

Journal Section

**FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF
QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT**

9 AUGUST, 1992

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**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

FOREWORD

Men die but memories endure and contribute substantially to the writings of history and the development of ethos. August 9, 1942, was the date when India, as one, rose in revolt against the British imperialism to liberate itself from foreign yoke.

Quit India Movement was one of the last non-violent upsurges against the mighty British Empire. The clarion call of 'Do or Die' given by the Mahatma Gandhi galvanised the entire nation to take up the cudgles against the colonial rule. Thousands of people from different walks of life participated in the Movement and made sacrifices for the emancipation of their motherland.

To mark the Golden Jubilee of the Movement, the befitting tribute that we can pay to these martyrs is to recapitulate their inspiring words which aroused the whole nation and filled the people with the spirit of 'Do or Die' to liberate Mother India. Their words spoken, services rendered and sacrifices made by them have continued all these years to inspire us and rededicate ourselves to the cherished ideals of selfless service and sacrifice in the cause of our motherland and will continue to be a beacon light to the generation to come.

This small booklet is a token of our reverence for the heroes of our freedom struggle.

New Delhi;
7 August, 1992.

SHIVRAJ V. PATIL
Speaker, Lok Sabha

PREFACE

This publication has been brought out by the Lok Sabha Secretariat with a view to commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the "Quit India Movement of 1942" and to pay our respectful homage to the heroes of the Movement and to the martyrs who suffered and made supreme sacrifice to make us breathe and grow in a free country. Containing *inter alia* the speeches made and views expressed by the eminent national leaders of those days, the booklet, it is hoped, would provide an insight into the non-violent struggle waged by the people of India to get their motherland liberated from the colonial domination.

New Delhi;
7 August, 1992.

C. K. JAIN
Secretary-General

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PART I

A.I.C.C. Resolution

QUIT INDIA RESOLUTION*

The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of the opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom, and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which had led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on domination of subject and colonial countries and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method.

* Text of AICC Resolution Bombay, 7 & 8 August, 1942.

The possession of empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the people of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm. The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure the success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subjected and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these Nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No further promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

The AICC therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a Provisional Government will be formed and Free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The Provisional Government can only be formed by the cooperation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its allied powers, to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially all power and authority must belong.

The Provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This Constitution according to the Congress view should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their cooperation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign dominations. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran, Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule of control of any other colonial power.

While the AICC must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a World Federal Defence Force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and cooperate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of international problems.

Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realises, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards World Federation. The reaction of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and World's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and the justice of their cause.

The AICC would yet again at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting

of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

The Committee appears to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

Lastly, whilst the AICC has stated its own view of the future government under free India, the AICC wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.

PART II

Speeches

MAHATMA GANDHI*

I

I congratulate you on the resolution that you have just passed. I also congratulate the three comrades on the courage they have shown in pressing their amendments to a division, even though they knew that there was an overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution, and I congratulate the thirteen friends who voted against the resolution. In doing so, they had nothing to be ashamed of. For the last twenty years we have tried to learn not to lose courage even when we are in a hopeless minority and are laughed at. We have learned to hold on to our beliefs in the confidence that we are in the right. It behoves us to cultivate this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was, therefore, glad to see that these friends had imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.

Having congratulated them on their courage, let me say that what they asked this Committee to accept through their amendments was not the correct representation of the situation. These friends ought to have pondered over the appeal made to them by the Maulana to withdraw their amendments; they should have carefully followed the explanations given by Jawaharlal. Had they done so, it would have been clear to them that the right which they now want the Congress to concern has already been conceded by the Congress.

Time was when every Mussalman claimed the whole of India as his motherland. During the years that the Ali Brothers were with me, the assumption underlying all their talks and discussions was that India belonged as much to the Mussalmans as to the Hindus. I can testify to the fact that this was their innermost conviction and not a mask: I lived with them for years. I spent days and nights in their company. And I make bold to say that their utterances were

* Text of Speech at AICC Session Bombay, 8 August, 1942.

the honest expression of their beliefs. I know there are some who say that I take things too readily at their face value, that I am gullible. I do not think I am such a simpleton, nor am I so gullible as these friends take me to be. But their criticism does not hurt me. I should prefer to be considered gullible rather than deceitful.

What these Communist friends proposed through their amendments is nothing new. It has been repeated from thousands of platforms. Thousands of Mussalmans have told me that if the Hindu-Muslim Question was to be solved satisfactorily, it must be done in my lifetime. I should feel flattered at this; but how can I agree to a proposal which does not appeal to my reason? Hindu-Muslim unity is not a new thing. Millions of Hindus and Musalmans have sought after it. I consciously strove for its achievement from my boyhood. While at school, I made it a point to cultivate the friendship of Muslim and Parsi fellow students. I believed even at that tender age that the Hindus in India, if they wished to live in peace and amity with the other communities, should assiduously cultivate the virtue of [good] neighbourliness. It did not matter, I felt, if I made no special effort to cultivate the friendship with Hindus, but I must make friends with at least a few Musalmans. It was as counsel for a Mussalman merchant that I went to South Africa. I made friends with other Mussalmans there, even with the opponents of my client, and gained a reputation for integrity and good faith. I had among my friends and co-workers Muslims as well as Parsis. I captured their hearts and when I left finally for India, I left them sad and shedding tears of grief at the separation.

In India, too, I continued my efforts and left no stone unturned to achieve that unity. It was my life-long aspiration for it that made me offer my fullest co-operation to the Mussalmans in the Khilafat movement. Muslims throughout the country accepted me as their true friend.

How then is it that I have now come to be regarded as so evil and detestable. Had I any axe to grind in supporting the Khilafat movement? True, I did in my heart of hearts cherish a hope that it might enable me to save the cow. I am a worshipper of the cow. I believe the cow and myself to be the creation of the same God, and I am prepared to sacrifice my life in order to save the cow. But,

whatever my philosophy of life and my ultimate hopes, I joined the movement in no spirit of bargain. I co-operated in the struggle for the Khilafat solely in order to discharge my obligation to my neighbour who, I saw, was in distress. The Ali Brothers, had they been alive today, would have testified to the truth of this assertion. And so would many others bear me out in that it was not a bargain on my part for saving the cow. The cow, like the Khilafat, stood on her own merits. As an honest man, a true neighbour and a faithful friend, it was incumbent on me to stand by the Mussalmans in the hour of their trial.

In those days I shocked the Hindus by dining with the Mussalmans, though with the passage of time they have now got used to it. Maulana bari told me, however, that though he would insist on having me as his guest, he would not allow me to dine with him, lest some day he should be accused of a sinister motive. And so, whenever I had occasion to stay with him, he called a Brahmin cook and made special arrangements for separate cooking. Firangi Mahal, his residence, was an oldstyle structure with limited accommodation; yet he cheerfully bore all hardships and carried out his resolve from which I could not dislodge him. It was the spirit of courtesy, dignity and nobility that inspired us in those days. The members of each community vied with one another in accommodating members of sister communities. They respected one another's religious feelings, and considered it a privilege to do so. Not a trace of suspicion lurked in anybody's heart. Where has all that dignity, that nobility of spirit, disappeared now? I should ask all Mussalmans, including Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, to recall those glorious days and to find out what has brought us to the present impasse. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah himself was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath, it is because the canker of suspicion has entered his heart. May God bless him with long life, but when I am gone he will realize and admit that I had no designs on Mussalmans and that I had never betrayed their interests. Where is the escape for me if I injure their cause or betray their interests? My life is entirely at their disposal. They are free to put an end to it, whenever they wish to do so. Assaults have been made on my life in the past, but God has spared me till now, and the assailants have repented for their action. But if someone were to shoot me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he would kill not the real Gandhi, but the one that appeared to him a rascal.

To those who have been indulging in a campaign of abuse and vilification I would say, 'Islam enjoins you not to revile even an enemy. The Prophet treated even enemies with kindness and tried to win them over by his fairness and generosity. Are you followers of that Islam or of any other? If you are followers of the true Islam, does it behove you to distrust the words of one who makes a public declaration of his faith? You may take it from me that one day you will regret the fact that you distrusted and killed one who was a true and devoted friend of yours.' It cuts me to the quick to see that the more I appeal and the more the Maulana importunes, the more intense does the campaign of vilification grow. To me, these abuses are like bullets. They can kill me, even as a bullet can put an end to my life. You may kill me. That will not hurt me. But what of those who indulge in abusing? They bring discredit to Islam. For the fair name of Islam, I appeal to you to resist this unceasing campaign of abuse and vilification.

Maulana Saheb is being made a target for the filthiest abuse. Why? Because he refuses to exert on me the pressure of his friendship. He realizes, that it is a misuse of friendship to seek to compel a friend to accept as truth what he knows is an untruth.

To the Qaid-e-Azam I would say: 'Whatever is true and valid in the claim for Pakistan is already in your hands. What is wrong and untenable is in nobody's gift, so that it can be made over to you. Even if someone were to succeed in imposing an untruth on others, he would not be able to enjoy for long the fruits of such coercion. God dislikes pride and keeps away from it. God would not tolerate a forcible imposition of an untruth.'

The Qaid-e-Azam says that he is compelled to say bitter things but that he cannot help giving expression to his thoughts and his feelings. Similarly I would say: I consider myself a friend of the Mussalmans. Why should I then not give expression to the things nearest to my heart, even at the cost of displeasing them? How can I conceal my innermost thoughts from them? I should congratulate the Qaid-e-Azam on his frankness in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings, even if they sound bitter to his hearers. But even so why should the Mussalmans sitting here be reviled, if they do not see eye to eye with

him? If millions of Mussalmans are with you, can you not afford to ignore the handful of Mussalmans who may appear to you to be misguided ? Why should one with the following of several millions be afraid of a majority community, or of the minority being swamped by the majority ? How did the Prophet work among the Arabs and the Mussalmans ? How did he propagate Islam ? Did he say he would propagate Islam only when he commanded a majority ? I, therefore, appeal to you for the sake of Islam to ponder over what I say. There is neither fair play nor justice in saying that the Congress must accept a thing even if it does not believe in it and even if it goes counter to principles it holds dear.

Rajaji said : 'I do not believe in Pakistan. But Mussalmans ask for it, Mr. Jinnah asks for it, and it has become an obsession with them. Why not then say "yes" to them just now ? The same Mr. Jinnah will later on realize the disadvantages of Pakistan and will forgo the demand.' I said : 'It is not fair to accept as true a thing which I hold to be untrue and ask others to do so in the belief that the demand will not be pressed when the time comes for settling it finally. If I hold the demand to be just, I should concede it this very day. I should not agree to it merely in order to placate Jinnah Saheb. Many friends have come and asked me to agree to it for the time being to placate Mr. Jinnah, disarm his suspicions and to see how he reacts to it. But I cannot be party to a course of action with a false promise. At any rate, it is not my method.'

The Congress has no sanction but the moral one for enforcing its decisions. It believes that true democracy can only be the outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally abjured from world affairs. If this is true, the solution of the Hindu-Muslim question, too, cannot be achieved by resort to violence. If the Hindus tyrannize over the Mussalmans, with what face will they talk of a world federation ? It is for the same reason that I do not believe in the possibility of establishing world peace through violence as the English and American statesmen propose to do. The Congress has agreed to submitting all the differences to an impartial international tribunal and to abide by its decisions. If even this fairest of proposals is unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence. How can I persuade myself

to agree to an impossibility ? To demand the vivisection of a living organism is to ask for its very life. It is a call to war. The Congress cannot be party to such a fratricidal war. Those Hindus who, like Dr. Moonje and Shri Savarkar, believe in the doctrine of the sword may seek to keep the Mussalmans under Hindu domination. I do not represent that section. I represent the Congress. You want to kill the Congress which is the goose that lays golden eggs. If you distrust the Congress, you may rest assured that there is to be a perpetual war between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, and the country will be doomed to continue warfare and bloodshed. If such warfare is to be our lot, I shall not live to witness it.

It is for that reason that I say to Jinnah Saheb, You may take it from me that whatever in your demand for Pakistan accords with considerations of justice and equity is lying in your pocket; whatever in the demand is contrary to justice and equity you can take only by the sword and in no other manner.'

There is much in my heart that I would like to pour out before this assembly. One thing which was uppermost in my heart I have already dealt with. You may take it from me that it is with me a matter of life and death. If we Hindus and Mussalmans mean to achieve a heart unity, without the slightest mental reservation on the part of either, we must first unite in the effort to be free from the shackles of this Empire. If Pakistan after all is to be a portion of India, what objection can there be for Mussalmans against joining this struggle for India's freedom ? The Hindus and Mussalmans must, therefore, unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom. Jinnah Saheb thinks the war will last long. I do not agree with him. If the war goes on for six months more, how shall we be able to save China ?

I, therefore, want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. Freedom cannot now wait for the realization of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices necessary for it will have to be much greater than would have otherwise sufficed. But the Congress must win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. And forget not that the freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for the Congressmen alone but for all the forty crores of the Indian people. Congressmen must forever remain humble servants of the people.

The Qaid-e-Azam has said the Muslim League is prepared to take over the rule from the Britishers if they are prepared to hand it over to the Muslim League, for the British took over the Empire from the hands of the Muslims. This, however, will be Muslim raj. The offer made by Maulana Saheb and by me does not imply establishment of Muslim raj or Muslim domination. The Congress does not believe in the domination of any group or any community. It believes in democracy which includes in its orbit Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Jews every one of the communities inhabiting this vast country. If Muslim raj is inevitable, then let it be; but how can we give it the stamp of our assent? How can we agree to the domination of one community over the others?

Millions of Mussalmans in this country come from Hindu stock. How can their homeland be any other than India? My eldest son embraced Islam some years back. What would his homeland be—Porbander or the Punjab? I ask the Mussalmans: 'If India is not your homeland, what other country do you belong to? In what separate homeland would you put my son who embraced Islam?' His mother wrote him a letter after his conversion, asking him if he had on embracing Islam given up drinking which Islam forbids to its followers. To those who gloated over the conversion, she wrote to say: 'I do not mind his becoming a Mussalman so much as his drinking. Will you, as pious Mussalmans, tolerate his drinking even after his conversion? He has reduced himself to the state of a rake by drinking. If you are going to make a man of him again, his conversion will have been turned to good account. You will, therefore, please see that he as a Mussalman abjures wine and women. If that change does not come about, his conversion goes in vain and our non-cooperation with him will have to continue.'

India is without doubt the homeland of all the Mussalmans inhabiting this country. Every Mussalman should therefore co-operate in the fight for India's freedom. The Congress does not belong to anyone class or community; it belongs to the whole nation. It is open to Mussalmans to take possession of the Congress. They can, if they like, swamp the Congress by their numbers, and can steer it along the course which appeals to them. The Congress is fighting not on behalf of the Hindus but on behalf of the whole nation, including the minorities. It would hurt me to hear of a single instance of a Mussalman being killed by a

Congressman. In the coming revolution, Congressmen will sacrifice their lives in order to protect the Mussalman against a Hindu's attack and *vice versa*. It is a part of their creed, and is one of the essentials of non-violence. You will be expected on occasions like these not to lose your heads. Every Congressman, whether a Hindu or a Mussalman, owes this duty to the organization to which he belongs. The Mussalman who will act in this manner will render a service to Islam. Mutual trust is essential for success in the final nation-wide struggle that is to come.

I have said that much greater sacrifices will have to be made this time in the wake of our struggle because of the opposition from the Muslim League and from Englishmen. You have seen the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle. It is a suicidal course that he has taken. It contains an open incitement to organizations which crop up like mushrooms to combine to fight the Congress. We have thus to deal with an Empire whose ways are crooked. Ours is a straight path which we can tread even with our eyes closed. That is the beauty of satyagraha.

In Satyagraha, there is no place for fraud or falsehood, or any kind of untruth. Fraud and untruth today are stalking the world. I cannot be a helpless witness to such a situation. I have travelled all over India as perhaps nobody in the present age has. The voiceless millions of the land saw in me their friend and representative, and I identified myself with them to an extent it was possible for a human being to do. I saw trust in their eyes, which I now want to turn to good account in fighting this Empire upheld on untruth and violence. However gigantic the preparations that the Empire has made, we must get out of its clutches. How can I remain silent at this supreme hour and hide my light under the bushel? Shall I ask the Japanese to tarry a while? If today I sit quiet and inactive, God will take me to task for not using up the treasure he had given me, in the midst of the conflagration that is enveloping the whole world. Had the condition been different, I should have asked you to wait yet awhile. but the situation now has become intolerable, and the Congress has no other course left for it.

Nevertheless, the actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy

and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two or three weeks. What would you do in the mean while ? What is the programme, for the interval, in which all can participate ? As you know, the spinning-wheel is the first thing that occurs to me. I made the same answer to the Maulana. He would have none of it, though he understood its import later. The fourteenfold constructive programme is, of course, there for you to carry out. What more should you do ? I will tell you. Every one of you should, from this moment, onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman, and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism.

It is not a make-believe that I am suggesting to you. It is the very essence of freedom. The bond of the slave is snapped the moment he considers himself to be a free being. He will plainly tell the master : 'I was your bondsman till this moment, but I am a slave no longer. You may kill me if you like, but if you keep me alive, I wish to tell you that if you release me from the bondage of your own accord, I will ask for nothing more from you. You used to feed and clothe me, though I could have provided food and clothing for myself by my labour. I hitherto depended on you instead of on God, for food and raiment. God has now inspired me with an urge for freedom and I am today a free man and will no longer depend on you.

You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. [I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. Maybe, he will propose the abolition of salt tax, the drink evil, etc. But I will say : 'Nothing less than freedom.']

Here is a *mantra*, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is : 'Do or Die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery. Every true Congressman or [Congress] woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your pledge. Keep jails out of your consideration. If the Government keep me free, I will spare you the trouble of filling the jails. I will not put on the Government the strain of maintaining a

large number of prisoners at a time when it is in trouble. Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal. Take a pledge with God and your own conscience as witness, that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life will gain it; he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or the faint-hearted.

A word to the journalists. I congratulate you on the support you have hitherto given to the national demand. I know the restrictions and handicaps under which you have to labour. But I would now ask you to snap the chains that bind you. It should be the proud privilege of the newspapers to lead and set an example in laying down one's life for freedom. You have the pen which the Government can't suppress. I know you have large properties in the form of printing-presses, etc., and you would be afraid lest the Government should attach them. I do not ask you to invite an attachment of the printing-press voluntarily. For myself, I would not suppress my pen, even if the press was to be attached. As you know my press was attached in the past and returned later on. But I do not ask from you that final sacrifice. I suggest a middle way. You should now wind up your Standing Committee, and you may declare that you will give up writing under the present restrictions and take up the pen only when India has won her freedom. You may tell Sir Frederick Puckle that he can't expect from you a command performance, that his Press notes are full of untruth, and that you will refuse to publish them. You will openly declare that you are wholeheartedly with the Congress. If you do this, you will have changed the atmosphere before the fight actually begins.

From the Princes I ask with all respect due to them a very small thing. I am a well-wisher of the Princes. I was born in a State. My grandfather refused to salute with his right hand any Prince other than his own. But he did not say to the Prince, as I feel he ought to have said, that even his own master could not compel him, his minister, to act against his conscience. I have eaten the Princes' salt and I would not be false to it. As a faithful servant, it is my duty to warn the

Princes that if they will act while I am still alive, the Princes may come to occupy an honourable place in free India. In Jawaharlal's scheme of free India, no privileges or the privileged classes have a place. Jawaharlal considers all property to be State-owned. He wants planned economy. He wants to reconstruct India according to plan. He likes to fly; I do not. I have kept a place for the Princes and the zamindars in India that I envisage. I would ask the Princes in all humility to enjoy through renunciation. The Princes may renounce ownership over their properties and become their trustees in the true sense of the term. I visualize God in the assemblage of people. The Princes may say to their people : 'You are the owners and masters of the State and we are your servants.' I would ask the Princes to become servants of the people and render to them an account of their own services. The Empire too bestows power on the Princes, but they should prefer to derive power from their own people; and if they want to indulge in some innocent pleasures, they may seek to do so as servants of the people I do not want the Princes to live as paupers. But I would ask them : 'Do you want to remain slaves for all time? Why should you, instead of paying homage to a foreign power, not accept the sovereignty of your own people ?' You may write to the Political Department : 'The people are now awake. How are we to withstand an avalanche before which even the large Empires are crumbling ? We, therefore, shall belong to the people from today onwards. We shall sink or swim with them.' Believe me, there is nothing unconstitutional in the course I am suggesting. There are, so far as I know, no treatie enabling the Empire to coerce the Princes. The people of the States will also declare that though they are the Princes' subjects, they are part of the Indian nation and that they will accept the leadership of the Princes, if the latter cast their lot with the People, but not otherwise. If this declaration enrages the Princes and they choose to kill the people, the latter will meet death bravely and unflinchingly, but will not go back on their word.

Nothing, however, should be done secretly. This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin. A free man would not engage in secret movement. It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a C.I.D. of your own, in spite of my advise to the contrary. But in the present struggle, we have to work openly and to receive the bullets on our chest, without taking to heels.

I have a word to say to the Government servants also. They may not, if they like, resign their posts yet. The late Justice Ranade did not resign his post, but he openly declared that he belonged to the Congress. He said to the Government that though he was a judge, he was a Congressman and would openly attend the sessions of the Congress, but that at the same time he would not let his political views warp his impartiality on the bench. He held Social Reform Conference in the very pandal of the Congress. I would ask all the Government servants to follow in the footsteps of Ranade and to declare their allegiance to the Congress, as an answer to the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle.

This is all that I ask of you just now. I will now write to the Viceroy. You will be able to read the correspondence not just now but when I publish it with the Viceroy's consent. But you are free to aver that you support the demand to be put forth in my letter. A judge came to me and said : "We get secret circulars from high quarters. What are we to do ?" I replied, "If I were in your place, I would ignore the circulars. You may openly say to the Government : 'I have received your secret circular. I am, however, with the Congress. Though I serve the Government for my livelihood, I am not going to obey these secret circulars or to employ underhand methods.' "

Soldiers too are covered by the present programme. I do not ask them just now to resign their posts and leave the army. Soldiers come to me, Jawaharlal and to the Maulana and say : "We are wholly with you. We are tired of the governmental tyranny." To these soldiers I would say : "You may say to the Government, 'Our hearts are with the Congress. We are not going to leave our posts. We will serve you so long as we receive your salaries. We will obey your just orders, but will refuse to fire on our own people.' "

To those who lack the courage to do this much I have nothing to say. They will go their own way. But if you can do this much, you may take it from me that the whole atmosphere will be electrified. Let the Government then shower bombs, if they like. But no power on earth will then be able to keep you in bondage any longer.

If the students want to join the struggle only to go back to their studies after a while, I would not invite them to it. For the present, however, till the time that I frame a programme for the struggle, I would ask the students to say to their professors : 'We belong to the Congress. Do you belong to the Congress or to the Government ? If you belong to the Congress, you need not vacate your posts. You will remain at your posts but teach us and lead us unto freedom.' In all fights for freedom, the world over, the students have made very large contributions.

If in the interval that is left to us before the actual fight begins, you do even the little I have suggested to you, you will have changed the atmosphere and will have prepared the ground for the next step.

There is much I should yet like to say. But my heart is heavy. I have already taken up much of your time. I have yet to say a few words in English also. I thank you for the patience and attention with which you have listened to me even at this late hour. It is just what true soldiers would do. For the last twenty-two years, I have controlled my speech and pen and have stored up my energy. He is a true *brahmachari* who does not fritter away his energy. He will, therefore, always control his speech. That has been my conscious effort all these years. But today the occasion has come when I had to unburden my heart before you. I have done so, even though it meant putting a strain on your patience; and I do not regret having done it. I have given you my message and through you I have delivered it to the whole of India.

I have taken such an inordinately long time over pouring out what was agitating my soul to those whom I had just now the privilege of serving. I have been called their leader or, in military language, their commander. But I do not look at my position in that light. I have no weapon but love to wield my authority over anyone. I do sport a stick which you can break into bits without the slightest exertion. It is simply my staff with the help of which I walk. Such a cripple is not elated, when he is called upon to bear the greatest burden. You can share that burden only when I appear before you not as your commander but as a humble servant. And he who serves best is the chief among equals.

Therefore I was bound to share with you, such thoughts as were welling up in my breast and tell you in as summary a manner as I can, what I expect you to do as the first step.

Let me tell you at the outset that the real struggle does not commence today. I have yet to go through much ceremonial as I always do. The burden is almost unbearable and I have got to continue to reason in those circles with whom I have lost my credit for the time being. I know that in the course of the last few weeks I have forfeited my credit with a large number of friends, so much so that some of them have now begun to doubt not only my wisdom but even my honesty. Now, I hold that my wisdom is not such a treasure which I cannot afford to lose; but my honesty is a precious treasure to me and I can ill afford to lose it.

Such occasions arise in the life of a man who is a pure seeker after truth and who would seek to serve humanity and his country to the best of his lights without fear or hypocrisy. For the last fifty years I have known no other way. I have been a humble servant of humanity and have rendered on more than one occasion such service as I could to the Empire; and here let me say without fear of challenge that throughout my career never have I asked for any personal favour. I have enjoyed the privilege of friendship, as I enjoy it today, with Lord Linlithgow. It is a friendship which has outgrown official relationship. Whether Lord Linlithgow will bear me out I do not know; but there has sprung up a personal bond between him and myself. He once introduced me to his daughter. His son-in-law, the A.D.C., was drawn towards me. He fell in love with Mahadev more than with me, and Lady Anne and he came to me. She is an obedient and favourite daughter. I take interest in their welfare. I take the liberty to give out these titbits only to give you an earnest view of the personal bond which exists between us. And yet let me declare here that no personal bond will ever interfere with the stubborn struggle which, if it falls to my lot, I may have to launch against Lord Linlithgow, as the representative of the Empire. It seems to me that I will have to resist the might of that Empire with the might of the dumb millions, with no limit but non-violence as policy confined to this struggle. It is a terrible job to have to offer resistance to a Viceroy with whom I enjoy such relations. He

has more than once trusted my word, often about my people. I mention this with great pride and pleasure. I mention it as an earnest of my desire to be true to the British nation, to be true to the Empire. I mention it to testify that when that Empire forfeited my trust, the Englishman who was its Viceroy came to know it.

Then there is the sacred memory of Charlie Andrews which wells up within me at this moment. The spirit of Andrews hovers about me. For me he sums up the brightest tradition of English culture. I enjoyed closer relations with him than with most Indians. I enjoyed his confidence. There were no secrets between us. We exchanged our hearts every day. Whatever was in his heart he would blurt out without the slightest hesitation or reservation. It is true he was friend of Gurudev, but he looked upon Gurudev with awe, not that Gurudev wanted it. Andrews had that peculiar humility. But with me he became the closest friend. Years ago he came to South Africa with a note of introduction from the late Gokhale. He is unfortunately gone. He was a fine Englishman. I know that the spirit of Andrews is listening to me.

Then I have received a warm telegram from the Metropolitan of Calcutta, Dr. Westcott conveying his blessings, though, I know, he is opposed to my move today. I hold him to be a man of God. I can understand the language of his heart, and I know that his heart is with me.

With this background, I want to declare to the world that, whatever may be said to the contrary, and although I might have forfeited the regard and even the trust of many friends in the West, and I bow my head low, but even for their friendship or their love, I must not suppress the voice within, call it 'conscience', call it the 'prompting of my inner basic nature'. There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology though I have not read many books on it. Such a man knows exactly what it is. That something in me which never deceives me tells me now : 'You have to stand against the whole world although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face although the world may look at you with bloodshot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that little thing which resides in the heart.' It says, 'Forsake friends, wife, and all; but testify to that for which you have lived, and for which you have to die.'

Believe me, friends, I am not anxious to die. I want to live my full span of life. According to me, it is 120 years at least. By that time India will be free, the world will be free. Let me tell you, too, that I do not regard England, or for that matter America, as free countries. They are free after their own fashion, free to hold in bondage the coloured races of the earth. Are England and America fighting for the liberty of these races today? You shall not limit my concept of freedom. The English and American teachers, their history and their magnificent poetry have not said you shall not broaden the interpretation of that freedom. And according to my interpretation of that freedom, I am constrained to say, they are strangers to that freedom which their poets and teachers have described. If they will know the real freedom, they should come to India. They have to come not with pride or arrogance but in the spirit of earnest seekers of Truth.

It is the fundamental truth with which India has been experimenting for 22 years. Unconsciously, from its very foundations long ago, the Congress has departed though non-violently from what is known as the constitutional method. Dadabhai and Pherozshah who held the Congress India in the palm of their hands had held on to the latter. They were lovers of the Congress. They were its masters. But above all they were real servants. They never countenanced murder and secrecy and the like. I confess there are many black sheep amongst us Congressmen. But I trust the whole of India to launch upon a non-violent struggle on the widest scale. I trust the innate goodness of human nature which perceives the truth and prevails during a crisis as if by instinct. But even if I am deceived in this, I shall not swerve. From its very inception the Congress based its policy on peaceful methods, and the subsequent generations added non-co-operation. When Dadabhai entered the British Parliament, Salisbury dubbed him as a black man, but the English people defeated Salisbury, and Dadabhai, went to Parliament by their vote. India was delirious with joy. These things, however, now India has outgrown.

It is with all these things as the background that I want Englishmen, Europeans and all the United Nations to examine in their heart of hearts what crime India has committed in demanding independence today. I ask: Is it right for you to distrust us? Is it right to distrust such an organization with all its

background, tradition and record of over half a century and misrepresent its endeavours before all the world by every means at your command? Is it right, I ask, that by hook or crook, aided by the Foreign Press, aided, I hope not, by the President of the U.S.A. or even by the Generalissimo of China, who has yet to win his laurels, you should present India's stand in shocking lights?

I have met the Generalissimo. I have known him through Madam Chiang who was my interpreter, and though he seemed inscrutable to me, not so Madam Chiang. And he allowed me to read his mind through her. He has not as yet said that we were wrong in demanding our independence. There is a chorus of disapproval and protest all over the world against us. They say we are erring, the move is inopportune. I had great regard for the British, but now British diplomacy stinks in my nostrils. Yet others are learning their lessons. They may succeed in getting, through these methods, world opinion on their side for a time; but India will raise her voice against all the organized propaganda. I will speak against it. Even if the whole of the world forsakes me, I will say: 'You are wrong. India will wrench with non-violence her liberty from unwilling hands.'

Even if my eyes close and there is no freedom for India, non-violence will not end. They will be dealing a mortal blow to China and to Russia if they oppose the freedom of non-violent India which today is pleading with bended knees for the fulfilment of a debt long overdue. Does a creditor ever go to the debtor like that? And even when India is met with such angry opposition, she says: 'We won't hit below the belt. We have learnt sufficient gentlemanliness. We are pledged to non-violence.' I have been the author of the non-embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet today you find me talking this strong language. My non-embarrassment plea was always qualified by the proviso 'consistent with our honour and safety'. If a man holds me by the neck and wants to drown me, may I not struggle to free myself directly? There is no inconsistency in our position today.

There are representatives of the Foreign Press assembled here today. Through them I wish to say to the world that United Nations, who say that they have need for India, have the opportunity now to declare India free and prove

their *bona fides*. If they miss it, they will be missing opportunity of their lifetime, and history will record that they did not discharge their obligations to India in time and lost the battle. I want the blessing of the whole world, so that I may succeed with them. I do not want the United Powers to go beyond their obvious limitations. I do not want them to accept non-violence and disarm today. There is a fundamental difference between Fascism and even this imperialism which I am fighting. Do the British get from India all they want? What they get today is from the India which they hold in bondage. Think what difference it would make if India was to participate as a free ally. That freedom, if it is to come, must come today. It will have no taste left in it if today you, who have power to help, do not exercise it. If you can exercise it, what seems impossible today will, under the glow of freedom, become possible tomorrow. If India feels that freedom, she will command that freedom for China. The road for running to Russia's help will be opened. Englishmen did not die in Malaya or on the soil of Burma. What shall enable us to retrieve this situation? Where shall I go and where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this vast mass of humanity to be aflame in the cause of world-deliverance, unless and until it has touched and felt freedom? Today they have no touch of life left. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre is to be put into their eyes, freedom has to come not tomorrow but today. I have, therefore, pledged the Congress and the Congress has pledged herself that she will do or die.

II

DETAILED ACTION PLAN PUT FORTH BY GANDHIJI

On the day of the hartal, no processions should be taken out, nor meetings held in the cities. All people should observe a twenty-four hours fast and offer prayers. If the owners of shops approve of our satyagraha struggle, they will all close their shops, but no one should be made to close his shop under coercion. In the villages, however, where there is no fear of violence or disturbance, meetings may be held and processions taken out and responsible Congressmen who believe in mass civil disobedience should explain the meaning of the contemplated satyagraha struggle to the people. The object of our satyagraha is to secure the

withdrawal of British rule and the attainment of independence for the whole of India. After the withdrawal of British rule, the constitution of the future government of the country will be settled by the joint deliberation of the whole nation, including all parties. That government will belong not to the Congress, nor to any particular group or party, but to the entire thirty-five crores of the people of India. All Congressmen should make it clear that it will not be the rule of the Hindus or of any particular community. It should also be well explained that this satyagraha is not directed against Englishmen but against British rule only, for we regard no one as our enemy. This should be brought home to villagers.

The local Congress workers should send their reports about the hartal and other activities to their provincial Congress committees and the latter to the central Congress office. In case, the leader in a particular place is arrested by the Government, another should be chosen in his place. Every province would make necessary arrangements suited to its particular circumstances. And in the last resort, every Congressman is his own leader and a servant of the whole nation. A final word : no one should think that those whose names are on the Congress register are the only Congressmen. Let every Indian, who desires the freedom for the whole of India and fully believes in the weapon of truth and non-violence for the purpose of this struggle, regard himself as a Congressman and act as such. If anybody has the spirit of communalism or harbours hatred or ill will in his heart against any Indian or Englishman, he will best help the struggle by keeping aloof. Such an individual will hinder the cause by joining the struggle.

Every satyagrahi should understand before joining the struggle that he is to ceaselessly carry on the struggle till independence is achieved. He should vow that he will be free or die. Those employed in Government offices, Government factories, railways, post offices, etc., may not participate in the hartal, because our object is to make it clear that we will never tolerate Japanese, Nazi or Fascist invasion, nor British rule. Therefore, we shall not for the present interfere in the above-mentioned Government departments. But an occasion may certainly arise, when we shall ask all those people who are employed in the Government offices to give up their positions and join the satyagraha struggle. But all Congress

members in the central and the provincial assemblies ought to vacate their seats and come out forthwith. In case, an attempt is made to fill their places with enemies of the country's freedom or henchmen of the British Government, local Congressmen should be put up to oppose their election. The same applies to Congress members of municipalities and other public bodies. As conditions in different provinces are not the same, every provincial Congress committee shall make arrangements suited to its special circumstances.

If any Government servant is called upon to perpetrate excesses or injustice, it will be his clear duty to resign at once, giving the real reasons. The free Indian Government will be under no obligation to continue in its service all those Government functionaries who are at present serving the empire on huge salaries; nor will it be under an obligation to continue the large pensions which are being drawn at present.

All students reading in institutions conducted or controlled by the Government should come out of these institutions. Those who are above sixteen years of age should join the satyagraha. Those who so leave these institutions should do so with a clear understanding that they are not to return to them until independence is achieved. There should be no coercion whatsoever in this matter. Only those who of their own free will wish to do so should come out. No good can come out of coercion.

If excesses are committed in any place by the Government, the people should offer resistance and endure the penalty. For instance, if the villagers, labourers or householders are ordered to vacate their farms or homes, they should flatly refuse to obey such orders. If an adequate compensation is offered or if they are suitably provided for by grant of land, etc., elsewhere, they may vacate their farms or homes. Here there is no question of civil disobedience, but simply of refusing to submit to coercion or injustice. We do not want to hinder military activities, but neither shall we submit to arbitrary high-handedness.

The salt tax causes great hardship to the poor. Therefore, wherever salt can be made, the poor people may certainly manufacture it for themselves and risk the penalty.

Land tax is due only to a government which we recognize as our own. It is long since we have mentally ceased to recognize the existing Government as such, but until now we have not gone to the length of refusing the payment of land tax because we felt that the country was not prepared to go so far. But the time has now come when those who have the courage and are prepared to risk their all, should refuse to pay it. The Congress holds that the land belongs to those who work on it and to no one else. If they part with a share of the produce to anyone, it is for the furtherance of their own interests. There are various systems of collecting land revenue. Where the zamindari system prevails, the zamindars pay the tax to the Government and the ryot to the zamindar. In such cases, if the zamindar makes common cause with the ryot, his portion of the revenue, which may be settled by mutual agreement, should be given to him. But if a zamindar wants to side with the Government, no tax should be payed to him. This will, in the immediate present, spell ruin to the ryot. Therefore, only those who are prepared to face utter ruin should refuse payment of land revenue.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

(i) On Quit India Resolution

The conception of the resolution is not narrow nationalism, but it has an international background. The arguments for the resolution have already been sufficiently put before the public. I am sure the *bona fides* of the resolution have been fully understood by all friends. The resolution is in no sense a challenge to anyone. If the British Government accept the proposal it would change the positions both internal and international, for the better from every point of view. The position of China would be improved. I am convinced that whatever change might come about in India, it must be for the better. The A.I.C.C. knows that Mahatma Gandhi has agreed that the British and other foreign armed forces stationed in India may continue. This has been agreed to in order not to allow the Japanese to come in.

I am surprised how intelligent people in England and America could have misunderstood the Congress stand unless, of course, they deliberately chose to misunderstand it. I have regretfully come to the conclusion that to some extent other governments are also following the British line of thought towards India. Today, the British Government is opposed to the Indian national movement for freedom. I am convinced that the British Government can never really think in terms of advancing the cause of the freedom of India unless, of course, the entire character of the present British Government is changed. I am not personally concerned with such a change, but I stand for dissociating myself with that government and that country. It is not for me to advise the British people what government they should have.

* Text of Speech at AICC Session, Bombay, 7 August, 1942.

There is a great deal of criticism in America, too, about what India wants. We are accused, by some newspapers, that we are blackmailing. It is a curious charge for a people to make who themselves had for generations carried on a struggle for freedom. If for demanding freedom we are called blackmailers then surely our understanding of the English language has been wrong. Whatever may happen in Whitehall, it is not going to stop us from working for our independence. We live for it and will die for it. I do not want to say anything at the present moment which might add to the feeling of bitterness that exists everywhere. I know that this War has produced great emotional reactions in people's minds which is one of the worst effects of the War and which makes it very difficult for the people to think straight and not to think in terms of violent hatred.

Nobody in Whitehall can think straight, I suppose. There is falsity everywhere. You listen to the radios, London, Berlin or Tokyo. One does not know what is the truth. I am prepared to make many allowances for the emotional background in England and America. I do not really mind if people there get angry. But I feel sorry for the people in England and America who have a perverted way of looking at the Indian question. They are so wrong that they will certainly land themselves in difficulty. After all, just think what would have been the course of history, particularly that of Britain, if she had taken right steps with regard to India in the last two years. If Britain had acted rightly, the entire history of the War would have been different. But in spite of perils and disasters, England has stuck to her imperialism and Empire. The fact is patent to me that the British Government and, for certain, the Government of India think the Indian National Congress to be their enemy number one. If the Government of India is going to treat the people of India like this, then we also know how to behave with them. We have seen in the last few months an unparalleled example of inefficiency and incompetency of this government. The whole system is a rotten one. I do not want to associate myself with the creaking, shaking machinery that the Government of India is. As for the so-called National War Front, there is neither the nation, nor the war, nor any front in it. All that this front is now doing is opposing the Congress. I certainly do not mind that. The whole Government of India is built that way. The only occasion when it does function

effectively and efficiently is when overnight it starts rounding up large numbers of people. One of these days some such efficient functioning will reappear against Congressmen!

It is curious tangle that we are in. It is not going to be resolved by shouting or by the approaches of the British Government. May I, with all respect, suggest to the great people of America that they have all gone wrong in regard to India, China and the whole of Asia. Americans have looked upon India as an appendage to Britain, and Asia as the dependent of Europe and America. Some of them have thought in terms of benevolence towards these countries, but always with a taint of racial superiority. They have always considered themselves, because of their inventions during this machine age, to be infinitely better than us and also, that we are a benighted backward people. But the people of Asia do not propose to be treated in that manner any longer. Asia is the mother continent of the world, and India and China constitute the real mother countries of the world. What is the good of such people, who, simply because they have some very great material achievements to their credit, have forgotten or are not learning the very essence and art of living? They have built and are building better motor cars. This is a machine age. We will also learn to build machines—better machines. Americans have forgotten the magnificent achievements of China and India. It is China and India, with the experience of ages, who have learned the art of living decently even without the material achievements considered necessary for such living.

I hate poverty. My grievance against the British is that they have made Indians miserable, poverty-stricken wrecks of humanity. We are now taking a step from which there will be no going back. If there is goodwill on the other side, then everything would be all right and the whole course of the War and the future of the world would be changed. The change would be not merely emotional but in the material sense also. But that is not to be. There might be some difficulty. It is my conviction that this resolution is the only way, the effective way, in which we can help China and Russia and I know how terrible the situation is there. Britain and America must change their whole conception of the War. It is no good looking at Asia as a side-show. Asia is the centre of the War and it is

Asia that is going to determine the final result of the War. Therefore, I want to prepare today, even at some risk and peril, so that the final result of the War should be the right kind of result. We must go forward even though it involves certain perils. I should like my friends, who do not agree with this resolution or who do not try to understand it, to respect our *bona fides*. People should realise that if there is any trouble in India, it is we who would suffer. If there is internal trouble or an external invasion by Japan, it is we who would suffer. England might be distantly affected but we will have to die immediately. The problem of meeting aggression concerns us deeply. How can I, after seeing the incompetence of the government, trust them? Their whole attitude is one of retreat. We, however, want to be valiant fighters. It is not a narrow nationalist resolution. I am proud of Indian nationalism because it is broadbased and has an international background.

The movement contemplated is not for merely achieving national ends but for achieving world freedom. The Congress is plunging into a stormy ocean and it would emerge either with a free India or go down. Unlike in the past, it is not going to be a movement for a few days, to be suspended and talked over. It is going to be a fight to the finish. The Congress has now burnt its boats and is about to embark on a desperate campaign. I can never persuade myself to work with a government which has neither vision nor intelligence. Nor would I remain a passive spectator of the great happenings that are taking place in the world. It appears to me, perhaps, I would live in eternal opposition to the Axis powers. I repudiate the suggestion that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi are bargaining and haggling. In moments of excitement people are prone to say certain things, but this should not be dubbed as bargaining. How, by granting India's independence, would the war efforts of the United Nations be hampered or how would chaos and anarchy follow in India? The resolution does not give out even one-tenth of the real feelings of the Indians towards the British Government.

(ii) Offer of Cooperation

The debate on this resolution is over and I have also had my say. There are just a few points which I have partly said and partly not said—which I would like to say in English for the benefit of my friends who may not have followed me.

What is the resolution? You have seen and read it. It is not a threat. It is an invitation. It is an explanation. It is an offer of co-operation. It is all that. It is not a threat but still behind it there is the obvious warning that certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of cooperation but of a free India with other free peoples. There is going to be no cooperation on any other terms. On any other terms this resolution can only promise conflict and struggle. Let that be clear. Some of our friends abroad may think that we are acting unwisely. I do not blame them. They move in their own environment. I want them to realise what we are saying. We are in dead earnest about the course we are going to adopt. Let there be no doubt about it. You may occasionally cheer and clap but the fact is that we are on the brink of a precipice and we are in dead earnest about it. I think this resolution of ours is not only a resolution of the All India Congress Committee but it does represent—as on many other occasions our resolutions have represented—the voice of India. I would even go a step further and say that it represents the voice of the entire oppressed humanity. If, by a miracle, Britain had accepted this resolution and acted according to its demands you would have seen such a wonderful change, not only in India but all over the world. It would have changed the whole nature of the War. It would have given it a real revolutionary background which it does not bear today.

Now, remember that the essential thing about this War is that it is something infinitely more than a war; it is a World War. That is big enough; but it is bigger than that: it is a part of, and prelude to, and precursor of a vast revolution that is enveloping the whole world. This War may end or it may be carried on for some time, but no peace will be established, no equilibrium attained until this revolution runs its appointed course. Our misfortune has been that the leaders in the West

did not realize the revolutionary significance of this War, or if they realized, they did not act accordingly. They are still carrying on in the same old way and think only in terms of more tanks and more aeroplanes. Probably in their position I would have done the same thing. They are not thinking of the vast surge of the elemental emotion of humanity. Unless they do this, they can never attain success. I hope they will learn, but, sometimes, I fear, that they will learn it too late.

Mr. Churchill and other Englishmen have not got over thinking in terms of the Anglo-Saxon race. In a recent speech Mr. Churchill visualised the day when the Anglo-Saxon race would march through the world in dignity and majesty. This is not a pleasant picture to contemplate and it is a thing not going to be tolerated by Asia at any rate. Let that be clear. There is too much talk of majesty and dignity of the Anglo-Saxon race or the German race or the Italian race. There are other races also in the world and we have had enough of such talks. This racial superiority can no more be tolerated. We are going to cooperate with the British when we think it right to do so and when there is a right cause; but we are not going to act with them if we think that the cause is not right. At the present time, the Allied cause is only negatively right in the sense that Germany and Japan are worse. But Indian freedom would change the whole nature of the War and make it right positively. Even the people of Nazi Germany and those who are helping the Germans would feel the impact of the change. It would be a turning point of the War. But they simply talk about their own problems which have no significance for us and ask us not to do this and that and go on in their own ruts. The people in England, America and elsewhere are looking at every question from the narrow standpoint of a soldier. And it does not matter to them how other people view the Indian question. India says something which we believe—and I honestly believe—is not only in the interest of India but enormously in the interest of the Allied cause provided they accept it. They talk about blackmailing and threaten us. I can only tell them that we will not be deterred from our course by any amount of threats. On the other hand the Westerners ought to realise that at this stage threats could only make the position infinitely worse and more difficult for them. We have decided to take this course on which there is no going back. I repeat again : we shall try to remain calm. We have got

big tasks ahead—a big task for our country, and a big task for the world. Whether we function as Indian National Congress or not, time may come when each individual will represent the Indian National Congress and work on his own. We must not in the excitement of the movement forget our high aims and objectives—high aims for India whose freedom we consider precious, and high aims and objectives with regard to the whole world. We are nationalists and we are proud of this fact. But we should not settle down to a narrow nationalism. We should always remember that we have to develop a right type of internationalism, but not pseudo-internationalism of the present-day world or of the League of Nations.

I beg everybody to consider this resolution in this spirit. Whether there are internal perils or external perils, after all, if the Japanese reach this country, you and I will suffer and not the people in London and Washington. You and I will have to die, face the situation, may have to face untold miseries and sufferings—we will have to face all that. People talk to us from Washington, New York and various other places. You know what Japan is. We know what subjection is and we know it better than Americans and Englishmen. We have had it for about two hundred years. We have come to the decision that it is better to throw off the fetters into the fire and come out as a free nation than be reduced to ashes.

We are prepared to pay any price for unity except the price of independence. What obstructions have not been placed in our path which have had no relation to the real issue? I can talk and negotiate with anybody who recognises the need for democratic freedom for India, but I cannot negotiate with anyone who refuses to recognise the fundamental issue—the freedom of India. I was told during the Cripps negotiations that a certain leader insisted on behalf of Muslims that the Viceroy's power of veto should not be removed or in any way qualified. If any section wants that the British Viceroy should exercise his veto power against the decisions of his Indian cabinet, it means clearly that that section is against the freedom of India. I do not want to injure anyone's feelings especially at a time when we are about to launch a great struggle for freedom. I tried, for one whole year, to find out what the League wanted, but I was unable to understand what they wanted.

I have not been able to find a parallel to such a situation in the history of the world. I have not come across anywhere else such a situation except in the land of Hitler. The Sudeten crisis bears similarity to the situation here. For purposes of negotiations we were not allowed to select our own representatives. We are told that we cannot send Muslims to represent the Congress. This is an insult to our great organization and to our revered President. We were prepared to stake everything consistent with our dignity and self-respect for finding a satisfactory settlement. Whenever we knocked at the doors we found them bolted, and we knocked ourselves against a wall. Are we beggars to be treated like this? Are we going to be so dishonourable as to sacrifice the mansion of Indian freedom which we want to build? Are we going to be kicked about by men who have made no sacrifice for the freedom of India and who can never think in terms of freedom at all?

Our conscience is clear. We have done everything that is humanly possible for arriving at a settlement. The Muslim masses are not reactionary. We have made strenuous and sincere attempts to resolve the communal issue, but all our attempts have either been sabotaged or frustrated. The chief difficulty is that the problem is more political than communal.

MAULANA AZAD*

Explaining the full meaning of the resolution coming up before the committee, the Congress President, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, in the course of a hundred minutes speech, said :

“What this resolution says is this :- Let us not depend upon promises. Let us have a declaration of Indian Independence forthwith and we, on our part, shall immediately enter into a Treaty of Alliance with the United Nations for the sole purpose of fighting and winning this war.”

Maulana Azad added : “This is the crux of our demand and there is no need unnecessarily to cloud the issue by raising fears of anarchy and chaos. If the British Government is earnest about this and true to its professions regarding India’s freedom, this can be done immediately. This is what we are asking the United Nations to do and I proclaim from this platform that the newly freed India will wholeheartedly be with the United Nations in the fight against all aggression.”

Referring to Sir *Stafford Cripps’* latest statement, *Maulana Azad* said that it was absurd to suggest that “we want anarchy and complete absence of government in this country. What we want is a change of administration. It is also wrong to any that we want the British and American armies to leave India. Mahatma Gandhi has explained this times without number. The slogan ‘Quit India’, means nothing more and nothing less than the complete transfer of power to Indian hand.”

Maulana Azad explained at length the Working Committee’s Wardha resolution as well as the recent resolution reiterating the Congress demand afresh, and said, “Whatever we have to do on both sides let us do it now.”

* Excerpts from his Speech at AICC Session, Bombay, 7 August, 1942.

Opening the proceedings, Maulana Azad referred to the Allahabad session of the A.I.C.C. and said that the decision taken then was impelled by necessity. They might forget everything but they could not forget the decision taken then. On the failure of the Cripps Mission, the only course open to them was to take the decision reached at Allahabad, namely, that for the effective defence of the country against foreign aggression the only course was to have the reins of Government in Indian hands. When a nation was denied such authority it could not effectively resist foreign aggression.

The menace of aggression to India was ever-increasing and the danger which was only a distant one a few months ago was fast approaching them. In the face of such danger it would be a calamity to allow the people to remain sullen and down-hearted. The Congress wanted to see that every Indian youth took part in resisting aggression. If the people of India were indifferent and sullen the responsibility was not that of the Congress but that of the British Government. Appeals during the last three years to set up a National Government in India had been rejected by the British Government.

If events had been allowed by the British to take a different shape, Indians would have been whole-heartedly engaged in the war. The British attitude was one of not allowing Indians an opportunity to put their heart into the war in the service of humanity.

In the circumstances, said Maulana Azad, there were two alternatives before the country. The first was to wait for events that might happen. The second was to act and save the country from the threatened invasion. In order to instil enthusiasm into the people, they must be made to feel that in participating in the war they would be defending their own hearths and homes. One could not expect them to fight with sincerity unless they were sure that they were fighting for the protection of their own freedom.

The Congress, Maulana Azad emphasised, had already declared that its sympathies were with the Democracies, but there was no other way of saving India than by bringing about a political change in the country. With the imminence of the danger from Japan it was no longer so much a question of India's freedom

but of India's protection. The fundamental test of the Congress demand, if it was granted, was whether it would hamper the effective prosecution of the war. With all the responsibility which rested on him as Congress President, he had not the slightest hesitation in saying that freedom would mean a new life in their war effort and the change would not endanger the cause of the United Nations. It must necessarily help the cause and the purpose of the war. It had to be remembered that what they wanted was that the reins of Government should be in Indian hands. They did not demand the withdrawal of the Allied forces, although Independence would entitle India to demand the withdrawal of such forces also from the country. But they did realise that such a demand was not practicable. They wanted the successful termination of the war in favour of the Democracies.

If conditions were different they would not have hesitated to demand the complete withdrawal of the British from India, even if it meant exposing the country to the dangers of anarchy and civil war. The demand which was being put forward for a political change in the country was not of such a nature as to upset civil administration and law and order. They wanted a change which would help the prosecution of the war and not bring about chaos. If fair play and justice prevailed, the British Government and their Allies would not find their demand such as would bring about chaos and disorder in the country. It was sheer travesty to interpret the Congress Demand in the manner interpreted by *Sir Stafford Cripps*.

The Congress President explained that the "Quit India" demand did not mean the physical removal of all the Britishers from India. It only meant the transfer of political power to Indian hands. After the demand had been originally made by *Gandhiji* both *Pandit Nehru* and himself went to Wardha to discuss the matter with *Gandhiji* who made it clear to them that it only meant the transfer of power.

Continuing Mr. Azad said that events had reached such a pass that there was no time either for threats or for promises. They must face facts reasonably and act instantly. The Congress did not want promises nor did they want to

make promises. The need of the hour was action and action right now on the part of the Congress as well as the British Government. Let the British Government sign India's Independence and simultaneously, "we will sign our agreement with the United Nations to fight along with them against all aggressors." He could say with all the emphasis at his command and speaking with the responsibility attached to the Congress Presidentship that they would be prepared to sign such an agreement. But were the intentions of the British Government honest? Were they willing to grant the Independence of India?

SARDAR PATEL*

Seconding the Resolution moved by Pandit Nehru at the AICC Session, Bombay on 7th August, 1942 Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel pointed out that in the last few days since they passed the resolution in the Working Committee, the outside world had suddenly developed an enormous interest in India. They were not getting more publicity than they could ever get all these years even by spending money. They were now getting advice freely from those whom they had no concern and who had evinced no interest in India so long. Some were giving advice, some were threatening, and some who professed to be friends of India, were declaring that their action would not be in India's good. But he did not want to give any answer to any of these criticism and advice for the simple reason that whatever answer he could give them would not reach them. The normal channel of publicity that were available were not in their control and were not open to them. Only such things as were palatable to the Government were allowed to go out of India.

Sardar Patel declared that if America and England were still thinking that they could fight their enemies from India without the co-operation of four hundreds millions of people, they were foolish. It must dawn on the people that this war was a people's war and they should fight for their country and their freedom. As long as this feeling was non-existent no amount of propaganda through the newspapers and the radio could rouse the people to a supreme effort.

For three years, the Congress was scrupulously adhering to their policy of non-embarrassment and did nothing, even under provocation. But this attitude was not appreciated and Britain thought that conditions would remain the same throughout. Now the enemy was at their door and they could not risk being idle any longer.

* Excerpts from his Speech at AICC Session, Bombay, 7 August, 1942.

Referring to the question of transfer of power to Indians, Sardar Patel declared that whenever the British Government were talking about transfer of power, they were never sincere in their professions. In India they pointed the Muslim League and asked to whom they should transfer power. But they never asked the same question of Burma. They were calling in their radio broadcasts and newspapers, the Government established by Japan in Burma as a Puppet Government, but he asked what sort of a Government was it they had at Delhi now. So far as India was concerned, even the so-called friends of India in England like Mr. Attlee were talking in the same language as Mr. Churchill. He declared that Britain was interested in defending India only for the purpose of making India safe for future generations of Britons. In Russia, it was a people's war; in China it was a people's war who were not fighting for their freedom, but for preserving it. But he asked, if India was not for Indians, how could they make it a people's war.

They were calling this a war for Democracy. Sardar Patel went on. The Congress had given three years to Britain to make that principle apply to India. When Mr. Churchill declared that the future of India was purely a British question and it had already been decided by the British Government, no American, who professed sympathy now for India, would raise a protest against this declaration.

At the same time Sardar Patel warned his audience against going to the other extreme and putting any faith in the professions of Japan about their good intentions regarding India. From her acts in Manchuria, China and elsewhere it was clear that Japan was following the same ambition of empire-building as England and even outdoing her in it. India could have no trust in Japanese declarations.

Sardar Patel declared that the British need not worry about to whom to transfer power. Let her transfer the power to the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, to any Indian, so long as they gave up their control over India. There were some people in India, who still thought that there would be some compromise between the Government and the Congress. He wanted to disabuse them of any such delusion. There was no more hope of any settlement with

Britain. An opportunity was given to the people now to fight for their own Independence as the Russians and the Chinese and many other nations were doing now elsewhere. They should not miss that opportunity; such an opportunity might not come again,

Sardar Patel warned the people that the fight before them was going to be a tough one and as Mahatma Gandhi had emphasised, should be short and swift. He further told them that it would not be the time for the jail-going type of movement. This time it would not happen that they would remain in jail for a year or two and cease to think about what was happening outside. Their object was to free India before the Japanese came here and to fight them if they did. The movement would not be confined to Congressmen only; it would take in all men who called themselves Indians. It would also include all items of non-violent resistance already sanctioned by the Congress and probably some more.

PART III

Views on A.I.C.C. Resolution/Movement

MAULANA AZAD*

When the resolution of the Working Committee was published, it created an electric atmosphere in the country. People did not pause to consider what the implications were, but felt that at last Congress was launching a mass movement to make the British Quit India. In fact very soon the resolution came to be described as the Quit India Resolution by both the people and the Government. The masses like some of the members of the Working Committee, had an implicit faith in Gandhiji's leadership and felt that he had some move in his mind which would paralyse the Government and force it to come to terms. I may here confess that many people thought that Gandhiji would bring freedom for India by some magic or superhuman method, and did not therefore think it necessary to make any special personal effort.

After passing the Resolution, the Working Committee decided that it would wait for Government reaction. If the Government accepted the demand or at least showed a conciliatory attitude there would be scope for further discussions. If on the other hand the Government rejected the demand a struggle would be launched under Gandhiji's leadership. I had little doubt in my mind that the Government would refuse to negotiate under duress. My anticipation was justified by the course of events.

A very large concourse of the foreign press had come to Wardha as they were anxious to know what the Working Committee would decide. On 15 July, Gandhiji held a press conference. In reply to a question, he said that if the movement were launched, it would be a non-violent rebellion against British power. It must confess that I felt unhappy about the whole situation. I did not oppose the resolution urging direct action but I was not very hopeful about its outcome.

* Excerpts from Maulana Azad's *India Wins Freedom*, 1988, pp. 83-90.

After the resolution was passed, Mahadev Desai told Miss Slade (known in India as Mira Ben) that she should go and meet the Viceroy and explain to him the purport of the resolution. It was suggested that she should also try to give an account of the nature of the proposed movement and how it would work. Miss Slade left Wardha to meet the Viceroy and request an interview with him. The Private Secretary to the Viceroy replied that since Gandhiji had declared that he was thinking in terms of rebellion, the Viceroy was not prepared to grant her an interview. He made it clear that the Government would not tolerate any rebellion during the war whether it was violent or non-violent. Nor was the Government, prepared to meet or discuss with any representative of an organisation which spoke in such terms.

Mira Ben then met the Private Secretary to the Viceroy and had a long talk with him. I was at that time in Delhi and she reported to me her conversation. She then went back to Wardha and described the interview to Gandhiji. Soon after this, Mahadev Desai issued a statement that there appeared to be some misunderstanding about Gandhiji's intention. He said that it was not correct to say that Gandhiji had described the proposed movement as an open non-violent rebellion.

I confess that Mahadev Desai's statement surprised me. The fact is that after Jawaharlal coined this phrase, Gandhiji had used it on several occasions. He may have given some special meaning to it in his own mind, but to the general public his statement meant that Congress was now resolved to force the British Government to give up their power by adopting all methods short of violent insurrection. I have already said that I had anticipated the likely British reaction and was not therefore surprised by the Viceroy's refusal to meet Gandhiji or his representative.

Faced with this development, I decided that a meeting of AICC must be summoned to consider the situation further and if necessary endorse the proposal of the Working Committee. I also felt that this would give the Government further time to consider the whole situation. Accordingly, a meeting of the AICC was called at Bombay for 7 August 1942.

From 14 July to 5 August, my time was taken up in series of meetings with Congress leaders from different parts of the country. I wanted to impress on them that if the Government accepted our demand or at least allowed us to function, the movement must conform strictly to Gandhiji's policy. If however the Government acted in a drastic manner, the country must reply to the violence of the Government in every possible way. The picture as it presented itself to me was that Bengal, Bihar, the United Provinces, the Central Province, Bombay and Delhi were fully prepared and the movement would be strong in these Provinces. Regarding the other Provinces, I did my best to create a proper atmosphere but I must confess that the picture was not very clear to me.

The refusal of the Viceroy even to receive Mira ben made Gandhiji realise that the Government would not easily yield. The confidence he had in this regard was shaken but he still clung to the belief that the Government would not take any drastic action. He thought that he would have enough time after AICC to prepare a programme of work and gradually build up the tempo of the movement. I could not share his optimism. On 28 July, I wrote a detailed letter to him in which I said that the Government was fully prepared and would take immediate action after the Bombay meeting of the AICC. Gandhiji replied that I should not draw any hasty conclusions. He also was studying the situation and he still believed that a way out may be found.

On 3 August, I left Calcutta for Bombay, I was not absolutely sure but I had a premonition that I was leaving Calcutta for a long time. I had also received some reports that the Government had completed its plans and proposed to arrest all the leaders immediately after the resolution was passed.

The Working Committee met on 5 August and prepared a draft resolution which was placed before the AICC on the 7th. In my opening remarks I gave a brief survey of the developments since the last meeting of the Committee. I also explained at some length the reasons which had led the Working Committee to change its attitude and call upon the nation to launch a struggle for India's freedom. I pointed out that the nation could not watch passively while its fate hung in the balance. India had sought to cooperate with the democracies but the

British Government made it impossible to offer honourable cooperation. Faced with the imminence of Japanese invasion, the nation was seeking to gain strength to resist the aggressor. The British could, if they wished, withdraw from India as they had withdrawn from Singapore, Malaya and Burma. Indians could not withdraw, as it was their own homeland and must therefore develop the strength to shake off British chains and withstand any attack by any new aggressor.

Except for a handful of communists who opposed the move, all members of the AICC welcomed the resolution drafted by the Working Committee. Gandhiji also addressed the meeting and after two days discussion late on the evening of 8 August the historic Quit India Resolution was passed.

During my visits to Bombay I generally stayed with the late Bhulabhai Desai. I did so on this occasion as well. He was then ill and had been unwell for some time. I was therefore a little surprised when on my return after the meeting of the AICC. I found he was waiting for me. It was very late and I was tired and thought that he must have retired. I gently admonished him for keeping up so late, but he told me that Mohammad Taher, one of my relations, who has his business in Bombay, had called for me and waited a long time. When I did not return, he had left a message with Bhulabhai Desai. Mohammad Taher had a friend in the Bombay Police and had learnt from him that all the Congress leaders would be arrested early next morning. Taher's friend also told him that he did not know it for certain but it was reported that we would all be transported out of India, perhaps to South Africa.

I had heard similar rumours in Calcutta before I left. Later I came to know that the rumour was not without foundation. When the Government decided that we should all be arrested, they also thought that it would not be politic to keep us in the country. In fact, approaches had been made to the Government of South Africa. There must have been some last minute hitch, for later the decision was changed. We soon found out that the Government had planned that Gandhiji should be detained at Poona while the rest of us should be imprisoned in the Ahmednagar Fort Jail.

Bhulabhai was greatly disturbed by this news and that is why he was waiting for me. I was very tired and in no mood to listen to such rumours. I told Bhulabhai that if the news was true I had only a few hours of freedom. It was better that I should have my dinner quickly and go to sleep so that I could face the morning better. I would rather sleep than spend my few hours of freedom in speculating about rumours. Bhulabhai agreed and soon I lay down to sleep.

I have always been in the habit of waking very early. This morning also I got up at 4 a.m. I was however still very tired and had a feeling of heaviness in my head. I took two aspirins and a cup of tea and settled down to work. It had been decided that we should send a copy of the resolution we had passed along with a covering letter to President Roosevelt. We felt that this was the least we could do in view of the interest he had been taking in the question of Indian freedom. I began to draft a letter to President Roosevelt but could not finish it. Perhaps because I was tired or perhaps because of the aspirin, I again felt drowsy and lay down to sleep.

I don't think I could have slept more than 15 minutes when I felt someone touch my feet. I opened my eyes and found Dhirubhai Desai, son of Bhulabhai standing with a sheet of paper in his hand. I knew what it was even before Dhirubhai told me that the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bombay had brought this warrant for my arrest. He also told me that the Deputy Commissioner was waiting in the verandah. I told Dhirubhai to inform the Deputy Commissioner that I would take a little time to get ready.

I had my bath and then dressed. I also gave the necessary instructions to my private secretary Mohammad Ajmal Khan who had by now joined me. I then came out on the verandah. Bhulabhai and his daughter-in-law were talking with the Deputy Commissioner. I smiled at Bhulabhai and said that the information your friend brought last evening has proved correct. I then turned to the Deputy Commissioner and said 'I am ready'. It was then 5 a.m.

I got into the Deputy Commissioner's car. A second car picked up my belongings and followed us. We drove straight to the Victoria Terminus. It was time for the local trains but the station was completely empty. Perhaps all trains

and passengers had been temporarily stopped. As soon as I got down from the car, I saw Asoke Mehta. He also had been arrested and brought to the Victoria Terminus. I realised that the Government had arrested not only the members of the Working Committee but also local leaders of the Congress in Bombay. I assumed that this was being done throughout India. There was a train waiting on the platform to which I was brought. An engine was then attaching a dining car to the train. It was a corridor train which usually ran on the Bombay-Poona line. I was taken to a compartment and sat down by the window.

Almost immediately Jawaharlal, Asaf Ali and Dr. Syed Mahmud appeared on the scene. Jawaharlal told me that Gandhiji had also been brought to the station and put in another compartment. A European military officer came up to us and asked if we wanted tea. I had already had my cup but ordered some tea again.

At this stage a second military officer appeared and began to count us. Something was obviously puzzling him for he counted us several times. As he came up to our compartment, he said aloud: 'Thirty'. When this had happened twice or thrice, I responded equally loudly and said 'Thirtytwo'. This seemed to confuse him further and he started to count once again. Soon however the guard blew his whistle and the train started to move. I noticed Mrs. Asaf Ali standing on the platform. She had come to see her husband off. As the train started to move she looked at me and said, 'Please don't worry about me, I shall find something to do and not remain idle'. Later events showed that she meant what she said.

I have already said that ours was a corridor train. Mrs. Naidu now came to our compartment and said that Gandhiji wanted to meet us. We walked down the corridor to his compartment which was some distance away. Gandhiji was looking very depressed. I had never seen him looking so dejected. I understood that he had not expected this sudden arrest. His reading of the situation had been that the Government would take no drastic action. I had of course warned him again and again that he was taking too optimistic a view but obviously he had placed greater faith in his own judgement. Now that his calculations had proved wrong, he was uncertain as to what he should do.

After we had talked for a minute or two, Gandhiji said, 'As soon as you reach your destination, you should inform the Government that you wish to continue to function as Congress President. You should ask for your private secretary and other necessary facilities for the purpose. When you were arrested last time and detained in Naini Jail, the Government had provided you with these facilities. You should ask for the same facilities again, and if necessary make an issue of it.'

I could not agree with Gandhiji. I told him that the situation now was completely different. We had chosen a path with open eyes and must now take the consequences. I could understand if he wanted me to fight on the issue which had been adopted by Congress but I did not see how I could fight on a minor issue like the extension of certain personal facilities to me. I did not think that I would be justified in asking that my private secretary should be allowed to see me so that I may carry on Congress work. This was hardly an issue on which I could fight in the present situation.

While we were talking the Police Commissioner of Bombay, who also was in the train with us, came up. He asked us to return to our own compartment. He told me that only Mrs. Naidu could stay with Gandhiji. Jawaharlal and I then returned to our compartment. The train was now moving fast towards Kalyan. It did not stop there but took the route to Poona. I thought that perhaps we would be detained there, and my belief became stronger when the train stopped.

It seemed that the news of our arrest had somehow reached Poona. The platform was full of police and no member of public was allowed on it. There was however a large crowd on the overbridge. As the train steamed in, they started to shout, 'Mahatma Gandhiji ki jai'. No sooner was this slogan raised than the police made a lathi charge on the people. The Deputy Commissioner said that he had received Government orders that no demonstrations or slogans would be permitted.

Jawaharlal was also sitting by the window. As soon as he saw that the police were making a lathi charge, he jumped out of the compartment and

rushed forward crying, 'You have no right to make a lathi charge.' The Police Commissioner ran after him and tried to bring Jawaharlal back into his compartment. Jawaharlal would not however listen to him and spoke angrily. By this time, another member of the Working Committee, Shankar Rao Deo, had also come out on the platform. Four policemen surrounded him and asked him to return to the train. When he refused to do so, they lifted him up bodily and carried him back. I called out to Jawaharlal that he should return. Jawaharlal looked angry but carried out my request. The Police Commissioner came up to me and said two or three times, 'I am very sorry Sir, but these are my orders and I must carry them out.'

From my window I saw Mrs. Naidu and Gandhiji were taken out from the train. Another man from Bombay who had also got down wanted to go off the platform, but the police prevented him. He would not desist till the police physically stopped him. I believe he was trying to act according to Gandhiji's instructions. It will be remembered that Gandhiji said that on the occasion of the present movement, nobody should court arrest voluntarily. It was only when physical force was applied that men should agree to go to prison.

After Gandhiji had been taken away the train again started to move. I now realised that we were being taken to Ahmednagar. We reached the station at about 1.30 p.m. The platform was completely empty except for a handful of police officers and one single army officer. We were asked to get down and were put in cars that were waiting. They started immediately and did not stop till we arrived at the gate within the Fort. An army officer was standing there. The Commissioner of Police brought out a list and handed it to him. The army officer called out our names one by one and asked us to enter. The Police Commissioner was in fact handing us over to the military authorities. From now on, we were under military control.

ACHARYA NARENDRA DEV

He averred that it was wrong to insinuate that Gandhiji was launching this movement as a result of disillusionment. It was also wrong to state that Gandhiji did not care what happened to China, Russia or the other Democracies. *It was because Gandhiji had been convinced that only a free India could effectively support the United Nations that he was embarking upon the movement.*

Referring to the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, Acharya Narendra Dev reiterated Gandhiji's words that if the Muslims wanted it, no power under the sun could stop them. But, he added, Mr. Jinnah was afraid to discuss it with others. The country could not and should not stop now, because no settlement had been possible with Mr. Jinnah. If they waited, the settlement would not come and the golden opportunity would slip away.

KHAN ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

When the Working Committee resolution was published, it created a great stir in the country. A call to the people to make preparations for the coming struggle for India's freedom was made by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Addressing the Frontier Provincial Congress Committee, he said : "You should get ready for Mahatma Gandhi's call which is expected any moment after the ratification of the Working Committee's resolution. I hope the Frontier Province as usual will be in the vanguard of this struggle."

On August 9, 1942, Gandhiji and the members of the Working Committee of the AICC were arrested and taken in special trains to different places for detention. Serious disturbances broke out all over India when the news of the arrests became known. Hundreds of Congress leaders throughout the country were arrested.

In the Frontier the situation was calm in the beginning. Local conditions had prevented Abdul Ghaffar from attending the AICC session. All the powers for conducting the movement were delegated to him by the Frontier Congress Committee. While he was engaged in discussing with his workers, news came of the arrests of the Congress leaders in Bombay. Addressing a meeting at Peshawar on August 10, he pledged full support to the 'Quit India' Resolution. He advised the people to wait and not become impatient, and insisted that the Khudai Khidmatgars should continue to do the constructive work and to counteract all propaganda that might create panic in the province. He said:

'The time has not yet come. At present we are not in a hurry to launch a movement. We have started the picketing of liquor shops in different places and we will continue it for some time more.'

Some of his colleagues suggested that they should resort to the cutting of telephone wires, removing of railway lines, and other acts of sabotage. Abdul Ghaffar was agreeable to it, provided the saboteur was prepared to hand over himself to the police and make a clean confession of his acts. This he said, would add to the moral courage of the worker and set an example of uprightness and bravery to the people and also save them from being victims of harassment and suspicion.

Towards the end of September, 1942 Abdul Ghaffar intensified the struggle. Large batches of Khudai Khidmatgars raided Government offices and courts. In different districts, on October 4, the Khudai Khidmatgars in large numbers issued out from their camps and marched towards their appointed destinations, shouting "Inquilab Zindabad", and carried the tricolour flag to be hoisted on the Government buildings. All courts and offices were guarded by the military and the police. As the Khudai Khidmatgars tried to break through the cordon, they were mercilessly beaten till they fell unconscious. Most of the Red Shirts were seriously injured and they were removed to the relief centres run by the Congress. Those who did not sustain serious injuries were carried away in police vans to distant places, where they were left to walk back home. Courts were closed for a fortnight. When they were reopened the raids were repeated and so were police atrocities. Hundreds of raiders were arrested.

The Frontier Government, unlike those of the other provinces, did not start any offensive against the Khudai Khidmatgars but employed numerous tricks to undermine the movement. The mullahs were hired to excite false religious sentiment, mischievous posters and handbills were freely distributed. Abdul Ghaffar warned his followers that worse trials were in store for them, and that the Government's inactivity was only temporary. They merely wanted to demonstrate to the world that the Muslims had no stake in the freedom struggle going on in the country. They knew that the news of the Khudai Khidmatgars' participation in the movement and its suppression in a totally Muslim province, would falsify their own propaganda outside. There was strict censorship on the

news from the Frontier Province. The faithful account of the struggle in the Frontier Province as narrated by Abdul Ghaffar, is as follows:

“All the powers for conducting the mass civil disobedience movement were delegated to me and I was appointed a dictator. I shuddered at the very word ‘dictator’, because the autocracy and dictatorship I intensely dislike. I always consulted my colleagues before sending out the ‘dictatorial’ orders..... I used to tour my province for supervising the ‘Quit India Movement’. One day, on way to Kohat, I was arrested at a police station on the Kohat Pass. From there I was driven back in a car to Peshawar and was released. A similar scene of arrest and release was enacted wherever I went.”

On 8 August, 1942, a general discussion took place in the AICC session on the Quit India Resolution. Various members expressed the following views (spoke at length) while supporting the Resolution:

Shri Achyut Patwardhan supporting the resolution, said that *it was a strange argument to put forward that in order to establish unity in the country, the Congress should agree to break up the nation and thus create Pakistan.* He failed to understand how the so-called unity would come out of a division of the country. Shri Patwardhan said that though millions of muslims were behind the demand for Pakistan, many millions more were opposed to it.

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (Congress Socialist) supporting the resolution, declared that India's attitude towards the British Power had undergone a evolutionary change during the last few months. *The course of events had shown that the British Power was not the invincible one it hitherto used to be. Consequently, subject peoples had shed their fear of Britain. Discontent against the way Britain was handling the Indian problem was daily growing.* Criticising the Communists' attitude, Dr. Lohia asked how these people who had been demanding an immediately revolutionary struggle could now oppose the proposed movement.

Shri T. Prakasam supporting the resolution, said that *the proposed movement would be the last fight for India's freedom. From Wardha to Bardoli, from Bardoli to Delhi, from Delhi to Allahabad and back then to Wardha, and from Wardha to Bombay – all this meant great progress in India's march towards the goal of freedom.* The Speaker was supremely gratified to find that Mahatma Gandhi had once again assumed the leadership of the Indian National Congress. Mr. Prakasam had no doubt about the response the country would give to Mahatma Gandhi's call. The movement might embarrass the United Nations, but in a larger measure would frighten Japan and Germany if they had any aims on India.

Mr. Prakasam was happy that the usual restrictions which Mahatma Gandhi generally imposed on those who joined him had now been relaxed, the only condition being that all those who joined were prepared to make and sacrifice for achieving India's freedom.

***Seth Govind Das :** Will the Honourable Leader of the House be pleased to state whether he is aware of the intense desire of the Indian public in general and this House in particular that, for the true and free constitutional reforms in India, the Honourable Leader of the House and the Government he represents should immediately Quit India? If so, what date has been fixed by him and his Government for quitting this country?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: With reference to the first part of the question, I have heard such views expressed by certain persons. As regards the second part, if the plan which His Majesty's Government and His Excellency the Governor-General have in mind for the reconstruction of the Executive Council is fulfilled, my colleagues and I will be only too happy to make way for the new Government.

Pandit Jiwan Lal supporting the resolution, repudiated the contention of the Communists that *the present war was a people's war so far as India was concerned*. He hoped that the Communists would, before long see the error and correct themselves, and support the Congress programme.

Shri Mahesh Dutt asserted that *the Working Committee resolution of 'Quit India Movement' was the only proper lead that could be given to the country*. The very fact that a mass movement was to be launched after the war had been in progress for three years, clearly demonstrated what amount of patience the Congress had shown. The repeated appeals to the British Government to settle the Indian problem, so as to enable India to make her participation in the war real and her contribution effective showed that the Congress had been prepared for a compromise. The Speaker hoped that once all possibilities of a settlement by negotiation had been explored and found useless and the struggle was launched, it would not be suspended halfway through, until India's independence was secured.

* Starred Questions and Answers Session. Central Leg. Assembly Deb., Vol. I, 5 February 1946, p. 481.

Sardar Pratap Singh supporting the Official Congress resolution declared that *it was absolutely false to state that the Sikhs were not behind the Congress. "The Sikhs are with the Congress in this final struggle for India's freedom and are prepared to throw in their last bit in this struggle", he declared.* Sardar Pratap Singh urged the Communists to throw in their lot with Gandhiji, who was not talking of 'rebellion and revolt'. He said:

"The Congress was determined to win freedom..... The movement which would now be launched, in fact, needed no one to lead it. It would be a spontaneous one and would grow in strength."

Maulana Nuruddin Behari supporting the resolution, said that as soldiers of the battle for India's freedom, they had no right to question the strategy of their General. When the call came, it was their duty to follow. The Communists had confused the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity with India's right to freedom. The Hindu-Muslim problem was different. The proposed struggle was for India's freedom and the Muslims would not lag behind in the struggle for freedom. The communists were keeping out of it not because of the Hindu-Muslim question, but because they did not want to join it, they were making an excuse of the Hindu-Muslim question. He assured Mahatma Gandhi that thousands of Mussalmans would join the movement.

PART IV

Indira Gandhi : Speech made while releasing the postage stamp
on India's struggle for freedom at New Delhi on 9 August, 1983

INDIRA GANDHI

The 9th of August is a special day in the history of our struggle for Independence. How well I remember that day in 1942! We were in Bombay. Late on the night of 8th August, the All-India Congress Committee adopted what later came to be known as the Quit India Resolution. Early on the 9th morning, at about 3 or 4 o'clock, I remember the door bell ringing. Sleepy-eyed, I opened the door to find the police with warrants for my father's and uncle's arrest. We were staying at that time in my father's younger sister's flat in Bombay. Almost immediately we learnt how wide the net had been cast. The city, as indeed the whole of the country, was stunned, but only for a brief while. Work was at hand and we rushed to the Gowalia Tank Maiden for the traditional flag-hoisting. It was the beginning of the final phase of our movement.

I must disagree with the words which Shri Gadgil has quoted from my father because I do not think that the public was apathetic or acquiescent. No one can say when the fight for freedom begins, in our country or in any other. It does not begin in meetings and resolutions, not even in demonstrations. Our own resolution for complete Independence was passed in 1929 in Lahore under my father's presidency. As the foreign regime consolidated its rule through the years, the seeds of struggle were sown in the hearts and minds of men and women of India. Our people fought bravely before that in 1857. So it goes on in every freedom struggle.

The Congress was born in 1885. But it was Mahatma Gandhi's coming which enabled it to reach out to the masses of our people, and from then on we cannot say that the people were quiet. It is true that the movement rose to high peaks, first in 1920-21, then in 1930-31 and finally in 1942. And in between there often was despair. Many people were in prison. My own father spent three years in prison from August 1942. His total convictions added up to 14 years.

Of these, he spent ten long years in jail. Prison to him was what he called his other home. There were many who left the country and went to Europe, to Canada, to Japan, not because of fear but perhaps they thought that they could carry on the struggle better outside. Many were sent to the Andaman Islands. We cannot honour these great men and women; we ourselves are honoured that they lived in India and guided our destinies.

Yet it is good to commemorate this day for the millions who have forgotten and the larger number of millions who have never known what struggle, what service, what sacrifice were demanded and willingly given not only by the well-known but by the countless poor and illiterate who formed the backbone and gave substance and strength to our movement.

The Congress movement was a non-violent and peaceful one. Yet, when we speak of our heroes today, we cannot ignore the others whose methods we may not approve but whose courage we must admire. Netaji, Bhagat Singh and so many others come in that category. So, we remember them all not only because of the past of which we are proud but because we want to build a future of which coming generations will be equally proud. The foundation for that future was laid on the day that we passed our Independence Resolution and further consolidated on this day, the 9th of August. That is the foundation on which we are building a new India, on which we are trying – no one can translate all dreams into reality, but that is where we are aiming at – to bring a better life to our people, a better life not merely in the sense of comfort and convenience but so that they can live with dignity and decency, with a feeling of equality and self-confidence in themselves and in their country.

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Self-reliance has been, is and will always remain our basic objective. Especially this month of August brings back heroic memories of the Quit India Movement.