APPENDIX - III.

Gandhi's draft resolution to the Working Committee Meeting on April 27, 1942.

"Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals, sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

"The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of Defence would also differ. The British Government have no trust in India's political parties. The Indian army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

"Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the war has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were free, her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that, if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India."
"The A.I.C.C. is, therefore, of opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

"The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal.

"For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

"This Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from an alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India, while welcoming universal sympathy, does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her non-violent strength and retain it likewise. Therefore, the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal, the Committee would expect all those who look to the Congress for guidance to offer
complete non-violent non-co-operation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-co-operation.

"It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of non-violent non-co-operation:

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.
2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice or wish him ill.
3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields, we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.
4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid, we may not refuse it.
5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting, our non-co-operation will be fruitless and unnecessary.

"At present our non-co-operation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete non-co-operation when they are actually fighting, it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore, not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-co-operation with the Japanese. Neither may we resist in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British
Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves — a position we can never accept.

"It is necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched earth policy. If, in spite of our non-violent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water supply, etc., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs or is of use to the masses.

"Whilst non-co-operation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India whole-heartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not, it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exercise the demon of untouchability, to reform decoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence."
Jawaharlal Nehru's alternative to the draft Resolution of Gandhi:

"In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India and the attitude of the British Government as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All-India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.

"The proposal of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to a greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of non-co-operation with Britain has grown.

"They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist Government and refuse to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power.

"India's participation in the war was purely an act of imposition upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and Fascism as to Imperialism. If India were free, she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, though her sympathies, would in any event have been with
the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the war, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her.

"The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

"The essential differences between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that, while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilised for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to her interest and dangerous to her cause of freedom to introduce foreign armies in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped, while India develops into a battle ground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control.

"India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority."
"The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain even in a partial measure British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety and world peace and freedom demand that British must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.

"The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place it must be resisted. Such resistance can only have the form of non-violent non-co-operation, as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would, therefore, expect the people of India to offer complete non-violent non-co-operation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them.

"We may not bend the knees to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields, we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him."
"In places wherein the British and the invading forces are fighting our non-co-operation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-co-operation with the invader. Judging from their attitude the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference.

"The success of such a policy of non-co-operation and non-violent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country."