a dry juridical production. The authors are completely oblivious of the fact that human society is a living organism whose life and progress are determined not by static legal and moral codes, but by the dynamic forces of economic evolution. Between C. R. Das' Constitutional Law and Babu Bhagwan Das' "Ethico-spiritual" concepts, the joint production has lost all socio-political significance. In details, three main groups of doctrines are contained in the scheme. They are: (1) Social Reform based on Humanitarianism; (2) Administrative Innovations which start from the assumption that the old village Panchayets can be and should be revived, and (3) Economic Progress admitting and guaranteeing the right of private property.

This ideal of Swaraj is obviously to be realised within the framework of the British connection, because nothing is said to the contrary. In fact, the burden of the whole programme is "to change the present regime so as to realise the ideal at an early date." This being the case, let us examine if the above three main formulæ of the Swaraj scheme will in any way alter the condition of our people.

The humanitarian clauses of social reform and "uplift"

are given the first place in the scheme. It is done obviously with the purpose of demonstrating that the "ideal" concerns primarily the welfare of the "masses." But the two provisos, one tacit and the other apparently incidentally, but none the less emphatically, added towards the end, make this laudable part of the scheme untenable. By not challenging outright the existence of imperial domination it is tacitly admitted that this "ideal" Swaraj will be and can be realised without complete national freedom. The unconditional acceptance of the right of private ownership and the full guarantee given to its functions precludes all possibility of protecting the working masses from economic exploitation. The authors pathetically try to extricate their scheme from this grave fallacy by devising an administrative structure which they put forward as novel and as an improvement on any other system, because the Panchayets are taken as the units. But in this they only succeed in making confusion worse confounded. They place themselves in the untenable position of one heralding the advent of capitalistic society and advocating a negation of democracy at the same time. But this cannot be done, not even by the combined juridical talent and ethical philosophy of the two gifted authors.

"Private property will be recognised and the growth of individual wealth will be permitted." What does this simple phrase mean? Capitalism must be enthroned on the holy soil of India. No sophistry can confuse this logical inference of the formulation of the economic doctrine of the Swaraj Party. But is it possible to hitch the horses of the Panchayet and capitalism to the unwieldy wagon of a fantastic Swaraj without running the risk of wrecking it? It is not. The Panchayet and capitalism represent two economic stages of society which are separated by centuries. The one excludes the other. The Panchayet or village communities were the political apparatus of a society still in the state of primitive communism; that is, at a period of economic development at which private property had not yet fully evolved. The study of the social history of any country will prove conclusively that some form of primitive village government existed everywhere in the pre-capitalist period, and that the growth of private ownership, which inevitably leads to capitalism, disrupts the primitive communal society. Private ownership cannot evolve into its logical and inevitable result—capitalism—without disrupting the antiquated political organism and



bringing into existence a new one, compatible with its growth and existence. The whole Das scheme is based upon an ignorance or ridiculous indifference to this universal law of social evolution. Hence its lifelessness.

It is well-known how the British rule is blamed for having ruined our old village Panchayets, under which the people "lived happy and prosperous from time immemorial." It is also asserted that the capitalist nature of British rule is responsible for this destructive role it has played. Now, is there any conceivable reason by which one can be convinced that Indian capitalism will be different from British capitalism? That Indian capitalism will thrive on the basis of a Panchayet administration which succumbed before the inroads of British capitalism? One has to be utterly ignorant of all economic laws in order to give an affirmative answer. The struggle of the Mavlas of Mulshi Petha is still going on. And it is Indian capital which is ruining the villages there. So it is clear that the free march of Indian capitalism, which is the corollary of the Swaraj Party's economic programme, ridicules its administrative programme, drawn up with such juridical precision. It also mocks at the humanitarianism of its social ideal. The first and last principle of the programme is that capitalism must develop in India, that every other interest must be submitted to this imperious necessity. This is also the programme of the Liberals. What is, then, the difference? Essentially there is none. But the Extremists must save their faces. Hence the camouflage of social reform and Panchayet administration.

The Panchayet administration formulated in the scheme is a camouflage, because a little analysis shows that it is not the revival of the old village councils that is advocated. What is demanded is a decentralised form of government. And this is a very familiar tune. Here is heard the voice of the rising bourgeoisie. It is the laissez faire policy of bourgeois democracy. The monopoly of imperialist capital demanded the rigid centralisation of the Government of India. The young national bourgeoisie smarted under it. The Provincial Autonomy of the Moderates, Fiscal Autonomy of the Home Rulers and Decentralised Administration of the Swarajists are but the different expressions of the same demand: the centralised monopoly of British capital must be broken in order that Indian capital can have elbow room. English radicals in the days of the Reform Bill struggled for the

policy of laissez faire: the cry of decentralised democracy rent the political sky of Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Das Scheme raises the standard of radical democracy in India, notwithstanding the authors' prejudice against democracy.

There are many other points in the scheme, whose political wisdom can be challenged. We will confine ourselves in referring here only to the most glaring ones. The doctrine of decentralisation on the ground of communal and linguistic demarcations is positively injurious to the growth of national solidarity. This doctrine is evidently formulated as a measure of expediency. But it will be only playing into the hands of imperialism, which is ever ready to encourage the communal spirit. A centralised national State based on universal suffrage is the only way to national solidarity. The communal and sectarian differences should be submerged in the national solidarity. The more the process of economic development grows, the more conscious will be this solidarity.

The different place conceded in the administrative scheme to urban and rural areas is also very harmful. But we need not be anxious about it, since it is too fantastic to affect the reality. A society thrown into the melting pot of capitalism will not be divided into watertight compartments of rural and urban areas. Economic development destroys all territorial differences and social prejudices.

One word more about the social reformism of the scheme. The ideal Swaraj will not permit nationalisation of industries, because "it will stifle private enterprise." This is but the corollary of the economic doctrine that "permits and encourages the accumulation of individual wealth." So the India of the Panchayets will permit and encourage the free accumulation of private wealth, which can alone be done by the unrestricted exploitation of labour. A scheme, which makes such wide provisions and gives such sweeping guarantees to capitalism, has not a word to say by way of protecting the welfare of the toiling masses. Not a word to restrict within limits the exploitation of the "masses." Not a word to curtail the absolutism of the landed aristocracy. Evidently landlordism will flourish in the Republic of the Panchayets. The lion and the lamb will eat out of the same pot in the land of Buddha. There is no end to bourgeois hypocrisy.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE SWARAJIST PROGRAMME.

WE have repeatedly pointed out that our struggle for National Liberation has come to a point where it is necessary to choose between two distinctly different courses. They are revolution and reversion to constitutional methods. A new leadership was needed to rescue the movement from this crisis. Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das promised this leadership; but the programme of the Swaraj Party, which is said to embody his point of view, has dashed all hope to the ground. In the previous chapter the Swaraj scheme prepared by the joint effort of Chittaranjan Das and Babu Bhagwan Das has been dealt with. Now comes the programme, which has since reached us. There is no room for doubt which way the New Party, headed by the Deshbandhu seeks to lead the country. It has made its choice definitely. The way chosen by it is that of Constitutionalism. It is so, in spite of the protestation of Mr. Das, who the day after his party adopted its programme declared in an interview to the "Nation": "Our plan of campaign is not so-called constitutional agitation. What is called constitutional agitation rests in the last resort on brute force. That is how the Western writers on political science have elucidated it. I denounce all idea of violence, etc., etc." "The Moderates propose to enforce their demands by prayers and petitions and constitutional agitation." The Swaraj Party will "bend the bureaucracy to its will by resorting to obstruction within the Councils and Civil Disobedience outside if the Government rejects the legitimate demands of the country."

What is the "demand of the country" according to the estimation of the Swaraj Party? It is "**Dominion status.**" This is, then, the "legitimate demand" of the country with which the Swaraj Party is threatening the bureaucracy. Notice, it is the "bureaucracy" and not imperialism which the Swaraj Party challenges. That is, according to its political philosophy (which denounces the theories of the "Western writers"), the welfare of the Indian people needs not complete national independence, but some reformation of the methods by which the British domination is maintained. This is the programme of the Swaraj Party in a nutshell.

No amount of sophistry can alter it. This being the case, Mr. Das' anxiety to prove that his party is something superior to the Liberals cannot conceal the fact that the leadership which he and his party colleagues propose for our movement is **not along the revolutionary path, but that of Constitutionalism.**

The New Party claims distinction from the Liberals by virtue of its promise to adopt "obstruction within the Councils and Civil Disobedience outside if the Government rejects the legitimate demands of the country." This may sound formidable. But it is a hollow threat, because all depends upon the character of the demand. And the programme of the Swaraj Party expressly prescribes that the demand must be "legitimate." Now what is the legal or moral code which is supposed to determine the legitimacy of the demand? Evidently these codes will be provided by the leaders of the party. In fact it has already been done. We have already had two of them—the Swaraj scheme and Dominion status. The recent attitude of the Liberals in the Councils and the Assembly has taken the fire out of the gun of the Swarajists in so far as the tactics of obstruction is concerned. It has shown that even orthodox constitutionalism does not preclude legitimate obstruction. So the only capital left to the Swaraj Party is the threat to supplement its action within the Councils by Civil Disobedience outside. All its claim to distinction from the Liberals hangs on this promise. But its programme again spoils the whole game. Civil Disobedience is accepted as a "legitimate" weapon. But its application is made subordinate to the "obligation to obey higher laws (whatever they may be)" and "in the opinion of the party the country is not at present ready for such Civil Disobedience." The leaders of the Swaraj Party, who take pride in their rationality, certainly do not expect to make the country fit for Civil Disobedience overnight. **Therefore, in the near future, the obstructionist activities of the New Party can hardly be any more fruitful than these of the Liberals.**

Then to take a long view of the thing. The Swaraj Party promises to work wonders if the Government rejects its demands, which are raised to the glorious height of "national" demands. So the future of the party depends on this probable rejection and this rejection again depends

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upon the character of the demands. Now what are the demands of the country, as estimated by the Swarajists? Dominion status as defined in the scheme promulgated by C. R. Das and Bhagwan Das. There is nothing in this demand which even pretends to dispute the right of imperialism. The substance includes such familiar themes as Dominion Status, Local Autonomy, Decentralised Government, and so forth. These "legitimate demands" have already received the gracious sanction of His Majesty's Government in the Montagu Reforms. So there cannot be any question of their categorical rejection, which alone will spur the Swaraj Party to action. A "legitimate" demand cannot be made unconstitutionally. "The attainment of Swaraj by all legitimate and peaceful means," which is the creed of the Swaraj Party, logically limits its activities within the boundaries of constitutionalism.

Thus, bound hand and foot by their constitutional prejudices, the leaders of the New Party are altogether incapable of taking their stand boldly upon the revolutionary road which has to be travelled to the end before national freedom can be conquered for the Indian people. Their class interests do not permit them to be otherwise. Hence they have produced a programme which limits the scope of their activities within the four walls of the Council Chambers. The party will in no case accept office. This is the only distinction from the Liberals. The Swarajists will be His Majesty's Opposition. But between the two wings of the national bourgeoisie, imperialism will sit tight and national freedom will remain a fiction.

Such are the ways of bourgeois Nationalism! "The Swaraj for the masses" will be attained within the framework of the British Empire. That is, the Indian toilers will be given the fictitious Panchayet which is evidently expected to thrive under the protection of British capital.

The struggle for National Liberation still stands in need of a new leadership. The struggle being essentially a revolutionary struggle, it demands a revolutionary leadership free from all those questionable theories about "non-violence" and "legitimacy." We are no more in love with violence than Mr. Das. But we are realist enough to call a spade a spade. British domination was not established in India by constitutional means; therefore, it cannot be over-

thrown by constitutional means. The kind of freedom or grade of freedom required for the progress and prosperity of the Indian people is to be determined neither by legal codes nor by ethical dogmas. It is primarily for material needs that freedom must be secured. Therefore, those who feel these material needs the most, will fight more boldly, more resolutely for freedom. This is the fundamental issue which will decide the future leadership of our movement. The social background of the Swaraj Party does not permit it to voice the material needs of the most needy. Therefore it cannot be revolutionary; therefore its programme is so full of fallacies and sophistries. It seeks to lead the movement in a direction which has been left behind under the pressure of revolutionary forces. Dominion status and local self-government, even in the beautiful garb of spiritualised politics and Panchayet system, miserably fail to correspond to the demands of the people. These demands are not determined by any decree of legitimacy, but by economic necessity. The movement for National Liberation requires a leadership which will reflect these demands and will know how to put them forward not by "legitimate and peaceful means," but by dint of revolutionary action.

The Swaraj Party pretends to lay claim to democratic character by talking of a "mandate from the electorate." But what is this "electorate" by whose assumed authority the fate of the Indian people is to be decided? It does not represent two per cent. of the population. Can a party, which even fails to advocate Universal Suffrage, be expected to defend national interests? If it acts in the name and on the authority of the so-called "electorate" created under the Montagu dispensation, it certainly does not take into consideration the welfare and aspirations of the millions who are excluded from this sham electorate, to accept which as a working basis is a negation of the rudiments of democracy. This limited electorate embraces the upper and middle propertied classes; a demand commensurate with its interests does not necessarily call for an immediate separation from the British Empire. By its programme of Dominion status, the Swaraj Party comes out as the spokesman of the classes included in the limited electorate. It represents the lower strata while the Liberals represent the upper. Therefore, it has no more right to national leadership than the Moderates.

The future, then, belongs to a party which will represent the interests of those not included in the limited electorate. This party, however, will not be led by those talking piously about the "masses" and betraying their interests in every crisis. It must be led by conscious revolutionaries. Its programme must be such as to direct the national struggle in a revolutionary course. It can alone be the great party of the worker and peasant masses. And the workers and peasants can be led to their freedom only under the leadership of the Communist Party, whose programme of National Liberation is already before the country. Let all sincere revolutionaries rally around this programme, which alone can infuse the great national forces with enthusiasm.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CLASS STRUGGLE.

“HISTORY is the history of class struggles”—thus wrote Karl Marx more than half-a-century ago. This new reading of human history was presented to the world at a time when capitalism was still comparatively in its earlier stages. Class differentiation was not yet so sharp as it has since grown, in consequence of the intensification of capitalist exploitation. Nor were the social sciences, which to-day throw a flood of new light upon the past, developed to any great extent. Consequently at the time of its first formulation, the Marxian theory of history certainly did not go unchallenged. It has been subjected first to the criticism of bourgeois learning retained by the capitalist State; later, the alarming growth of revolutionary Socialism divested this criticism of its former academic character. The wild ravings of the bourgeois intellectuals against the theory of class struggle simply showed the sharpening of class antagonism.

So it is not only in India that the theory of class struggle and class interests is declared taboo by the bourgeoisie. Our spiritual Nationalists and the humanitarian Labour leaders need not, therefore, congratulate themselves upon having discovered that the sacred soil of India is immune from class antagonism, which is the curse of western civilisation. Marx and his Materialist Conception of History may be the result of western civilisation; but was not Thomas Carlyle, who said that the history of the world was the biography of great men, also a product of western society? To-day, when class antagonism has broken out into a bloody civil war, the bourgeoisie stoutly decries the theory of class interest as against democratic relations between Capital and Labour. They do it while every act of theirs is a move in the fiercest class war which they are brutally conducting in every walk of society.

It is but natural that those who are benefited by the social system maintained by class domination, will deny the existence of this domination. It is so in the West, and it is not otherwise in India. All the voluminous works on capitalist economics together with the learned treatises of bourgeois philosophy, however, did not make class domina-



tion non-existent, although they denied it. As soon as the exploited masses grow conscious of their interests, class antagonism becomes evident to them, and the hypocrisy of the doctrine of equality, be it democratic or spiritual, is exposed. Therefore, the propertied classes and the intellectuals paid by the propertied classes always endeavour to prevent the development of class consciousness among the labouring masses; because such consciousness marks the beginning of the end of unrestrained exploitation. The pious horror of class antagonism, which is expressed by even those of our leaders who shed tears for the "masses" and spin Utopian schemes for their salvation, has grown out of the instinctive desire for the safety of class domination.

Class war is the inevitable attribute of civilisation, which does not differ fundamentally in different countries. Civilisation is a stage of human development. Human society is called civilised when the human being has succeeded in conquering to a considerable extent the forces of nature. A civilised man is no longer a helpless victim of the elements. He has progressed a long way in his struggle against nature. The primitive tools have been evolved into more advanced means of production, whose ownership has not only ceased to be communal, but has passed into the hands of the few who possess capital. The development of the means of production leads to their concentration and this, in its turn, helps the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the possessing class which is growing smaller and smaller every day. This accumulation of wealth is effected only by expropriating the ever-growing majority, the workers, who are sunk into the depths of poverty. The corollary of this situation is class war.

In civilised society, class antagonism becomes sharpest and breaks out into open civil war; but it exists, although in less acute forms, in the previous stages of society. Ever since primitive man came out of tribal communism and entered the stage of society in which the first forms of private ownership were to be noticed, he has been involved in an incessant class war. The root cause of all the great movements of human history is to be found in the revolt of the oppressed class against the oppressing class. The history of India, like the history of any other country, is full of such revolts. The more human society progresses, the more ad-

vanced the means of production become, the more conscious grows the interest of the classes, and the class conflict becomes fiercer in consequence. If in India such a form of class war as is prevalent in the West is still lacking to a certain extent, the reason is to be sought, not in its spiritual nature, but in the backwardness of Indian society. Owing to the retarded growth of modern means of production, the class differentiation has not yet become as clear as it is in the highly industrialised countries. The difference between the intensity of class conflict lies not in the geographical situation of the particular country, nor in the peculiar genius of a given people, but in the grades of economic development. In the industrialised parts of India, the conflict between Capital and Labour is not much milder than in the West, although the Indian workers still lack sufficient class-consciousness.

Of course, there are many who hold that not only has India travelled on a special road, but she will make further progress also in her own way. These people have still to learn that they themselves give the lie to their own theory. The very Nationalist movement is but a form of class struggle. The class struggle between feudalism and the new bourgeoisie, which broke out into a wave of revolutions in Europe, the mightiest crest of which wave was the great French Revolution, could not take place in India owing to the advent of the British. The Nationalist movement is but the belated enactment of the historic struggle of the bourgeoisie to liberate the forces of social production from the yoke of feudalism. The introduction of a third element, namely British domination, has complicated and confused the issue, whose fundamental significance, however, remains the same. The fact that the landed aristocracy is to-day found allied with the British proves that Nationalism, in addition to its anti-British character, constitutes an objective menace to the remnants of feudalism. The victory of Nationalism will mean the victory of the native bourgeoisie, and the victory of the bourgeoisie will mean the triumph of capitalism. In other words, through the turmoils of the Nationalist movement, India is advancing towards higher grades of civilisation which, by the very nature of things, will intensify the class antagonism between the two sections into which society is being divided.

Thus there is no escape. Indian society is pursuing the same line of evolution as any other human community. This fundamental truth is not affected by superficial peculiarities, which are being held out as essential features by the conscious or unconscious propagandists of the dominating class, whose privileged position will be impaired by the growth of class consciousness among the exploited masses.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PATRIOTISM.

THE cry of "Bolshevik menace" is not unknown to us in India. Ever since the Russian Revolution, the British Government has raised time and again the Bolshevik bogey. The object of this subterfuge is obvious. It is to terrify the propertied classes into loyalty to the Government of law and order. Those clever tactics have not been altogether unsuccessful. Not only the upper classes—capitalists and landlords—but even a large section of the patriotic middle classes fell easy victims to this stratagem of imperialism. That the capitalists and landlords would be scared by the gruesome picture of the demon of Bolshevism sweeping down upon India with its bloody hordes is quite natural. They have large interests to save. Their patriotism is based upon the desire to protect what they possess and to acquire more. It does not need much cleverness to convince them that this patriotism of theirs is not compatible with any revolutionary movement which, directly or indirectly, threatens the regime of law and order. But for those Nationalists belonging to the lower middle classes, "Bolshevism" certainly cannot be an awful enemy, because they have not much to lose. We do not intend to enter here into the theory of Bolshevism nor are we calling upon the revolutionary patriots to embrace Bolshevism. We want to point out the sinister motive of the British Government in discovering "Bolshevik agents" in every bush.

Up till recently, the campaign against Bolshevism was practically confined to the Anglo-Indian and Liberal Press. It is true that, from time to time, some section of the Nationalist press also caught the anti-Bolshevik virus. It was a campaign of lies. Although it did prejudice the minds of the Indian people, thereby preventing the correct understanding of such an epoch-making event as the Russian Revolution, this campaign was not then a campaign of ruthless prosecution. The situation has now changed. The campaign against the "Bolshevik menace" has transcended the limits of propaganda and entered the stage of wholesale arrest and persecution. The British Government is still

able to deceive our patriots about the real significance of this campaign. This persecution is said to be not against Indian revolutionaries engaged in the struggle for the liberation of the Indian people, but against "foreign agents." The Government is sure of the support of the propertied upper classes in this campaign against Bolshevism for the reasons stated above, but this talk of "foreign agents" must be invented in order at least to neutralise the middle class Nationalists.

In course of the last two months, a number of arrests have been made, and several persons have already been sentenced to hard labour. Not a word of protest has been heard from the Nationalist quarters. Evidently the trick of the Government has worked. Our Nationalists are convinced that the men arrested and sentenced are really engaged in some mischievous propoganda, not in the interest of the Indian people, but to serve the purpose of some outside force. If this attitude towards the present prosecutions prevails, and it appears that it does prevail, then the sinister press campaign of the last several years has borne fruit. There is an adage that the enemy of our enemy is our friend. Acting according to this adage, the revolutionary Nationalists endeavoured to overthrow British imperialism with the help of Pan-Germanism. It is indeed curious that in another situation, where the grouping of hostile forces is apparently similar, the same line of reasoning is not followed. Let us repeat that we are not here discussing the merits of Bolshevism. It is very well known how heartily the British Government hates Bolshevism. The latter, therefore, must be the mortal enemy of the former. This being the case, that section of our Nationalists, who earnestly desire the end of British domination, should find in Bolshevism at least an ally, if not a friend. But when one man after another is arrested as a "Bolshevik agent," and not a word of protest is uttered by our Nationalists, it is evident that what is implied by the very term "Bolshevism" is not compatible with the patriotism of the upper classes.

Before we proceed to deal with the relation between Bolshevism and revolutionary patriotism as against the patriotism of property, it is necessary to say a few words about the stupid talk of "foreign agent." What was the crime of the six youths convicted at Peshwar? They were accused

of being "Bolshevik agents," engaged in a conspiracy to overthrow the British Government. We have many a brilliant lawyer in the Nationalist movement. Many an attempt has been made to challenge the British Government on constitutional grounds. But none cared to find out if the charges against those youths were proved. The only evidence against them was that they had been in Russia (forced by circumstances to go there) where they had studied the theories and tactics of revolution. This certainly does not prove that they were employed by anybody. The Indian students educated in the State Universities of Japan, the United States, Germany or any other country are not looked upon as the agents of the Governments of those countries. What was proved, however, was that those youths brought with them not sacks of gold, but a knowledge which is positively dangerous to the security of British Imperialism. This is a very interesting point for our Nationalists to know and ponder over. It is said that seditious literature was found with those accused. What was the nature of that literature? Evidently it dealt with the necessity of organising the workers and peasants of India in a great political party for the freedom of the country. Why should such a propaganda be looked upon as "foreign"? The secret of the whole affair is that those youths as well as the others arrested subsequently on similar charges must be prosecuted, not because of their trip to Russia, or for their alleged connection with the Bolsheviks, **but for the fact that they represent a political tendency which is dangerous to imperialism**, and, therefore, is destined to infuse new vigour into the national struggle. So soon as the revolutionary Nationalists will understand this significance of the movement for a working class party, they will see through the stratagem of imperialism, and the Bolshevik bogey will cease to terrify them. This is a dangerous eventuality, hence the stupid talk of "foreign agents." The object is to blindfold the revolutionary patriots by working upon their national prejudices.

Now, let us see if patriotism needs to be super-suspicious of Bolshevism. Be it said once again that the patriotism of property is not under consideration. We mean the desire of the hundreds and thousands of men and women, who have no particular vested interest, to see their country free, to see the people of India in a position to live a human life. These patriots, who are ready to sacrifice their lives

for their ideal, who have time and again worn the thorny crown of martyrdom, are moved by the suffering of the people. They are certainly not fighting in order that the sacrosanct right of landlordism may remain paramount through all eternity, nor that the dividends of the Indian industries may go on increasing year after year. Sincere, revolutionary patriotism is a sentiment which is created by love for freedom—not the freedom of the few to exploit the many, but freedom for all to live, learn and progress.

What reason has this revolutionary Nationalism to be hostile to Bolshevism? The men, who are to-day prosecuted by imperialism as "Bolshevik agents," fully share with the earnest patriot the desire to see the people of India free and in a position to progress. The wrath of imperialism is wreaked upon them, **because they know how to translate this desire into practice**, because from the very beginning **their activities have constituted a serious menace to the security of the Government of law and order**. The youths convicted at Peshwar went to Russia and imbibed the bloody doctrine of Bolshevism; even that much cannot be said of the men arrested or otherwise persecuted subsequently. Their crime consists in their attempt to organise a working class party with the object of fighting for the economic interest of the toiler. Is there anybody in India who can condemn this attempt and have his patriotism go unchallenged?

The experience of the last several years has proved amply the necessity of a working class party. The Government is clever enough to see that the growth of such a party will sound its death-knell; therefore, it is determined to crush it in the beginning. The upper classes have reason to side with the Government in this campaign of persecution; they can be alarmed by the cry of "Bolshevik menace." But it will be a great victory for imperialism if it succeeds in blindfolding the lower middle classes, which constitute the rank and file of the Nationalist army to-day.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM.

WE are told by a friend that our critique of bourgeois Nationalism is resented by many a sincere revolutionary Nationalist, because the latter think that this criticism reflects upon their honesty. Let it be said at the very beginning that our revolutionary duty does not permit us to spare the feelings of any particular body which directly or indirectly acts contrary to the interests of the Indian masses. We believe that the revolutionary Nationalists, who are inspired by the noble ideal of National Liberation, and who, during the last two decades have amply proved their readiness to suffer for this ideal, are also with us in the desire to protect the interests of and secure happiness and prosperity for the masses. Correctly understood, our criticism, therefore, should not offend these honest idealists; on the contrary, the object of this criticism has always been to point out, above all to them, the motive behind the apparently plausible acts of the upper classes.

It seems that the misunderstanding arises from the term "bourgeoisie." The correct socio-economic definition of this term is evidently not asked for. It is looked upon as a purely western commodity which has no place in India. In short, this term awakens in the average Indian a good deal of prejudice, which is kept alive by the subtle propaganda of the upper classes. Instead of looking for the class in our society which corresponds to what is called the bourgeoisie in the West, the common term "bhadralkh" is taken for the synonym. Hence arises the misunderstanding. Of course, the term "bhadralkh" also is essentially applicable to the upper classes; and in that sense it does correspond to the "bourgeoisie" of the West. But the term "bhadralkh" now embraces such a variety of social elements that it is incorrect to use it as the synonym for the word "bourgeoisie" which has a very definite significance.

The term "bhadralkh" literally means cultured person—something like the English "gentleman." Certainly it has an indirect economic basis, inasmuch as culture has been so



far available only to people enjoying certain economic privileges. The Indian term, however, is not so closely economic as is "bourgeoisie." The latter is a French word which was originally applied to the propertied townsmen, and carried with it all the power and privileges that were the monopoly of the propertied townsmen in the eighteenth century. Therefore, although essentially there is not much difference between the significance of the two terms, commonly not exactly the same thing is understood by them in the places they are respectively used.

The objection to the term "bourgeoisie," and particularly the criticism levelled against the philosophy and politics of this class, is based upon this difference between the superficial meaning of the two terms. It is perhaps thought that the Indian upper classes do not care for material things; their superiority is cultural—they are intellectual aristocrats. This is precisely the doctrine whose hypocrisy we mean to expose. It is useless to quarrel over terms. It matters very little whether the term "bhadralokh" exactly means the "bourgeoisie" or not. What does matter is that there is a class in India which for all intents and purposes does occupy the same place in Indian society as the bourgeoisie does in the western countries. All the elements included in the general term "bhadralokh" may not and in fact do not belong completely to this class. It is also true that the relation between this particular section of the "bhadralokh" and the masses is not the same as the relation between the masses and others who are also called "bhadralokh." Still more: the relation between this particular section of the "bhadralokh" (the section which precisely corresponds to the bourgeoisie) and the other sections which are also called "bhadralokh" is hardly to be distinguished from the relation subsisting between the former and the masses. So what is to be noticed is not the loose use of a particular term, a use which has to be made for clarity and in the absence of any more suitable term—but the **social composition** of the class referred to by this term. If this is done our friends the Nationalist revolutionaries will not have any reason to be offended by our criticism of bourgeois philosophy and politics. They are offended, because they think that our criticism is against them; and since they do not possess the attributes which are the object of our criticism,

it is quite logical that they should resent our attitude. In fact, what we persistently point out is how the class, from which the revolutionary Nationalists hail, does **not** enjoy any of the rights and privileges that are supposed to belong to a bhadralkh, and how the intellectual assets they are so proud of are nothing but a commodity which is to be sold at the doors of the property-owning upper classes in return for an insufficient means of livelihood. Therefore our criticism ought to help the revolutionary Nationalists to see things as they are, instead of wounding their pride.

The reason for this resentment on the part of the revolutionaries, if really resentment is there, is that they consider themselves members of the class which we call the bourgeoisie. Now, in light of the noble sentiments which move these Nationalists, it is not possible to count them among those whose patriotism is manifestly that of property, and whose theory of Nationalism, as we will show presently, does not correspond with the welfare of the majority of the people who constitute the nation. We say, at the risk of incurring their displeasure in the beginning, to those who must eventually be with us: "Do not be so proud of your bhadralkh descent; look at your real position closely with a realist's eye and you will see that you do not belong to the bourgeoisie, the present-day bhadralkh that counts." In scientific social language, we say to the revolutionary patriots who want the freedom not of a certain section, but of the masses of the Indian people: "You are de-classed; economically you have no place in the ranks of the bourgeoisie—you belong to the exploited working class; it is only the prejudice of birth, of tradition that does not allow you to have this realistic view of your position; materially you are an exploited worker pure and simple; spiritually you are bound hand and foot by the subtle propaganda of the upper classes, who are very much interested in keeping alive your prejudice against the 'illiterate mob,' so that the union of intellectual worker and manual worker will be delayed as much as possible. Such being the case, why should the class, which does not enjoy any of the rights and privileges that go with property, be active or passive supporters of the politics of bourgeois Nationalism?" The revolutionary patriots have nothing but their prejudice to lose. If they can do it, they will appreciate our critique of the bourgeoisie, and will see

that this critique does not in the least reflect upon their honesty.

Do we not remember the sentiments that, two decades ago, brought Nationalism out of the narrow circle of those engaged in prosperous liberal professions or occupying comfortable Government posts? What was the ideal of those pioneers of new Nationalism who challenged the right of the then Congress to speak in the name of the nation? The sentiment was of rebellion against the miserable condition to which the masses had been reduced by the foreign ruler. The ideal was to feed the hungry, to enlighten the illiterate. Not the English High Priests of Constitutionalism, but some native rebel or other, for example Bankin Chatterji, was the inspiring genius. The sight of a hungry, ignorant, oppressed people was the moving force. Therefore, the story of the **Ananda Math** fired the imagination of our revolutionary patriots. The cry was: "Rob the rich to feed the poor." In another part of the country, the vision of Sivaji leading his mountaineers fired the popular imagination. This is the basis of revolutionary Nationalism, which concerns itself with the fate of the broad masses of the people. So far none of the political parties, that have at one time or other appropriated the title of fighting for the national interest, has stood upon this basis. The reason for this deviation has been insistently pointed out by us. It has not been an involuntary deviation. Exigencies of class interest demanded it. And here comes the difference between bourgeois Nationalism calculated to further the interests of the upper (and specially capitalist) classes, and revolutionary patriotism based upon the noble ideal of securing happiness and prosperity for the majority of the people.

When the bourgeoisie, actuated by the desire to advance its own class interest, betrays the cause of honest patriotism, it certainly becomes imperative that every sincere patriot gets over the prejudice of being a bhadralokh and takes his stand on the road of a clear revolutionary fight, which will lead to the realisation of the ideal that burns in him. Failing to do so, he naturally identifies himself with the bourgeoisie, and, therefore, deserves to be called a hypocrite.

Now let us see what path the various schools of bourgeois Nationalism are following, in order to judge if that

path conforms to the ideal of sincere patriotism. In a recent article called "The Bolshevik Menace," the "Bengalee" holds up our programme as positively harmful to the interests of the nation. After quoting the particular clause which calls for giving the land to the toiler, this organ of the merchant princes and landed barons writes :

"It, therefore, behoves all owners of property and wealth, all professional men, all sane and sober patriots, all apostles of education and culture to combine and guard against this incipient danger which threatens to sap the very foundation of the social structure and paralyse the activities of a young and rising nation."

The entire article is full of such choice sentiments, which can be found expressed abundantly in the press of the big bourgeoisie. Any programme that proposes to curtail in the least the vested interests of the upper classes is condemned in the name of the nation, and the patriotism of the Nationalist lower middle classes is invoked to rush to the defence of the rights of property against the exploited and expropriated masses. Does not the ideal of honest patriotism warrant an unconditional denunciation of this brand of Nationalism? Are we wrong in calling upon the revolutionary Nationalists to sever all connection with these patriots of property and to forget their illusion of intellectual superiority, an illusion which only renders them the involuntary defenders of this brand of Nationalism?

One more instance. The Swaraj Party is headed by men whose agitation is supposed to be above suspicion. Here again it is not individual idealism, but class interest that rules supreme; and the situation has to be met as a class. The Swaraj Party proposes to enter the Councils and put forth a demand for "real self-government" **on behalf of the nation**. In order to do it, they must have the mandate of the electorate, which is hardly one-half per cent. of the population. And who constitute this electorate? Overwhelmingly, the propertied upper classes. Therefore, it is quite conceivable what will be the nature of the "real self-government" demanded by the Swaraj Party. Here is what the "Tribune" (an organ of the Swaraj Party) says: "By compelling the Government to become really constitutional, in other words, to accept the people, **that is the electorate**, as its only true master." This is the political philosophy of the party in a

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nutshell. The interests of the electorate, that is the infinitesimal minority, are taken for national interests and as soon as the Government takes these interests into consideration it will become really constitutional. Upon this achievement of national self-government, the representatives of this minority will rule over the country in the name of national welfare and democracy!

Is it not a monstrous lie to say that any one of the above parties or some other of similar nature can receive the loyal adhesion of those who honestly desire the welfare of the masses? Is it not a deplorable mistake for the revolutionary patriots to consider themselves allied in any way with the classes that deceive the nation for their own interests? This is what we mean by the Nationalism of the bourgeoisie.

## CHAPTER XV.

### PROGRAMME OF REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM.

We reproduce below\* the programme which we laid last year before the Indian National Congress at Gaya. Although it was widely published in the Indian press, thanks to the

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#### \* OUR PROGRAMME.

1. Complete National Independence.
2. Election of a National Assembly by universal suffrage.
3. Establishment of the Federated Republic of India.

#### Social and Economic.

1. Abolition of Landlordism; the distribution of land among the peasantry.
2. Reduction of land-rent to a fixed minimum. Establishment of State Agricultural Co-operative Banks, to provide cheap credit to the cultivators, to free them from the clutches of the moneylender.
3. Modernisation of agriculture with State aid.
4. Abolition of indirect taxation; the imposition of an income tax.
5. Nationalisation of railways, mines, waterways, telegraphs, etc.
6. Development of modern industries with State aid.
7. Minimum wage for labour; an eight-hour day; better working and living conditions.
8. Protective labour legislation, with recognition of unions and the right to strike.
9. Workers' Councils in industries.
10. Profit-sharing in all big industries.
11. Free and compulsory education.
12. Separation of the State and Religion.
13. Full social, economic and political rights for women.

#### Action Programme.

1. Organisation of the poor peasantry to demand abolition of feudal rights and dues, reduction of land rent, etc.
2. Mass demonstrations with the slogan of "Non-payment of rent and taxes."
3. Resistance against high prices, Salt Tax and other indirect taxation.
4. Full recognition of labour unions and the right to strike.
5. Demand for the eight-hour day, minimum wage, better housing for the workers and a higher standard of living.
6. Support of all strikes, politically and financially, by the Congress.
7. Organisation of tenants' strikes against high house rents in the cities.
8. Organisation of National Volunteers.
9. Organisation of clerks and employees in the Governmental and commercial offices for higher salaries.
10. To enter the Councils with the object of wrecking them.
11. Mass demonstrations for the release of political prisoners.
12. Country-wide Mass Civil Disobedience (General Strike).

gratuitous services of Reuter, and was freely commented upon by all shades of Indian and Anglo-Indian opinion, it was not brought before the consideration of the Congress, nor was any action taken upon it, for or against. We still abide by this programme, which we have drawn up with the fullest consciousness of the political needs of the moment—needs which our programme takes into consideration, as well as preparing a path to the wider needs of the Indian people ten to fifteen years hence. Our programme has been dubbed "Bolshevik," "Communist" and every other adjective deemed reprehensible by our capitalist rulers and their allies, the Moderates. Even our doughty Non-co-operators have condemned it through their various and several organs of the press as "wild," "foolish" or "impracticable." We are content that they shall rave on and fully ventilate their opinions, which are but the expression of their various class interests. We are all the more content, because such expression of opinion has helped exceedingly to clear the muddled political atmosphere and to dissipate the rainbow of "Spiritual Swaraj," which befuddled the brains of some of our best Nationalist leaders. Since the publication of our programme last December, the clarification of the political ideology of the various classes and sections of the Indian people is noteworthy. Whereas, last year, there was no political programme worthy of the name advanced on behalf of any single political group, with the possible exception of the Moderates, to-day we find that every constellation of opinion, from the Home Rulers to the Socialists and Communists, is possessed of a declaration of principles and aims which constitutes a fairly clear and definite programme.

The existence of numerous political parties, each with its own political programme, demarcating the social class and class interests of each body of opinion; this division of the Indian body politic into a number of well-defined and class conscious political groups, with a definite goal and the means whereby they propose to attain it—all this constitutes the greatest step forward in the political history of the past year. Previously, our Nationalists of the extremist school were groping in the dark and some of them were undeniably "up in the air." The effect of the developments of the past year, since the débâcle of Non-co-operation and the arrest of the Mahatma, has been to bring them down to earth, into the light of cold facts and realities, and to force them to grapple

with material problems in a commonsense and matter-of-fact way. We believe that our programme and propaganda, coupled with the objective events of this period, have vitally assisted in this process of clarification. Therefore, we continue our labours with renewed courage and determination, in spite of the innumerable obstacles thrown in our way, not alone by those whom we recognise as our bitterest enemies, but by those who profess to be our friends. We know that truth cannot be stamped out by persecution; much less can it be by cunning intrigue. We, therefore, continue serenely in our course, confident in the ultimate success of our work and encouraged at every step by the multiplying evidence of its fruitfulness. The seed of the ideas we seek to expound is being sown on fertile soil. The Indian workers and peasants are ripe for the message we bear them. Even though the word is being carried faintly across thousands of miles of ocean, it reaches their listening ear, helped by the willing efforts of thousands who labour on the spot. For every enemy that seeks to choke and throttle the message of emancipation that we propagate, hundreds spring up to help and encourage. Therefore we do not despair; therefore we continue our work, filled with the confidence that objective forces, which we merely seek to guide and interpret, will eventually triumph over every individual or set of individuals who try to pit themselves against the workings of these inexorable material laws. The complete fulfilment of all we have spoken and written during the last two years about the Indian Nationalist movement, the collapse of Gandhism and the rise of new political parties, proves that we are right.

We propose in the immediate future, to deal exhaustively with our programme, analysing each clause in a series of short articles which will explain and seek to convince the reader of its utility and practicability, and to dissipate the bogey of "Bolshevism," which has been raised, partly through ignorance of what Bolshevism is and partly through design to scare away those apt to be interested, by an appeal to their prejudices and fears. Our programme is not "Bolshevik" or to use the more scientific term, "Communist." A passing reference to any Communist Programme from the Russian Communist Party to the Indian Communist Party, will prove this fact. Our programme, which we have framed with an eye to the special factors and conditions



governing Indian life in all its aspects, is at most a programme of modified Social-Democracy, such as is propagated in all the advanced countries of the West and even in some of the East, notably Turkey. All the Liberal-Radical parties that have struggled to hold their own against a growing world-reaction, have adopted and set forth programmes in most respects similar to this. National independence, universal suffrage and the election of a National Assembly in which the popular sovereignty shall rest, are the basis of the programmes of Turkish, Egyptian and Irish Nationalism—programmes which have been partially realised, but only after a desperate struggle by means of armed resistance; not, as our Nationalists would prefer, by means of “suffering, self-sacrifice and soul-force.” The betrayal of the masses by those at the head of the Turkish “Republic,” “Independent” Egypt and the Irish “Free State,” who struck a bargain with the enemy at the expense of the majority of their own people, has often been pointed out by us. It is to prevent such betrayal by a last-minute compromise with the imperial overlord, that we wish to see written in blazoned letters the social and economic clauses of our Programme of National Liberation and Reconstruction. A party which fights openly on a programme calling for the abolition of landlordism, reduction of land-rent, State aid to agriculture and the abolition of all indirect taxation, will carry the Indian masses with it, and will not desist from the struggle until these measures, so indispensable to the improvement in the economic condition of our rural population, have been won. Similarly, the clauses calling for minimum wages in all industries, an eight-hour day, improved living conditions and protective legislation of workers, together with profit-sharing in big industries, the formation of Workers’ Councils and a guarantee of the rights of labour to organise for its own protection and to strike—such clauses will rally the ten millions of the industrial proletariat to the banner of Nationalism and, by their indispensable help, will sweep it along to victory.

To call such clauses “Bolshevik” is absurd. Most of these safeguards and provisions to agricultural and industrial labour actually exist in the form of legislation in every enlightened country in the world. In England, France, Germany, not to mention the smaller countries of Europe, labour legislation protecting and insuring against old age, sickness,

unemployment and accidents, irrespective of party programmes, has either long been in existence, as in Germany, or is being ceaselessly agitated for without incurring the stigma of "Bolshevism." Until the recognised rights of labour were impinged upon by the war, with its martial law and reactionary onslaughts on the hours of work, conditions of labour and standard of living of the working class—the eight-hour day, minimum wage and enforcement of a certain standard of comfort to workers were guaranteed by law in most of the European countries. Only in the last two or three years, and that most incompletely, have the hard-fought and dearly-won rights to organise and strike on the part of the European working class been interfered with by the reactionary ruling class of the West in a manner acknowledged as "unconstitutional," but justified by special legislation, the plea for "increased production," or by out-and-out dictatorship and the destruction of all constitutional rights and privileges, such as the iron rule of Mussolini in Italy, now parading as international Fascism. In the United States of America, home of the most arbitrary onslaughts on the recognised status and rights of the working class, the tradition of the eight-hour day is being fought for by prolonged strikes and a nation-wide campaign on the part of American Labour. Altogether, with the exception of the clauses calling for abolition of landlordism and the abolition of indirect taxation, not one of the clauses of our programme stands for anything unique or unheard-of in the ordinary political life of the West.

Even for these two clauses, so necessary in view of the rack-rented condition of the Indian peasantry, instances can be cited, both historical and contemporaneous, which would fully justify a Nationalist Party in including such clauses on its programme, without risking the appellation of Bolshevism. The land-problem which formed the basis of the Russian Revolution, and which was solved in a revolutionary manner by the expropriation of all private property, including that in land, without compensation, is the only right solution. But we put forth for the benefit of our Indian Nationalists nothing so unpleasantly drastic. We call only for the confiscation of all **large** estates without compensation. This has been done in Mexico, where the Madero Revolution of 1910 freed the Mexican peons from the bondage of big landlordism and distributed the land to the cultivators

without compensating the owners, who naturally fought fiercely against their fate; but their number was so infinitesimal in comparison to the overwhelming needs of the peasantry that they had to succumb and despite frequent revolutions and counter-revolutions in Mexico from 1910 until today, the original confiscation still holds good. Similarly, in Ireland, however despicably the Free Staters sold themselves to imperialism, they too had to recognise the unsolved land-problem and have been forced to **buy up** the greatest estates for distribution among the rack-rented peasantry, who are to be forced to pay for the land they have been granted, by generations of taxation which will go to swell the pockets of the landlords and their heirs.

The single tax, that upon land, has been long advocated by the school of Henry George in England, without being called "Bolshevik." All forms of indirect taxation are recognised by Liberal opinion as undesirable and unjust, and the modern tendency in legislation is to avoid them whenever possible—but under capitalist dictatorship this can never be fully realised, since the inevitable instinct is to shift the burden of taxation on to the shoulders of the poor, who being propertyless can pay only by indirect means. The Labour Party's plea for the "capital levy" upon wealth is an attempt to get at the rich and relieve the poor by a direct tax upon large incomes and properties. Will our Indian Nationalists join with the "Morning Post" school of imperialism in calling the British Labour Party "Bolshevik"?

Our programme calls also for the nationalisation of public utilities, such as railroads, canals, mines, lights, telephones, telegraphs, etc. This has been wholly or partially accomplished in all the advanced countries; here is no Bolshevism, but simple progressive good-government, practised wherever some form of democracy prevails in the teeth of plutocratic robbery and corruption. The introduction of free and compulsory education is now a commonplace everywhere; will this also be dubbed "Bolshevism," simply because the Russian Communist Party has enforced it as well upon the illiterate population of the ex-Czar? Separation of religion from the State and the granting of full rights of citizenship to women can likewise be defended from the implication of Bolshevism—we have heard even our orthodox Nationalists advocate such measures.

Where then is the "Bolshevism" in our programme? Wherein lies its danger to the established order of capitalist society? Have our Indian Nationalists allowed themselves to be frightened by a shadow, waved in their faces by cunning imperialism, which scents in our programme a sure road to National Liberation, since it rallies all classes of the people with the exception of the rankest reactionaries and "loyalists" under the banner of National Freedom and Economic and Social Reconstruction? The imperialist ruler cries: "Bolshevism! Bolshevism!"—and our intrepid Nationalists cover their ears and flee in terror, neither caring to look nor to analyse something which they vaguely fear attacks the vested interests of their class. Were this Bolshevism, they would perhaps be justified in their fears, since Bolshevism, when it comes, will sweep all special interests and privileges aside to make room for only one class—the producing class of Indian society. But India is not yet ripe for Bolshevism. She must evolve through the stage of bourgeois democracy, which as Marx says, will call into being its own grave-diggers in the shape of a strong, class-conscious and militant Indian proletariat. Till that day, we Indian Communists must stand together with those honest Nationalists who really desire the freedom of their country and the improvement in the condition of the people, and it is therefore that we offer them, not the Communist Programme, but a programme of National Liberation and Reconstruction, which will carry them on to victory.

## CHAPTER XVI. ANOTHER SPLIT.

THE Bombay compromise has dealt another blow to the theory that the Congress is a united national party. Ever since the opposition to the programme of orthodox Non-co-operation raised its voice, the conflicting interests and divergent tendencies latent in the extremist camp became evident. Nevertheless, there was many a sincere Nationalist who clung to the illusion of holding the Congress together as a united political party, at all costs. It was as hopeless a work as to keep the limbs of a body intact after the breath of life has gone out of it. The theory of an imaginary unity has at last become altogether untenable, now that the very votaries of this theory can be found at the head of the new rebellion.

The split in Bombay is, however, not unexpected. It is the logical consequence of the compromise at Allahabad. It was not in Bombay, but at Allahabad that the hollowness of the No-change majority became transparent. After the Non-co-operation movement abdicated the leadership of the revolutionary mass action for National Liberation at Bardoli, the clash of interests between the two strata of the middle class became the life of the Congress. This internal strife had been submerged by a bigger revolutionary movement; but as soon as the middle class Nationalists chose to fall back upon their own resources to carry on the struggle against imperialism, the absence of uniformity in their objective became evident. The leadership of the Non-co-operation movement was in the hands of the lower middle class, which has absolutely no reason to compromise with foreign domination because no amount of reform will save this element of our society from the economic bankruptcy into which it has been driven by the exigencies of imperialist exploitation. The solution of the problem which faces the lower middle class, demands a revolutionary change in the present system. Therefore, the spontaneous revolt of the masses in the aftermath of the war—a revolt that drove the upper classes into the protecting arms of imperialism—roused hope and some courage in the advanced section of the lower middle class, which stepped forward to assume the leadership of this revolt. This combination of forces obliged the upper middle class to play a secondary role. It could not accept the Reforms, because there was hardly any place for it therein.

But at the same time it was not ready to go so far as the lower middle class threatened to go under the pressure of a revolutionary movement. Under such circumstances, the only course left to the upper middle class was to mark time, while ostensibly participating in the popular movement. It did not dare to challenge the leadership of the lower middle class, so long as the latter acted under the dictates of the revolutionary masses. But the break-up of the coalition between the lower middle class and the masses marked the beginning of a new movement. An open contest between the two strata of the middle class for the leadership of the national struggle became the main feature of this new movement.

Divorced from the mass movement, the lower middle class stood out as the party of social reaction and political impotency. It, therefore, became very easy for the upper middle class to assault its political opponent. This struggle for leadership began several months before the Gaya Congress. It has ended in Bombay. The national movement of the present and of the immediate future has not only ceased to be a revolutionary mass movement, but it will not be determined even according to the interests of the lower middle class. The leadership of the national movement has passed over to the radical intelligentsia and upper middle class, which stand closer to the rich propertied classes than to the common people. When, with the victory of Gaya to their credit, the No-change leaders chose to make a compromise with the minority party in the name of unity, the weakness of their position became apparent. The inevitable outcome of this move was clear to those who did not have any reason to entertain illusions. The inevitable has happened. The No-changers as a party have recognised the superiority of upper middle class politics. This is the long and short of the Congress Committee decision in Bombay. This decision, however, is tantamount to a reproving sermon upon the grave of militant Non-co-operation, which fired the imagination of the lower middle class. Therefore, the rank and file of the latter have revolted against this decision and have forgotten the theory of national unity, which they used to preach with such a religious zeal. The split at Gaya has provoked another split.

What are these splits? Are they deplorable signs of weakness? Certainly not. On the contrary, they mark the

stages of the clarification of class interests, which constitute the foundation of all political movements. Despite the sanctimonious sermons of our leaders, the Indian struggle for liberation is also reared upon the background of class interests. Therefore, the clarification of these interests makes for the strengthening of the movement as a whole, although certain phases of it may come to an end. The split at Gaya heralded the coming of a new school of Nationalism, which would be based upon the interests, not of the lower middle class in coalition with the unconscious masses as hitherto, but upon the interests of the upper middle class, consciously pursuing its own ends and endeavouring in the name of national welfare to make the masses of the people follow its lead. The split at Bombay is not the "Revolt of Rajagopal," as it is euphemistically dubbed. It is the refusal of the lower middle class to follow the lead of the upper middle class.

The split at Gaya had a revolutionary significance, since it marked the rise of a radical and progressive ideology on the ruins of orthodox Non-co-operation, whose reactionary social character could give birth only to confusion in the economic field and impotency in the political sphere. The revolt against the abdication of the No-Change leadership in Bombay indicates the impossibility of swinging the entire middle class with those who say that the salvation of the Indian people lies in the organisation of His Majesty's Parliamentary Opposition. At Gaya, the upper middle class revolted against lower middle class inaction; in Bombay, the lower middle class refused to subscribe to a programme which tends to a compromise with imperialism, in return for some extension of the Reforms.

It is not necessary to take Sjts. Rajagopal and Shyam-sundar literally. They are but the expression of an objective force that has pushed them into this revolt. They are heading a movement which is objectively revolutionary, not because they fully understand the significance of their present position, but because the movement has not had enough experience yet to throw up its own conscious leadership. But now the voice of Sjt. Rajagopal and his fellow rebels is the voice of a class which finds no place for itself in the programme of the Swaraj Party. Time will prove if the present leaders will be able to make this voice clearer. If they cannot, new leaders will take their place. The crux of the situation, however, is that even the two wings of the middle

class have found it impossible to have a common political party. The Non-co-operation movement was a coalition of several social forces. Its strength lay in the spontaneous action of the masses. The leadership was petty-bourgeois. The break-up of this coalition must be followed by the rise of independent political parties, representing the interests of the several classes that went into the composition of the coalition. All these social elements are opposed to the British domination ; but none of them does fight or can fight as the representative of the entire people. Every one of them will fight for the interests of its own class, and will try to glorify this class interest as the national interest. It is true that the nation is under foreign domination, but it is also true that the burden of foreign domination does not fall evenly upon all the classes into which the nation is divided. Consequently the conflict between imperialism and the various classes cannot be of uniform tenacity and of equal revolutionary significance. There are Indians who stand closer to the British Government than to other Indians. This is true even when the patriotism of every Indian is taken for granted. These material causes contribute to the growth of parties, all of which carry on the struggle against imperialism, in accordance with the interests of the classes they respectively represent.

Economic and political opportunities that are required for the immediate welfare of the upper middle class, including the Liberal intelligentsia, are available within the framework of imperialism. The demands for these opportunities are contained in the programme of the Swaraj Party. Why does the Swaraj Party give Council-entry the first place in its programme? Because, once elected to the Councils, the representatives of the upper middle class will come to a compromise with imperialism and will call upon the people to accept this compromise in the name of democracy. The realisation of the entire programme of the Swaraj Party does not solve the problem that faces the lower middle class, the people whose voice is raised in the "Revolt of Rajagopal." The Swaraj Party has a beautiful scheme of Swaraj, which in the field of practical politics, however, reduces itself to Home Rule within the Empire. This does not promise to remove the chronic starvation which eats into the vitals of the lower middle class—it does not provide employment for the thousands and thousands of high school and university grad-



uates. The very politics of extremism was reared upon the revolt against the programme of Dominion Home Rule advocated by the Moderates. It makes very little difference to the lower middle class whether this Home Rule is to be realised by gradual stages or all of a sudden. The process of realisation does not alter its character, which is the perpetuation of foreign domination in another garb—in conjunction with a certain section of the native population.

The various upper strata of the people have crystallised their respective class programmes, around which they have built or are building their political parties. None of them is willing to forego its class interest in favour of the national interest. In fact, every one of them proclaims its class interest to be the national interest. The revolt against the Bombay surrender shows that the lower middle class has also its particular interests, which cannot be included in the programme of the upper class parties. These interests cannot be included in the Swaraj Party programme, any more than in the old Moderate programme. Therefore, the logical conclusion of this situation is the necessity of another party. If this necessity is not recognised, the split in Bombay will end in nothing. It will be drowned in personal bickerings. The history of the Non-co-operation movement should be studied, in order that proper steps may be taken in this fateful moment. The great Non-co-operation movement collapsed, as soon as the lower middle class leadership made the fatal choice in favour of upper class patronage, and thereby was obliged to betray the mighty mass following. Left to itself, the lower middle class became devoid of any political potentiality and succumbed before the onslaught of upper middle class radicalism. Now the same upper classes, on whose altar the Non-co-operation movement was sacrificed, and even that section of the middle class which was its brother-in-arms till yesterday, are turning their back upon the lower middle class. The only lesson that can be learnt from this experience is that the revolt against the **Bombay compromise will be fruitful in the case where the lower middle class recognises its ally in the workers and peasants** and can have the courage to go back to the position which it surrendered, when it sought to win the good graces of the propertied classes.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### REVOLUTION.

So another special session of the Congress will be held. What for? Ostensibly to re-establish the unity of the Nationalist movement—to put an end to disputes and disagreements which arose out of the ruins of the Non-co-operation movement. The lost unity is to be recovered; but the programme for the realisation of which the re-established unity will be applied is an entirely different one. In plain language, another special session has been called to repudiate the revolutionary programme inadvertently adopted in the last special session at Calcutta, just three years ago. The mistake committed in one special session should be repented and rectified in another.

The liquidation of the Non-co-operation movement, a much-desired but none the less difficult task begun at Bardoli, will be completed at Delhi. Under the storm and stress of the post-war revolutionary situation, the National Congress was thrown off the respectable track of constitutionalism. It has taken three years for it to regain the lost balance. The national movement must henceforth be made to shun the revolutionary path.

As soon as the Congress tries to assume the leadership of the entire nation, that is, the masses of the population of the country, it is thrown off the track it is anxious to keep on and is forced into a situation that it dreads and deplores no less passionately than the Government. The programme of Non-co-operation committed it to mass action. The inevitable consequence of a programme, which proposed to paralyse the Government, could not be evaded by all the sophistry of spiritualism. Therefore the only way out of this undesirable situation was to repudiate the programme itself. This was done for all practical purposes. But a certain section of the Congress persisted in keeping up a show, because they were afraid of facing the situation that would result from the disillusionment of their lower middle class following. The other section, which was composed of practical politicians fully or partially conscious of the interest of the class they represented, however, had not the patience for such half-hearted measures. They demanded a frank repudiation of the Calcutta programme, which could not be carried

through unless the Congress was ready to launch upon a revolutionary career. Since in every critical moment the Non-co-operation leaders unmistakably demonstrated their unwillingness to risk the vicissitudes of a mass movement, it was sheer hypocrisy for the Congress to claim the representation of the bulk of the nation. Either it stood for the interests of the masses or it did not. There was no middle way. As soon as the mistake of having hastily adopted a programme, which inevitably called for mass action, was comprehended, a new way had to be struck out. It had to be done if the collapse of Non-co-operation was not to mean the decomposition of the National Congress itself. The disagreements and disputes that rent the Congress during the last twelve months, arose from this: one section of the Congress leadership wanted to sever all connection with the masses and to stand on the newly struck-out path as representatives of the electorate which they proposed to glorify as the pick of the nation, whereas the other section proposed to carry on a wordy warfare and thereby save their face.

Of course, this political and organisational discord has its roots in the background of social-economics. On previous occasions, we have dealt with this aspect of the question. To recapitulate in brief. The two strata of the middle class, which stood at the head of the Non-co-operating Congress, do not possess identical economic interests. The upper stratum being nearer to the bourgeoisie, to whom certain politico-economic concessions had been made by the Reforms Act, wanted to participate in the rights conceded by the Reforms; so rejection of the programme of mass action was not only a relief to them, but did not leave them deprived of all political activities. But it was not so with the other section, namely, the lower middle class elements. For the first time in the history of the national movement, they leaped into political prominence when they placed themselves at the head of a revolutionary mass movement. The severance of this accidental tie would mean political death for them. Therefore, they wanted to keep the show of a mass movement, although for practical purposes they were no less anxious to shun it than their political opponents of the other section. The whole controversy of Pro-change v. No-change was based upon this class conflict.

The upper middle class politics have at last come out victorious. The myth of the majority scored at Gaya is

dissipated. The principle in whose favour the programme of Non-co-operation is to be abandoned, is that not the needs and revolt of the masses, but the interests and convenience of the electorate should determine the programme and tactics of the national movement. The special session of the Congress is called to establish this principle. Those who will have the temerity not to accept it will be declared as acting without the authority of the "people." The Congress still acts in the name of the people, although it has never represented its will and is in the future going to subordinate its interests to those of the privileged few—the infinitesimal minority which is called "the electorate."

The special session is called to make the Congress swallow its words, pronounced at Gaya. The question of Council-entry will be decided in the affirmative. There are very few in the rank and file of the Congress membership who fully appreciate the significance of this incident, which appears to be closing a period of tactical disagreement and personal quarrels among the leaders. Yet the rank and file of the Congress membership have no reason to be satisfied with this unity. This unity is realised at the sacrifice of the last vestige of revolutionary purpose in the Congress programme; but the national movement is a revolutionary struggle. The Swaraj coveted by the rank and file Nationalist will not be achieved by the realisation of the programme of the newly-united Congress.

Revolution is no more a state of mind than Gandhian Swaraj is. It is an event, which under the pressure of material conditions, happens from time to time in the history of human society. When existing conditions and reigning institutions stand in the way of the continued development of a given community, a struggle ensues which eventually ends in a clash. This process goes on throughout the structure of human society. It will continue till that stage is attained, in which the society will cease to be a forced combination of conflicting elements. Looking from this point of view, our national movement is certainly a revolutionary struggle leading inevitably up to a fierce clash.

What are the causes of the national movement? Why do we crave for National Liberation? Is national freedom a thing in itself? The answer to these questions provides us with an entirely different conception of the Indian movement—a conception which enables us to see the new CON-

gress politics in its true colours, and, more, to comprehend the real significance of the unity which will be celebrated by holding a special session. The much-heralded unity is a unity of those social forces which are against revolution and, therefore, against the freedom of the Indian people. All their patriotic protestations and wordy extremism do not alter this fact.

India needs political independence, because the yoke of imperialist domination does not permit the normal development of her people. It is an old story how the exigencies of British capitalist monopoly have held Indian society in economic backwardness. Every member of the Congress can tell very eloquently the stories of India's chronic poverty and the miserable plight of our people. In fact, the Nationalist movement is based upon the profession of bringing about a political condition which will be conducive to the redress of these grievances. Now, what are the root causes of these grievances? Why are the Indian masses so ground down in chronic poverty? Because of the exploitation of British capital. Therefore, even the first step towards the freedom that is needed to relieve the conditions of the Indian masses is the overthrow of the political institutions, which are built with the express purpose of maintaining the monopolist right of British capital. We say first step advisedly, because if the overthrow of British capitalist monopoly will be followed by the enthronement of the Indian bourgeoisie, the redress of the economic grievances of the masses will still remain an object to be realised. But it will nevertheless be the first step, and the ultimate goal cannot be reached without taking the first steps. These first steps, however, cannot be taken unless the Nationalist movement is inspired with a revolutionary purpose. British imperialism will not abandon its monopoly rights until the possibilities of the immense politico-military power at its disposal are exhausted. Now, does the programme of the newly-united Congress in any way promise to lead the nation to such a fight? Certainly not. On the contrary, it proposes to accept, not without gratitude, what is available within the framework of the political structure, which is built with the sole purpose of fighting every move towards those initial steps on the road to freedom for the Indian people. The programme of bourgeois Nationalism, to which the Congress will be committed in the special session, does not propose to lead the Indian masses

against capitalist exploitation, but strikes out a way by which the Indian capitalist class can have a share in the exploitation. Dominion status granted to India does not injure the position of British imperialism. It strengthens its position; because these political concessions, together with the economic rights that go with them, tie the Indian bourgeoisie so closely to their imperialist prototype, that they become no less anxious than the latter to suppress any movement which advocates the economic betterment of the masses. In the special session will be laid the foundation of this bourgeois unity, which will eventually broaden into a fellowship with imperialism, with the common object of exploiting the Indian masses.

What a gulf separates a programme with such tendencies from the revolutionary struggle for National Liberation! The rank and file of the Congress membership, who have no reason to be allured by these eventualities, should go to the special session with open eyes. One eventful period of the national struggle is on the eve of its close. A lesson should be drawn from it for the future. A revolutionary movement under non-revolutionary leadership ends in such a pass. Let the rank and file Nationalists develop a revolutionary leadership commensurate with the historical significance of the movement.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE NEW ORIENTATION.

THE decisions of the Special Congress go to prove that there is more disunity than unity in the country. The factional dispute within the Congress ranks is far from being overcome. With the exception of the Mahatma practically all the foremost leaders of the movement are again in the field. This ought to be helpful to the situation. But these newly-released leaders are by no means free from party affiliation, although they put the greatest emphasis upon their desire to see a united Congress. They cannot be otherwise. So long as there will remain various social classes with divergent interests, so long there will exist the necessity of several parties. The indisputable fact that all these social classes, or at least a majority of them, happen to be engaged in a fight for a common object does not make them unite in an all-inclusive party. The common object is but the immediate object which is by no means the ultimate end sought for, but only the means to the end. The immediate object, for which there may be a united front, is some sort of loosening of the foreign control over the political and economic life of the country. There is, however, great divergence of views as to the extent and character of this loosening. But the possibility of this unity vanishes as soon as the vision of the ultimate end is considered. The ultimate end is freedom, by which is meant the freedom for the respective classes engaged in the struggle. This conflict of interests, innate in the end sought for, cannot remain absent from the struggle itself. It is reflected upon the tactics of the movement. In proportion as the end sought for becomes clear to the respective social classes engaged in the national struggle, the possibility of their remaining in an all-inclusive party with identical programme and uniform tactics becomes less. Looked at from this angle, the Congress as a united political party should be considered objectively dead, and the rise of several independent parties inevitable. The best that the Special Congress could do was to agree to disagree; no use talking of unity where there is none and cannot be: better to form a coalition of parties. But our leaders seem to be actuated by the desire for conquest rather than of a coalition. When one talks of an all-inclusive party, he means that it is his

particular party in which the rest should be included. But this is impossible. Hence all this confusion and bickering.

The re-appearance of Mohammed Ali and Dr. Kitchlew on the one hand and Lala Lajpat Rai on the other greatly strengthens the position of the two contending parties. Notwithstanding their profession of unity (and they are unquestionably sincere in their profession), their weight will be thrown against it. That is, reinforced by their leadership their respective parties will become more aggressive and will demand the surrender of the opponent. This will clear away the sentimental fog from the political horizon and vigorous party building will begin. The much needed coalition of parties will be then only a question of time.

This new orientation in our Nationalist politics is already noticed. It is not at all surprising that the Special Congress has accepted the split as a settled fact instead of temporising once more. In fact, it is by far the best course and should be welcomed by all revolutionaries and practical politicians. Several leaders of the Swaraj Party already indicated their intention of leaving the Congress altogether if the Special Congress would not accept their point of view. In other words, the Swaraj Party, which to-day represents the most politically advanced and conscious elements of our society, wants to conquer, not to compromise. If the lower middle class still persists in its obduracy, the practical politicians of the Swaraj Party will leave them alone with their sentimental aberrations and political impotency. This determination of the Swaraj Party has been made very clear in the statement made by Lala Lajpat Rai on August 28.

Those, who know Lalaji and possess any understanding of the socio-economic forces that determine politics, could not have doubt as to his party affiliation. It was a foregone conclusion that his release would reinforce the Swaraj Party. Like the rest of our leaders Lalaji wishes a national unity, but he is no less emphatic in expressing his doubt regarding the efficacy of the orthodox Non-co-operation tactics and in venting his impatience on those who may not share his views. He gave the irreconcilable "No-changers" clearly to understand that their freaks could not be tolerated any longer, and unless they find their way to surrender, the Swaraj Party would fly its flag on the ruins of the Congress. These are the threatening words pronounced by Lalaji: "The Swaraj Party is bent on utilising the Councils, and any decision that



might be arrived at by the Special Congress which will not permit entry into the Councils, may possibly have the effect of driving out these men (Das, Nehru and Ajmal Khan) and other eminent men from the fold of the Congress. To me a Congress without these personalities would be a sorry affair." Nothing could be clearer. Unity is indeed needed. But the nation must accept the programme and tactics which correspond to the interests and aspirations of the middle class represented by the Swaraj Party. If it does not, the Swaraj Party would not hesitate to send the Congress to the devil. This is class politics. In conclusion Lajpat Rai seeks to terrorise the Congress by his own withdrawal in case "the Special Session fails to arrive at a solution acceptable to the great bulk of the Congressmen."

It is perfectly correct that, deprived of the intellectual guidance of the men like Das, Nehru and Lajpat Rai, the Congress will sink into despicable impotency. It will be the case not because the movement has been created by these or any other individuals, but because the Congress as a body stands for bourgeois Nationalism and these men are the most conscious and able champions of the cause. Had the Congress proceeded in the revolutionary direction of a great mass organisation as it promised to do in the heyday of Non-co-operation, it could to-day be indifferent to such threats as uttered by Lalaji. That has not been the case. In a revolutionary crisis the Congress chose to fall back upon the middle class background; therefore its helm has passed into the hands of Das-Nehru-Rai. The Swaraj Party must triumph and capture the Congress in the name of the "nation" and the movement in its next stages will be conducted in accordance with the end pursued by the bourgeoisie. The lower middle class is in an unenviable position. It must either play second fiddle or be eliminated from national politics. The recourse to futile terrorism is there, but an entire social class cannot be accommodated in its narrow confines.

Now, what does this victorious Swaraj Party propose to accomplish? Let the Lala answer: "to ignore no other method which might ensure such pressure on the Government as may compel them to negotiate with us." Here is the whole secret of class politics in a nutshell. What is sought is to force the Government to negotiate. With whom? With the representatives of the upper middle class. And the people are asked to unite on this ground! We have repeatedly

pointed out that even if the demands of the Swaraj Party as formulated in its programme are conceded by the Government, Swaraj will be still very far off as far as the people in general are concerned. It will be a victory of the Swaraj Party, but not for the nation, because the nation is not confined within the narrow limits of the two per cent. "electorate" which has been glorified as the popular will by the stalwarts of bourgeois Nationalism.

Let us not worry about the poor devils in the factories, in the mines and on the fields. What is this Swaraj (granted that it will be full-fledged Dominion Home Rule) going to mean to the lower middle class—the element that swelled the ranks of the Non-co-operating Congress and to-day sulks under the slogan of "No-change"? Absolutely nothing. This being the case, the lower middle class cannot very well welcome the new orientation of Nationalist politics and follow the lead of the Swaraj Party. But to-day they stand really in a sorry plight, voluntarily divorced from the dynamics of mass energy on the one hand, and on the other at the risk of forfeiting the leadership of the radical intellectuals if they (the lower middle class) do not subscribe to a programme which leaves them altogether in the lurch. Their salvation also demands a new orientation—a revolutionary orientation. They should give up the illusion of sentimental unity and seek the solid union with the toiling masses in the light of identical economic interests.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE NEXT STEP.

A VERY sensational act in the drama of our national struggle is over. The Non-co-operation movement has been brought to a close. No sophistry, no loud talking to the gallery, which is being done amply, can change this fact. What has been accomplished at Delhi is nothing more or less than a total repudiation of the programme adopted at Calcutta. The programme of organising a country-wide mass movement with the purpose of challenging the authority of the British Government has been abandoned. The trend of things during the last year and a half was clearly in this direction. Therefore, to us as well as to everybody who was not carried away by rosy appearances, the Delhi decisions do not come as a surprise. We, particularly, have all along fearlessly laid bare the tendencies that were latent in the leadership of the Non-co-operation campaign. Our object in doing so has not been sterile criticism. We wanted to open the eyes of the revolutionary elements which are to-day thrown into utter confusion by the volte face even of those leaders who had the reputation of being the stalwarts of orthodox Gandhism. We were branded as Bolsheviks actuated with the evil purpose of fomenting class hatred in a holy land where human beings are considered equal. Our audacity to question the wisdom of the leaders was certainly not relished. Our suggestions largely fell upon deaf ears. Nevertheless, the logic of events has proved the correctness of our position. The apparently mighty Non-co-operation movement flourished, floundered and failed along the lines indicated by us. We don't claim to be prophets. What we want to impress upon the revolutionary elements of contemporary Indian society is the soundness of the social philosophy, economic theories and political principles we profess. The other point we desire to make is that the life, struggle and progress of the Indian nation is bound to pursue generally the same lines followed by other nations. The doctrine that India will work out her destiny in her own peculiar way is erroneous. It serves no other purpose than to hinder the progress of revolution.

Now that the liquidation of the Non-co-operation campaign can no longer be obscured by phrases, the question that faces those who are not in conformity with this liquidation is: "What next?" The ability to answer this query requires a

careful and objective study of the rise and fall of the great Non-co-operation movement. It is obviously impossible to make such a study here. The required study is made in other publications of our party. Here only a cursory review can be made in order to strengthen the suggestions which will be presently made, concerning the next steps to be taken for pushing the national struggle further ahead.

We need not go into history to prove that the Delhi decisions mean total repudiation of the Non-co-operation programme. The question of Council-entry is of little significance, in spite of the fact that it was made the crux of the whole controversy. The resolution to enter the reformed Councils or to contest the election, by itself, does not constitute a violation of the original Non-co-operation programme. In fact, an amendment to this effect would strengthen the programme. The revolutionary significance of the Non-co-operation programme lay in the fact that its realisation demanded mass action. The programme of paralysing the Government could not be realised by the efforts, however sincere and determined they might be, of the educated few, a considerable section of whom again was voluntarily allied with the bureaucracy. The forces that make the existence of the present order possible, therefore, should be tapped. The existence of the British Government is dependent upon neither the co-operating councillors, nor the practising lawyers, nor again the clerks and students. These have their relative importance. A concerted effort by all these elements to withhold their co-operation would certainly embarrass the Government; but under no circumstances would make it impossible. Then, the very structure of the present order is such that it is well-nigh impossible for these elements to non-co-operate with the Government for any length of time. Therefore, the determination to paralyse the Government by withholding all support presupposed the necessity of eventually falling back upon other social forces—forces that are more vital for the existence of the Government and even the shortest period of Non-co-operation which can seriously injure the Government. These are the productive forces of society, namely, the workers and peasants. The profit that British imperialism makes out of its domination over India, is not produced by the lawyers and students. Clerks contribute but little to it. The toil of the workers and peasants, who constitute more than 90 per cent. of the population, goes

into the accumulation of this profit. Any act that will cut into the source of this profit will weaken the position of the Government. The very organisation of society is dependent primarily and principally upon the workers. The Government will not necessarily collapse if the council chambers remain empty, the lawyers take to spinning and the school-rooms are deserted. But even a week's cessation of work on the railways, in the harbours and other public utilities will throw everything out of gear. The refusal of the Indians to enlist in the army and that of the troops to fight will be the beginning of the end. Nearly 40 per cent. of the entire revenue comes from the peasantry only in the form of direct land rent. If this source of income is disturbed the whole structure of the State will crack.

We know as well as anyone else that these formidable forces cannot be brought into action overnight. What we desire to point out here is that the original Non-co-operation programme implied the necessity of invoking these forces of revolution. Had that programme been consciously conceived and determinedly acted upon we would not be where we are to-day. No sooner did the very sponsors of Non-co-operation realise what a dangerous path they had involuntarily trod upon than they began to sabotage the essential significance of the original programme. Delhi repudiation is but the logical consequence of Bardoli betrayal. By the end of 1921 it was clearly manifest that real Non-co-operation was too big an affair to be confined within the limits of the programme perfunctorily adopted in Calcutta and ratified at Nagpur. The triple boycott was but a meagre vehicle for the expression of the revolutionary energies kindled in the country. The fullest mobilisation of these energies was necessary if the programme of paralysing the government was to be earnestly carried through. But it was too much for the Congress which stood at the head of the gigantic movement. The idea of paralysing the Government by withholding popular co-operation evolved out of the objective situation which did not permit any other form of direct fight with the established order. This spontaneously evolved form of struggle was taken up by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi whose subjective limitations, however, hedged in the revolutionary programme of Non-co-operation. The wave of revolutionary mass movement, which alone could have led to the realisation of the Non-co-operation programme, precipitated

the clash between the objective and subjective factors that went into the making of the Non-co-operation campaign. The Congress succumbed in this fatal clash. The journey towards Delhi, then the Councils, the negotiation with the bureaucracy and finally compromise with imperialism was begun.

Why blame those who have buried at Delhi the cadaver of Non-co-operation? The bewildered "No-changers" to-day accuse their idol Mohammed Ali of having betrayed the heritage of the Mahatma. But it will be too realistic for them to think that Mohammed-Alism is the inevitable consequence of political Gandhism. You cannot at the same time do and not do a thing till eternity. The Non-Co-operation movement either had to be a revolutionary mass movement or die of inanition. When at Bardoli it decided not to be a mass movement it committed suicide. Now a form of struggle suitable for the masses is not suitable for the bourgeoisie. The triple boycott had some meaning so long as behind it loomed the possibility of a National Strike headed by the productive element of the nation. The vision of this National Strike was to be seen in the promised slogans of Non-payment of Taxes and Mass Civil Disobedience. Once these slogans were put away as something outside the realm of practical politics, the Calcutta programme became worthless. It rejected mass action, but insisted upon a form of struggle not applicable to the requirements of the upper classes. It, consequently, became necessary to formulate a new programme, to devise other forms of struggle with imperialism to be carried on by the upper and middle classes. The collapse of Non-co-operation does not mean the end of national struggle, which is the antithesis of foreign domination and therefore must go on in some form or other.

At Delhi has been completed the task undertaken at Bardoli, namely, revolutionary mass action as a form of struggle for National Liberation has been abandoned. The new programme adopted is the programme of constitutionalism: the tactics will be parliamentarism, negotiation and compromise. It cannot be otherwise, since the basis of the Congress has been shifted from one social class to the other. During the last three years it almost lost its upper class moorings and came dangerously near the masses. The balance has been recovered. The Congress has again become the respectable organ of bourgeois Nationalism which may in-

dulge in beautiful idealism and high rhetorics, but never forgets its pocket.

Now, the rank and file "No-changers" are totally dismayed. They slept upon their illusive victory at Gaya and woke up to see the Congress leadership out of their hands. They are burning with righteous indignation because realism has induced others to call a scrap of paper a scrap of paper and not an article of faith. All they can do is to hurl anathema upon everybody on the authority of the Mahatma. But it will be of little avail. They stand face to face with a settled fact: the Congress has repudiated the Non-co-operation programme and reverted to constitutionalism, which certainly will be more militant than that of pre-war days, because the bourgeoisie has developed considerably since then. But it will be constitutionalism none the less with the ultimate object of striking a bargain with imperialism as to the respective share in the exploitation of the country and its productive forces.

This being the case, the next step for the social class, to which the "No-changers" belong, obviously is to prepare for equally definite and determined action in accordance with the interests of those sections of the nation who will be little benefitted by the policy to which the Congress is committed at Delhi. The Non-co-operation movement collapsed because the Congress refused to mobilise and lead those revolutionary social forces that alone could make it a success. Those forces are still in the country. Their objective potentiality is no less to-day than in 1920-21, if not more. Those revolutionary patriots who are not satisfied with the turn the Congress has taken at Delhi, should not waste their time in recrimination. Their slogan should be "Forward." They should show that Non-co-operation is a powerful weapon. But they can only do it when they will learn from the voluntary or involuntary blunders of their leaders. They should invoke by all means those forces of revolution which were shunned by the Congress. The next step, therefore, is the organisation of a **People's Party** comprising all the exploited elements of our society. Such a party alone will carry the Non-co-operation programme to its logical consequences.

## CHAPTER XX.

### GOOD CRITICISM BUT BAD PROGRAMME.

THE "Socialist" criticises the manifesto of the projected Workers' and Peasants' Party of India. The manifesto certainly contains many points which call for criticism of much severer nature than that ventured by the "Socialist." It is a very confused document, full of undigested ideas of the Labour movement, sloppy sentimentality and clauses which are positively pernicious. The authors obviously lack the understanding of the task they have set themselves to do. Among the innumerable contradictions and incongruities contained in that manifesto, the "Socialist" picks up only two points to criticise. They concern the aim of the proposed party and private property. "Achievement of Labour Swaraj" is certainly a vague programme so long as "Labour Swaraj" is left undefined. We have had so many brands and interpretations of Swaraj during the last three years that one more variety does not make much difference, nor does it dissipate the confusion into which the people have been thrown. The "Socialist" points out that ambiguity and suggests that the object of the projected party should be not a "class Swaraj" but a classless Swaraj. So far so good; but the criticism should be more penetrating if the ideological confusion of the authors of the manifesto is to be cleared, in order that the party may be born under proper auspices. The term "Labour Swaraj" does not necessarily mean the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the "Socialist" appears to assume. It is hard to say what is in the mind of those who wrote the manifesto; but a perusal of the document certainly does not permit such a conclusion. The pretence of a programme formulated in the manifesto certainly does not tend towards any dictatorship. On the other hand, "Labour Swaraj" may mean the "classless Swaraj" which the "Socialist" suggests; because, when the class living on unearned income is eliminated, then society will be so composed that every member will have to contribute a certain amount of labour for its upkeep. But the "Labour Swaraj" of the manifesto means neither one nor the other. It is just an empty phrase, coined by people perhaps with good intentions, but certainly without any understanding of the term. Had it not been so, the manifesto would deal with more immediate political questions, without solving which,



neither "Labour Swaraj" of one sort nor of the other can be attained. However, the "Socialist" certainly justifies its name by frowning upon such childish phrases, although it fails to go as far as it should have gone.

Then, the question of private property is not the only question which has not been touched in the manifesto. The "Socialist" could point out omissions of much more vital significance. Coupled with "Labour Swaraj" the question of private property, of course, stands out as the most glaring of such omissions; because it is simply ridiculous to talk of "Labour Swaraj," be it dictatorship of the proletariat or be it a Communist society, without committing oneself to the total abolition of private property. Lack of clarity on such a vital question will not only create dissensions in its ranks, as the "Socialist" warns, but will make the very existence of a working class party impossible. In its earlier stages, the working class party may find it necessary to put forward a minimum programme, which leaves out questions of fundamental social readjustment. It goes without saying that the workers and peasants of India, under the present circumstances, must be organised with slogans corresponding to their most immediate necessities. Therefore, such questions as the abolition of private property, communal reconstruction of social economy, etc., need not be included in the minimum programme. Why, then, talk of such far-off things as "Labour Swaraj"? It does not come within the purview of immediate necessities. It is certainly out of the realm of practical politics. But the outstanding feature of the manifesto is the lack of all sense of proportion. We have already fully expressed our views on the manifesto and the so-called programme of the projected Workers' and Peasants' Party ("Vanguard," Aug. 1, 1923). Here a reference to the criticism of the "Socialist" is only intended.

The commendable criticism of the "Socialist," however, is followed by a bad programme. The prospects of a working class party in India would not be any brighter if the programme set forth in the manifesto is rejected in favour of the suggestions made by the "Socialist." If the one is ambiguous and childish, the other is incoherent and mechanical.

There is no system in the programme suggested by the "Socialist." In it the far-off ideal is mixed up with what

is supposed to be the "tactics" or the methods of immediate fight. Much more attention is given to the building up of the "classless Swaraj" (which, according to the "Socialist" should be the aim of the party) than to immediate political problems and economic necessities. The economics of the "Socialist" is rather shaky. For example, it goes merrily on to the pleasant task of setting up nice little village units, which are to be inhabited by free cultivators, without bothering itself with the thorny question of landlordism, which reigns supreme in India. The Labour-Peasants' Party Manifesto advocates a "Labour Swaraj" (whatever that might be), without defining its attitude about private property; the programme advanced by the "Socialist" proposes a re-grouping of the village, without saying a word as to what should happen to those who own the land to-day. It is difficult to choose one from the other.

The programme proposed by the "Socialist" calls for a "classless Swaraj" which, according to the definition given, is something like a Socialist commonwealth. It is certainly a far-fetched programme just at this moment. There are much nearer goals to attain. It is no use being utopians or absolutists. A more immediate and more portable political programme is necessary. It is a long jump from mediæval feudal-patriarchy to a Socialist commonwealth. There is danger of breaking one's neck or being laughed at. Socialism, at least a correct understanding of it, does not overlook the various stages of political existence through which a given community must pass before socialised production, distribution and exchange are reached. The Indian masses will still have to go through not a few of these economic and political stages. A normal march along this line of social evolution has been obstructed by imperialism; therefore, the first and foremost task is the overthrow of the latter. National Liberation is no less necessary for the ultimate freedom of the working class than for the immediate aggrandisement of the native bourgeoisie. It is idle to talk about the socialisation of the means of production while this still remains in an almost primitive stage. Neither a handloom nor a piece of land held by the greed of a small peasant can be socialised by dint of a programme. In India we still live in the age of the handloom and of primitive agriculture. Is it not premature to talk of the socialisation of the means of production? The production itself is yet far from being socialised.

Therefore, we need not fix our gaze so high up in the air. A political institution, which is necessary for carrying our people through the intervening stages of economic development, should be our immediate goal. To lead the working class for the conquest of that goal is our task.

The "Socialist" naturally (because it is Socialist) won't have private property. It proposes nationalisation of public utilities, key industries and "housing-land." But then comes the fatal slip and the whole programme becomes mere words. "The owners of socialised property will be maintained by the State by way of compensation." How is the State going to get the money for this purpose? By selling the "confiscated" (?) properties or by taxation? The first will mean simply a change of hands and the second embarrassment of riches for the worker. The entire value of the socialised property cannot be covered by taxation at once. It has to be spread over a certain period, and for this period the State will be the debtor to the expropriated (?) class. The conclusion of this situation is not difficult to make: a circle will be described—the State-power will revert ere long to those who hold the purse-strings. The vision of classless Swaraj will vanish in the thin air. Too academic and too puritanical understanding of Socialism leads us to such a vicious circle. Socialism tempered by realism, or in other words, ability to apply Marxian dialectics to the Indian situation is what is needed. The programme suggested by the "Socialist" lacks this ability no less conspicuously than the confused manifesto.

The economic structure of the village units, which, according to the "Socialist," should be the cornerstone of the new society, is too mechanical to be applied on a large scale. Besides, the meaning of that particular clause is far from clear. As soon as something concrete is approached, a serious contradiction is revealed. For instance, in the "classless Swaraj" the "hiring of labour will be permitted." What does it mean? The wage system is not to be abolished. And the inevitable outcome of a situation where wages are paid and taken, is the development of classes with conflicting interests. Furthermore, "any ryot unable to run his quota may hire himself out, lease his holding or share it with another." Such an arrangement will inevitably lead to the accumulation of land in the hands of a few, and it will not be very long before we come back to the same point from

where we started the journey towards the "classless Swaraj," which can never be reached through such a mechanical and perfunctory programme. So, on the question of landownership, which is the most vital economic problem in contemporary India, the programme misses fire altogether.

Although in a previous clause private property is allowed except in the public utilities and some vital industries, in another place it is stipulated that "private trading will be absolutely forbidden in foodstuffs, etc." This is another of the contradictions that result not from simple oversight, but from the slipshod manner in which is drafted a programme for the building of such a far-off ideal as a "classless Swaraj." Better results could be expected if the "Socialist" would apply itself to problems which affect the Indian working class more immediately. Such topics as tactics, direct action, propaganda, strike, boycott and general strike are dealt with. Not only the definitions of these terms given, are not always correct, but nothing at all is said as to what should be the tactics of an Indian working class party at this period of political subjugation, economic backwardness and social stagnation.

In short, the programme is very defective theoretically. If it is meant to be the maximum programme of a Socialist Party, it falls very short of the mark. Nor is it the minimum programme for the building of a working class party. No attempt has been made to formulate the demands which will correspond to the every-day necessities of the worker and peasant. The vague ideals and perfunctory economic proposals contained in it do not make the programme any more understandable for the masses than the programme of the bourgeois parties. The profound theoretical difference between spiritual Swaraj and classless Swaraj is certainly beyond the intellectual ken of the average Indian peasant or worker. It is not enough to say what will happen when the general strike takes place; what is more important is to formulate a programme of action which will develop the movement in such a way that the possibilities of a general strike will be nearer every day. But the "Socialist" has nothing to suggest in this respect. Its programme confines itself, on the one hand, to a mechanical scheme of new social order and, on the other, to some incorrect definitions.

## CHAPTER. XXI.

### REVOLUTION VERSUS PACIFISM—I.

NOTHING appeals to the average Indian Nationalist more than the idea that he is the heir of a culture which is destined to save the world. This notion runs rampant through our movement and is responsible for the cult of spiritual imperialism into which Indian Nationalism often degenerates in many a disillusioned soul. Non-violence is said to be the innate characteristic of Indian culture and it is preached that India will teach the world how to defeat violence by Non-resistance. This pacifist prejudice of our Nationalist movement is based upon the authority of Mahatma Gandhi. It is true that to the Mahatma, "ahimsa" (Non-violence) is a creed. He would not have Swaraj if it were to be conquered through violence. It is a laudable sentiment in so far as an individual is concerned; but a great movement for liberation is not provoked nor is it determined by the peculiar notions of any individual. It is the expression of the needs and aspiration of an entire people or an entire class, as the case may be. With us it is the material need of an entire nation that has given rise to the movement for political liberation. Undoubtedly there are cultural aspects of the movement; but the primary cause is material, because a people must first of all live and thrive in order to develop cultural attributes. Viewed abstractly, "ahimsa" is an admirable virtue. It can be preached to those barbarous kings who chop off the heads of men just for the fun of it, or to the civilised ruling class which has millions of youths slaughtered to increase the rate of profit or to stabilise a world economy that has for ever lost its balance. But "ahimsa" ceases to be a virtue when it is preached to a hungry man or a hungry crowd, trying to secure a piece of bread at all costs, without showing, not in theory, but in practice, how they can satisfy their hunger peacefully. This conflict between theory and practice runs through the entire cult of pacifism. The Indian Nationalist movement suffers very much from pacifist prejudices; therefore, it is imperative for all sincere patriots to face and solve this fallacy involved in the cult of Non-violence.

Indian Nationalists take pride in their self-arrogated mission of saving the world, torn asunder by the cult of violence. But before undertaking this great mission, is it

not necessary to prove that India can save herself by the remedy that she prescribes for the suffering world? That is, it is necessary to prove that the Indian people can attain freedom by adhering strictly to non-violent means. To enunciate that we will do it is not to prove that it can be done. Then it is not for the world alone; a clarification on this point is required for the welfare of our own movement. It has to be answered once for all if revolution and pacifism can go hand in hand. Inability or timidity in tackling this vital question has given birth to many curious notions, which only weaken the movement. For example, there are many who proclaim themselves as "non-violent revolutionaries." One could just as well speak of a vegetarian tiger.

Now, what is Indian Nationalism? It is a doctrine that primarily calls for the free existence of the Indian people in a political and economic sense. All the cultural and spiritual contributions that India may be destined to make to human civilisation cannot be made until this first condition is fulfilled. In other words, she cannot save the world unless she can save herself. So, the question can be thus formulated: "Can the political and economic freedom of the Indian people be realised by non-violent means?" In other words, is the struggle for existence compatible with the cult of Non-resistance? Let the revolutionary Nationalist answer this question honestly, and all the ideological confusion and theoretical fallacies of Indian Nationalism will be dissipated. The cautious may admonish: "That is a remote question, leave it alone." But that will be evading the issue. First of all it is not a remote question. A movement cannot have an adequate programme and proper tactics unless its theoretical background is clarified. The Indian national movement flounders like a rudderless ship, because the philosophy of Indian Nationalism is so nebulous. The cult of Non-violence has become one of the fundamental attributes of our Nationalism. Devotion to this cult has determined the fate of the movement during the last several years. Therefore, the future of the movement demands a determination of the relation between this cult and the primary needs of the Indian people. Then, if Non-violence is to us a matter of expediency, a cult shall not be made out of it. A tactical move should not be confounded with an article of faith or a principle of philosophy. It is necessary to know where to draw the line.

Here we will not deal with the question of Non-violence from the point of view of tactical exigency. Suffice it to say that premature violence is worse than Non-violence, and sporadic terrorism has as much to do with revolution as the cult of "ahimsa." The latter confuses the revolutionary forces in the first stages of their development, while the former is futile. In the present stage of our struggle it would be stupid to talk of violent action; but the tactical necessity of refraining from premature resort to violence does not impose on the movement the cult of pacifism.

But Non-violence appears to have more than a tactical bearing on our movement; therefore, it should be dealt with as a theoretical problem. To demonstrate the incompatibility between the doctrine of Non-violence and the struggle for freedom (not spiritual, but earthly) is not tantamount to preaching premature violence or impatient terrorism. It would have been merely an academic discussion, had our Nationalist leaders not laid exaggerated stress upon the imaginary speciality of Indian Nationalism, which not only proposes to triumph over the evil forces of imperialism by dint of its innate spiritual attributes, but pretends to cure the whole world of violence by its own noble example. Pacifist prejudices may be harmless so long as they remain confined within the bounds of individual idiosyncrasies; but they become the handmaid of counter-revolution when introduced into the theory and practice of a great struggle for freedom. Religious beliefs and ethical concepts often stand in the way of a vigorous fight and sap the energy of the militant. This has been the case with the Non-co-operation movement, whose revolutionary potentialities were not permitted to assert themselves, due to the plea of Non-violence. The social significance of this doctrine of Non-violence is sinister, and it has been exposed by us on previous occasions. Here we propose to deal with it as a live political issue. Let the sincerity of those preaching pacifism in a revolutionary struggle be taken for granted; that is, let us believe that the Indian cult of Non-violence is of a spiritual nature and is not of the Western hypocritical variety, which serves the interests of the present social system. Now, we may also assume that to a sincere Nationalist, Non-violence or any other creed is not the end, but the means to an end, which is the freedom of the country. It will be presently shown that the two positions cannot be maintained at one and the same

time : one cannot be a sincere pacifist and a sincere Nationalist at the same time.

Let us take concrete examples. In his election manifesto, Mr. Satyamurti states his faith. One clause of this statement runs thus : "There is no royal road to Swaraj. It will not come by merely asking for it. It can come in only by one of two ways : first by armed rebellion, which I am against as absolutely impossible ; second by creating a situation in India which will compel Britain to realise that it is impossible to keep India within the Empire, except as a self-governing nation. I believe in this."

The issue of Non-violence is not directly raised here, but it is practically involved inasmuch as the possibility of an armed conflict is dismissed. So, by other means than an armed rebellion, Mr. Satyamurti would force the British Government to come to terms. But he forgets that the British Government may not be as averse to the resort to arms as are the apostles of our spiritual Nationalism. If Britain cannot hold India under her domination with a show of constitutionalism, she will do so by force. The situation created by Mr. Satyamurti will not find the British without powerful military forces. So, if the movement for national freedom is to be carried to a victorious end, an armed conflict with those who profit by the political slavery of the Indian people, is inevitable. It may come sooner or later, but it must come. It is however no concern to the bourgeois patriots of Mr. Satyamurti's type, because they do not propose to go that far, where an armed conflict with Imperialism would be thrust upon them. They will be contented with the status of "a self-governing nation within the Empire." When one is determined to end the Nationalist struggle in a compromise, it is possible to forego all thoughts of an armed conflict. In that case, however, the efficacy of non-violent means is established at the cost of revolution. The incompatibility between pacifism and revolution is not disproved.

Another instance, Jawahar Lal Nehru, in his admirable address to the U.P. Conference, falls victim to this dangerous fallacy. The sincerity of Jawahar Lal's patriotism is unchallengeable. His vision, nevertheless, is clouded with pacifist prejudices. For the first time, we find a responsible leader officially declare that the people of Indian cannot



be really free unless all connections with imperialism are broken. But he not only believes that this complete freedom from British imperialism will be secured by non-violent means, but that the salvation of the world will come through the success of Non-violent Non-co-operation. This is an illusion that should have been long ago discarded by revolutionary Nationalists like Jawahar Lal. Whenever he commits the Indian movement to a fight to the finish with imperialism, he inevitably takes his stand on a road which ultimately leads to an armed conflict. Let us repeat again our opposition to any premature act or talk of violence. We fully endorse the sentiments expressed by Jawahar Lal about the recrudescence of terrorism in Bengal. Nevertheless, we cannot help discovering an incomplete grasp of revolutionary theory and practice in his rhetorical outburst against violence.

It is not required to be bloodthirsty. One need not preach the futile cult of terrorism; but it is equally useless to entertain illusions. The people of India are engaged in a revolutionary struggle. The issue is simple: British imperialism is determined to keep the Indian nation under subjugation, while the Indian people are every day growing into the consciousness that their future depends upon political independence. British domination is, in the last analysis, based on brute force—the police, the army and navy. Therefore, India cannot be free from the British yoke until these forces at the latter's disposal are fully spent and exhausted. Can this be achieved by Non-violent Non-co-operation? A government with such mighty weapons at its command would not stand still and watch, while the forces determined to overthrow it accomplish their task peacefully. Our naive Nationalists may like to conceive of such an impossible situation, in order that their cherished desire to set the world an example of practical pacifism may be realised; but the world does not move as we wish it to. If India will not have freedom conquered by violent means, she will have to go without it. Pacifism, therefore, renders the success of our national struggle an impossibility. The essential significance of Indian Nationalism is not an incipient spiritual imperialism, but the determination of a people to free itself. It is a revolutionary movement, and as such it cannot avoid a bitter struggle with the power it is destined to overthrow.

These considerations should be kept in view, in order that the dynamic revolutionary forces behind Indian Nationalism can be marshalled for the fight that has to be fought, sooner or later. It is suicidal to incite to violence unnecessarily and without proper preparation; it is equally detrimental to the movement to feed it upon philosophical illusions and political fallacies.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### REVOLUTION VERSUS PACIFISM—II.

THE presidential address of Pundit Jawahar Lal to the U.P. Conference calls for more than passing notice. It is by far the most important pronouncement lately made by any outstanding personality in India. In asserting that "the basis of Non-co-operation is direct action" he indicated the only way that should be followed by the revolutionary Nationalists who are not satisfied with the neo-constitutionalism of the Swaraj Party. But the Punditji himself does not seem to quite understand what is direct action. Otherwise he would not make the statement that direct action cannot be carried on by large masses of people, but by a selected few. He appears to hold the masses responsible for the failure of Non-co-operation. This is an absolutely wrong view of the case. On various occasions during the last few years, the masses were ready to act, but it was the general staff of the Non-co-operation movement that held them back. Jawahar Lal betrays an ignorance of history when he states: "No one can expect large masses of people to indulge continuously in direct action. Only the elect can do that, and the masses can sympathise with them and join them occasionally for a short time." History shows the case to be the contrary. All great movements are carried through by might and sacrifice of the masses and not by the elect, though the latter may appropriate the glory. He apparently does not agree with the Delhi compromise; of course as a revolutionary he cannot. But he endeavours to justify it by throwing the blame on the masses. He argues that it is necessary to go back a little "to some kind of constitutional action whenever large numbers of people are tired of direct action." The Congress has reverted to constitutionalism, not because it could not get the support of the masses for a programme of direct action, but because it was afraid of leading the revolutionary masses in the path of direct action. The masses, who enthusiastically rallied round the standard of Non-co-operation, did not get tired of "continuous direct action"; on the contrary, their zeal to act was dampened by the timidity and indecision of the leadership which is, evidently, constituted from the "elect" of the Punditji. Of course, if by the elect, Jawahar Lal means the conscious vanguard determined to lead the masses in the fight, he is right;

and as one of this revolutionary vanguard, he is called upon to undo the wilful blunders committed by the Congress.

The next important point in the speech is the declaration that complete separation from the British Empire is the goal of the Indian Nationalist movement. For the first time, it has been stated authoritatively that our fight is not against bureaucracy, that is a certain **form** of administration, but against imperialism. Indian Nationalism does not strive for some modification in the relationship between the Indian people and the British overlord. What is wanted is the end of this relation. As the Punditji made clear, free India may have all sorts of relations with Britain as an equal, but no equality is possible on the basis of Imperialism. This revolutionary formulation of the political programme of Indian Nationalism is very timely, in view of the fact that the programme of the Swaraj Party, which to all practical purposes has captured the Congress, has removed the ambiguity in which the Non-co-operators preferred to leave the question. Complete independence is not a question of dignity, nor should it be a creed. It will also be ridiculous to declare outright that India is independent. The independence of India should be the first clause in the programme of Indian Nationalism. Not only the Liberals representing the propertied upper classes, but also the middle class Swarajists will be satisfied with some measure of self-government leading up to Dominion status. This programme does not take the interests of the majority of the people in consideration. Larger measures of self-government, even Dominion status will not materially alter the politico-economic condition of the masses, including the propertyless lower middle class. Greater opportunities will be conceded to Indian capital, and more political power will come into the hands of the propertied classes; but the people at large will remain politically disfranchised and economically enslaved. British imperialism will take the Indian upper classes into political partnership, only on condition that its right to exploit the Indian masses economically is not seriously contested. Therefore the programme of Dominion status cannot rally the majority of the people under the banner of the Congress. In this connection nothing better can be done than to quote Jawahar Lal's words:

"I suppose there is hardly an Indian who does not in his heart of hearts desire independence, but there are many

who dare not say so—many who think that it is unwise to make the assertion at this stage. Let us get rid of this mentality—this cowardice. We may not be strong enough to gain our object for a while, but we should be brave enough to declare it and work for it.”

It should only be added that it is not a matter of cowardice or heroism, the desire of independence is born out of material necessity. Those who talk of Dominion status do not do so out of cowardice. They will be satisfied with Dominion status, because it will meet, at least temporarily, their economic demands. The majority of the people must fight for complete independence, because **no compromise with imperialism will better their economic conditions.**

This revolutionary pronouncement of Jawahar Lal, however, is rendered meaningless by his philosophy of Non-violence. He still suffers from the malady of Gandhism, which does not allow him to take a realistic view. His denunciation of terrorism is correct and incorrect at the same time. It is correct politically. Spasmodic acts of violence do not lead anywhere. Revolutionary energy is only dissipated thereby. But the ethical scruples of the Punditji are utterly mistaken. Why condemn the ardent youths who have been driven into the blind alley of futile terrorism by disillusionment? They are mistaken, but they are idealists. Show them the highroad of revolution, instead of condemning them on moral grounds. These romantic revolutionaries suspended their activities with the hope that something consoling for them would come out of the Non-co-operation movement. When some of them desired to participate in the Non-co-operation movement, they were treated as outcasts who could be taken into the sacred folds of Gandhism only on their making public penance. The collapse of Non-co-operation and the non-revolutionary nature of its leadership have thrown these young enthusiasts back upon their own resources. Instead of declaring them moral culprits, the Punditji should find in them the material for his “elect,” which would act as the conscious vanguard of the masses. But this demands a more realistic leadership on the part of Jawahar Lal. He will not get these misled revolutionaries to follow him in such ridiculous theatricals as the Flag Demonstration; something more dynamic should be found. Through these youths is expressed the violent energy, which will have to be invoked sooner or

later for the realisation of the political programme formulated by the Punditji himself. But the pacifist prejudices of Jawahar Lal get him into trouble. He is entangled in philosophic fallacies. He proposes to destroy the mightiest imperialism that the world has ever seen, but he sings the song of love and peace. This confused outlook lands him in such a queer position that he loses all perspective and is unable to distinguish black from white. In his bewilderment he says:

“Bolshevism and Fascism are the ways of the West to-day. They are really alike and represent different phases of insensate violence and intolerance. The choice for us is between Lenin and Mussolini on the one hand and Gandhi on the other. Can there be any doubt as to who represents the soul of India to-day?”

Beautiful as a peroration, but all wrong historically and politically. One cannot be expected to do better, when an attempt is made to understand the great world currents, by taking the ethical concept of Violence versus Non-violence as the standard. If our Nationalists of the type of Jawahar Lal would care to learn anything outside Indian history, it would be apparent to them that the programme of Bolshevism is no more bloodthirsty than Gandhism, although there is no other point of contact between the two. It is not the teachings of Bolshevism that have driven it to violence. It was thrust upon the Bolsheviks either to turn traitors to their programme, or to take up the challenge and defend it. If Jawahar Lal will remain true to his ideal, if he will conquer the freedom of the Indian people, he will find his ethical formulas unavailing. It is only deplorable ignorance that can herd Lenin and Mussolini, Bolshevism and Fascism together, merely because both use violence. Then, Jawahar Lal has no patience for impatience. Well, in that case his outburst does not mean anything. If he would damn the Bolsheviks, because they could not tolerate the Tsar and his retinue of landlords and capitalists, who sucked the life-blood of the Russian people, by what ethical code can he justify his intolerance for the British in India? Yes, he can argue that his intolerance is Gandhism: it is not violent. Well, history will prove that. The impossibility of riding on the two horses of Ahimsa and Revolution will be soon revealed.

It is not possible to correct Jawahar Lal's wrong ideas about the cause of the present chaotic state of the world in a short article. This may be done on some other occasion. Meanwhile he would do better to learn something about Bolshevism, Fascism and such other burning world topics before passing judgment on them so light-heartedly. If Gandhism still represents the soul of India, as Jawahar Lal believes, then the day of her liberation is far off. The spirit of Mussolini is not hard to find in India. The weakness of Indian Nationalism lies not only in its pacifist prejudices, but in its fascist (reactionary jingoist) tendencies. When our disillusioned lower middle class forsakes Gandhism, it hails Mussolini as the prophet. But the soul of real India, that is of the majority who toil and starve, will be stirred to action not by the reactionary pacifism of Gandhi nor by the Nationalist jingoism of Mussolini; it will only respond to the little known but much maligned programme of Bolshevism, that is, a programme which will stand for the economic liberation and social emancipation of the toiling masses. India will be free only through the conscious action of these potential followers of Bolshevism. Many a river of blood will have to be traversed and many a tenet of reactionary Nationalism will have to be forgotten before that goal is realised.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE CULT OF NON-VIOLENCE :

#### Its Socio-Economic Background.

THE spiritual character of India's national struggle has been so much emphasised that to the naive sentimentalist its real significance has been altogether lost. The cult of Non-violence, which runs rampant through the philosophy of Indian Nationalism, has been invested with a religio-cultural halo. The average Nationalist passionately adheres to it, and preaches it without even suspecting that something very mundane can be lurking behind this unearthly aureole. The dream of delivering suffering humanity from the bondage of a material civilisation, based on brute force, is so intoxicating to a people with hardly anything else to make it forget its own bondage, that all sense of reality is drowned in a melancholy pride. This dream, however, is not dreamt by the entire people. It is only the middle class, particularly the lower strata, which is sinking steadily into the dreary depths of economic bankruptcy, which is the victim, complete and hopeless. The upper classes may also appear to be dreaming this ridiculous dream, but they are too realistic to lose their balance. They have too much at stake in this material world to be fascinated by an imaginary vision. The masses of the people are too engrossed in the all-absorbing struggle for existence to bother about the spiritual mission of India.

Now, whence does this dream come? And how has it acquired such a grip on the mentality of the middle class? These questions are to be answered for the future welfare of the Indian people. It is not healthy for a nation, which feels hunger more than any other sensation, to be fed continuously upon spiritual moonshine. The cult of Non-violence exercises a deadening effect on the popular energy and the inevitable consequence of it is the weakening of the national struggle.

We are not engaged here in the task of analysing the merits and demerits of Non-violence as against violence, or vice-versa. Nor do we propose to expose the ridiculousness of the pet hobby of saving the wicked world by the spiritual teachings of a nation that cannot save itself materially. Our object here is to examine the material background upon which the religio-ethical theory of Non-violence is reared.



This examination is necessary to open the eyes of those honest Nationalists who accept this theory, without suspecting that quite a material motive may give birth to it and foster its glorification.

The examination we propose to make requires some historical reminiscences and the enunciation of the fundamental principle of Nationalism. Of course, it should be pointed out that we do not accept the theory that Nationalism on the soil of India is entirely cultural. As in any other country, it is primarily a political issue, and we propose to deal with it as such. We know that man is not a political animal, nor is human society a voting machine. It is no less so in the West than in India. But the first requisite for a particular people to make its full contribution to the accumulated store of human knowledge and culture is its material existence. Just as an individual must have his physical requirements satisfied before he can develop finer human attributes, just so is the case with a community. The cultural achievement of the primitive human society was very meagre when man had to spend all his time and all his energy in the struggle for physical existence. In proportion as the problem of material existence is solved, in proportion as the leisure at the disposal of man increases, this energy is turned into other channels and the human animal, individually and collectively, begins to develop those finer attributes that are called intellectual, cultural and spiritual. These fundamental laws underlie the progress of every human community. In the course of this progress, which is dynamic, every such community develops a political existence. Therefore, it is wrong to condemn politics as a purely material thing, nor can it be spiritualised by any stretch of the imagination. Indian Nationalism may be remotely a cultural movement, but immediately it is a political one, because the cultural future of the Indian people cannot be guaranteed without defending its material existence, and to insure its normal progress is the motive-force of the Nationalism that has, of late, affected practically all the strata of Indian society.

Looking into history, we do not find any trace of the cult of Non-violence in Indian Nationalism in its earlier days. It is a mistake to think that the inauguration of the Non-co-operation movement marks the birth of Indian Nationalism. The Non-co-operation movement is only a phase of the national consciousness of India, which made

itself felt already in the eighties of the last century, when the National Congress was born. From 1882 until 1919 Indian Nationalism developed through various stages, but there was no talk of its regenerating the violence-ridden world by the philosophy of Non-violence. This element was introduced by Gandhi, just at the moment when the movement had attained maturity and was entering the first period of revolutionary activity. It should be noted in passing that the terrorist outbursts beginning from 1907 could not be called revolutionary action in the proper sense of the term. The revolutionary potentiality of Indian Nationalism became manifest only when the broad masses of the people were affected by it. This happened partially during the war, but not completely till 1918. So, we discover the curious phenomenon that as soon as Indian Nationalism assumed openly revolutionary proportions, the cult of Non-violence was introduced into it by Gandhi. In other words, when the forces were set in motion for the political freedom of India, freedom which is the pre-requisite for the accomplishment of any other higher mission that may be reserved for the Indian nation—precisely then began the preaching of the cult of Non-violence, which is declared to be the special characteristic of India, but which for all practical purposes only obstructed and will only obstruct the development of these revolutionary forces.

This fact concerning the introduction of the cult of Non-violence into Indian Nationalisation throws a new light on the whole question. It shows the way to the socio-economic background of the cult which has since become the main article of faith of Indian Nationalism.

Much has been said of the emphasis Gandhi put upon the doctrine of Non-violence. The two extreme theories are: (1) it was to him a religion and politics played a secondary role; (2) it was a measure of expediency to put the movement beyond the Indian Penal Code. The first cannot be admitted, because Non-violence has exceeded the bounds of a personal creed; while the second is utterly mechanical. The reason is to be searched for deeper, in the realm of material necessity, which is the prime mover of Nationalism. Here is what the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" has to say on the matter. In its editorial of October 4th, 1923, this classic exponent of the cult of Non-violence writes:

“The idea of Non-co-operation was not really the creation of Mahatma Gandhi. What he did was simply to find organised and outer expression for the latent discontent in the country. Mahatma Gandhi saw the danger of this latent discontent. **He did not want**, that this discontent should be left to itself and burst out in fatal physical revolt or revolution. . . . This was the true inwardness of his campaign.”

We know that there are many who would not recognise the “Patrika” as the faithful interpreter of Gandhism; but the same thesis can be easily established from the sayings, writings and acts of the Mahatma himself. We are, however, not concerned with the personality of Gandhi. Our object is to expose the fact that the cult of Non-violence is not a spontaneous expression of the nature of the Indian people, but, on the contrary, is expounded and preached (no matter by whom) in order to thwart the development of dynamic revolutionary forces which threaten to push Indian Nationalism dangerously farther than the so-called politically-minded class desired it to go. The cult of Non-violence was smuggled into Indian Nationalism by the dictates of purely mundane desire. The principal instruments in this act of smuggling might not have been cognisant of the significance of what they were doing; but this does not alter the real purpose served by the cult of Non-violence, namely the security of the vested interests in the face of the menacing forces of revolution.

Political Nationalism is a material thing, and the Indian Nationalist movement is primarily political. This being the case, the theory and tactics of Indian Nationalism must be determined by material considerations. If Non-violence has come to be a cardinal principle of Indian Nationalism, it is because material considerations demand it to be so. That section of the Indian people, which stood at the head of the Nationalist movement until the fateful days of 1918 till 1919, did not desire a radical change in the structure of Indian society. They wanted, in the extreme case, to be the rulers of the country in the place of foreign government; but nothing was farther from their mind than any disruption in the socio-economic system obtaining under British rule. So long as this was generally accepted as the objective of the national movement, there was no danger involved in it. But the unexpected appearance of the rebellious masses on

the scene of Nationalism changed its character objectively. The constitutional and administrative readjustment, which had so far been the end sought for by the Nationalism of the upper classes, could not be expected to satisfy the demands of the entire people, when the consciousness of the latter would be fully awakened. The social basis of Nationalism was broadened; consequently the theory of Nationalism must also be revised. For the first time in its history, the revolutionary significance of Nationalism became evident. It became clear that the logical sequence of this reinvigorated Nationalism would be a desire, not for the simple transference of the political power from the hands of the foreign ruler to those of the native upper class, but such far-reaching revolutionary changes in the socio-economic as well as in the political sphere, as would open the way for the normal progress of the entire people. This eventuality threatened more than the termination of British domination; it constituted itself a menace to the entire social traditions and economic system, which sanctioned from time immemorial class rule, even on the holy soil of India. In one word, Nationalism came dangerously near to becoming a revolutionary movement.

This had not been what the "politically-minded" upper classes had in view when they contested British authority in the name of Nationalism. But it was not possible to retrace the steps taken. The hand of history cannot be set back. Besides, for the sake of their own development, the upper classes of the Indian people must challenge British absolutism. The necessity of carrying on the struggle against the British politico-economic monopoly from the point of view of upper class interests without provoking, however, the forces of revolution latent in the masses of the people, gave birth to the cult of spiritualism in politics. The corollary thereof was the doctrine of soul-force, suffering, passive resistance and all the rest that constituted Gandhism. The object was to discourage the spirit of revolt, which once kindled cannot be expected to be kept within specified limits.

Thus, we find the Moderate politicians declare Swaraj to be harmful just now, the apostle of extremism, Bepin Pal, proclaims in his election manifesto his desire to maintain the imperial bond for the welfare of India and for world

peace; and the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" Oct. 25th, 1923, writes:

"The moment this inert mass commences to move, it will spell fatal revolution among us, before which both the educated Indians and the British rulers will be equally swept away. When this leviathan moves, both Moderates and Extremists, along with their common enemy, the bureaucracy, will be equally crushed under its mammoth feet. How to prevent this catastrophe is the root problem just now before the educated leaders of the people and the representatives of the Government."

The cult of Non-violence was invented precisely for the solution of this problem, which worries the leaders of Nationalism no less than the agents of imperialism. So much so, that the day may not be far distant when the two will bury the hatchet in order to carry on the crusade against those forces of revolution which menace the security of the vested interests.

Such is the socio-economic background of the cult of Non-violence. It is not the cornerstone of Indian Nationalism. On the contrary, it is the clever stratagem of the upper class to head off a revolutionary convulsion, without which Nationalism will never come into his own, although the debris of our old society will be swept away, along with the British rule, by this convulsion. The cult of Non-violence, therefore, is meant to serve the interests of those who have built castles of social privilege and economic exploitation upon this stinking debris. If the end of Nationalism is to glorify these privileged few, then Non-violence is certainly useful; but to Nationalism of a broader kind, which is the expression of the desire of the entire Indian people, it is a positive hindrance.

The sentimental Nationalists belonging to the lower middle class fall victims to this upper class propaganda, because they dare not face the reality. They cannot call their own anything but a naive class prejudice. They are always ready to run after any chimera. This pitiable psychological attitude of theirs is fully exploited by the clever agents of the upper class, who can thus turn them into ardent propagandists in the cause of the vested interest. Those who

talk of Non-violence as the basic principle of Indian Nationalism, and dream the fond dream of showing the wicked world the path to salvation, may be perfectly sincere (which in this case means ignorant) ; but they are only helping the sacrifice of Indian Nationalism on the altar of the upper classes.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE COCONADA CONGRESS.

THE day of reckoning is near. In another month the general staff of the Nationalist forces will meet to give an account of its past achievements and to indicate the lines of further advance. The Coconada Congress does not promise to be an exciting affair. It would be idle to expect much from it. In this gathering will not be felt the vigorous palpitation of a healthy national organism; only the memory of a glorious past will cast its melancholy shadow. A divided leadership will face a disillusioned and demoralised following. Bombastic speeches certainly there will be. Resolutions will also be passed. But there will be no life in them. All but the name of revolutionary Non-co-operation will have disappeared. The demoralised Nationalist army will not receive the much-needed new direction. The Coconada Congress will meet in a great confusion and end in making the confusion worse confounded.

Why should such a pessimist view of the situation be taken? To-day we have in our midst practically all the great national heroes with the single exception of the Mahatma. The Special Session at Delhi has accomplished the great task of re-establishing the unity of the movement. No less a personality than Maulana Mohamed Ali will be in the chair. The wise statesmanship of the Lion of the Punjab will be available. Preparations for Civil Disobedience are being made under the direction of Dr. Kitchlew. And in addition to all this, there will be the electoral success of the Swaraj Party to infuse new vigour into the movement.

It sounds reassuring, but it still remains to be seen if all these factors on the credit side can save the bankruptcy into which the Non-co-operation movement **voluntarily** went. Much was expected of Mohamed Ali. The rank and file of the Congress, which revolted against the revolt of radicalism, heroically held its own until the second in command of the Non-co-operation movement came out of jail, in order to rally the scattered forces for new action. The hope has been dashed to the ground. The idol showed its clay feet in such a hurry that the admirers were staggered. Mohamed Ali has failed to give the leadership which was expected of him. His pronouncements since

he came out of jail are full of mere platitudes and hopeless contradictions. No constructive programme, no positive suggestion as to the future of the movement is to be found in them. He authorises the removal of the ban on the Councils, but holds up the edict of the "ulemas" on the question. He professes to be the standard-bearer of pure Gandhism, but sets his face positively against Civil Disobedience, without which the political programme of Non-co-operation becomes meaningless. He indulges in fearful threats against the Government, but finds the demand for the separation from the British Empire "childish and petulant." He deplores the Hindu-Moslem feuds, but still insists on Khilafat propaganda, which contributed not a little to the success of the enemies of national freedom in creating communal dissensions, and incidentally to the organisation of the forces of Hindu reaction in the Hindu Sabha, which is sure to aggravate the communal issue. In political questions, he has absolutely no programme to suggest. He harps on the threadbare "Constructive Programme" which constructs naught but inaction. Such is the record with which Mohamed Ali goes to Coconada to furnish the Nationalist forces with a new direction.

During the last year and a half, the controversy over Council-entry has been the only activity of the Congress. When the Congress meets at Coconada, this controversy will have been over. Some new theme must be found to keep up the show. Till now there is no indication as to what will be the new theme. The defeat of the Swaraj Party in the elections will certainly give impetus to the cult of pure Gandhism. The "No-changers" can be expected to be very noisy. But the movement to-day demands something more than noise, created with the sole purpose of vindicating some pet theory or other. Most of the "No-change" leaders have forfeited the trust of their following by their attitude at Delhi. It will be sheer hypocrisy on their part to revert to the "Constructive Programme." In the Coconada Congress will be revealed the inability of both the factions to provide the required leadership. The fact that the "No-change" stalwarts surrendered to the Swarajists, signifies the defeat of their cult. The defeat of the Swarajists in the election, on the other hand, takes the fire out of the guns of the latter. This being the case, if one or the other prevailing tendency is to be looked upon as the way out of this



impasse, Coconada will prove to be a dull affair. The two tendencies, which fought over the narrow issue of Council-entry, have eliminated each other. Neither the one nor the other can supply what is needed. Whence is the new lead to come? The Coconada Congress will have to answer this question. It is not likely that it will be able to do so. Therefore, a realist cannot be optimistic about it in spite of the galaxy of factors that can be arrayed on its credit side.

The talk of Civil Disobedience may be revived. Dr. Kitchlew's activities indicate that. But the programme of Civil Disobedience has also become a dead horse, not because its former sponsors have set their face against it, but because even those who still stand by it ostensibly, do not dare or do not want to proceed in the way that alone leads to its realisation. The programme of Civil Disobedience loses all potentiality if it is made conditional upon the fulfilment of the unrealisable "Constructive Programme." The necessity of "creating a suitable atmosphere" for the inauguration of Civil Disobedience is recognised by all. The "No-changers" claim that it can only be done by working the "Constructive Programme"; while those Swarajists, who still profess to be Non-co-operators, hold that their programme, which hinges on securing a majority in the Councils, is the only way. Now, both have been proved impossible. The rapid disintegration of the Non-co-operation movement after Bardoli has demonstrated that the "Constructive Programme," far from developing the movement, cannot hold it together. The electoral experiences of the Swaraj Party on the other hand show that a revolutionary movement cannot be directed through constitutional channels. Civil Disobedience, therefore, cannot be inaugurated if the movement is not freed from these two tendencies both of which have gone off the mark.

Civil Disobedience, however, still remains the only feasible programme of action for our movement under the present circumstances. But the realisation, nay, the very adoption of this programme demands a radical change in the socio-economic outlook of the Congress. The real significance of the Delhi compromise is the commitment of the Congress to the programme of bourgeois Nationalism. It was but the logical evolution of the anti-revolutionary tendency of the Non-co-operation movement. The motive of the Delhi compromise, of the "betrayal" of Gandhism by its

principal custodian, was latent in the social background of the Calcutta programme. Therefore, to revert now to the theories of orthodox Non-co-operation will be only to describe a vicious circle. Moreover, it is highly problematical if this reversion is possible. The way to Civil Disobedience will be open only in case the Congress can liberate itself from the bonds of bourgeois Nationalism. It can hardly be expected that this revolution in the ideology of the Congress will take place at Coconada, because during the last two years the "No-change" leaders have not shown any less dread and aversion to revolution than the out and out exponents of constitutionalism now constituting the power behind the Swaraj Party.


The Nationalist movement stands in need of a revolutionary leadership. We cannot expect it at Coconada, neither from one faction nor from the other. The revolutionary elements in the programme expounded by Mr. Das before his defeat at Gaya have been lost in the anxiety to turn that defeat into a victory; whereas the revolutionary potentiality of the idea of Non-co-operation has been drowned in the wilderness of the reactionary social philosophy of the "No-changers." What is left, therefore, is impotent neo-constitutionalism on the one hand, and demagogy on the other. Such is the atmosphere in which the Coconada Congress meets. Naturally nothing positive can be expected. The forces of revolutionary Nationalism still appear to be too scattered, too bewildered to assert themselves. But sooner or later they must assume the leadership of the Congress. The dull show at Coconada should give an impetus to the revolutionary forces. They should take independent action and repudiate the non-revolutionary and impotent leadership.

The only programme of revolutionary Nationalism is militant mass action. The masses, who enthusiastically rallied under the banner of the Congress in the earlier stages of Non-co-operation, are demoralised to-day. Determined preliminary efforts are necessary to win back their confidence. Propaganda based on vague generalities will not suffice. The consciousness of the masses has to be awakened. Nationalism should be made a concrete issue to them. A clear and vigorous Programme of Action is needed for this purpose. On the eve of the Coconada Congress, we remind the revolutionary Nationalists of the Programme we published before the Gaya Congress. Many prejudices,

many fond illusions, many suspicions prevented due consideration being given to the programme. To-day those illusions are gone; prejudices and suspicions should have been cleared by this time. The bogey of Bolshevism drove the patriots of property to the stronghold of constitutionalism. So much so that Nationalists of all shades, from Bepin Chandra Pal to Mohamed Ali, would not countenance separation from the British Empire. Why? Because "it would harm the cause of Indian Swaraj." If this does not open the eyes of the revolutionary Nationalists, then the future of the movement is indeed dark. Let the Coconada Congress go down in history as the turning point in Indian Nationalism. Let a mighty call for Revolutionary Mass Action rise out of the wilderness of reaction, indecision and impotence.

THE END.



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