and there is an amazing amount of houha and shouting. Consciously and sub-consciously they avoid tackling fundamental issues, for such issues require fundamental remedies and the courage of thought and action. Hence Liberal defeats and victories are of little consequence. They relate to no principle. The leading characteristic of the Party and the distinguishing feature, if it can be considered so, is thus moderation in everything, good or bad. It is an outlook on life and the old name—the Moderates—was perhaps the most suitable.

"In moderation placing all my glory
While Tories call me Whig and Whigs a Tory."  

But moderation, however admirable it might be, is not a bright and scintillating virtue. It produces dullness, and so the Indian Liberals have unhappily become a 'Dull Brigade'—sombre and serious in their looks, dull in their writing and conversation, and lacking in humour. Of course there are exceptions, and the most notable of these is Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who, in his personal life, is certainly not dull or lacking in humour and who enjoys even a joke against himself. But on the whole the Liberal group represents bourgeoisdom in excelsis with all its pedestrian solidity. The Leader of Allahabad, which is the leading Liberal newspaper, had a revealing editorial note last year. It stated that great and unusual men had always brought trouble to the world, and therefore it preferred the ordinary, mediocre kind of man. With a fine and frank gesture it nailed its flag to mediocrity.

Moderation and conservatism and a desire to avoid risks and sudden changes are often the inevitable accompaniments of old age. They do not seem quite so appropriate in the young, but ours is an ancient land, and sometimes its children seem to be born tired and weary, with all the lack-lustre and marks of age upon them. But even this old country is now convulsed by the forces of change, and the moderate outlook is bewildered. The old world is passing, and all the sweet reasonableness of which the Liberals are capable does not make any difference; they might as well argue with the hurricane or the flood or the earthquake. Old assumptions fail them, and they dare not seek for new ways of thought and action. Dr. A. N. Whitehead, speaking of the European tradition, says: "The whole of this tradition is warped by the vicious assumption that each generation will substantially live amid the conditions governing the lives of its fathers, and will transmit those conditions to mould

1 Alexander Pope.
with equal force the lives of its children. We are living in the first period of human history for which the assumption is false. Dr. Whitehead errs on the side of moderation in his analysis, for probably that assumption has always been untrue. If the European tradition has been conservative, how much more so has ours been? But the mechanics of history pay little attention to these traditions when the time for change comes. We watch helplessly and blame others for the failure of our plans. And that, as Mr. Gerald Heard points out, is the "most disastrous of illusions, the projection that convinces itself that any failure in one's plans must be due not to a mistake in one's own thinking, but to a deliberate thwarting by some one else."

All of us suffer from this terrible illusion. I sometimes think that Gandhiji is not free from it. But we act at least and try to keep in touch with life, and by trial and error sometimes lessen the power of the illusion and stumble along. But the Liberals suffer most. For they do not act for fear of acting wrongly, they do not move for fear of falling, they keep away from all healthy contacts with the masses, and sit enchanted and self-hypnotised in their mental cells. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri warned his fellow-Liberals a year and a half ago not to "stand by and let things pass." That warning had greater truth in it than he himself probably realised. Thinking always in terms of what the Government did, he was referring to the constitutional changes that were being hatched by various official committees. But the misfortune of the Liberals had been that they stood by and let things pass when their own people were marching ahead. They feared their own masses, and they preferred to alienate themselves from these masses rather than fall out with our rulers. Was it any wonder that they became strangers in their own land, and life went by and left them standing? When fierce struggles were waged for life and freedom by their countrymen, there was no doubt on which side of the barricade the Liberals stood. From the other side of that barricade they gave us good advice, and were full of moral platitudes, laying them on thick like sticky paint. Their cooperation with the British Government in the round table conferences and committees was a moral factor of value to the Government. A denial of it would have made a difference. It was remarkable that at one of these conferences even the British Labour Party kept away; not so our Liberals, who went in spite of an appeal by some Britishers to them not to do so.
We are all moderates or extremists in varying degrees, and for various objects. If we care enough for anything we are likely to feel strongly about it, to be extremist about it. Otherwise we can afford a gracious tolerance, a philosophical moderation, which really hides to some extent our indifference. I have known the mildest of Moderates to grow very aggressive and extremist when a suggestion was made for the sweeping away of certain vested interests in land. Our Liberal friends represent to some extent the prosperous and well-to-do. They can afford to wait for Swaraj, and need not excite themselves about it. But any proposal for radical social change disturbs them greatly, and they are no longer moderate or sweetly reasonable about it. Thus their moderation is really confined to their attitude towards the British Government, and they nurse the hope that if they are sufficiently respectful and compromising perhaps, as a reward for this behaviour, they might be listened to. Inevitably they have to accept the British viewpoint. Blue books become their passionate study, Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice and such-like books their constant companions, a new Government Report a matter for excitement and speculation. Liberal leaders returning from England make mysterious statements about the doings of the great ones in Whitehall, for Whitehall is the Valhalla of Liberals, Responsiveists and other similar groups. In the old days it was said that good Americans when they died went to Paris, and it may be that the shades of good Liberals sometimes haunt the precincts of Whitehall.

I write of Liberals, but what I write applies to many of us also in the Congress. It applies even more to the Responsiveists, who have outdistanced the Liberals in their moderation. There is a great deal of difference between the average Liberal and the average Congressman, and yet the dividing line is not clear and definite. Ideologically there is little to choose between the advanced Liberal and the moderate Congressman. But, thanks to Gandhiji, every Congressman has kept some touch with the soil and the people of the country, and he has dabbled in action, and because of this he has escaped some of the consequences of a vague and defective ideology. Not so the Liberals: they have lost touch with both the old and the new. As a group they represent a vanishing species.

Most of us, I suppose, have lost the old pagan feeling and not gained the new insight. Not for us to "have sight of Proteus rising from the sea"; or "hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn." And very few of us are fortunate enough—
“To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.”

Not for most of us, unhappily, to sense the mysterious life of Nature, to hear her whisper close to our ears, to thrill and quiver at her touch. Those days are gone. But though we may not see the sublime in Nature as we used to, we have sought to find it in the glory and tragedy of humanity, in its mighty dreams and inner tempests, its pangs and failures, its conflicts and misery, and, over all this, its faith in a great destiny and a realisation of those dreams. That has been some recompense for us for all the heart-breaks that such a search involves, and often we have been raised above the pettiness of life. But many have not undertaken this search, and having cut themselves adrift from the ancient ways, find no road to follow in the present. They neither dream nor do they act. They have no understanding of human convulsions like the great French Revolution or the Russian Revolution. The complex, swift and cruel eruptions of human desires, long suppressed, frighten them. For them the Bastille has not yet fallen.

It is often said with righteous indignation that “Patriotism is not a monopoly of Congressmen.” The same phrase is repeated again and again with a lack of originality which is somewhat distressing. I hope no Congressman has ever claimed a corner in this emotion. Certainly I do not think it is a Congress monopoly, and I would be glad to make a present of it to any one who desired it. It is often enough the refuge of the opportunist and the careerist, and there are so many varieties of it to suit all tastes, all interests, all classes. If Judas had been alive to-day he would no doubt act in its name. Patriotism is no longer enough: we want something higher, wider and nobler.

Nor is moderation enough by itself. Restraint is good and is the measure of our culture, but behind that restraint there must be something to restrain and hold back. It has been, and is, man’s destiny to control the elements, to ride the thunderbolt, to bring the raging fire and the rushing and tumbling waters to his use, but most difficult of all for him has been to restrain and hold in check the passions that consume him. So long as he will not master them, he cannot enter fully into his human heritage. But are we to restrain the legs that move not and the hands that are palsied?
I cannot resist the temptation to quote four lines of Roy Campbell's, written on some South African novelists. They seem to be equally applicable to various political groups in India:

"They praise the firm restraint with which you write.  
I'm with you there, of course.  
You use the snaffle and the curb all right,  
But where's the bloody horse?"

Our Liberal friends tell us that they follow the narrow path of the golden mean, and steer themselves between the extremes of the Congress and the Government. They constitute themselves the judges of the failings of both, and congratulate themselves that they are free from either. They endeavour to hold the scales and, like the figure of Justice, I suppose, they keep their eyes closed or bandaged. Is it my fancy merely that takes me back through the ages and makes me listen to that famous cry: "Scribes and Pharisees. . . . Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!"
Most of those who have shaped Congress policy during the last seventeen years have come from the middle classes. Liberal or Congressmen, they have come from the same class and have grown up in the same environment. Their social life and contacts and friendships have been similar, and there was little difference to begin with between the two varieties of bourgeois ideals that they professed. Temperamental and psychological differences began to separate them, and they began to look in different directions—one group more towards the Government and the rich, upper middle class, the other towards the lower middle classes. The ideology still remained the same, the objectives did not differ, but behind the second group there was now the push of larger numbers from the market-place and the humbler professions as well as the unemployed intelligentsia. The tone changed; it was no longer respectful and polite, but strident and aggressive. Lacking strength to act effectively, some relief was found in strong language. Frightened by this new development, the moderate elements dropped out and sought safety in seclusion. Even so, the upper middle class was strongly represented in the Congress, though in numbers the little bourgeoisie was predominant. They were drawn not only by the desire for success in their national struggle, but because they sought an inner satisfaction in that struggle. They sought thereby to recover their lost pride and self-respect, and to rehabilitate their shattered dignity. It was the usual nationalist urge, and though this was common to all, it was here that the temperamental differences between the moderate and the extremist became evident. Gradually the lower middle class began to dominate the Congress, and later the peasantry made their influence felt.

As the Congress became more and more the representative of the rural masses, the gulf that separated it from the Liberals widened, and it became almost impossible for the Liberal to understand or appreciate the Congress viewpoint. It is not easy for the upper-class drawing-room to understand the humble cottage or the mud hut. Yet, in spite of these differences, both the ideologies were nationalist and bourgeois; the variation was one of degree, not of kind. In the Congress
many people remained to the last who would have been quite at home in the Liberal group.

For many generations the British treated India as a kind of enormous country-house (after the old English fashion) that they owned. They were the gentry owning the house and occupying the desirable parts of it, while the Indians were consigned to the servants’ hall and pantry and kitchen. As in every proper country-house there was a fixed hierarchy in those lower regions—butter, housekeeper, cook, valet, maid, footman, etc.—and strict precedence was observed among them. But between the upper and lower regions of the house there was, socially and politically, an impassable barrier. The fact that the British Government should have imposed this arrangement upon us was not surprising; but what does seem surprising is that we, or most of us, accepted it as the natural and inevitable ordering of our lives and destiny. We developed the mentality of a good country-house servant. Sometimes we were treated to a rare honour—we were given a cup of tea in the drawing-room. The height of our ambition was to become respectable and to be promoted individually to the upper regions. Greater than any victory of arms or diplomacy was this psychological triumph of the British in India. The slave began to think as a slave, as the wise men of old had said.

Times have changed, and the country-house type of civilisation is not accepted willingly now, either in England or India. But still there remain people amongst us who desire to stick to the servants’ halls and take pride in the gold braid and livery of their service. Others, like the Liberals, accept that country-house in its entirety, admire its architecture and the whole edifice, but look forward to replacing the owners, one by one, by themselves. They call this Indianisation. For them the problem is one of changing the colour of the administration, or at most having a new administration. They never think in terms of a new State.

For them Swaraj means that everything continues as before, only with a darker shade. They can only conceive of a future in which they, or people like them, will play the principal rôle and take the place of the English high officials; in which there are the same types of services, government departments, legislatures, trade, industry—with the I.C.S. at their jobs; the princes in their palaces, occasionally appearing in fancy dress or carnival attire with all their jewels glittering to impress their subjects; the landlords claiming special protection, and meanwhile harassing their tenants; the money-lender, with his
money-bags, harassing both zamindar and tenant; the lawyer with his fees; and God in His heaven.

Essentially their outlook is based on the maintenance of the status quo, and the changes they desire can almost be termed personal changes. And they seek to achieve these changes by a slow infiltration with the goodwill of the British. The whole foundation of their politics and economics rests on the continuance and stability of the British Empire. Looking on this Empire as unshakable, at least for a considerable time, they adapt themselves to it, and accept not only its political and economic ideology but also, to a large extent, its moral standards, which have all been framed to secure the continuance of British dominance.

The Congress attitude differs fundamentally from this because it seeks a new State and not just a different administration. What that new State is going to be may not be quite clear to the average Congressman, and opinions may differ about it. But it is common ground in the Congress (except perhaps for a moderate section) that present conditions and methods cannot and must not continue, and basic changes are essential. Herein lies the difference between Dominion Status and Independence. The former envisages the same old structure, with many bonds visible and invisible tying us to the British economic system; the latter gives us, or ought to give us, freedom to erect a new structure to suit our circumstances.

It is not a question of an implacable and irreconcilable antagonism to England and the English people, or the desire to break from them at all costs. It would be natural enough if there was bad blood between India and England after what has happened. "The clumsiness of power spoils the key and uses the pick-axe," says Tagore, and the key to our hearts was destroyed long ago, and the abundant use of the pick-axe on us has not made us partial to the British. But if we claim to serve the larger cause of India and humanity we cannot afford to be carried away by our momentary passions. And even if we were so inclined the hard training which Gandhiji has given us for the last fifteen years would prevent us. I write this sitting in a British prison, and for months past my mind has been full of anxiety, and I have perhaps suffered more during this solitary imprisonment than I have done in gaol before. Anger and resentment have often filled my mind at various happenings, and yet as I sit here, and look deep into my mind and heart, I do not find any anger against England or the English people. I dislike British imperialism and I resent its imposition on India;
I dislike the capitalist system; I dislike exceedingly and resent the way India is exploited by the ruling classes of Britain. But I do not hold England or the English people as a whole responsible for this, and even if I did, I do not think it would make much difference, for it is a little foolish to lose one's temper at or to condemn a whole people. They are as much the victims of circumstances as we are.

Personally, I owe too much to England in my mental make-up ever to feel wholly alien to her. And, do what I will, I cannot get rid of the habits of mind, and the standards and ways of judging other countries as well as life generally, which I acquired at school and college in England. All my predilections (apart from the political plane) are in favour of England and the English people, and if I have become what is called an uncompromising opponent of British rule in India, it is almost in spite of myself.

It is that rule, that domination, to which we object, and with which we cannot compromise willingly—not the English people. Let us by all means have the closest contacts with the English and other foreign peoples. We want fresh air in India, fresh and vital ideas, healthy co-operation; we have grown too musty with age. But if the English come in the rôle of a tiger they can expect no friendship or co-operation. To the tiger of imperialism there will only be the fiercest opposition, and to-day our country has to deal with that ferocious animal. It may be possible to tame the wild tiger of the forest and to charm away his native ferocity, but there is no such possibility of taming capitalism and imperialism when they combine and swoop down on an unhappy land.

For any one to say that he or his country will not compromise is, in a sense, a foolish remark, for life is always forcing us to compromise. When applied to another country or people, it is completely foolish. But there is truth in it when it is applied to a system or a particular set of circumstances, and then it becomes something beyond human power to accomplish. Indian freedom and British imperialism are two incompatibles, and neither martial law nor all the sugar-coating in the world can make them compatible or bring them together. Only with the elimination of British imperialism from India will conditions be created which permit of real Indo-British co-operation.

We are told that independence is a narrow creed in the modern world, which is increasingly becoming inter-dependent, and therefore in demanding independence we are trying to put
the clock back. Liberals and pacifists and even so-called socialists in Britain advance this plea and chide us for our narrow nationalism, and incidentally suggest to us that the way to a fuller national life is through the "British Commonwealth of Nations." It is curious how all roads in England—liberalism, pacifism, socialism, etc.—lead to the maintenance of the Empire. "The desire of a ruling nation to maintain the status quo," says Trotsky, "frequently dresses up as a superiority to 'nationalism', just as the desire of a victorious nation to hang on to its booty easily takes the form of pacifism. Thus Mac-Donald, in the face of Gandhi, feels as though he were an internationalist."

I do not know what India will be like or what she will do when she is politically free. But I do know that those of her people who stand for national independence to-day stand also for the widest internationalism. For a socialist, nationalism can have no meaning, but even many of the non-socialists in the advanced ranks of the Congress are confirmed internationalists. If we claim independence to-day it is with no desire for isolation. On the contrary, we are perfectly willing to surrender part of that independence, in common with other countries, to a real international order. Any imperial system, by whatever high-sounding name it may be called, is an enemy of such an order, and it is not through such a system that world co-operation or world peace can be reached.

Recent developments have shown all over the world how the various imperialist systems are isolating themselves more and more by autarchy and economic imperialism. Instead of the growth of internationalism we see a reversal of the process. The reasons for this are not difficult to discover, and they indicate the growing weakness of the present economic order. One of the results of this policy is that while it produces greater co-operation within the area of autarchy, it also means isolation from the rest of the world. For India, as we have seen by Ottawa and other decisions, it has meant a progressive lessening of our ties and contacts with other countries. We have become, even more than we were, the hangers-on of British industry; and the dangers of this policy, apart from the immediate harm it has done in various ways, are obvious. Thus Dominion Status seems to lead to isolation and not to wider international contacts.

Our friends the Indian Liberals, however, have an amazing knack of seeing the world, and more particularly their own country, through British spectacles of true-blue colour. With-
out trying to appreciate what the Congress says and why it says so, they repeat the old British argument of independence being narrower and less soul-lifting than Dominion Status. Internationalism means for them Whitehall, for they are singularly ignorant of other countries, partly because of the language difficulty, but even more so because they are quite content to ignore them. They are, of course, averse to direct action or any kind of aggressive politics in India. But it is curious to note that some of their leaders have no objection to such methods being adopted in other countries. They can appreciate and admire them from a distance, and some of the present-day dictators of Western countries receive their mental homage.

Names are apt to mislead, but the real question before us in India is whether we are aiming at a new State or merely at a new administration. The Liberal answer is clear; they want the latter, and nothing more, and even that is a distant and progressive ideal. The words 'Dominion Status' are mentioned from time to time, but their real objective for the time being is expressed in those mystic words "responsibility at the centre". Not for them the full-blooded words: Power, Independence, Freedom, Liberty; they sound dangerous. The lawyer's language and approach appeals to them far more, even though it may not enthuse the multitude. History has innumerable instances of individuals and groups facing perils and risking their lives for the sake of faith and freedom. It seems doubtful if any one will ever deliberately give up a meal or sleep less soundly for "responsibility at the centre" or any other legal phrase.

This, then, is their objective, and this is to be reached not by 'direct action' or any other form of aggressive action but, as Mr. Srinivasa Sastri put it, by a display of "wisdom, experience, moderation, power of persuasion, quiet influence and real efficiency." It is hoped that by our good behaviour and our good work we shall ultimately induce our rulers to part with power. In other words, they resist us to-day because either they are irritated against us on account of our aggressive attitude, or they doubt our capacity, or both. This seems a rather naive analysis of imperialism and the present situation. That brilliant English writer, Professor R. H. Tawney, has written an appropriate and arresting passage dealing with the notion of gaining power in stages and with the co-operation of the ruling classes. He refers to the British Labour Party, but his words are even more applicable to India, for in England they have at least
democratic institutions, where the will of the majority can, in theory, make itself felt. Professor Tawney writes:

"Onions can be eaten leaf by leaf, but you cannot skin a live tiger paw by paw; vivisection is its trade, and it does the skinning first. . . ."

"If there is any country where the privileged classes are simpletons, it is certainly not England. The idea that tact and amiability in presenting the Labour Party's case can hoodwink them into the belief that it is their case also, is as hopeless as an attempt to bluff a sharp solicitor out of a property of which he holds the title-deeds. The plutocracy consists of agreeable, astute, forcible, self-confident, and, when hard pressed, unscrupulous people, who know pretty well on which side their bread is buttered, and intend that the supply of butter shall not run short. . . . If their position is seriously threatened, they will use every piece on the board, political and economic—the House of Lords, the Crown, the Press, disaffection in the Army, financial crisis, international difficulties, and even, as newspaper attacks on the pound in 1931 showed, the émigré trick of injuring one's country to protect one's pocket."

The British Labour Party is a powerful organisation. It is backed by the Trade Unions, with their millions of paying members, and a highly developed co-operative organisation, as well as many members and sympathisers among the professional classes. Britain has democratic parliamentary institutions based on adult suffrage, and a long tradition of civil liberty. In spite of all this, Mr. Tawney is of opinion—and recent events have confirmed the soundness of this—that the Labour Party cannot hope to gain real power merely by smiling and persuasion, useful and desirable as both these approaches are. Mr. Tawney suggests that even if the Labour Party obtained a majority in the House of Commons, it would still be powerless to make any radical change in face of the opposition of the privileged classes, who hold so many political, social, economic, financial and military citadels. In India, it need hardly be pointed out, conditions are very different. There are no democratic institutions or traditions. We have instead a well-established practice of ordinance and dictatorial rule and the suppression of the liberties of the person, of speech, writing, assembly and the Press. Nor have the Liberals any strong organisation behind them. They have thus to rely on their smile alone.

Liberals are strongly opposed to any activity that is 'unconstitutional' or 'illegal'. In countries with democratic constitutions the word 'constitutional' has a wide significance. It
controls the making of laws, it protects liberties, it checks the executive, it provides for the democratic methods of bringing about changes in the political and economic structure. But in India there is no such constitution and the word can mean no such thing. To use it here is merely to introduce an idea which has no place in the India of to-day. The word 'constitutional' is often used here, strange to say, in support of the executive's more or less arbitrary actions. Or else it is used in the sense of 'legal'. It is far better to confine ourselves to the words 'legal' or 'illegal', though they are vague enough and vary from day to day.

A new ordinance or a new law creates new offences. To attend a public meeting may be an offence; so also to ride a bicycle, to wear certain clothes, not to be home by sunset, not to report oneself to the police daily—all these and numerous other acts are offences to-day in some part of India. A certain act may be an offence in one part of the country and not in another. When these laws can be promulgated by an irresponsible executive at the shortest notice, the word 'legal' simply means the will of that executive and nothing more. Ordinarily that will is obeyed, willingly or sullenly, because the consequences of disobedience are unpleasant. But for any one to say that he will always obey it means abject submission to a dictatorship or irresponsible authority, the surrender of his conscience, and the impossibility of ever gaining freedom, so far as his activities are concerned.

In every democratic country to-day there is an argument going on as to whether radical economic changes can be brought about in the ordinary course through the constitutional machinery at their disposal. Many people are of opinion that this cannot be done, and some unusual and revolutionary method will have to be adopted. For our purpose in India the issue of this argument is immaterial, for we have no constitutional means of bringing about the changes we desire. If the White Paper or something like it is enacted, constitutional progress in many directions will be stopped completely. There is no way out except by revolution or illegal action. What

1 Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, the eminent Liberal leader and editor-in-chief of the Leader newspaper, has himself laid stress on the lack of any kind of constitutional government in India, in his criticism in the U.P. Council, of the Report of the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on India: "Better submit to the present unconstitutional government rather than to the more reactionary and further more unconstitutional government of the future."
then is one to do? Give up all idea of change and resign oneself to fate?

The position to-day in India is even more extraordinary. The Executive can and does prevent or restrict all manner of public activities. Any activity that is, in its opinion, dangerous for it is prohibited. Thus all effective public activity can be stopped, as it was stopped during the last three years. Submission to this means giving up all public work. That is an impossible position to take up.

No one can say that he will always and without fail act legally. Even in a democratic state occasions may arise when one's conscience compels one to act otherwise. In a despotically or arbitrarily governed country these occasions are bound to be more frequent; indeed, in such a state the law loses all moral justification.

"Direct action is allied to dictatorship and not democracy, and those who wish to bring about the triumph of democracy must eschew direct action," say the Liberals. This is confused thinking and loose writing. Sometimes direct action—e.g. a workers' strike—may even be legal. But probably political action was meant. In Germany to-day under Hitler what kind of action is possible? Either abject submission or illegal and revolutionary action. How could democracy be served there?

Indian Liberals often refer to democracy, but most of them have no desire to go near it. Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyer, one of the most prominent of Liberal leaders, said in May 1934: "In advocating the convention of a constituent assembly, the Congress places too much faith in the wisdom of the multitude, and does too little justice to the sincerity and ability of men who have taken part in various Round Table Conferences. I very much doubt whether the constituent assembly would have done better." Sir Sivaswamy's idea of democracy is thus something apart from the 'multitude', and fits in more with a collection of 'sincere and able' men nominated by the British Government. Further, he blesses the White Paper, for though "not fully satisfied" with it, "he thought it would be unwise for the country to oppose it wholesale." There appears to be no reason whatever why there should not be the most perfect co-operation between the British Government and Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyer.

The withdrawal of civil disobedience by the Congress was naturally welcomed by the Liberals. It was also not surprising that they should take credit for their wisdom in having kept aloof from this "foolish and ill-advised movement". "Did we
not say so?” they told us. It was a strange argument. Because when we stood up and put up a good fight we were knocked down; therefore, the moral pointed out was that standing up is a bad thing. Crawling is best and safest. It is quite impossible to be knocked down or to fall from that horizontal position.
It was natural and inevitable that Indian nationalism should resent alien rule. And yet it was curious how large numbers of our intelligentsia, to the end of the nineteenth century, accepted, consciously or unconsciously, the British ideology of empire. They built their own arguments on this, and only ventured to criticise some of its outward manifestations. The history and economics and other subjects that were taught in the schools and colleges were written entirely from the British imperial view-point, and laid stress on our numerous failings in the past and present and the virtues and high destiny of the British. We accepted to some extent this distorted version, and even when we resisted it instinctively we were influenced by it.

At first there was no intellectual escape from it for we knew no other facts or arguments, and so we sought relief in religious nationalism, in the thought that at least in the sphere of religion and philosophy we were second to no other people. We comforted ourselves in our misfortune and degradation with the notion that though we did not possess the outward show and glitter of the West we had the real inner article, which was far more valuable and worth having. Vivekananda and others, as well as the interest of Western scholars in our old philosophies, gave us a measure of self-respect again and roused up our dormant pride in our past.

Gradually we began to suspect and examine critically British statements about our past and present conditions, but still we thought and worked within the framework of British ideology. If a thing was bad, it would be called ‘un-British’; if a Britisher in India misbehaved, the fault was his, not that of the system. But the collection of this critical material of British rule in India, in spite of the moderate outlook of the authors, served a revolutionary purpose and gave a political and economic foundation to our nationalism. Dadabhai Naoroji’s *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, and books by Romesh Dutt and William Digby and others, thus played a revolutionary rôle in the development of our nationalist thought. Further researches in ancient Indian history revealed brilliant and highly civilized periods in the remote past, and we read of these with great satisfaction. We also discovered that the
British record in India was very different from what we had been led to believe from their history books.

Our challenge to the British version of history, economics, and administration in India grew, and yet we continued to function within the orbit of their ideology. That was the position of Indian nationalism as a whole at the turn of the century. That is still the position of the Liberal group and other small groups as well as a number of moderate Congressmen, who go forward emotionally from time to time, but intellectually still live in the nineteenth century. Because of that the Liberal is unable to grasp the idea of Indian freedom, for the two are fundamentally irreconcilable. He imagines that step by step he will go up to higher offices and will deal with fatter and more important files. The machinery of government will go on smoothly as before, only he will be at the hub, and somewhere in the background, without intruding themselves too much, will be the British Army to give him protection in case of need. That is his idea of Dominion Status within the Empire. It is a naïve notion impossible of achievement, for the price of British protection is Indian subjection. We cannot have it both ways, even if that was not degrading to the self-respect of a great country. Sir Frederick Whyte (no partisan of Indian nationalism) says in a recent book:¹ “He (the Indian) still believes that England will stand between him and disaster, and as long as he cherishes this delusion he cannot even lay the foundation of his own ideal of self-government.” Evidently he refers to the Liberal or the reactionary and communal types of Indians, largely with whom he must have come into contact when he was President of the Indian Legislative Assembly. This is not the Congress belief, much less is it that of other advanced groups. They agree with Sir Frederick, however, that there can be no freedom till this delusion goes and India is left to face disaster, if that is her fate, by herself. The complete withdrawal of British military control of India will be the beginning of Indian freedom.

It is not surprising that the Indian intelligentsia in the nineteenth century should have succumbed to British ideology; what is surprising is that some people should continue to suffer that delusion even after the stirring events and changes of the twentieth century. In the nineteenth century the British ruling classes were the aristocrats of the world, with a long record of wealth and success and power behind them. This long record and training gave them some of the virtues as well as

¹ Sir Frederick Whyte: *The Future of East and West.*
failings of aristocracy. We in India can comfort ourselves with the thought that we helped substantially during the last century and three-quarters in providing the wherewithal and the training for this superior state. They began to think themselves—as so many races and nations have done—the chosen of God and their Empire as an earthly Kingdom of Heaven. If their special position was acknowledged and their superiority not challenged, they were gracious and obliging, provided that this did them no harm. But opposition to them became opposition to the divine order, and as such was a deadly sin which must be suppressed.

M. André Siegfried has an interesting passage dealing with this aspect of British psychology.¹

"Par l'habitude héréditaire du pouvoir joint à la richesse, il a fini par contracter une manière d'être, aristocratique, curieusement imbue de droit divin ethnique et qui même a continué de s'accentuer quand déjà la suprématie britannique était contestée. Les jeunes générations de la fin du siècle... elles en arrivent à se dire, inconsciemment, que ce succès leur est donné...

"Cette façon d'interpréter les choses est intéressante à souligner, parce qu'elle éclaire, dans ce défilé particulièrement délicat, les réactions de la psychologie britannique. On n'aura pas manqué de le remarquer, c'est dans des causes extérieures que l'Angleterre croit trouver la source de ces difficultés: toujours, pour commencer, c'est la faute de quelqu'un, et si ce quelqu'un veut bien se réformer, l'Angleterre alors pourra retrouver sa prospérité... toujours cet instinct de vouloir changer les autres au lieu de se changer soi-même!"

If this was the general British attitude to the rest of the world, it was most conspicuous in India. There was something fascinating about the British approach to the Indian problem, even though it was singularly irritating. The calm assurance of always being in the right and of having borne a great burden worthily, faith in their racial destiny and their own brand of imperialism, contempt and anger at the unbelievers and sinners who challenged the foundations of the true faith—there was something of the religious temper about this attitude. Like the Inquisitors of old, they were bent on saving us regardless of our desires in the matter. Incidentally they profited by this traffic in virtue, thus demonstrating the truth of the old proverb: "Honesty is the best policy". The progress of India became synonymous with the adaptation of the country.

¹ In La Crise Britannique au XXe Siècle.
to the imperial-scheme and the fashioning of chosen Indians after the British mould. The more we accepted British ideals and objectives the fitter we were for ‘self-government’. Freedom would be ours as soon as we demonstrated and guaranteed that we would use it only in accordance with British wishes.

Indians and Englishmen are, I am afraid, likely to disagree about the record of British rule in India. That is perhaps natural, but it does come as a shock when high British officials, including Secretaries of State for India, draw fanciful pictures of India’s past and present and make statements which have no basis in fact. It is quite extraordinary how ignorant English people, apart from some experts and others, are about India. If facts elude them, how much more is the spirit of India beyond their reach? They seized her body and possessed her, but it was the possession of violence. They did not know her or try to know her. They never looked into her eyes, for theirs were averted and hers downcast through shame and humiliation. After centuries of contact they face each other, strangers still, full of dislike for each other.

And yet India with all her poverty and degradation had enough of nobility and greatness about her, and though she was overburdened with ancient tradition and present misery, and her eyelids were a little weary, she had “a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions”. Behind and within her battered body one could still glimpse a majesty of soul. Through long ages she had travelled and gathered much wisdom on the way, and trafficked with strangers and added them to her own big family, and witnessed days of glory and of decay, and suffered humiliation and terrible sorrow, and seen many a strange sight; but throughout her long journey she had clung to her immemorial culture, drawn strength and vitality from it, and shared it with other lands. Like a pendulum she had swung up and down; she had ventured with the daring of her thought to reach up to the heavens and unravel their mystery, and she had also had bitter experience of the pit of hell. Despite the woeful accumulations of superstition and degrading custom that had clung to her and borne her down, she had never wholly forgotten the inspiration that some of the wisest of her children, at the dawn of history, had given her in the Upanishads. Their keen minds, ever restless and ever striving and exploring, had not sought refuge in blind dogma or grown complacent in the routine observance of dead forms or ritual and creed. They had de-
manded not a personal relief from suffering in the present or a place in a paradise to come, but light and understanding: "Lead me from the unreal to the real, lead me from darkness to light, lead me from death to immortality."¹ In the most famous of the prayers recited daily even to-day by millions, the gayatri mantra, the call is for knowledge, for enlightenment.

Though often broken up politically her spirit always guarded a common heritage, and in her diversity there was ever an amazing unity.² Like all ancient lands she was a curious mixture of the good and bad, but the good was hidden and had to be sought after, while the odour of decay was evident and her hot, pitiless sun gave full publicity to the bad.

There is some similarity between Italy and India. Both are ancient countries with long traditions of culture behind them, though Italy is a newcomer compared to India, and India is a much vaster country. Both are split up politically, and yet the conception of Italia, like that of India, never died, and in all their diversity the unity was predominant. In Italy the unity was largely a Roman unity, for that great city had dominated the country and been the fount and symbol of unity. In India there was no such single centre or dominant city, although Benares might well be called the Eternal City of the East, not only for India but also for Eastern Asia. But, unlike Rome, Benares never dabbled in empire or thought of temporal power. Indian culture was so widespread all over India that no part of the country could be called the heart of that culture. From Cape Comorin to Amaranath and Badrinath in the Himalayas, from Dwarka to Puri, the same ideas coursed, and if there was a clash of ideas in one place, the noise of it soon reached distant parts of the country.

Just as Italy gave the gift of culture and religion to Western Europe, India did so to Eastern Asia, though China was as old and venerable as India. And even when Italy was lying prostrate politically, her life coursed through the veins of Europe.

It was Metternich who called Italy a "geographical expression", and many a would-be Metternich has used that

¹ Brihadaranyak Upanishad, i, 3, 27.
² "The greatest of all the contradictions in India is that over this diversity is spread a greater unity, which is not immediately evident because it failed historically to find expression in any political cohesion to make the country one, but which is so great a reality, and so powerful, that even the Musulman world of India has to confess that it has been deeply affected by coming within its influence." Sir Frederick Whyte: The Future of East and West.
phrase for India, and, strangely enough, there is a similarity even in their geographical positions in the two continents. More interesting is the comparison of England with Austria, for has not England of the twentieth century been compared to Austria of the nineteenth, proud and haughty and imposing still, but with the roots that gave strength shrivelling up and decay eating its way into the mighty fabric.

It is curious how one cannot resist the tendency to give an anthropomorphic form to a country. Such is the force of habit and early associations. India becomes Bharat Mata, Mother India, a beautiful lady, very old but ever youthful in appearance, sad-eyed and forlorn, cruelly treated by aliens and outsiders, and calling upon her children to protect her. Some such picture rouses the emotions of hundreds of thousands and drives them to action and sacrifice. And yet India is in the main the peasant and the worker, not beautiful to look at, for poverty is not beautiful. Does the beautiful lady of our imaginations represent the bare-bodied and bent workers in the fields and factories? Or the small group of those who have from ages past crushed the masses and exploited them, imposed cruel customs on them and made many of them even untouchable? We seek to cover truth by the creatures of our imaginations and endeavour to escape from reality to a world of dreams.

And yet despite these different classes and their mutual conflicts there was a common bond which united them in India, and one is amazed at its persistence and tenacity and enduring vitality. What was this strength due to? Not merely the passive strength and weight of inertia and tradition, great as these always are. There was an active sustaining principle, for it resisted successfully powerful outside influences and absorbed internal forces that rose to combat it. And yet with all its strength it could not preserve political freedom or endeavour to bring about political unity. These latter do not appear to have been considered worth much trouble; their importance was very foolishly ignored, and we have suffered for this neglect. Right through history the old Indian ideal did not glorify political and military triumph, and it looked down upon money and the professional money-making class. Honour and wealth did not go together, and honour was meant to go, at least in theory, to the men who served the community with little in the shape of financial reward.

The old culture managed to live through many a fierce storm and tempest, but though it kept its outer form, it lost its real
content. To-day it is fighting silently and desperately against a new and all-powerful opponent—the *bania* civilisation of the capitalist West. It will succumb to this newcomer, for the West brings science, and science brings food for the hungry millions. But the West also brings an antidote to the evils of this cut-throat civilisation—the principles of socialism, of co-operation, and service to the community for the common good. This is not so unlike the old Brahman ideal of service, but it means the brahmanisation (not in the religious sense, of course) of all classes and groups and the abolition of class distinctions. It may be that when India puts on her new garment, as she must, for the old is torn and tattered, she will have it cut in this fashion, so as to make it conform both to present conditions and her old thought. The ideas she adopts must become racy to her soil.
THE RECORD OF BRITISH RULE

What has been the record of British rule in India? I doubt if it is possible for any Indian or Englishman to take an objective and dispassionate view of this long record. And even if this were possible, it would be still more difficult to weigh and measure the psychological and other immaterial factors. We are told that British rule "has given to India that which throughout the centuries she never possessed, a government whose authority is unquestioned in any part of the sub-continent"; it has established the rule of law and a just and efficient administration; it has brought to India Western conceptions of parliamentary government and personal liberties; and "by transforming British India into a single unitary state it has engendered amongst Indians a sense of political unity" and thus fostered the first beginnings of nationalism. That is the British case, and there is much truth in it, though the rule of law and personal liberties have not been evident for many years.

The Indian survey of this period lays stress on many other factors, and points out the injury, material and spiritual, that foreign rule has brought us. The viewpoint is so different that sometimes the very thing that is commended by the British is condemned by Indians. As Doctor Ananda Coomaraswamy writes: "One of the most remarkable features of British rule in India is that the greatest injuries inflicted upon the Indian people have the outward appearance of blessings."

As a matter of fact the changes that have taken place in India during the last century or more have been world changes common to most countries in the East and West. The growth of industrialism in Western Europe, and later on in the rest of the world, brought nationalism and the strong unitary state in its train everywhere. The British can take credit for having first opened India's window to the West and brought her one aspect of Western industrialism and science. But having done so they throttled the further industrial growth of the country till circumstances forced their hands. India was already the meeting-place of two cultures, the western Asiatic culture of Islam.

1 The quotations are from the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform (1934).
and the eastern, her own product, which spread to the Far East. And now a third and more powerful impulse came from further west, and India became a focal point and a battle-ground for various old and new ideas. There can be no doubt that this third impulse would have triumphed and thus solved many of India's old problems; but the British, who had themselves helped in bringing it, tried to stop its further progress. They prevented our industrial growth, and thus delayed our political growth, and preserved all the out-of-date feudal and other relics they could find in the country. They even froze up our changing and to some extent progressing laws and customs at the stage they found them, and made it difficult for us to get out of their shackles. It was not with their goodwill or assistance that the bourgeoisie grew in India. But after introducing the railway and other products of industrialism they could not stop the wheel of change; they could only check it and slow it down, and this they did to their own manifest advantage.

"On this solid foundation the majestic structure of the Government of India rests, and it can be claimed with certainty that in the period which has elapsed since 1858 when the Crown assumed supremacy over all the territories of the East India Company, the educational and material progress of India has been greater than it was ever within her power to achieve during any other period of her long and chequered history."¹ This statement is not so self-evident as it appears to be, and it has often been stated that literacy actually went down with the coming of British rule. But even if the statement was wholly true, it amounts to a comparison of the modern industrial age with past ages. In almost every country in the world the educational and material progress has been tremendous during the past century because of science and industrialism, and it may be said with assurance of any such country that progress of this kind "has been greater than was ever within her power to achieve during any other period of her long and chequered history"—though perhaps that country's history may not be a long one in comparison with Indian history. Are we needlessly cantankerous and perverse if we suggest that some such technical progress would have come to us anyhow in this industrial age, and even without British rule? And, indeed, if we compare our lot with many other countries, may we not hazard the guess that such progress might have been greater, for we have had to contend against a stifling of that progress by the British

¹ Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (1934).
THE RECORD OF BRITISH RULE

themselves? Railways, telegraphs, telephones, wireless and the like are hardly tests of the goodness or beneficence of British rule. They were welcome and necessary, and because the British happened to be the agents who brought them first, we should be grateful to them. But even these heralds of industrialism came to us primarily for the strengthening of British rule. They were the veins and arteries through which the nation’s blood should have coursed, increasing its trade, carrying its produce, and bringing new life and wealth to its millions. It is true that in the long-run some such result was likely, but they were designed and worked for another purpose—to strengthen the imperial hold and to capture markets for British goods—which they succeeded in achieving. I am all in favour of industrialisation and the latest methods of transport, but sometimes, as I rushed across the Indian plains, the railway, that life-giver, has almost seemed to me like iron bands confining and imprisoning India.

The British conception of ruling India was the police conception of the State. Government’s job was to protect the State and leave the rest to others. Their public finance dealt with military expenditure, police, civil administration, interest on debt. The economic needs of the citizens were not looked after, and were sacrificed to British interests. The cultural and other needs of the people, except for a tiny handful, were entirely neglected. The changing conceptions of public finance which brought free and universal education, improvement of public health, care of poor and feeble-minded, insurance of workers against illness, old age and unemployment, etc., in other countries, were almost entirely beyond the ken of the Government. It could not indulge in these spending activities for its tax system was most regressive, taking a much larger proportion of small incomes than of the larger ones, and its expenditure on its protective and administrative functions was terribly heavy and swallowed up most of the revenue.

The outstanding feature of British rule was their concentration on everything that went to strengthen their political and economic hold on the country. Everything else was incidental. If they built up a powerful central government and an efficient police force, that was an achievement for which they can take credit, but the Indian people can hardly congratulate themselves on it. Unity is a good thing, but unity in subjection is hardly a thing to be proud of. The very strength of a despotic government may become a greater burden for a people; and a police force, no doubt useful in many ways, can be, and has been often
enough, turned against the very people it is supposed to protect. Bertrand Russell, comparing modern civilisation with the old Greek, has recently written: “The only serious superiority of Greek civilisation as compared to ours was the inefficiency of the police, which enabled a larger proportion of decent people to escape.”

Britain’s supremacy in India brought us peace, and India was certainly in need of peace after the troubles and misfortunes that followed the break-up of the Moghal empire. Peace is a precious commodity, necessary for any progress, and it was welcome to us when it came. But even peace can be purchased at too great a price, and we can have the perfect peace of the grave, and the absolute safety of a cage or of prison. Or peace may be the sodden despair of men unable to better themselves. The peace which is imposed by an alien conqueror has hardly the restful and soothing qualities of the real article. War is a terrible thing and to be avoided, but it does encourage some virtues, which, according to William James, the psychologist, are: fidelity, cohesiveness, tenacity, heroism, conscience, education, inventiveness, economy, and physical health and vigour. Because of this, James sought for a moral equivalent of war which, without the horrors of war, would encourage these virtues in a community. Perhaps if he had learnt of non-co-operation and civil disobedience he would have found something after his own heart, a moral and peaceful equivalent of war.

It is a futile task to consider the ‘ifs’ and possibilities of history. I feel sure that it was a good thing for India to come in contact with the scientific and industrial West. Science was the great gift of the West, and India lacked this, and without it she was doomed to decay. The manner of our contacts was unfortunate, and yet, perhaps, only a succession of violent shocks could shake us out of our torpor. From this point of view the Protestant, individualistic, Anglo-Saxon English were suitable, for they were more different from us than most other Westerners, and could give us greater shocks.

They gave us political unity and that was a desirable thing, but whether we had this unity or not. Indian nationalism would have grown and demanded that unity. The Arab world is today split up into a large number of separate states— independent, protected, mandatory and the like—but throughout all of them runs the desire for Arab unity. There can be no doubt that Arab nationalism would largely achieve this unity if Western imperialist powers did not stand in the way. But, as in
India, it is the purpose of these powers to encourage disruptive tendencies and create minority problems which weaken and partly counteract the nationalist urge and give an excuse to the imperialist power to stay on and pose as the impartial arbitrator.

The political unity of India was achieved incidentally as a side-product of the Empire's advance. In later years, when that unity allied itself to nationalism and challenged alien rule, we witnessed the deliberate promotion of disunity and sectarianism, formidable obstacles to our future progress.

What a long time it is since the British came here, a century and three-quarters since they became dominant! They had a free hand, as despotic governments have, and a magnificent opportunity to mould India according to their desire. During these years the world has changed out of all recognition—England, Europe, America, Japan. The insignificant American colonies bordering the Atlantic in the eighteenth century constitute to-day the wealthiest, the most powerful and technically the most advanced nation; Japan, within a brief span, has undergone amazing changes; the vast territories of the U.S.S.R., where till only yesterday the dead hand of the Tsar's government suppressed and stifled all growth, now pulsate with a new life and build a new world before our eyes. There have been big changes in India also, and the country is very different from what it was in the eighteenth century—railways, irrigation works, factories, schools and colleges, huge government offices, etc., etc.

And yet, in spite of these changes, what is India like to-day? A servile state, with its splendid strength caged up, hardly daring to breathe freely, governed by strangers from afar; her people poor beyond compare, short-lived and incapable of resisting disease and epidemic; illiteracy rampant; vast areas devoid of all sanitary or medical provision; unemployment on a prodigious scale, both among the middle classes and the masses. Freedom, democracy, socialism, communism are, we are told, the slogans of unpractical idealists, doctrinaires or knaves; the test must be one of the well-being of the people as a whole. That is indeed a vital test, and by that test India makes a terribly poor show to-day. We read of great schemes of unemployment relief and the alleviation of distress in other countries; what of our scores of millions of unemployed and the distress that is widespread and permanent? We read also of housing schemes elsewhere; where are the houses of hundreds of millions of our people, who live in mud huts or have
no shelter at all? May we not envy the lot of other countries where education, sanitation, medical relief, cultural facilities, and production advance rapidly ahead, while we remain where we were, or plod wearily along at the pace of a snail? Russia in a brief dozen years of wonderful effort has almost ended illiteracy in her vast territories, and has evolved a fine and up-to-date system of education, in touch with the life of the masses. Backward Turkey, under the Ataturk, Mustapha Kemal's leadership, has also made giant strides towards widespread literacy. Fascist Italy, on the very threshold of its career, attacked illiteracy with vigour. Gentile, the Education Minister, called for "a frontal attack on illiteracy. That gangrenous plague, which is rotting our body politic, must be extirpated with a hot iron." Hard words, unseemly for a drawing-room, but they show the conviction and energy behind the thought. We are politer here and use more rounded phrases. We move warily and exhaust our energies in commissions and committees.

Indians have been accused of talking too much and doing little. It is a just charge. But may we not express our wonder at the inexhaustible capacity of the British for committees and commissions, each of which, after long labour, produces a learned report—"a great State document"—which is duly praised and pigeon-holed? And so we get the sensation of moving ahead, of progress, and yet have the advantage of remaining where we were. Honour is satisfied, and vested interests remain untouched and secure. Other countries discuss how to get on; we discuss checks and brakes and safeguards lest we go too fast.

"The Imperial splendour became the measure of the people's poverty," so we are told (by the Joint Parliamentary Committee 1934) of the Moghal times. It is a just observation, but may we not apply the same measure to-day? What of New Delhi to-day with its Viceregal pomp and pageantry, and the Provincial Governors with all their ostentation? And all this with a background of abject and astonishing poverty. The contrast hurts, and it is a little difficult to imagine how sensitive men can put up with it. India to-day is a poor and dismal sight behind all the splendours of the imperial frontage. There is a great deal of patchwork and superficiality, and behind it the unhappy petty bourgeoisie, crushed more and more by modern conditions. Further back come the workers, living miserably in grinding poverty, and then the peasant, that symbol of India, whose lot it is to be "born to Endless Night".
"Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,
The emptiness of ages on his face,
And on his back the burden of the world.

"Through this dread shape the suffering ages look.
Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop,
Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,
Plundered, profaned and disinherited,
Cries protest to the powers that made the world,
A protest that is also prophecy." 1

It would be absurd to cast the blame for all India's ills on the British. That responsibility must be shouldeled by us, and we may not shirk it; it is unseemly to blame others for the inevitable consequences of our own weaknesses. An authoritarian system of government, and especially one that is foreign, must encourage a psychology of subservience and try to limit the mental outlook and horizon of the people. It must crush much that is finest in youth—enterprise, spirit of adventure, originality, 'pep'—and encourage sneakishness, rigid conformity, and a desire to cringe and please the bosses. Such a system does not bring out the real service mentality, the devotion to public service or to ideals; it picks out the least public-spirited persons whose sole objective is to get on in life. We see what a class the British attract to themselves in India! Some of them are intellectually keen and capable of good work. They drift to government service or semi-government service because of lack of opportunity elsewhere, and gradually they tone down and become just parts of the big machine, their minds imprisoned by the dull routine of work. They develop the qualities of a bureaucracy—"a competent knowledge of clerkship and the diplomatic art of keeping office". At the highest they have a passive devotion to the public service. There is, or can be, no flaming enthusiasm. That is not possible under a foreign government.

But apart from these, the majority of petty officials are not an admirable lot, for they have only learnt to cringe to their superiors and bully their inferiors. The fault is not theirs. That is the training the system gives them. And if sycophancy and nepotism flourish, as they often do, is it to be wondered at? They have no ideals in service; the haunting fear of unemployment and consequent starvation pursues them, and their

1 These extracts are from the American poet, E. Markham's poem: The Man with the Hoe.
chief concern is to hold on to their jobs and get other jobs for their relatives and friends. Where the spy and that most odious of creatures, the informer, always hover in the background, it is not easy to develop the more desirable virtues in a people.

Recent developments have made it even more difficult for sensitive, public-spirited men to join government service. The Government does not want them, and they do not wish to associate with it too closely, unless compelled by economic circumstance.

But, as all the world knows, it is the White Man who bears the burden of Empire, not the Brown. We have various imperial services to carry on the imperial tradition, and a sufficiency of safeguards to protect their special privileges, all, we are told, in the interests of India. It is remarkable how the good of India seems to be tied up with the obvious interests and advancement of these services. If any privilege or prize post of the Indian Civil Service is taken away, we are told that inefficiency and corruption will result. If the reserved jobs for the Indian Medical Service are reduced, this becomes a "menace to India's health." And of course if the British element in the army is touched, all manner of terrible perils confront us.

I think there is some truth in this: that if the superior officials suddenly went away and left their departments in charge of their subordinates there would be a fall in efficiency. But that is because the whole system has been built this way, and the subordinates are not by any means the best men, nor have they ever been made to shoulder responsibility. I feel convinced that there is abundant good material in India, and it could be available within a fairly short period if proper steps were taken. But that means a complete change in our governmental and social outlook. It means a new State.

As it is we are told that whatever changes in the constitutional apparatus may come our way, the rigid framework of the great services which guard and shelter us will continue as before. Hierophants of the sacred mysteries of government, they will guard the temple and prevent the vulgar from entering its holy precincts. Gradually, as we make ourselves worthy of the privilege, they will remove the veils one after another, till, in some future age, even the holy of holies stands uncovered to our wondering and reverent eyes.

Of all these imperial services the Indian Civil Service holds first place, and to it must largely go the credit or discredit for the functioning of government in India. We have been fre-
quently told of the many virtues of this service, and its greatness in the imperial scheme has almost become a maxim. Its unchallenged position of authority in India with the almost autocratic power that this gives, as well as the praise and boosting which it receives in ample measure, cannot be wholly good for the mental equilibrium of any individual or group. With all my admiration for the Service, I am afraid I must admit that it is peculiarly susceptible, both individually and as a whole, to that old and yet somewhat modern disease, paranoia.

It would be idle to deny the good qualities of the I.C.S., for we are not allowed to forget them, but so much bunkum has been and is said about the Service that I sometimes feel that a little debunking would be desirable. The American economist, Veblen, has called the privileged classes the "kept classes". I think it would be equally true to call the I.C.S., as well as the other imperial services, the "kept services". They are a very expensive luxury.

Major D. Graham Pole, formerly a Labour member of the British Parliament and one who is greatly interested in Indian affairs, writing in the Modern Review some time ago stated that "no one has ever tried to dispute the fact that the I.C.S. is a most able and efficient service." As similar statements are frequently made in England and believed, it is worth while examining this. It is always unsafe to make such positive and definite statements which can easily be disproved, and Major Graham Pole is entirely wrong in imagining that the fact has not been disputed. It has been frequently challenged and disputed, and long ago even Mr. G. K. Gokhale said many hard things about the I.C.S. The average Indian—Congressman or non-Congressman—would certainly join issue with Major Graham Pole. And yet it is possible that both may be partly right and may be thinking of different qualifications. Ability and efficiency for what? If this ability and efficiency are to be measured from the point of view of strengthening the British Empire in India and helping it to exploit the country, the I.C.S. may certainly claim to have done well. If, however, the test is the well-being of the Indian masses, they have signally failed, and their failure becomes even more noticeable when one sees the enormous distance that separates them in regard to income and standards of living from the masses they are meant to serve, and from whom ultimately their varied emoluments come.

It is perfectly true that the service has, as a whole, kept up
a certain standard, though that standard is necessarily one of mediocrity, and has occasionally thrown up exceptional men. More could hardly be expected of any such service. It embodied essentially the British Public School spirit, with all its good and bad points (though many of the members of the I.C.S. now are not public school men). Though it kept up a good standard, it disapproved strongly of nonconformity with the type, and special abilities of individual members lost themselves in the dull routine of the day's work, and to some extent in the fear of appearing different from the others. There were many earnest members, many with a conception of service, but it was service of the Empire, and India came only as a bad second. Trained and circumstances as they were, they could only act in that way. Because they were few in numbers, surrounded by an alien and often unfriendly people, they held together and kept up a certain standard. The prestige both of race and office demanded this. And because they had largely autocratic powers, they resented all criticism, considered it one of the major sins, became more and more intolerant and pedagogic, and developed many of the failings of irresponsible rulers. They were self-satisfied and self-sufficient, narrow and fixed minds, static in a changing world, and wholly unsuited to a progressive environment. When abler and more adaptable minds than theirs tackled the Indian problem they resented this, called them offensive names, suppressed them and threw every possible obstacle in their way. And when post-war changes brought dynamic conditions, they were wholly at sea and unable to adapt themselves to them. Their limited hide-bound education had not fitted them for such emergencies and novel situations. They had been spoilt by a long spell of irresponsibility. As a group they had practically absolute power, subject only in theory to a control by the British Parliament. "Power corrupts," Lord Acton has told us, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

They were, on the whole, reliable officers in their limited way, doing their day-to-day work fairly competently, without brilliance. But their very training was such that a wholly unexpected situation found them wanting, although their self-confidence, their methodical nature, and their esprit de corps helped them to tide over immediate difficulties. The famous Mesopotamia muddle exposed the British Indian Government for its inefficiency and 'woodenness', but many a similar muddle does not see the light of day. Even their reaction to Civil Disobedience was crude. To shoot and club may dispose of
the opponents for a while, but it does not solve any problem, and it undermines that very feeling of superiority which it is meant to protect. It was not surprising that they had recourse to violence to meet a growing and aggressive nationalist movement. That was inevitable, for empires rest on that and they had been taught no other way of meeting opposition. But the fact that excessive and unnecessary violence was used showed that they had lost all grip of the situation, and no longer possessed the self-control and restraint which they seemed to have in normal times. Nerves frequently gave way and even in their public utterances there was a trace of hysteria. The calm confidence of other days was gone. A crisis has a pitiless way of showing us all up and exposing our innermost weaknesses. Civil Disobedience was such a crisis and test, and very few on either side of the barricade—Congress or Government—survived fully that test. In a crisis the number of men and women of really first-class calibre is found to be small, says Mr. Lloyd George, and "the rest do not count in a crisis. The hummocks that look like eminences in fine weather are quickly submerged in a great flood when the highest peaks alone are visible above the surface of the waters."

The I.C.S. were intellectually and emotionally not prepared for what happened. The original training of many of their members was classical, which gave them a certain culture and a certain charm. It was an old-world attitude, suitable for the Victorian Age, but utterly out of place under modern conditions. They lived in a narrow, circumscribed world of their own—Anglo-Indian—which was neither England nor India. They had no appreciation of the forces at work in contemporary society. In spite of their amusing assumption of being the trustees and guardians of the Indian masses, they knew little about them and even less about the new aggressive bourgeoisie. They judged Indians from the sycophants and office-seekers who surrounded them and dismissed others as agitators and knaves. Their knowledge of post-war changes all over the world, and especially in the economic sphere, was of the slightest, and they were too much in the ruts to adjust themselves to changing conditions. They did not realise that the order they represented was out of date under modern conditions, and that they were approaching as a group more and more the type which T. S. Elliot describes in The Hollow Men.

And yet that order will continue so long as British imperialism continues, and this is powerful enough still and has able and resourceful leaders. The British Government in India
is like a tooth that is decaying, but is still strongly imbedded. It is painful, but it cannot be easily pulled out. The pain is likely to continue, and even grow worse, till the tooth is taken out or falls out itself.

The Public School type has had its day even in England, and does not occupy the same place as it did, although it is still prominent in public affairs. In India it is still more out of place, and it can never fit in or co-operate with an aggressive nationalism, much less with those working for social change.

There are of course many excellent men, both English and Indian, in the I.C.S. but, so long as the present system prevails their excellence will be devoted to objects which are not beneficial to the Indian people. Some Indian members of the Service are so overcome by this Public School spirit that they become plus royaliste que le roi. I remember meeting a youthful Indian member of the I.C.S. who had a very high opinion of himself which unfortunately I could not share. He pointed out to me the many virtues of his Service, and ended up by the unanswerable argument in favour of the British Empire—was it not better than the Roman Empire and the Empires of Chengiz Khan and Timur?

The underlying assumption of the I.C.S. is that they discharge their duties most efficiently, and therefore they can lay every stress on their claims, and the claims are many and varied. If India is poor, that is the fault of her social customs, her banias and money-lenders, and above all, her enormous population. The greatest bania of all, the British Government in India, is conveniently ignored. And what they propose to do about this population I do not know, for in spite of a great deal of help received from famines, epidemics, and a high death-rate generally, the population is still overwhelming. Birth-control is proposed and I, for one, am entirely in favour of the spread of the knowledge and methods of birth-control. But the use of these methods itself requires a much higher standard of living for the masses, some measure of general education, and innumerable clinics all over the country. Under present conditions birth-control methods are completely out of reach for the masses. The middle classes can profit by them as, I believe, they are doing to a growing extent.

But this argument of over-population is deserving of further notice. The problem to-day all over the world is not one of lack of food or lack of other essentials, but actually lack of mouths to feed, or, to put it differently, lack of capacity to buy food, etc., for those who are in need. Even in India, considered
apart, there is no lack of food, and though the population has
gone up, the food supply has increased and can increase more
proportionately than the population. Then again the much
advertised increase of population in India has been (except in
the last decade) at a much lower rate than in most Western
countries. It is true that in future the difference will be greater,
for various forces are tending to lessen or even stop population
increase in Western countries. But limiting factors are likely to
check population increase in India also soon.

Whenever India becomes free, and in a position to build her
new life as she wants to, she will necessarily require the best
of her sons and daughters for this purpose. Good human
material is always rare, and in India it is rarer still because of
our lack of opportunities under British rule. We shall want
the help of many foreign experts in many departments of
public activity, particularly in those which require special
technical and scientific knowledge. Among those who have
served in the I.C.S. or other imperial services there will be
many, Indians or foreigners, who will be necessary and wel-
come to the new order. But of one thing I am quite sure, that
no new order can be built up in India so long as the spirit of
the I.C.S. pervades our administration and our public services.
That spirit of authoritarianism is the ally of imperialism, and
it cannot co-exist with freedom. It will either succeed in
crushing freedom or will be swept away itself. Only with one
type of state it is likely to fit in, and that is the fascist type.
Therefore it seems to me quite essential that the I.C.S. and
similar services must disappear completely, as such, before we
can start real work on a new order. Individual members of
these services, if they are willing and competent for the new
job, will be welcome, but only on new conditions. It is quite
inconceivable that they will get the absurdly high salaries and
allowances that are paid to them to-day. The new India must
be served by earnest, efficient workers who have an ardent faith
in the cause they serve and are bent on achievement, and who
work for the joy and glory of it, and not for the attraction of
high salaries. The money motive must be reduced to a mini-
mum. The need for foreign helpers will be considerable, but
I imagine that the least wanted will be civil administrators who
have no technical knowledge. There will be no lack of such
people in India.

I have previously stated how the Indian Liberals, and other
groups like them, have accepted British ideology with reference
to the government of India. This is especially noticeable in
regard to the Services, for their cry is for ‘indianisation’ and not for radical change of the spirit and nature of the Services and the State structure. This is a vital matter on which it is impossible to give in, for Indian freedom is bound up not only with the withdrawal of British Forces and Services, but also with the elimination of the authoritarian spirit that inspired them, and a levelling down of their salaries and privileges. There is a great deal of talk of safeguards in these days of constitution-making. If these safeguards are to be in the interests of India, they should lay down, among other things, that the I.C.S. and similar services should cease to exist, in their present form and with the powers and privileges they possess, and should have nothing to do with the new constitution.

Even more mysterious and formidable are the so-called Defence Services. We may not criticise them, we may not say anything about them, for what do we know about such matters? We must only pay and pay heavily without murmuring. A short while ago, in September 1934, Sir Philip Chetwode, the Commander-in-Chief in India, speaking in the Council of State at Simla, told Indian politicians, in pungent military language, to mind their own business and not interfere with his. Referring to the mover of an amendment to some proposition, he said: "Do he and his friends think that a war-worn and war-wise race like the British, who won their Empire at the point of the sword and have kept it by the sword ever since, are to be talked out of war wisdom which that experience brings to a nation by armchair critics . . . ?" He made many other interesting remarks, and we were informed, lest we might think that he had spoken in the heat of the moment, that he had carefully written out his speech and spoke from a manuscript.

It is, of course, an impertinence for a layman to argue about military matters with a Commander-in-Chief, and yet perhaps even an armchair critic might be permitted to make a few observations. It is conceivable that the interests of those who hold the Empire by the sword and those over whose heads this shining weapon ever hangs, might differ. It is possible that an Indian army might be made to serve Indian interests or to serve imperial interests, and the two might differ or even conflict with each other. A politician and an armchair critic might also wonder if the claims of eminent generals for freedom from interference are valid after the experiences of the World War. They had a free hand then to a large extent, and from all accounts they made a terrible mess of almost everything in every army—British, French, German, Austrian, Italian,
Russian. Captain Liddell Hart, the distinguished British military historian and strategist, writes in his *History of the World War* that at one stage in the War while British soldiers fought the enemy, British generals fought one another. The national peril did not bring unity of thought or effort. The War, he continues, "has shattered our faith in idols, our hero-worshipping belief that great men are different clay from common men. Leaders are still necessary, perhaps more necessary, but our awakened realisation of their common humanity is a safeguard against either expecting from them, or trusting in them, too much."

That arch-politician, Mr. D. Lloyd George, has painted in his *War Memoirs* a terrible picture of the failings and blunders of the generals and admirals in the World War, blunders which cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of men. England and her allies won the War, but it was a "blood-stained stagger to victory"; the reckless and unintelligent handling of men and situations by the high officers brought England almost to the rim of catastrophe, and she and her allies were saved largely by the incredible folly of their foes. So writes the great War Premier of Britain, and he explains how he had to undertake surgical operations in order to get ideas into Lord Jellicoe's head, especially in regard to the proposal for having a convoy system. Of the French Marshal Joffre, he seems to think that his chief virtue was the possession of a resolute countenance which inspired a sense of strength. "That is what harassed people instinctively seek in trouble. They make the mistake of thinking that the seat of intelligence is in the chin."

But Mr. Lloyd George's main indictment is against the British High Command itself, the Commander-in-Chief, Field-Marshall Haig. He demonstrates how Lord Haig's inordinate vanity and refusal to listen to politicians and others, made him conceal important facts from the British Cabinet itself, and led the British Army in France to one of its greatest disasters. And even when failure stared him in the face; obstinate to the last, he continued his ill-advised offensive for several months in that awful mud of Passchendaele and Cambrai, till seventeen thousand officers alone lay dead and dying, and four hundred thousand gallant British soldiers were 'casualties'. It is well that the 'Unknown Soldier' is honoured to-day after his death; his life was cheap, and he had little consideration when he was alive.

Politicians, like all other people, err frequently, but democratic politicians have to be sensitive and responsive to men
and events, and they usually realise their mistakes and try to repair them. The soldier is bred in a different atmosphere, where authority reigns and criticism is not tolerated. So he resents the advice of others and when he errs, he errs thoroughly and persists in error. For him the chin is more important than the mind or brain. In India we have the advantage of having produced a mixed type, for the civil administration itself has grown up and lives in a semi-military atmosphere of authority and self-sufficiency, and possesses therefore to a great extent the soldier’s chin and other virtues.

We are told that the process of ‘indianisation’ of the army is being pushed on, and in another thirty years or more an Indian general might even appear on the Indian stage. It is possible that in not much more than a hundred years the process of indianisation might be considerably advanced. One is apt to wonder how, in a moment of crisis, England built up a mighty army of millions within a year or two. If it had possessed our mentors, perhaps it would have proceeded more cautiously and warily. It is possible of course that the War would have been over long before this soundly-trained army was ready for it. One thinks also of the Russian Soviet armies growing out of almost nothing and facing and triumphing over a host of enemies, and to-day constituting one of the most efficient fighting machines in the world. They did not apparently possess “war-worn and war-wise” generals to advise them.

We have now a military academy at Dehra Dun where gentlemen cadets are trained to become officers. They are very smart on parade, we are told, and they will no doubt make admirable officers. But I wonder sometimes what purpose this training serves, unless it is accompanied by technical training. Infantry and cavalry are about as much use to-day as the Roman phalanx, and the rifle is little better than a bow and arrow in an age of air warfare, gas bombs, tanks, and powerful artillery. No doubt their trainers and mentors realise this.

What has been the record of British rule in India? Who are we to complain of its deficiencies when they were but the consequences of our own failings? If we lose touch with the river of change and enter a backwater, become self-centred and self-satisfied, and, ostrich-like, ignore what happens elsewhere, we do so at our peril. The British came to us on the crest of a wave of new impulse in the world, and represented mighty historic forces which they themselves hardly realised. Are we to complain of the cyclone that uproots us and hurls us about,
or the cold wind that makes us shiver? Let us have done with the past and its bickering and face the future. To the British we must be grateful for one splendid gift of which they were the bearers, the gift of science and its rich offspring. It is difficult, however, to forget or view with equanimity the efforts of the British Government in India to encourage the disruptive, obscurantist, reactionary, sectarian, and opportunist elements in the country. Perhaps that too is a needed test and challenge for us, and before India is reborn it will have to go through again and again the fire that cleanses and tempers and burns up the weak, the impure and the corrupt.
A CIVIL MARRIAGE AND A QUESTION OF SCRIPT

After spending about a week in Poona and Bombay in the middle of September 1933, I returned to Lucknow. My mother was still in hospital there, and was improving very slowly. Kamala was also in Lucknow, trying to attend on her, although she was not very well herself. My sisters used to come over from Allahabad for the week-ends. I remained in Lucknow for two or three weeks, and I had more leisure there than I was likely to have in Allahabad, my chief occupation being visits to the hospital twice daily. I utilised my spare hours in writing some articles for the Press, and these were widely published all over the country. A series of articles entitled “Whither India?”, in which I had surveyed world affairs in relation to the Indian situation, attracted considerable attention. I learnt later that these articles were even reproduced in Persian translations in Teheran and Kabul. There was nothing novel or original in these articles for any one in touch with recent developments and modern Western thought. But in India our people had been too engrossed in their domestic troubles to pay much attention to what was happening elsewhere. The reception given to my articles, as well as many other indications, showed that they were developing a wider outlook.

My mother was getting very tired of being in hospital, and we decided to take her back to Allahabad. One of the reasons for this was my sister Krishna’s engagement, which had just been announced. We wanted to have the marriage as soon as possible, before I was suddenly removed to prison again. I had no notion how long I would be allowed to remain out, as Civil Disobedience was still the official programme of the Congress, and the Congress itself and scores of other organisations were illegal.

We fixed the marriage for the third week of October in Allahabad. It was to be a civil ceremony. I was glad of this, though as a matter of fact we had no choice in the matter. The marriage was between two different castes, a Brahman and a non-Brahman, and under present British Indian Law no religious ceremony had validity for such a marriage. Fortunately a recently passed Civil Marriage Act came to our rescue.
There were two such Acts, the second one, under which my sister's marriage took place, being confined to Hindus and those belonging to allied faiths—Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs. But if either party does not belong to one of these faiths, by birth or conversion, then this second Act does not apply and the first Civil Marriage Act has to be resorted to. This first Act requires from both the parties a denunciation of all the leading religions, or at any rate a statement that they do not belong to them. This wholly unnecessary denunciation is a great nuisance. Many people, even though they are not religiously inclined, object to this statement and thus cannot take advantage of the Act. The orthodox of various faiths oppose all changes which would facilitate inter-marriages. The result is that they drive people either to make that statement of denunciation or to a patently superficial conversion to get within the law. Personally I should like to encourage inter-marriages, but whether they are encouraged or not, it is very necessary to have a permissive general civil marriage Act, applicable to persons of all religions, permitting them to marry without any denunciation or change of faith.

There was no fuss about my sister's wedding; it was a very simple affair. Ordinarily I dislike the fuss attendant on Indian marriages. In view of my mother's illness and, even more so, the fact that civil disobedience was still going on and many of our colleagues were in prison, anything in the nature of show was singularly out of place. Only a few relatives and local friends were invited. Many old friends of my father's were hurt because they felt, quite wrongly, that I had purposely ignored them.

The little invitation we issued for the wedding was written in Hindustani in the Latin script. This was an innovation, as such invitations are always either in the nāgri or the Persian script, and the idea of writing Hindustani in the Latin script is almost unknown, except in army and missionary circles. I used the Latin script as an experiment, and I wanted to see the reactions of various people. It had a mixed reception, mostly unfavourable. The recipients were few: if a larger circle had been approached the reaction would have been still more unfavourable. Gandhiji did not approve of what I had done.

I did not use the Latin script because I had become a convert to it, although it had long attracted me. Its success in Turkey and Central Asia had impressed me, and the obvious arguments in its favour were weighty. But even so I was not convinced, and even if I had been convinced, I knew well that it did not
stand the faintest chance of being adopted in present-day India. There would be the most violent opposition to it from all groups, nationalist, religious, Hindu, Muslim, old and new. And I feel that the opposition would not be merely based on emotion. A change of script is a very vital change for any language with a rich past, for a script is a most intimate part of its literature. Change the script and different word-pictures arise, different sounds, different ideas. An almost insurmountable barrier is put up between the old literature and the new, and the former becomes almost a foreign language that is dead. Where there is no literature worth preserving this risk should be taken. In India I can hardly conceive of the change, for our literature is not only rich and valuable but is bound up with our history and our thought, and is intimately connected with the lives of our masses. It would be cruel vivisection to force such a change, and it would retard our progress in popular education.

But this question is not even an academic one in India to-day. The next step in script reform for us seems to me the adoption of a common script for the daughter languages of Sanskrit—Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati. As it is, their scripts have a common origin and do not differ greatly, and it should not be difficult to strike a common mean. This would bring these four great sister languages much nearer to each other.

One of the legends about India which our English rulers have persistently circulated all over the world is that India has several hundred languages—I forget the exact number. For proof there is the census. Of these several hundred, it is an extraordinary fact that very few Englishmen know even one moderately well, in spite of a life-long residence in this country. They class the lot of these together and call them the 'Vernacular', the slave language (from the Latin *verna*, a home-born slave), and many of our people have, unknowingly, accepted this nomenclature. It is astonishing how English people spend a life-time in India without taking the trouble to learn the language well. They have evolved, with the help of their *khansamahs* and *ayahs*, an extraordinary jargon, a kind of pidgin-Hindustani, which they imagine is the real article. Just as they take their facts about Indian life from their subordinates and sycophants, they take their ideas about Hindustani from their domestic servants, who make a point of speaking their pidgin language to the sahib-log for fear that they would not understand anything else. They seem to be wholly ignorant of the fact that Hindustani, as well as the other Indian languages, have high literary merit and extensive literatures.
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If the census tells us that India has two or three hundred languages, it also tells us, I believe, that Germany has about fifty or sixty languages. I do not remember any one pointing out this fact in proof of the disunity or disparity of Germany. As a matter of fact, a census mentions all manner of petty languages, sometimes spoken by a few thousand persons only; and often dialects are classed, for scientific purposes, as different languages. India seems to me to have surprisingly few languages, considering its area. Compared to the same area in Europe, it is far more closely allied in regard to language, but because of widespread illiteracy, common standards have not developed and dialects have formed. The principal languages of India (excluding Burma) are Hindustani (of the two varieties, Hindi and Urdu), Bengali, Gujrati, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam and Canarese. If Assamese, Oriya, Sindhi, Pashtu and Punjabi are added, the whole country is covered, except for some hill and forest tribes. Of these, the Indo-Aryan languages, which cover the whole north, centre and west of India, are closely allied; and the southern Dravidian languages, though different, have been greatly influenced by Sanskrit and are full of Sanskrit words.

The eight principal languages mentioned above have all old and valuable literatures, and each of them is spoken to-day over a vast area, which is definite and clearly marked. Thus from the point of view of numbers speaking a language, these languages are among the major languages of the world. Fifty million people speak Bengali. As for Hindustani, with its variations, it is spoken, I imagine (I have no figures here), by about a hundred and forty millions in India, and it is partly understood by a vast number of others all over the country. Such a language has obviously enormous possibilities. It rests on the solid foundation of Sanskrit and it is closely allied to Persian. Thus it can draw from two rich sources, and of course, in recent years, it has drawn from English. The Dravidian country in the south is the only part where Hindustani comes as almost a foreign tongue, but the people there are making a great effort to learn it. Two years ago (in 1932) I saw some figures of a private voluntary society which had undertaken the teaching of Hindi in the south. During the previous fourteen years, since its formation, it was stated that 550,000 persons had learnt Hindi through its efforts in the Madras Presidency alone. For a volun-

1 The following figures have been given by the advocates of Hindustani. I do not know if they are based on the last census of 1931
tary effort, which is supported in no way by the State, this is remarkable, and most of the persons who learn Hindi themselves become missionaries in the cause.

I have no doubt whatever that Hindustani is going to be the common language of India. Indeed it is largely so to-day for ordinary purposes. Its progress has been hampered by foolish controversies about the script, nāgri or Persian, and by the misdirected efforts of the two factions to use language which is either too Sanskritised or too Persianised. There is no way out of the script difficulty, for it arouses great heat and passion, except to adopt both officially, and allow people to use either. But an effort must be made to discourage the extreme tendencies and develop a middle literary language, on the lines of the spoken language in common use. With mass education this will inevitably take place. At present the small middle-class groups, that are supposed to be the arbiters of literary taste and style, are terribly narrow-minded and conservative, each in its own way. They cling to antique forms that have no life in them and have few contacts with their own masses or with world literature.

The development and spread of Hindustani must not and will not conflict with the continued use and enrichment of the other great languages of India—Bengali, Gujrati, Marathi, Oriya and the Dravidian languages of the south. Some of these languages are already more wide-awake and intellectually alert than Hindustani, and they must remain the official languages for educational and other purposes in their respective areas.

or the previous one of 1921. I imagine they refer to the latter, and up-to-date figures would show a considerable increase under each head.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of speaking</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindustani (including western Hindi, Punjabi and Rajasthani)</td>
<td>139.3 millions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>49.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telegu</td>
<td>23.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canarese</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oriya</td>
<td>10.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gujrati</td>
<td>9.6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>279.8</strong></td>
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Some languages like Pushtu, Assamese and, of course, Burmese, which is entirely different, linguistically and territorially, have been omitted from this list.
Only through them can education and culture spread rapidly among the masses.

Some people imagine that English is likely to become the *lingua franca* of India. That seems to me a fantastic conception, except in respect of a handful of upper-class intelligentsia. It has no relation to the problem of mass education and culture. It may be, as it is partly to-day, that English will become increasingly a language used for technical, scientific and business communications, and especially for international contacts. It is essential for many of us to know foreign languages in order to keep in touch with world thought and activities, and I should like our universities to encourage the learning of other languages besides English—French, German, Russian, Spanish, Italian. This does not mean that English should be neglected, but if we are to have a balanced view of the world we must not confine ourselves to English spectacles. We have already become sufficiently lop-sided in our mental outlook because of this concentration on one aspect and ideology, and even the most rabid of our nationalists hardly realise how much they are cribbed and confined by the British outlook in relation to India.

But however much we may encourage the other foreign languages, English is bound to remain our chief link with the outside world. That is as it should be. For generations past we have been trying to learn English, and we have achieved a fair measure of success in the endeavour. It would be folly to wipe the slate clean now and not to take full advantage of this long training. English also is to-day undoubtedly the most widespread and important world language, and it is gaining fast on the other languages. It is likely to become more and more the medium of international intercourse and radio broadcasting, unless 'American' takes its place. Therefore we must continue to spread the knowledge of English. It is desirable to learn it as well as possible, but it does not seem to me worth while for us to spend too much time and energy in appreciating the finer points of the language, as many of us do now. Individuals may do that, but to set it as an ideal for large numbers is to put a needless burden on them and prevent them from progressing in other directions.

I have been greatly attracted lately by 'Basic English', and it seems to me that this extreme simplification of English has a great future before it. It would be desirable for us to undertake the teaching of Basic English on an extensive scale rather than Standard English, which can be left to specialists and particular students.
I would personally like to encourage Hindustani to adapt and assimilate many words from English and other foreign languages. This is necessary, as we lack modern terms, and it is better to have well-known words rather than to evolve new and difficult words from the Sanskrit or Persian or Arabic. Purists object to the use of foreign words, but I think they make a great mistake, for the way to enrich our language is to make it flexible and capable of assimilating words and ideas from other languages.

I happened to go, soon after my sister's wedding, to Benares to visit an old friend and colleague, Shiva Prasad Gupta, who had been lying ill for over a year. He was in Lucknow Gaol when he had a sudden attack of paralysis, and he had been recovering from it very slowly ever since. During my Benares visit, a small Hindi literary society gave me an address and I had a pleasant informal talk with its members. I told them that I hesitated to speak to experts on subjects I knew little about, but still I made a few suggestions. I criticised the intricate and ornate language that was customary in Hindi writing, full of difficult Sanskrit words, artificial, and clinging to ancient forms. I ventured to suggest that this courtly style, addressed to a select audience, should be given up, and Hindi writers should deliberately write for the masses and in language understood by them. Mass contacts would give new life and sincerity to the language, and the writers themselves would catch some of the emotional energy of the mass and do far better work. Further, I suggested that if Hindi authors paid more attention to Western thought and literature, they would derive great benefit from it; it would be desirable to have translations from the classics of the European languages as well as from books dealing with modern ideas. I also mentioned that probably modern Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi were a little more advanced in these matters than modern Hindi, and certainly more creative work had been done in Bengali in recent years than in Hindi.

We had a friendly talk about these matters and then I came away. I had no idea that my remarks would be sent to the Press, but some one present sent a report to the Hindi papers.

And then there was a tremendous outcry in the Hindi Press against me and at my presumption in criticising Hindi and comparing it, to its disadvantage, with Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi. I was called an ignoramus—which indeed I was in that particular subject—and many harder words were used to squash and suppress me. I had no time to follow the contro-
versy and it went on, I am told, for months, till I was again in prison.

This incident was a revelation to me. It revealed the extraordinary sensitiveness of Hindi literary men and journalists, and their refusal to face a little honest criticism from one who wished them well. The inferiority complex was evidently at work. Self-criticism there was none at all, and critical standards were poor. It was not unusual for an author and his critic to fall out and accuse each other of personal motives. The whole outlook was narrow, bourgeois and parochial, and both the journalists and the authors seemed to write for each other and for a small circle, ignoring the vast public and its interests. It seemed to me an extraordinary pity and an unhappy waste of energy when the field was so vast and inviting.

Hindi literature has a fine past, but it cannot live for ever on its past. I feel sure that it has a great future, and that Hindi journalism will be a tremendous power in this country. But neither will progress much till it shakes itself free of narrow conventions and boldly addresses the masses.
COMMUNALISM AND REACTION

About the time of my sister's wedding came news of Vithalbhai J. Patel's death in Europe. He had long been ailing, and it was because of his ill-health that he had been released from prison in India. His passing away was a painful event, and the thought of our veteran leaders leaving us in this way, one after another, in the middle of our struggle, was an extraordinarily depressing one. Many tributes were paid to Vithalbhai, and most of these laid stress on his ability as a parliamentarian and his success as President of the Assembly. This was perfectly true, and yet this repetition irritated me. Was there any lack of good parliamentarians in India or of people who could fill the Speaker's chair with ability? That was the one job for which our lawyer's training had fitted us. Vithalbhai had been something much more than that—he had been a great and indomitable fighter for India's freedom.

During my visit to Benares in November I was invited to address the students of the Hindu University. I gladly accepted this invitation and addressed a huge gathering presided over by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Vice-Chancellor. In the course of my speech I had much to say about communalism, and I denounced it in forcible language, and especially condemned the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha. This was not exactly a premeditated attack, but for a long time past my mind had been full of resentment at the increasingly reactionary efforts of the communalists of all groups, and as I warmed up to my subject, some of this resentment came out. Deliberately I laid stress on the reactionary character of the Hindu communalists, for there was no point in my criticising Muslims before a Hindu audience. At the moment, it did not strike me that it was not in the best of taste to criticise the Hindu Mahasabha at a meeting presided over by Malaviyaji, who had long been one of its pillars. I did not think of this, as he had not had much to do with it lately, and it almost seemed that the new aggressive leaders of the Mahasabha had pushed him out. So long as he had been one of the leading spirits, the Mahasabha, in spite of its communalism, had not been politically reactionary. But latterly this new development has become very patent, and I felt sure that Malaviyaji could not have anything
to do with it and must have disapproved of it. Still, it was not quite right for me, as I realised later, to have taken an undue advantage of his invitation by making remarks which put him in an awkward position. I was sorry for this.

I was also sorry for a foolish error into which I had fallen. Some one sent us by post a copy of a resolution which, it stated, had recently been passed in Ajmer by a Hindu young men’s organisation. This resolution was most objectionable and I referred to it in my Benares speech. As a matter of fact no such resolution had been passed by any organisation, and we had been the victims of a hoax.

My Benares speech, briefly reported, created an uproar. Used as I was to such outcries, I was quite taken aback by the vehemence of the attack of the Hindu Mahasabha leaders. These attacks were largely personal and seldom touched the point in issue. They overreached themselves, and soon I was glad of them, for they gave me an opportunity for having my say on the subject. I had been bursting with it for months past, even when I was in prison, but did not know how to tackle it. It was a hornets’ nest, and though I was used to hornets, it was no pleasure to enter into controversies which degenerated into abuse. But now I had no choice, and I wrote what I considered a reasoned article on Hindu and Muslim communalism, showing how in neither case was it even bona fide communalism, but was political and social reaction hiding behind the communal mask. I happened to possess odd newspaper cuttings, which I had collected in prison, of various speeches and statements of communal leaders. Indeed I had so much material that I was hard put to it how to compress it in a newspaper article.

This article of mine was given great publicity in the Indian Press. But strange to say there was no response to it from either side—Hindu or Muslim communalists—although there was a great deal about both in my article. The Hindu Mahasabha leaders, who had denounced me in the most vigorous and varied language, now remained perfectly silent. From the Muslim side Sir Mohamad Iqbal endeavoured to correct some of my facts regarding the second Round Table Conference, but otherwise he did not say anything about my argument. It was in my reply to him that I suggested that a Constituent Assembly should decide both the political and communal issues. Later I wrote one or two additional articles on communalism. I was very much heartened, not only by the reception of all these articles, but by the visible effect they were producing on people who tried to think. I did not imagine, of course, that I could
conjure away the passions that underlay the communal spirit. My object was to point out that the communal leaders were allied to the most reactionary elements in India and England, and were in reality opposed to political, and even more so to social advance. All their demands had no relation whatever to the masses. They were meant only to bring some advancement to the small groups at the top. It was my intention to carry on with this reasoned attack when prison claimed me again. The oft-repeated appeal for Hindu-Muslim unity, useful as it no doubt is, seemed to me singularly inane, unless some effort was made to understand the causes of the disunity. Some people, however, seem to imagine that by a frequent repetition of the magic formula, unity will ultimately emerge.

It is interesting to trace British policy since the Rising of 1857 in its relation to the communal question. Fundamentally and inevitably it has been one of preventing the Hindu and Muslim from acting together, and of playing off one community against another. After 1857 the heavy hand of the British fell more on the Muslims than on the Hindus. They considered the Muslims more aggressive and militant, possessing memories of recent rule in India, and therefore more dangerous. The Muslims had also kept away from the new education and had few jobs under the Government. All this made them suspect. The Hindus had taken far more kindly to the English language and clerly jobs, and seemed to be more docile.

The new nationalism then grew up from above—the upper-class English-speaking intelligentsia—and this was naturally confined to the Hindus, for the Muslims were educationally very backward. This nationalism spoke in the gentlest and most abject of tones, and yet it was not to the liking of the Government, and they decided to encourage the Muslims more and keep them away from the new nationalist platform. Lack of English education was in itself a sufficient bar then, so far as the Muslims were concerned, but this was bound to go gradually. With foresight the British provided for the future, and in this task they were helped by an outstanding personality—Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Sir Syed was unhappy about the backward condition of his community, especially in education, and he was distressed at the lack of favour and influence it had in the eyes of the British Government. Like many of his contemporaries, he was a great admirer of the British, and a visit to Europe seems to have had a most powerful effect on him. Europe, or rather Western Europe, of the second half of the nineteenth century was at
the height of its civilisation, the unchallenged mistress of the world, with all the qualities that had made it great most in
evidence. The upper classes were secure in their inheritance and
adding to it, with little fear of a successful challenge. It was the
age of a growing liberalism and a firm belief in a great destiny.
It is not surprising that the Indians who went there were fas-
cinated by this imposing spectacle. More Hindus went there to
begin with and they returned admirers of Europe and England.
Gradually they got used to the shine and glamour, and the first
surprise wore off. But in Sir Syed’s case that first surprise and
fascination is very much in evidence. Visiting England in 1869,
he wrote letters home giving his impressions. In one of these
he stated: “The result of all this is that although I do not
absolve the English in India of discourtesy, and of looking upon
the natives of that country as animals and beneath contempt, I
think they do so from not understanding us; and I am afraid I
must confess that they are not far wrong in their opinion of us.
Without flattering the English, I can truly say that the natives
of India, high and low, merchants and petty shopkeepers,
educated and illiterate, when contrasted with the English in
education, manners and uprightness, are as like them as a dirty
animal is to an able and handsome man. The English have
reason for believing us in India to be imbecile brutes. . . . What
I have seen, and seen daily, is utterly beyond the imagination
of a native of India. . . . All good things, spiritual and worldly,
which should be found in man, have been bestowed by the
Almighty on Europe, and especially on England.”

Greater praise no man could give to the British and to
Europe, and it is obvious that Sir Syed was tremendously im-
pressed. Perhaps also he used strong language and heightened
the contrasts in order to shake up his own people out of their
torpor and induce them to take a step forward. This step, he
was convinced, must be in the direction of Western education;
without that education his community would become more and
more backward and powerless. English education meant govern-
ment jobs, security, influence, honour. So to this education he
turned all his energy, trying to win over his community to his
way of thinking. He wanted no diversions or distractions from
other directions; it was a difficult enough piece of work to over-
come the inertia and hesitation of the Muslims. The be-
ginnings of a new nationalism, sponsored by the Hindu
bourgeoisie, seemed to him to offer such a distraction, and he

1 This quotation has been taken from Hans Kohn’s History of
Nationalism in the East.
opposed it. The Hindus, half a century ahead in Western education, could indulge in this pastime of criticising the Government, but he had counted on the full co-operation of that Government in his educational undertakings and he was not going to risk this by any premature step. So he turned his back on the infant National Congress, and the British Government were only too willing to encourage this attitude.

Sir Syed's decision to concentrate on Western education for Muslims was undoubtedly a right one. Without that they could not have played any effective part in the building up of Indian nationalism of the new type, and they would have been doomed to play second fiddle to the Hindus with their better education and far stronger economic position. The Muslims were not historically or ideologically ready then for the bourgeois nationalist movement as they had developed no bourgeoisie as the Hindus had done. Sir Syed's activities, therefore, although seemingly very moderate, were in the right revolutionary direction. The Muslims were still wrapped up in a feudal antidemocratic ideology, while the rising middle class among the Hindus had begun to think in terms of the European liberals. Both were thoroughly moderate and dependent on British rule. Sir Syed's moderation was the moderation of the landlord-class to which the handful of well-to-do Muslims belonged. The Hindu's moderation was that of the cautious professional or business man seeking an outlet for industry and investment. These Hindu politicians looked up to the shining lights of English liberalism—Gladstone, Bright, etc. I doubt if the Muslims did so. Probably they admired the Tories and the landed classes of England. Gladstone, indeed was their bête noir because of his repeated condemnation of Turkey and the Armenian massacres; and because Disraeli seemed to be more friendly to Turkey they—that is of course the handful who took interest in such matters—were to some extent partial to him.

Some of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's speeches make strange reading to-day. At a speech delivered in Lucknow in December 1887 he seems to have criticised and condemned the very moderate demands of the National Congress which was holding its annual sessions just then. Sir Syed said: "... If Government fight Afghanistan or conquer Burma, it is no business of ours to criticise its policy. ... Government has made a Council for making laws. ... For this Council she selects from all Provinces those officials who are best acquainted with the administration and the condition of the people, and
also some *RAISES* who, on account of their high social position, are worthy of a seat in that assembly. Some people may ask—why should they be chosen on account of social position instead of ability? . . . I ask you—Would our aristocracy like that a man of low caste or insignificant origin, though he be a B.A. or M.A. and have the requisite ability, should be in a position of authority above them and have power in making the laws that affect their lives and property? Never! . . . None but a man of good breeding can the Viceroy take as his colleague, treat as his brother, and invite to entertainments at which he may have to dine with Dukes and Earls. . . . Can we say that the Government, in the method it has adopted for legislation, acts without regard to the opinions of the people? Can we say that we have no share in the making of the laws? Most certainly not."

Thus spoke the leader and representative of the ‘democracy of Islam’ in India! It is doubtful if even the taluqadars of Oudh, or the landed magnates of Agra Province, Behar, or Bengal would venture to speak in this vein to-day. And yet Sir Syed was by no means unique in this. Many of the Congress speeches read equally strangely to-day. But it seems clear that the political and economic aspect of the Hindu-Muslim question then was this: the rising and economically better-equipped middle class (Hindu) was resisted and checked to some extent by part of the feudal landlord-class (Muslim). The Hindu landlords were often closely connected with their *bourgeoisie*, and thus remained neutral or even sympathetic to the middle-class demands which were often influenced by them. The British, as always, sided with the feudal elements. The masses and the lower middle classes on either side were not in the picture at all.

Sir Syed’s dominating and forceful personality impressed itself on the Indian Muslims, and the Aligarh College became the visible emblem of his hopes and desires. In a period of transition a progressive impulse may soon play out its part and be reduced to functioning as a brake. The Indian Liberals are an obvious example of this. They remind us often that they are the true heirs of the old Congress tradition and we of a later day are interlopers. True enough. But they forget that the world changes and the old Congress tradition has vanished with the snows of yester-year and only remain as a memory. So also Sir Syed’s message was appropriate and necessary when

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1 Taken from Hans Kohn’s *History of Nationalism in the East*. 
it came, but it could not be the final ideal of a progressive community. It is possible that had he lived a generation later, he would himself have given another orientation to that message. Or other leaders could have re-interpreted his old message and applied it to changing conditions. But the very success that came to Sir Syed and the reverence that clung to his memory made it difficult for others to depart from the old faith; and, unhappily, the Muslims of India were strangely lacking in men of outstanding ability who could point a new way. Aligarh College did fine work, produced a large number of competent men, and changed the whole tone of the Muslim intelligentsia, but still it could not wholly get out of the framework in which it was built—a feudal spirit reigned over it, and the goal of the average student's ambition was government service. Not for him the adventures of the spirit or the quest of the stars: he was happy if he got a Deputy Collectorship. His pride was soothed by his being reminded that he was a unit in the great democracy of Islam, and in witness of this brotherhood, he wore jauntily on his head the red cap, called the Turkish fez, which the Turks themselves soon afterwards were going to discard utterly. Having assured himself of his inalienable right to democracy, which enabled him to feed and pray with his brother Muslims, he did not worry about the existence or otherwise of political democracy in India.

This narrow outlook and hankering after government service was not confined to the Muslim students of Aligarh and elsewhere. It was equally in evidence among the Hindu students who were far from being adventurous by nature. But circumstances forced many of them out of the rut. There were far too many of them and not enough jobs to go round, and so they became the déclassé intellectuals who are the backbone of national revolutionary movements.

The Indian Muslims had not wholly recovered from the cramping effects of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's political message when the events of the early years of the twentieth century helped the British Government to widen the breach between them and the nationalist movement, now clamant and aggressive. Sir Valentine Chirol wrote in 1910 in his *Indian Unrest*: “It may be confidently asserted that never before have the Mohammadans of India as a whole identified their interests and their aspirations so closely as at the present day with the consolidation and permanence of British rule.” Political prophecies are dangerous. Within five years after Sir Valentine wrote, the Muslim intelligentsia was trying hard to break
through from the fetters that kept it back and to range itself beside the Congress. Within a decade the Indian Muslims seemed to have outstripped the Congress and were actually giving the lead to it. But these ten years were momentous years, and the Great War had come and gone and left a broken-down world as a legacy.

And yet Sir Valentine had superficially every reason to come to the conclusion he did. The Aga Khan had emerged as the leader of the Muslims, and that fact alone showed that they still clung to their feudal traditions, for the Aga Khan was no bourgeois leader. He was an exceedingly wealthy prince and the religious head of a sect, and from the British point of view he was very much a persona grata because of his close association with the British ruling classes. He was widely cultured, and lived mostly in Europe, the life of a wealthy English landed magnate and sportsman; he was thus far from being personally narrow-minded on communal or sectarian matters. His leadership of the Muslims meant the lining up of the Muslim landed classes as well as the growing bourgeoisie with the British Government; the communal problem was really secondary and was obviously stressed in the interests of the main objective. Sir Valentine Chirol tells us that the Aga Khan impressed upon Lord Minto, the Viceroy, “the Mahommedan view of the political situation created by the partition of Bengal, lest political concessions should be hastily made to the Hindus which would pave the way for the ascendency of a Hindu majority equally dangerous to the stability of British rule and to the interests of the Mahommedan minority whose loyalty was beyond dispute.”

But behind this superficial lining up with the British Government other forces were working. Inevitably the new Muslim bourgeoisie was feeling more and more dissatisfied with existing conditions and was being drawn towards the nationalist movement. The Aga Khan himself had to take notice of this and to warn the British in characteristic language. He wrote in the Edinburgh Review of January 1914 (that is, long before the War) advising the Government to abandon the policy of separating Hindus from Muslims, and to rally the moderate of both creeds in a common camp so as to provide a counterpoise to the radical nationalist tendencies of young India—both Hindu and Muslim. It was thus clear that he was far more interested in checking political change in India than in the communal interests of Muslims.

But the Aga Khan or the British Government could not stop
the inevitable drift of the Muslim bourgeoisie towards nationalism. The World War hastened the process, and as new leaders arose the Aga Khan seemed to retire into the background. Even Aligarh College changed its tone, and among the new leaders the most dynamic were the Ali Brothers, both products of Aligarh. Doctor M. A. Ansari, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, and a number of other bourgeoisie leaders now began to play an important part in the political affairs of the Muslims. So also, on a more moderate scale, Mr. M. A. Jinnah. Gandhiji swept most of these leaders (not Mr. Jinnah) and the Muslims generally into his non-co-operation movement, and they played a leading part in the events of 1919–23.

Then came the reaction, and communal and backward elements, both among the Hindus and the Muslims, began to emerge from their enforced retirement. It was a slow process, but it was a continuous one. The Hindu Mahasabha for the first time assumed some prominence, chiefly because of the communal tension, but politically it could not make much impression on the Congress. The Muslim communal organisations were more successful in regaining some of their old prestige among the Muslim masses. Even so a very strong group of Muslim leaders remained throughout with the Congress. The British Government meanwhile gave every encouragement to the Muslim communal leaders who were politically thoroughly reactionary. Noting the success of these reactionaries, the Hindu Mahasabha began to compete with them in reaction, thereby hoping to win the goodwill of the Government. Many of the progressive elements in the Mahasabha were driven out or left of their own accord, and it inclined more and more towards the upper middle classes, and especially the creditor and banker class.

The communal politicians on both sides, who were interminably arguing about percentages of seats in legislatures, thought only in terms of patronage which influence in Government gives. It was a struggle for jobs for the middle-class intelligentsia. There were obviously not enough jobs to go round, and so the Hindu and Muslim communalists quarrelled about them, the former on the offensive, for they had most of the existing jobs, the latter always wanting more and more. Behind this struggle for jobs there was a much more important contest which was not exactly communal but which influenced the communal issue. On the whole the Hindus were, in the Punjab, Sind, and Bengal, the richer, creditor, urban class; the Muslims in these provinces were the poorer, debtor, rural class.
The conflict between the two was therefore often economic, but it was always given a communal colouring. In recent months this has come out very prominently in the debates on various provincial bills for reducing the burden of rural debt, especially in the Punjab. The representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha have consistently opposed these measures and sided with the banker class.

The Hindu Mahasabha is always laying stress on its own irreproachable nationalism when it criticises Muslim communalism. That the Muslim organisations have shown themselves to be quite extraordinarily communal has been patent to everybody. The Mahasabha's communalism has not been so obvious, as it masquerades under a nationalist cloak. The test comes when a national and democratic solution happens to injure upper-class Hindu interests, and in this test the Mahasabha has repeatedly failed. The separation of Sind has been consistently opposed by them in the economic interests of a minority and against the declared wishes of the majority.

But the most extraordinary exhibition of anti-nationalism and reaction, both on the part of Muslim and Hindu communalists, took place at the Round Table Conferences. The British Government had insisted on nominating only definitely communal Muslims, and these, under the leadership of the Aga Khan, actually went to the length of allying themselves with the most reactionary and, from the point of view not only of India but of all progressive groups, the most dangerous elements in British public life. It was quite extraordinary to see the close association of the Aga Khan and his group with Lord Lloyd and his party. They went a step further, and made pacts with the representatives of the European Association and others at the R.T.C. This was very depressing, for this Association has been and is, in India, the stoutest and the most aggressive opponent of Indian freedom.

The Hindu Mahasabha delegates responded to this by demanding, especially in the Punjab, all manner of checks on freedom—safeguards in the interests of the British. They tried to outbid the Muslims in their attempts to offer co-operation to the British Government, and, without gaining anything, damned their own case and betrayed the cause of freedom. The Muslims had at least spoken with dignity, the Hindu communalists did not even possess this.

The outstanding fact seems to me how, on both sides, the communal leaders represent a small upper class reactionary group, and how these people exploit and take advantage of the
religious passions of the masses for their own ends. On both sides every effort is made to suppress and avoid the consideration of economic issues. Soon the time will come when these issues can no longer be suppressed, and then, no doubt, the communal leaders on both sides will echo the Aga Khan's warning of twenty years ago for the moderates to join hands in a common camp against radical tendencies. To some extent that is already evident, for however much the Hindu and Muslim communalists attack each other in public they cooperate in the Assembly and elsewhere in helping Government to pass reactionary measures. Ottawa was one of the links which brought the three together.

Meanwhile it is interesting to notice that the Aga Khan's close association with the extreme Right wing of the Conservative party continues. In October 1934 he was the guest of honour at the British Navy League dinner, at which Lord Lloyd presided, and he supported wholeheartedly the proposals for further strengthening the British Navy, which Lord Lloyd had made at the Bristol Conservative Conference. An Indian leader was thus so anxious about imperial defence and the safety of England that he wanted to go further in increasing British armaments than even Mr. Baldwin or the 'National' Government. Of course, this was all in the interest of peace.

The next month, in November 1934, it was reported that a film was privately shown in London, the object of which was "to link the Muslim world in lasting friendship with the British Crown". We were informed that the guests of honour on this occasion were the Aga Khan and Lord Lloyd. It would seem that the Aga Khan and Lord Lloyd have become almost as inseparably united—two hearts that beat as one—in imperial affairs, as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M. R. Jayakar are in our national politics. And it is worth noticing that, during these months when the two were so frequently communing with each other, Lord Lloyd was leading a bitter and unrelenting attack on the official Conservative leadership and the National Government for their alleged weakness in giving too much to India.¹

Latterly there has been an interesting development in the speeches and statements of some of the Muslim communal leaders. This has no real importance, but I doubt if many

¹ Recently a Council of some British peers and Indian Muslims has been formed to cement and further the union of these extreme reactionary elements.
people think so, nevertheless it is significant of the mentality of communalism, and a great deal of prominence has been given to it. Stress has been laid on the 'Muslim nation' in India, on 'Muslim culture' on the utter incompatibility of Hindu and Muslim 'cultures'. The inevitable deduction from this is (although it is not put baldly) that the British must remain in India for ever and ever to hold the scales and mediate between the two 'cultures'.

A few Hindu communal leaders think exactly on the same lines, with this difference, however, that they hope that being in a majority their brand of 'culture' will ultimately prevail.

Hindu and Muslim 'cultures' and the 'Muslim nation'—how these words open out fascinating vistas of past history and present and future speculation! The Muslim nation in India—a nation within a nation, and not even compact, but vague, spread out, indeterminate. Politically, the idea is absurd, economically it is fantastic; it is hardly worth considering. And yet it helps us a little to understand the mentality behind it. Some such separate and unmixable 'nations' existed together in the Middle Ages and afterwards. In the Constantinople of the early days of the Ottoman Sultans each such 'nation' lived separately and had a measure of autonomy—Latin Christians, Orthodox Christians, Jews, etc. This was the beginning of extra-territoriality which, in more recent times, became such a nightmare to many eastern countries. To talk of a 'Muslim nation', therefore, means that there is no nation at all but a religious bond; it means that no nation in the modern sense must be allowed to grow; it means that modern civilisation should be discarded and we should go back to the medieval ways; it means either autocratic government or a foreign government; it means, finally, just nothing at all except an emotional state of mind and a conscious or unconscious desire not to face realities, especially economic realities. Emotions have a way of upsetting logic, and we may not ignore them simply because they seem so unreasonable. But this idea of a Muslim nation is the figment of a few imaginations only, and, but for the publicity given to it by the Press, few people would have heard of it. And even if many people believed in it, it would still vanish at the touch of reality.

So also the ideas of Hindu and Muslim 'culture'. The day of even national cultures is rapidly passing and the world is becoming one cultural unit. Nations may retain, and will retain for a long time much that is peculiar to them—language, habits, ways of thought, etc.—but the machine age and science, with
swift travel, constant supply of world news, radio, cinema, etc., will make them more and more uniform. No one can fight against this inevitable tendency, and only a world catastrophe which shatters modern civilisation can really check it. There are certainly many differences between the traditional Hindu and Muslim philosophies of life. But these differences are hardly noticeable when both of them are compared to the modern scientific and industrial outlook on life, for between this latter and the former two there is a vast gulf. The real struggle to-day in India is not between Hindu culture and Muslim culture, but between these two and the conquering scientific culture of modern civilisation. Those who are desirous of preserving 'Muslim culture', whatever that may be, need not worry about Hindu culture, but should withstand the giant from the West. I have no doubt, personally, that all efforts, Hindu or Muslim, to oppose modern scientific and industrial civilisation are doomed to failure, and I shall watch this failure without regret. Our choice was unconsciously and involuntarily made when railways and the like came here. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan made his choice on behalf of the Indian Muslims when he started the Aligarh College. But none of us had really any choice in the matter, except the choice which a drowning man has to clutch at something which might save him.

But what is this 'Muslim culture'? Is it a kind of racial memory of the great deeds of the Arabs, Persians, Turks, etc.? Or language? Or art and music? Or customs? I do not remember any one referring to present-day Muslim art or Muslim music. The two languages which have influenced Muslim thought in India are Arabic and Persian, and especially the latter. But the influence of Persian has no element of religion about it. The Persian language and many Persian customs and traditions came to India in the course of thousands of years and impressed themselves powerfully all over north India. Persia was the France of the East, sending its language and culture to all its neighbours. That is a common and a precious heritage for all of us in India.

Pride in the past achievements of Islamic races and countries is probably one of the strongest of Islamic bonds. Does any one grudge the Muslims this noble record of various races? No one can take it away from them so long as they choose to remember it and cherish it. As a matter of fact, this past record is also to a large extent a common heritage for all of us, perhaps because we feel as Asiatics a common bond uniting
us against the aggression of Europe. I know that whenever I have read of the conflicts of the Arabs in Spain or during the Crusades, my sympathies have always been with them. I try to be impartial and objective, but, try as I will, the Asiatic in me influences my judgment when an Asiatic people are concerned.

I have tried hard to understand what this 'Muslim culture' is, but I confess that I have not succeeded. I find a tiny handful of middle-class Muslims as well as Hindus in north India influenced by the Persian language and traditions. And looking to the masses the most obvious symbols of 'Muslim culture' seem to be: a particular type of pyjamas, not too long and not too short, a particular way of shaving or clipping the moustache but allowing the beard to grow, and a *lotā* with a special kind of snout, just as the corresponding Hindu customs are the wearing of a *dhoṭi*, the possession of a topknot, and a *lotā* of a different kind. As a matter of fact, even these distinctions are largely urban and they tend to disappear. The Muslim peasantry and industrial workers are hardly distinguishable from the Hindu. The Muslim intelligentsia seldom sports a beard, though Aligarh still fancies a red Turkish cap with a fez (Turkish it is called, although Turkey will have none of it). Muslim women have taken to the *sari* and are emerging rather slowly from the *purdah*. My own tastes do not harmonise with some of those habits, and I do not fancy beards or moustaches or topknots, but I have no desire to impose my canons of taste on others, though I must confess, in regard to beards, that I rejoiced when Âmanullah began to deal with them in summary fashion in Kabul.

I must say that those Hindus and Muslims who are always looking backward, always clutching at things which are slipping away from their grasp, are a singularly pathetic sight. I do not wish to damn the past or to reject it, for there is so much that is singularly beautiful in our past. That will endure I have no doubt. But it is not the beautiful that these people clutch at, but something that is seldom worth while and is often harmful.

In recent years Indian Muslims have had repeated shocks, and many of their deeply cherished notions have been shattered. Turkey, that champion of Islam, has not only ended the Khilafat, for which India put up such a brave fight in 1920, but has taken step after step away from religion. In the new Turkish Constitution an article stated that Turkey was a Moslem State, but, lest there be any mistake, Kemal Pasha
said in 1927: "The provision in the Constitution that Turkey is a Moslem State is a compromise destined to be done away with at the first opportunity." And I believe he acted up to this hint later on. Egypt, though much more cautiously, is going the same way and keeping her politics quite apart from religion. So also the Arab countries, except Arabia itself, which is more backward. Persia is looking back to pre-Islamic days for her cultural inspiration. Everywhere religion recedes into the background and nationalism appears in aggressive garbs, and behind nationalism other isms which talk in social and economic terms. What of the 'Muslim nation' and 'Muslim culture'? Are they to be found in the future only in northern India, rejoicing under the benign rule of the British?

If progress consists in the individual taking a broader view of what constitutes politics, our communalists as well as our Government have deliberately and consistently aimed at the opposite of this—the narrowing of this view.
The possibility of my re-arrest and conviction always hung over me. It was, indeed, more than a possibility when the land was ruled by Ordinances and the like and the Congress itself was an illegal organisation. Constituted as the British Government was, and constituted as I was, my suppression seemed inevitable. This ever-present prospect influenced my work. I could not settle down to anything, and I was in a hurry to get through as much as possible.

And yet I had no desire to invite arrest, and to a large extent I avoided activities which might lead to it. Invitations came to me from many places in the province and outside to undertake a tour. I refused them, for any such speaking tour could only be a raging campaign which would be abruptly ended. There was no half-way house for me then. When I visited any place for some other object—to confer with Gandhiji and the Working Committee members—I addressed public meetings and spoke freely. In Jubbulpore we had a great meeting and a very impressive procession; in Delhi the gathering was one of the biggest I had seen there. Indeed, the very success of these meetings made it clear that the Government would not tolerate their frequent repetition. In Delhi, soon after the meeting, there was a very strong rumour of my impending arrest, but I survived and returned to Allahabad, breaking journey at Aligarh to address the Muslim University students there.

I disliked the idea of taking part in non-political public activities when the Government was trying to crush all effective political work. I found a strong tendency among Congressmen to seek shelter from such work by engaging in the most humdrum activities which, though desirable in themselves, had little to do with our struggle. The tendency was natural, but I felt that it should not be encouraged just then.

In the middle of October 1933 we had meetings of our U.P. Congress workers in Allahabad to consider the situation and decide on future work. The Provincial Congress Committee was an illegal body, and as our object was to meet and not just to defy the law, we did not formally convene this committee. But we asked all its members who were outside gaol, as well as other selected workers, to come to an informal conference.
There was no secrecy about our meetings, though they were private, and we did not know till the last moment whether the Government would interfere or not. At these meetings we paid a great deal of attention to the world situation—the great slump, naziism, communism, etc. We wanted our comrades to see the Indian struggle in relation to what was happening elsewhere. The conference ultimately passed a socialistic resolution defining our objective and expressed itself against the withdrawal of civil disobedience. Everybody knew well enough that there was no chance of widespread civil disobedience, and even individual civil disobedience was likely to peter out soon or continue on a very restricted scale. But a withdrawal made little difference to us as the Government offensive and Ordinance laws continued. So, more as a gesture than anything else, we decided to continue the formal civil disobedience but in effect our instructions to our workers were not to go out of their way to invite arrest. They were to carry on their normal work and if arrest came in the course of that, to accept it with good grace. In particular, they were asked to renew contacts with the rural areas and find out the condition of the peasantry, both as a result of the remissions of rent and Government repression. There was no question of a no-rent campaign then. This had been formally withdrawn after the Poona Conference, and it was obvious that it could not be revived under the circumstances.

This programme was a mild and inoffensive one with nothing patently illegal in it, and yet we knew that it would lead to arrests. As soon as our workers went to the villages they were arrested and charged, quite wrongly, with preaching a no-rent campaign (which had been made an offence under the Ordinance laws) and convicted. It was my intention to go to these rural areas after the arrest of many of my comrades, but other activities claimed my attention and I postponed my visit till it was too late.

Twice, during those months, the members of the Working Committee met together to consider the all-India situation. The Committee itself was not functioning, not so much because it was an illegal body but because, at Gandhiji’s instance after Poona, all Congress Committees and offices had been suspended. I happened to occupy a peculiar position as, on coming out of gaol, I refused to join this self-denying ordinance and insisted on calling myself the General Secretary of the Congress. But I functioned in the air. There was no proper office, no staff, no acting-president, and Gandhiji, though available for consul-
tation, was busy with one of his tremendous all-India tours, this time for Harijan work. We managed to catch him during his tour at Jubbulpore and Delhi and held our consultations with Working Committee members. They served to bring out clearly the differences between various members. There was an impasse, and no way out of it agreeable to everybody. Gandhiji was the deciding factor between those who wanted to withdraw civil disobedience and those who were against this. As he was then in favour of the latter course, matters continued as before.

The question of contesting elections on behalf of the Congress to the legislatures was sometimes discussed by Congressmen, though the Working Committee members were not much interested in this at the time. It did not arise; it was obviously premature. The ‘Reforms’ were not likely to materialise for another two or three years at least, and there was then no mention of fresh elections for the Assembly. Personally I had no theoretical objection to contesting elections, and I felt sure in my mind that when the time came the Congress would have to go in for them. But to raise this question then was only to distract attention. I hoped that the continuance of our struggle would clear up the issues that faced us and prevent the compromising elements from dominating the situation.

Meanwhile I continued sending articles and statements to the Press. To some extent I had to tone down my writings, for they were written with a view to publication, and there was the censor and various laws whose octopus-like tentacles reached far. Even if I was prepared to take risks, the printers, publishers and editors were not. On the whole the newspapers were good to me and stretched many a point in my favour. But not always. Sometimes statements and passages were suppressed, and once a whole long article, over which I had taken some pains, never saw the light of day. When I was in Calcutta in January 1934 the editor of one of the leading dailies came to see me. He told me that he had sent one of my statements to the Editor-in-Chief of all Calcutta newspapers for his opinion, and as the Editor-in-Chief had disapproved of it, it had not been published. The ‘Editor-in-Chief’ was the Government Press Censor for Calcutta.

In some of my Press interviews and statements I ventured to criticise forcibly some groups and individuals. This was resented, partly because of the idea, which Gandhiji had helped to spread, that Congress could be attacked without any danger of its hitting back. Gandhiji himself had set an example of
this and in varying degrees leading Congressmen had followed
his lead, though sometimes this was not so. Usually we stuck
to vague and pious phrases, and this gave an opportunity to our
critics to get away with their faulty reasoning and opportunist
tactics. The real issues were avoided on both sides, and an
honest discussion, with occasional parry and thrust, seldom took
place, as it does in Western countries, except where fascism
prevails.

A friend, whose opinion I valued, wrote to me that she had
been a little surprised at the vigour of some of my statements to
the Press—I was almost becoming ‘cattish’. Was this the out-
come of ‘frustration’ of my hopes? I wondered. Partly it was
true, for nationally all of us suffer from frustration. Individ-
ually also it must have been true to some extent. Yet I was
not very conscious of the feeling because personally I had no
sensation of suppression or failure. Ever since Gandhiji came
within my ken politically, I learnt one thing at least from him:
not to suppress my ideas within me for fear of the consequences.
That habit—followed in the political sphere (in other spheres it
would be more difficult and dangerous to follow)—has often got
me into trouble, but it has also brought much satisfaction with
it. I think that it is because of this that many of us have
escaped real bitterness of heart and the worst kinds of frus-
tration. The knowledge also that large numbers of people think
of one with affection is very soothing and is a powerful antidote
against defeatism and frustration. The most terrible of all
feelings, I imagine, is to be alone, forgotten by others.

But, even so, how can one escape in this strange, unhappy
world a feeling of frustration? How often everything seems to
go wrong, and though we carry on, doubts assail us when we see
the quality of human material around us. I am afraid I feel
anger and resentment often enough at various happenings and
developments, and even at persons and groups. And latterly
I have begun to resent more and more the drawing-room atti-
dude to life, which ignores vital issues and considers it improper
to refer to them, because they happen to touch one’s pocket or
pet prejudices. With all this resentment and frustration and
‘cattishness’, I hope I have not yet lost the gift of laughing at
my own and other people’s follies.

I sometimes wonder at the faith of people in a beneficent
Providenc: how it survives shock after shock, and how disaster
itself and disproof of beneficence are considered but tests of
the soundness of that faith. Those delightful lines of Gerard
Hopkins find an echo in many a heart:
"Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh, the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir, life upon thy cause..."

Faith in progress, in a cause, in ideals, in human goodness
and human destiny—are they not nearly allied to faith in a
Providence? If we seek to justify them by reason and logic
immediately we get into difficulties. But something within us
clutches to that hope and faith, for, deprived of them, life
would be a wilderness without an oasis.

The effect of my socialist propaganda upset even some of
my colleagues of the Working Committee. They would have
put up with me without complaint, as they had done for several
years during which I had been carrying on this propaganda,
but I was now frightening to some extent the vested interests
in the country, and my activities could no longer be called
innocuous. I knew that some of my colleagues were no
Socialists, but I had always thought that, as a member of the
Congress Executive I had perfect freedom to carry on socialist
propaganda without committing the Congress to it. The realisation
that some members of the Working Committee did not
think that I had that freedom came as a surprise. I was putting
them in a false position and they resented it. But what was I to
do? I was not going to give up what I considered the most
important part of my work. I would much rather resign from
the Working Committee if there was a conflict between the
two. But how could I resign when the Committee was illegal
and was not even functioning properly?

This difficulty faced me again later—I think it was towards
the end of December—when Gandhiji wrote to me from
Madras. He sent me a cutting from the Madras Mail containing
an interview he had given. The interviewer had asked him
about me and he had replied almost apologising for my activi-
ties and expressing his faith in my rectitude: I would not
commit the Congress to these novel ways. I did not particu-
larly fancy this reference to me, but what upset me much more
was Gandhiji's defence, further on in the interview, of the big
zamindari system. He seemed to think that this was a very
desirable part of rural and national economy. This was a great
surprise to me for the big zamindaris and taluqas have very few defenders to-day. All over the world they have been broken up, and even in India most people recognise that they cannot last long. Even taluqadars and zamindars would welcome an end of the system provided, of course, they got sufficient compensation therefor. The system is indeed sinking of its own weight. And yet Gandhiji was in favour of it and talked of trusteeship and the like. How very different was his outlook from mine, I thought again, and I wondered how far I could co-operate with him in future. Must I continue to remain in the Working Committee? There was no way out just then, and a few weeks later the question became irrelevant because of my return to prison.

My domestic affairs took up a lot of my time. My mother's health continued to improve, but very slowly. She was still bedridden, but she seemed to be out of danger. I turned to my financial affairs which had been long neglected and were in a muddle. We had been spending much more than we could afford, and there seemed to be no obvious way of reducing our expenditure. I was not particularly anxious about making both ends meet. Almost I looked forward to the time when I would have no money left. Money and possessions are useful enough in the modern world, but often they become a burden for one who wants to go on a long journey. It is very difficult for moneyed people to take part in undertakings which involve risk; they are always afraid of losing their goods and chattels. What is the good of money or property if the Government can take possession of it when it chooses, or even confiscate it? So I almost wished to get rid of what little I had. Our needs were few and I felt confident of my ability to earn enough. My chief concern was that my mother, in the evening of her life, should not suffer discomforts or any marked lowering of the standard of living. I was also anxious that my daughter's education should not be interfered with, and this, according to my thinking, involved a stay in Europe. Apart from this,

1 Mr. P. N. Tagore, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the All-Bengal Landholders' Conference, said in his address on December 23, 1934: "Personally I will not regret the day when lands of the zamindars are nationalised, as has been done in Ireland, upon payment of adequate compensation to the landlord." It should be remembered that the Bengal landholders, being under the Permanent Settlement, are better off than the landholders in the non-permanently settled areas. Mr. P. N. Tagore's ideas about nationalisation appear to be vague.
neither my wife nor I had any special need for money. Or so we thought, being unused to the real lack of it. I am quite sure that when the time comes when we lack money, we shall not be happy about it. One extravagance which I have kept up will be hard to give up, and this is the buying of books.

To improve the immediate financial situation we decided to sell off my wife’s jewellery, the silver and other similar articles that we possessed, as well as many cart-loads of odds and ends. Kamala did not like the idea of parting with her jewellery, although she had not worn any of it for a dozen years and it had lain in the bank. But she had looked forward to handing it on to our daughter.

It was January 1934. Continued arrests of our workers in the villages of the Allahabad district, although innocently employed, seemed to demand that we should follow in their steps and visit those villages. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, our very effective secretary of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, was also under arrest. January 26th—Independence Day—was coming and it could not be ignored. Despite Ordinances and prohibitions it had been regularly observed in various parts of the country every year since 1930. But who was to give the lead? And what was the lead to be? There was no one besides me who was functioning, even in theory, as an official of the All-India Congress. I consulted some friends and almost all agreed that something should be done, but there was no agreement as to what this something should be. I found a general tendency to avoid any action which might lead to arrests on a large scale. Eventually I issued a brief appeal for the appropriate celebration of Independence Day, the manner of doing so to be decided by each local area for itself. In Allahabad we planned a fairly widespread celebration all over the district.

We felt that the organisers of this Independence Day celebration would be arrested on that day. Before I went back to prison again I wanted to pay a visit to Bengal. This was partly to meet old colleagues there, but really it was to be a gesture in the nature of tribute to the people of Bengal for their extraordinary sufferings during the past few years. I knew very well that I could do nothing to help them. Sympathy and fellow-feeling did not go far, and yet they were very welcome, and Bengal was especially suffering from a sense of isolation, of being deserted by the rest of India in her hour of need. That feeling was not justified, but nevertheless it was there.

I had also to go to Calcutta with Kamala to consult our doctors there about her treatment. She had been far from well,
but we had both tried to overlook this to some extent and postpone recourse to a treatment which might involve a long stay in Calcutta or elsewhere. We wanted to be together as much as possible during my brief period outside prison. After I went back to gaol, I thought, she would have plenty of time for doctors and treatment. Now that arrest seemed near, I decided to have these consultations at least in my presence in Calcutta; the rest could be attended to later.

So we decided to go to Calcutta, Kamala and I, on January 15th. We wanted to return in good time for our Independence Day meetings.
EARTHQUAKE

It was the afternoon of the 15th January, 1934. I was standing in the veranda of our house in Allahabad addressing a group of peasants. The annual Magh Mela had begun, and we had crowds of visitors all day. Suddenly I became unsteady on my feet and could hardly keep my balance. I clung on to a column near by. Doors started banging and a rumbling noise came from the adjoining Swaraj Bhawan, where many of the tiles were sliding down the roof. Being unaccustomed to earthquakes, I did not know at first what was happening, but I soon realised it. I was rather amused and interested at this novel experience and I continued my talk to the peasants and began telling them about the earthquake. My old aunt shouted out to me from some distance to run out of the building. The idea struck me as absurd. I did not take the earthquake seriously, and in any event I was not going to leave my bed-ridden mother upstairs, and my wife, who was probably packing, also upstairs and seek safety for myself. For what seemed quite an appreciable time the shocks continued and then passed off. They provided a few minutes’ conversation and soon were almost forgotten. We did not know then, nor could we guess, what those two or three minutes had meant to millions in Behar and elsewhere.

That evening Kamala and I left for Calcutta and, all unknowing, we were carried by our train that night through the southern earthquake area. The next day there was little news in Calcutta about the disaster. The day after bits of news began to come in. On the third day we began to have a faint notion of the calamity.

We busied ourselves with our Calcutta programme. There were plenty of doctors to be seen repeatedly, and it was finally decided that Kamala was to come back to Calcutta for treatment a month or two later. Then there were friends and Congress colleagues whom we had not met for a long time. I had a terrible sense of oppression all the time. People seemed to be afraid of doing almost anything lest trouble should come to them; they had gone through much. Newspapers were more cautious than anywhere else in India. There was also, as elsewhere in India, doubt and confusion about future work. It was
indeed this doubt, and not so much fear, that prevented any
effective political activity. There were fascist tendencies much
in evidence, and socialist and communist tendencies—all rather
vague and running into each other. It was difficult to draw
hard and fast lines between these groups. I had neither the
time nor the opportunity to find out much about the terrorist
movement, which was receiving a great deal of attention and
advertisement from official sources. As far as I could gather, it
had no political significance whatever, and the old members
of the terrorist groups had no faith left in it. They were
beginning to think on different lines. Resentment at Govern-
ment action in Bengal had, however, led individuals here and
there to break loose and indulge in a kind of feud. Indeed, on
either side this idea of a feud seemed to be dominant. On the
side of the individual terrorists this was obvious enough. On
the side of the State also the attitude was far more that of
carrying on a feud, with occasional reprisals, than of calmly
grappling with an anti-social occurrence and suppressing it. Any
government faced by terroristic acts is bound to combat them
and try to suppress them. But serene control is more becoming
in a government than excessive action applied indiscriminately
to guilty and innocent alike, and chiefly to the latter because
they are sure to be more numerous. Perhaps it is not easy to
remain calm and collected in the face of such a threat. Ter-
roristic acts were becoming rare, but the possibility of them
was ever present, and this was enough to upset the composure
of those who had to deal with them. Such acts, it is patent
enough, are not a disease but the symptoms of a disease. It is
futile to treat the symptoms and not the disease itself.

I believe that a number of young men and women, who are
supposed to have dealings with terrorists, are really attracted by
the glamour of secret work. Secrecy and risk have always an
appeal for the adventurous type of youth; the desire to be in the
know, to find out what all this shouting is about, and who are
these men behind the scenes. It is the call of the detective
story. These people have no intention of doing anything,
certainly not a terroristic act, but their mere association with
suspects in the eyes of the police is enough to make them sus-
pect also. Soon they are likely to find themselves in the ranks
of the detenus, or in an internment camp, if a worse fate does
not await them.

Law and order, we are told, are among the proud achieve-
ments of British rule in India. My own instincts are entirely
in favour of them. I like discipline in life, and dislike anarchy
and disorder and inefficiency. But bitter experience has made me doubt the value of the law and order that states and governments impose on a people. Sometimes the price one pays for them is excessive, and the law is but the will of the dominant faction and the order is the reflex of an all-pervading fear. Sometimes, indeed, the so-called law and order might be more justly called the absence of law and order. Any achievement that is based on widespread fear can hardly be a desirable one, and an ‘order’ that has for its basis the coercive apparatus of the State, and cannot exist without it, is more like a military occupation than civil rule. I find in the Rajatarangini, the thousand-year-old rashmiri historic epic of the poet Kalhana, that the phrase which is repeatedly used in the sense of law and order, something that it was the duty of the ruler and the State to preserve, is dharma and abhaya—righteousness and absence of fear. Law was something more than mere law, and order was the fearlessness of the people. How much more desirable is this idea of inculcating fearlessness than of enforcing ‘order’ on a frightened populace!

We spent three and a half days in Calcutta and during this period I addressed three public meetings. As I had done before in Calcutta, I condemned and argued against terroristic acts, and then I passed on to the methods that the Government had adopted in Bengal. I spoke from a full heart, for I had been greatly moved by accounts of occurrences in the province. What pained me most was the manner in which human dignity had been outraged by indiscriminate suppression of whole populations. The political problem, urgent as it was, took second place before this human problem. These three speeches of mine formed the three counts against me in my subsequent trial in Calcutta and my present sentence is due to them.

From Calcutta we went to Santiniketan to pay a visit to the poet Rabindra Nath Tagore. It was always a joy to meet him and, having come so near, we did not wish to miss him. I had been to Santiniketan twice before. It was Kamala’s first visit, and she had come especially to see the place as we were thinking of sending our daughter there. Indira was going to appear for her matriculation soon afterwards, and the problem of her future education was troubling us. I was wholly against her joining the regular official or semi-official universities, for I disliked them. The whole atmosphere that envelops them is official, oppressive and authoritarian. They have no doubt produced fine men and women in the past, and they will continue to do so. But these few exceptions cannot save the universities
from the charge of suppressing and deadening the fine instincts of youth. Santiniketan offered an escape from this dead hand, and so we fixed upon it, although in some ways it was not so up to date and well-equipped as the other universities.

On our way back we stopped at Patna to discuss with Rajendra Babu the problem of earthquake relief. He had just been discharged from prison and, inevitably, he had taken the lead in unofficial relief work. Our arrival was unexpected, for none of our telegrams had been delivered. The house where we intended staying with Kamala's brother was in ruins; it was a big double-storied brick structure. So, like many others, we lived in the open.

The next day I paid a visit to Muzaffarpur. It was exactly seven days after the earthquake and little had so far been done to remove the debris, except from some of the main streets. As these streets were cleaned corpses were being discovered, some in curiously expressive attitudes, as if trying to ward off a falling wall or roof. The ruins were an impressive and terrifying sight. The survivors were thoroughly shaken-up and cowed by their nerve-racking experiences.

Returning to Allahabad, collections of funds and materials were immediately organised, and all of us, of the Congress or out of it, took this up in earnest. Some of my colleagues were of opinion that because of the earthquake the Independence Day celebrations should be called off. But other colleagues and I saw no reason why even an earthquake should interfere with our programme. So on the 26th January we had a large number of meetings in the villages of Allahabad district and a meeting in the city, and we met with greater success than we had anticipated. Most people expected police interference and arrests, and on a minor scale there was some interference. But, much to our surprise, we survived the meeting. In some of our villages and in some other cities arrests were made.

Soon after returning from Behar I issued a statement about the earthquake, ending up with an appeal for funds. In this statement I criticised the inactivity of the Behar Government during the first few days after the earthquake. It was not my intention to criticise the officials in the earthquake areas, for they had had to deal with a very difficult situation which would have tried the stoutest nerves, and I was sorry that some of my words were capable of this interpretation. But I did feel strongly that the headquarters of the Behar Government had not shown great competence to begin with, especially in the matter of removal of debris, which might have saved lives.
Thousands of people were killed in Monghyr city alone, and three weeks later I saw a vast quantity of debris still lying untouched, although a few miles away at Jamalpur there was a large colony of many thousands of railway workers, who could have been utilised for this purpose within a few hours of the catastrophe. Living people were unearthed even twelve days after the earthquake. The Government had taken immediate steps to protect property, but they had not been so expeditious in trying to rescue people who lay buried. The municipalities in these areas were not functioning.

I think my criticism was justified, and I found later that the great majority of people in the earthquake areas agreed with it. But whether it was justified or not, it was honestly made, not with the intention of blaming the Government, but of speeding them up. No one accused them of any deliberate sins of commission or omission in this respect. It was a novel and overpowering situation and errors were excusable. The Behar Government, so far as I know (for I have been in gaol), later on worked with energy and competence to repair the ravages of the earthquake.

But my criticism was resented, and soon afterwards a few people in Behar came out with a general testimonial in favour of the Government as a kind of counterblast. The earthquake and its demands became almost a secondary matter. More important was the fact that the Government had been criticised, and it must be defended by its loyal subjects. This was an interesting instance of a widespread phenomenon in India—the dislike of criticism of the Government, which is a commonplace in Western countries. It is the military mentality, which cannot tolerate criticism. Like the King, the British Government in India and all of its superior officials can do no wrong. To hint at any such thing is lèse majesté.

The curious part of it is that a charge of inefficiency and incompetence is resented far more than an accusation of harsh government or tyranny. The latter might indeed land the person making it in prison, but the Government is used to it and does not really mind it. After all, in a way, it might almost be considered a compliment to an imperial race. But to be called inefficient and wanting in nerve hurts, for this strikes at the root of their self-esteem; it disturbs the messianic delusions of the English officials in India. They are like the Anglican bishop who was prepared to put up meekly with a charge of unchristian behaviour, but who resented and hit out when some one called him foolish and incompetent.
There is a general belief among Englishmen, frequently asserted as if it was an incontrovertible maxim, that a change of government in India, involving a reduction or elimination of British influence, would result in a much worse and more inefficient government. Holding this belief, but generous in their enthusiasm, radicals and Englishmen of advanced views plead that good government is no substitute for self-government, and if Indians want to go to the dogs, they should be permitted to do so. I do not know what will happen to India when British influence is eliminated. Much depends on how the British withdraw and who is in control in India then, and on a host of other considerations, national and international. I can quite conceive a state of affairs, established with the help of the British, which will be more inefficient and generally worse than anything that we can have to-day, for it will have all the vices of the present system without its virtues. I can conceive more readily still a different state of affairs which, from the point of view of the Indian people, will be far more efficient and beneficial than anything we have to-day. It is possible that the coercive apparatus of the State may not be so efficient, and the administrative apparatus not quite so shiny, but there will be greater efficiency in production, consumption, and the activities which go to raise the physical, the spiritual, and cultural standards of the masses. I believe that self-government is good for any country. But I am not prepared to accept even self-government at the cost of real good government. Self-government if it is to justify itself must stand ultimately for better government for the masses. It is because I believe that the British Government in India, whatever its claims in the past may have been, is incapable of providing good government and rising standards for the masses to-day, that I feel that it has outlived its utility, such as it was, in India. The only real justification for Indian freedom is the promise of better government, of a higher standard for the masses, of industrial and cultural growth, and of the removal of the atmosphere of fear and suppression that foreign imperialist rule invariably brings in its train. The British Government and the I.C.S., though they may be strong enough to impose their will on India, are not efficient or competent enough to solve India’s problems of to-day, and even less of the future, because their foundations and assumptions are all wrong and they have lost touch with reality. A government or ruling class which is not competent enough, or which represents a passing order, cannot long continue even to impose their will.
The Allahabad Earthquake Relief Committee deputed me to visit the areas affected by the earthquake and to report on the methods of relief-work adopted there. I went immediately, alone, and for ten days I wandered about those torn and ruined territories. It was a very strenuous tour, and I had little sleep during those days. From five in the morning till almost midnight we were up and about, motoring over the cracked and crumpled-up roads, or going by little boats where the bridges had collapsed and the roads were under water owing to a change in level. The towns were impressive enough with their extensive ruins, and their roads torn up and twisted sometimes as by a giant hand, or raised high above the plinth of the houses on either side. Out of huge cracks in these roads water and sand had gushed out and swept away men and cattle. More even than these towns, the plains of North Behar—the garden of Behar, they used to be called—had desolation and destruction stamped upon them. Mile upon mile of sand, and large sheets of water, and huge cracks and vast numbers of little craters out of which this sand and water had come. Some British officers who flew over this area said that it bore some resemblance to the battlefields of northern France in war-time and soon after.

It must have been a terrible experience. The earthquake began with strong side-to-side movements which knocked down any person who was standing. Then there were up-and-down movements, and a vast rumbling and reverberating noise as of an artillery bombardment or a hundred aeroplanes in the sky, and waters gushed out in innumerable places out of huge fissures and craters and rose to about ten or twelve feet. All this probably lasted for three minutes or a little more and then it died down, but those three minutes were terrible enough. It is not surprising that many persons who saw this happen imagined that this was the end of the world. In the cities there was a noise of falling houses, and a rushing of waters, and an atmosphere full of dust which made it impossible to see even a few yards. In the rural areas there was not much dust and one could see a little farther, but there were no calm-eyed spectators about. Those who survived lay flat on the ground, or rolled about, in an agony of terror.

A little boy of twelve was dug out (I think in Muzaffarpur) alive ten days after the earthquake. He was greatly surprised. He had imagined, when he was knocked down and imprisoned by falling material, that the world had ended and he was the solitary survivor.
In Muzzaffarpur also at the exact moment of the earthquake when houses were collapsing and hundreds were dying all round, a baby girl was born. The inexperienced young parents did not know what to do, and were distraught. I learnt, however, that both the mother and the baby survived and were flourishing. In honour of the earthquake the baby was named Kampo Devi.

The city of Monghyr was the last place in our tour. We had wandered a good deal and gone almost up to the frontier of Nepal, and we had seen many harrowing sights. We had become used to ruins and destruction on a vast scale. And yet when we saw Monghyr and the absolute destruction of this rich city, we gasped and shivered at the horror of it. I can never forget that terrible sight.

All over the earthquake areas there was a very painful absence of self-help among the residents, both in the cities and villages. Probably the middle classes in the cities were the worst offenders in this respect. They all waited for somebody to take action and help them, either the Government or the non-official relief agencies. Others who offered their services thought that work meant ordering people about. Part of this feeling of helplessness was no doubt due to the nervous collapse brought about by the terror of the earthquake, and it must have gradually lessened.

In marked contrast with this was the energy and capacity of the large numbers of relief workers who poured in from other parts of Behar and other provinces. It was wonderful to see the spirit of efficient service of these young men and women and, in spite of the fact that a host of separate relief organisations were working, there was a great deal of co-operation between them.

In Monghyr I indulged in a theatrical gesture to give a push to the self-help movement for digging and removing the debris. I did so with some hesitation, but it turned out to be a success. All the leaders of the relief organisations went out with spades and baskets and did a good day’s digging, and we brought out the corpse of a little girl. I left Monghyr that day, but the digging went on and many local people took it up with very good results.

Of all the non-official relief organisations the Central Relief Committee, of which Rajendra Frasad was the head, was far the most important. This was by no means a purely Congress organisation, and it developed into an all-India body representing various groups and the donors. It had, however, the
great advantage of having the Congress organisation in the rural areas at its disposal. In no province in India, except Gujrat and some districts of the United Provinces, were the Congress workers more in touch with the peasants. In fact the workers themselves came largely from the peasantry; Behar is pre-eminently the peasant province of India and even its middle classes are closely allied to the peasantry. Sometimes when, as Congress Secretary, I went to inspect the Behar Provincial Congress Committee's office, I criticised in vigorous language what I considered was their inefficiency and general slackness in keeping office. There was a tendency to sit rather than stand, to lie down rather than sit. The office was one of the barest I had seen, for they would try to carry on without many of the usual office accessories. Yet, in spite of my criticism of the office, I knew well that from the Congress point of view the province was one of the most earnest and devoted in the country. Congress made no show there, but it had the solid backing of the peasantry. Even in the All-India Congress Committee the Behar members seldom took up an aggressive attitude in any matter. They seemed to be a little surprised at finding themselves there. But in both the Civil Disobedience movements Behar put up a splendid record. Even in the subsequent individual civil disobedience, it did well.

The Relief Committee availed itself of this fine organisation to reach the peasantry. In the rural areas no other agency, not even the Government, could be so helpful. And the head of both the Relief Committee and the Behar Congress organisation was Rajendra Babu, the unquestioned leader of Behar. Looking like a peasant, a typical son of the soil of Behar, he is not impressive at first sight till one notices his keen frank eyes and his earnest look. One does not forget that look or those eyes, for through them truth looks at you and there is no doubting them. Peasant-like, he is perhaps a little limited in outlook, somewhat unsophisticated from the point of view of the modern world, but his outstanding ability, his perfect straightness, his energy, and his devotion to the cause of Indian freedom are qualities which have made him loved not only in his own province but throughout India. No one in any province in India occupies quite that universally acknowledged position of leadership as Rajendra Babu does in Behar. Few others, if any, can be said to have imbibed more thoroughly the real message of Gandhiji.

It was fortunate that a man like him was available for the leadership of the relief-work in Behar, and it was faith in him
that drew a vast sum of money from all over India. Weak in health, he threw himself into the work of relief. He overworked himself, for he became the centre of all activity and everybody turned to him for advice.

During my tour in the earthquake areas, or just before going there, I read with a great shock Gandhiji's statement to the effect that the earthquake had been a punishment for the sin of untouchability. This was a staggering remark and I welcomed and wholly agreed with Rabindra Nath Tagore's answer to it. Anything more opposed to the scientific outlook it would be difficult to imagine. Perhaps even science will not be absolutely dogmatic to-day about the effect of emotional states and psychic occurrences on matter. A mental shock may result in indigestion or something worse to the person concerned. But to suggest that a human custom or failing had its reactions on the movements of the earth's crust is an astounding thing. The idea of sin and divine wrath and man's relative importance in the affairs of the universe—they take us back a few hundred years, when the Inquisition flourished in Europe and burned Giordano Bruno for his scientific heresy and sent many a witch to the stake! Even in the eighteenth century in America leading Boston divines attributed earthquakes in Massachusetts to the impiety of lightning rods.

And if the earthquake was a divine punishment for sin, how are we to discover for which sin we are being punished?—for, alas! we have many sins to atone for. Each person can have his pet explanation; we may have been punished for submitting to alien domination, or for putting up with an unjust social system. The Maharaja of Durbhanga, the owner of enormous estates, was, financially, one of the major sufferers from the earthquake. We might as well say that this was a judgment on the zamindari system. That would be nearer the mark than to suggest that the more or less innocent people of Behar were being made to suffer vicariously for the sins of untouchability of the people of South India. Why did not the earthquake visit the land of untouchability itself? Or the British Government might call the calamity a divine punishment for civil disobedience, for, as a matter of fact, North Behar, which suffered most from the earthquake, took a leading part in the freedom movement.

We can go on speculating indefinitely in this manner. And then, of course, the question arises why we should interfere with the workings of Providence or try to lessen the effect of its divine decrees by our humane efforts. And we begin to wonder