Chapter Four

THE SALT SATYAGRAHA: THE NON-OFFICIAL VIEW
 IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN OPINION

Gandhi's Interest in American Opinion

The importance of American opinion on India was realized both by the British and the Indians. It was the belief of the British officials and high personages, as reflected by Professor Rushbrook Williams, that Gandhi fully realized the importance of American opinion and that he was at pains to cultivate it. (1)

Although this view was controverted by Srinivasa Sastri, the eminent Indian liberal statesman, (2) some messages and actions of Gandhi during the civil disobedience movement do indicate that he cared for the correct representation of the civil disobedience movement before the American public and also wanted its sympathy at crucial stages.

Gandhi chose important occasions for his messages to America. Just on the eve of embarking on his march to Dandi, Gandhi sent a cable to T. H. K. Reddie, Director of the Indian Independence League in New York, in which he said:

The movement is absolutely peaceful. The Congress policy of non-violence remains unchanged, even in mass response. (3)

1 L. F. Rushbrook Williams, "Indian Unrest and American Opinion", Asiatic Review, 26 (July 1930), p. 491. This article represented the paper which Rushbrook Williams read before a meeting of the East India Association held in London on 19 June 1930. He had returned from a lecture tour of the USA only a few days before the meeting.

2 Ibid., pp. 505-6. Srinivasa Sastri was present in the meeting in which Rushbrook Williams read his paper.

Again, on another important occasion, i.e., the breaking of the salt laws at the sea-shore of Dandi on 6 April 1930, Gandhi sent a special message for America which was received by Reznie the same day and was published by the New York Times on 7 April under the caption: "Gandhi Asks Backing Here: Urges Expression of Public Opinion for India's Right to Freedom."

Gandhi was very direct and demanding on the occasion. He said:

I know I have countless friends in America who deeply sympathize with this struggle to secure liberty. But mere sympathy will avail me nothing.

What is wanted is the concrete expression of public opinion in favor of India's inherent right to independence and complete approval of the absolutely non-violent means adopted by the Indian National Congress.

In all humility, but in perfect truth, I claim that if we attain our end through non-violent means, India will have delivered a message for the whole world. (4)

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4 Ibid., 7 April 1930, p. 11. Haridas T. Muzumdar, who was with Gandhi during his Dandi march, has reproduced a photostat copy of Gandhi's hand-written message, dated 5 April 1930, in his book, Gandhi Versus The Empire (New York, 1932), opposite of page 113. He claims that this message was written by Gandhi at his instance and was meant to be sent to an American friend in New York but that the exigencies of the political situation in India prevented its despatch at that time. The message reads: "I want world sympathy in this battle of Right against might."

On 27 April, the Sunday Times of London published the full text of a long message which Gandhi was reported to have addressed to the people of America. The Sunday Times got it from the Associated Press of America. It was reproduced in Modern Review, 47 (June 1930), pp. 793-4. In the message Gandhi explained the immediate national demand; the iniquity of the Salt Tax; the barbarous repression of the civil resisters by the Government; the peacefulness of the civil disobedience movement despite violent occurrences in Calcutta, Karachi, Chittagong and Peshawar which, in any case, were due to some special reasons; the enthusiastic and devoted participation of the people — both men and women — in the programmes of the civil resistance; and, finally, the importance of India's non-violent struggle for the progress of humanity.
Interest of Other Indian Leaders

From the account of Haridas T. Muzumdar in his book, *America's Contributions to India's Freedom*, it appears that leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Motilal Nehru, too, showed keen interest in American opinion on India. Muzumdar had returned to India from the USA during the Christmas week of 1929 with greetings for Gandhi from some social, political and religious leaders of America. He went to Lahore where the Indian National Congress passed the resolution demanding "Complete Independence" for India instead of "Dominion Status." He delivered the letters to Gandhi and also met Jawaharlal Nehru, the incoming President of the Congress. In the midst of his hectic activities, Jawaharlal Nehru found time for a two-hour conference with Muzumdar during which he showed "a firm grasp of trends in American thinking." (5) Muzumdar recalls that Nehru questioned him at length regarding the extent and nature of American interest in Gandhi and India's struggle for freedom. (6)

Muzumdar further narrates that when after Gandhi's arrest on 5 May he went to Bombay to meet Motilal Nehru, the Acting President of the Congress, to seek his permission for getting arrested by picketing Whiteway Laidlaw and Company in Bombay, the latter advised him to go back to America and interpret to the American people the true story of India's struggle for freedom. He, in fact, offered to ask the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee to provide Muzumdar enough money for his passage to


6 Ibid.
Another important leader on the Indian scene during the time, Madan Mohan Malaviya, too, was greatly interested in cultivating American opinion on the Indian question. It has already been seen that when Gajanan Birla arranged an interview between him and the American Vice-Consul G. M. Abbott and another American, L. Brooke Edwards, on 2 May at Birla House in Calcutta, Malaviya utilized the opportunity to appeal to them to see that the American public was correctly informed about the situation in India. He also told them that India gave great importance to the moral effect of American public opinion on the Indian question. (8)

Finally, there is a moving appeal by the Bombay Congress, which was in the forefront of the civil disobedience movement in 1930, to the Americans published in the secretly printed Bombay Congress Bulletin of 4 July and reproduced in the Chicago weekly Unity of 18 August. Addressing the Americans as "Comrades over the seas", this appeal reminded them of their own Declaration of Independence of 4 July 1776 and greeted them on this day as "friends and brothers." It told them that India today stood in the same position as they had stood before 4 July 1776 and that the British rule in India had been a long tortuous sequence of the impoverishment of the country and the emasculation of its manhood. It had been a denial of God and a negation of humanity. Agonizingly but pointedly the Bulletin asked:

... and today when the Indian nation has with one voice decided to break the shackles of ages and vindicate the glory of man, where are you, American

7 Ibid., p. 21.
brothers, your ideals of Liberty so forgotten, your voice of justice so stifled, that you have not one word to say for the cause of Indian freedom?

... Can you sit still while infants are being massacred, men and women murdered, and the flower of land maimed and battered, because Britain must squeeze out her petty pence from this land? Will you be untrue to the trust that the greatest of your heroes has bequeathed to you?

Lastly, in a tone highly charged with emotion and comradesly feelings, it called upon the Americans:

Fulfill the high destinies for which Heaven appears to have intended you. Come, brother, clasp the hand that seeks yours in the name of liberty, and declare with us that Britain is an outlaw among nations and that her rule in India is an outrage to humanity and civilization. (9)

Efforts of the Indian Residents in the USA

Apart from the fact that leaders in India were interested in cultivating American opinion, the Indians residing in the USA were very active during the civil disobedience movement and provided a conscious focus to that section of the American opinion which may be designated as anti-British and pro-nationalist during this time. (10)

In fact, in its forty-third session held in Calcutta in December 1928, the Indian National Congress itself had shown a

9 Unity, 105 (18 August 1930), p. 339. The Congress Bulletin was banned by the Bombay Government at this time. Yet it was secretly printed and circulated in India. It also found its way to the USA. A good number of its issues were reproduced in the All-India issue of Unity of 18 August. In fact, Rev. John H. Holmes, the editor of Unity, got Gandhi's suppressed weekly Young India also mimeographed at the Community Church of which he was the pastor and saw to it that all American subscribers received their copy of Young India. See Muzumdar, n. 5, p. 29.

10 See Williams, n. 1, pp. 482-5.
keen realization of the need for developing contacts with the outside world and, to that effect, had decided to open a Foreign Department at its headquarters. It also recognized the American Branch of the Indian National Congress operating in New York under the directorship of Sailendra Nath Ghose and authorized it to form subordinate committees in the USA. (11) However, the leaders in India were not satisfied with the manner in which this body conducted its public propaganda in the United States. Moreover, it refused to supply information about its membership, manner of formation, etc., despite repeated requests from the parent organization. As such, the All-India Congress Committee in its meeting held on 21 March 1930 at Allahabad disaffiliated this branch. (12) Nevertheless, neither Sailendra Nath Ghose nor other Indians were deterred by this from organizing their activities in the USA. They continued their efforts in rallying American public support for the Indian cause, although their voices were discordant and actions disunited.

As referred to earlier, Sailendra Nath Ghose had formed an American Branch of the Indian National Congress in New York and had succeeded in getting recognition by the forty-third session of the Indian National Congress in 1928. He, however, did not fully agree with the policy of the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi to conduct the struggle only through non-violent means. He organized an 'Independence' dinner in New York on 26 January

1930 which was addressed among others, by Ghose himself; Dr. J. T. Sunderland, the author of *India in Bondage*; Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, an Indian revolutionary; and Roger N. Baldwin, Director of the American Civil Liberties Union. Most of the speakers, according to the *New York Times*, stressed that if non-violence proved useless, violence must be resorted to. (13) Ghose utilized the opportunities offered by American institutions and organizations to ventilate his views that India will never obtain independence by peaceful resistance but that India was determined to obtain independence at any cost and, as such, was prepared for bloodshed if it was necessary. (14) He also tried to convince the Americans that international peace and disarmament could be assured only when India became an independent country, for as long as India remained a part of the British Empire, England would maintain a big navy and to maintain a matching position with England, the USA, Japan, France, and Italy would also need big navies of their own. (15)

Even after disaffiliation of his branch by the Indian National Congress in March 1930, Ghose continued to issue statements and organize meetings on behalf of, what he now called, the Indian National Congress of America rather than the American Branch of the Indian National Congress. Immediately after the violent incidents at Sholapur in India on 8 May he issued a statement in

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New York that the "capture" of Sholapur was of tremendous significance in that it indicated the desertion of Indian soldiers from the British Army for which a call had been given by the Indian insurgents and that it added another centre to the Indian nationalist independence, Bombay already being one such centre. (16)

Ghose again figures in the meeting held in New York on 11 May 1930 under the joint auspices of the Indian National Congress, Indian Freedom Foundation, and some other associated organizations to celebrate the seventy-third anniversary of "the first war in India's independence of 1857" as also to protest against the arrest of Gandhi on 5 May. The main speakers in the meeting were Ghose and Daniel F. Cohalan, former Justice of the Supreme Court of New York. The meeting in a resolution expressed alarm at the recruitment of American citizens in India into the British military forces "to suppress the Indian insurrection." (17) It also, by a second resolution, urged the US Government to recognize the belligerency rights of the Indian insurgents as also the Indian independence itself. (18)

Another Indian group which was vocal during this time in New York was the India Independence League of America founded and

16 Ibid., 9 May 1930, p. 9.

17 A wireless message to New York Times from Simla, 10 May, reported that the Bombay auxiliary forces recruited from among citizens included the equivalent of a troop of light horse entirely composed of American citizens drawn mainly from among the employees of the General Motors which had a large assembly plant on the outskirts of the city of Bombay. "The object of these volunteers," according to this message, "is in no sense aggressive, their main object being the defense of white community against the native violence." Ibid., 11 May 1930, p. 26.

18 Ibid., 12 May 1930, p. 2.
directed by T. H. K. Rezmie. As against Sailendra Nath Ghose, Rezmie, in his speeches and communications, emphasized the commitment to non-violent methods of the Indian nationalist movement and its leaders like Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The League celebrated the Indian Independence Day on 26 January in New York by holding a dinner whose objective was "to foster the movement for Indian independence through a course of peaceful aggressiveness voted by the Indian National Congress at Lahore last month." (19) At the dinner a cable from Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress, was read out "which forewore any recourse to violence even under provocation." (20)

When Sailendra Nath Ghose's statements that India was determined to win freedom even by violent methods were published in some of the American newspapers and there were some other reports from India implying that even Gandhi would compromise with violence, Rezmie came out with statements explaining Gandhi's stand and claiming that he was keeping in direct cable contact with Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi both of whom had repeatedly denounced any intention on their part to espouse a bloody resistance. (21) He disclaimed that the Indian people had any intention to engage in a military revolt against the British Government. (22) Moreover, through he announced the American press that Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the Indian National Congress, had asked him expressly

19 Ibid., 26 January 1930, p. 6.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., 2 March 1930, p. 4; 22 February 1930, p. 15.
to inform the American public that Sailendra Nath Ghose's organization had been disaffiliated by the parent organization and, as such, Ghose could no longer claim to speak with authority on developments in India. (23) He also denied that the Indian nationalists had asked the Indian soldiers to desert their army as had been claimed by Ghose a few days earlier.

In the Mid-West, too, in the important city of Detroit, Michigan, some Indian groups were active. Sher M. Quraishi came out with a statement on behalf of the Independence of India League, Detroit, pointing out that the question of world peace would remain unsolved if the one-fifth of mankind residing in India was to be at the beck and call of British imperialism "to participate, however, unwillingly, in the Imperialistic ventures of that Empire." (24) He detailed the British exploitation of India and referred to the pacific means which the people of India had adopted so far in their struggle for freedom. He, however, pointed out that the insolence of the British administration was forcing the people of India to look to other means and that the Independence of India League did not intend to stand in the way of India's independence by whatever means the people of India may choose to effect it. He referred to the American War of Independence of 1776 and expressed the hope that Americans would not find it difficult to sympathize with this point of view. He appealed to all those who loved world peace to

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23 Ibid., 11 May 1930, p. 26. Ghose admitted that his organization had no official connection with the Indian National Congress since 1 May but insisted that the "divorce" was by common consent and for "reasons of policy." Ibid.

24 Unity, 104 (31 December 1929), p. 223.
join hands with this organization to secure for India the right of self-determination and freedom. (25)

There was another group in Detroit under the name of India Independence Central Committee, presided over by Nur M. Malik, which came out with a long manifesto in the name of the Indian residents in the USA and addressed to the American people. It narrated the woes of the Indians under the British Government and lay its case before the world, especially "the Great American Nation." It finally appealed to the Americans to extend their help to the people of India as they had done to other nations in the past. It made it clear that the Indians did not want to inveigle America into their fight but they did want them to understand India and its problems and, because of their "sacred traditions," to assert their influence in favour of their just cause. (26)

Among other Indians who were actively engaged in promoting the Indian cause in the USA, the names of Haridas T. Muzumdar, Taraknath Das, and Syud Hossain may be mentioned here. (27) After a stay of about ten years in the USA, Muzumdar had visited India on the eve of the Lahore Congress and participated in Gandhi's Dandi march. From there he had been reporting on the situation in

25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 104 (8 December 1930), pp. 207-8.
27 Rushbrook Williams reported in the meeting of the East India Association held on 19 June 1930 in London that in New York alone there were 1,600 Indians — businessmen, technical apprentices and students taken together — very many of whom held extreme political views. These, according to him, made the life of the moderates uncomfortable. See Williams, n. 1, pp. 334-5.
India, emphasizing the role and influence of Gandhi. (28) He returned to the USA in August and extended an invitation to the American businessmen to expand their trade with India. He advised them that, in view of the anti-British boycott in India, time was ripe for them to make contacts there. He also informed them that the Indian leaders were urging their followers to buy American, German, or Japanese goods rather than commit the sin of purchasing British goods. So, if America wished to extend its trade to relieve its unemployment, the Indian market was open. (29) The press also reported that Muzumdar had brought a short message from Gandhi in which he sought world sympathy "in this battle of right against might." (30) Muzumdar was described as "an emissary of the Gandhi civil resistance movement and the Indian National Congress." (31) Having secured modest office space in the building of The Nation in New York City at a nominal rent, Muzumdar started his "India Today and Tomorrow Series," the first volume of which, India's Non-Violent Revolution, was published that very year. (32) Syud Hossain and Taraknath Das utilized the public platforms and the columns of journals to interpret the Indian situation to the Americans. Many of the articles of Taraknath Das were published in Unity. In them, he described the emerging new leadership in

30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Three others published in this series between 1931 and 1932 were: Peshawar: Men Versus Machine Guns (1931); The Story of Peace Negotiations (1931); and The Round Table Conference (1932).
India, exemplified by the rise of Subhas Chandra Bose, Nripendra Chandra Banerjee, and Jawaharlal Nehru. (33) He reported that the young nationalists in India, under the leadership of Bose and others, were asserting that a mere declaration of independence was not enough and that they, following the footsteps of the Irish Republicans, were advocating to organize the government of the Federated Republic of the United States of India with its duly elected president and cabinet ministers. (34) Das maintained that unless the British Government granted Dominion Status to India in the near future, leaders like Bose would gain the upper hand in Indian politics and they would not hesitate to tackle the problem of Indian independence even through a revolution, as had happened in the USA and Ireland. He pointed out that a free India would become a factor of world peace and would afford equal opportunity for trade and commerce to all nations. "Therefore," according to him, "Indian nationalists expect that many far-sighted statesmen of various countries will favor the cause of Indian freedom and the establishment of the Federated Republic of the United States of India." (35) Evidently, Das was trying to convince the Americans as to why they should be ready to give recognition to such a free government of India when the eventuality came. He reverted to this theme later when he tried to refute the arguments of the British propagandists in the USA to the effect that the Indian

33 Taraknath Das, "India's Political Crisis", Unity, 105 (7 April 1930), p. 93. See also Taraknath Das, "Indian Nationalism and Bolshevism", ibid., 105 (14 April 1930), p. 108.


35 Ibid.
nationalist movement was merely a Hindu movement. He reminded the Americans that the Indian nationalist leaders were following the footsteps of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, and other founding fathers of the United States of America and, therefore, the Indian people may justly expect American support. (36) A few months earlier, when the merciless flogging of the Indians in Sholapur was reported in the American press, he challengingly asked the American friends of the British Labour Party and especially of Ramsay MacDonald as to whether they approved of the British reign of terror in India and, if they did not, would they immediately protest against this in unmistakable terms? (37)

C. F. Andrews, an English clergyman for long a resident of India and a close associate of Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, was also in the United States in 1930. Through the columns of newspapers and journals and from public platforms, he described the nationalist and social reform movements in India led by Gandhi. (38) The New York Times published a long article by him on 6 April 1930 in which he explained why Gandhi had launched the civil disobedience movement in India and why he had chosen the breaking of the salt laws as a form of that movement. He quoted from a letter of Gandhi which he had received only recently to show that violence was a part of the very atmosphere of India at the present time and that an

immediate clash between opposing forces was certain unless he
himself would direct the violence already existing in
the hearts of the people and the government into non-violent
channels. (39) As regards violation of the salt laws, he explained
how humiliating and burdensome was the salt tax to the Indian
people. He, then, gave a brief history of the non-cooperation
movement in 1920-1922 and showed how Gandhi had stopped that movement
when he found that the movement had gone astray from the path of
non-violence with the incidents at Chauri Chaura in February 1922.
He also referred to Gandhi's illness in the jail in 1924 and the
circumstances in which he was operated upon. He gave a pen-picture
of Gandhi's daily life and high-lighted his affectionate attitude,
especially towards children. (40)

The Foreign Policy Association of New York provided Andrews
an opportunity to express his views on India in a panel discussion
along with Haridas T. Muzumdar, Cornelia Sorabji, and C. F. Strickland,
a retired member of the Indian Civil Service. (41) He refuted
Sorabji's identification of Hinduism with the caste system and
extolled Hinduism as one of the greatest and noblest religions of

40  According to the report of the special correspondent of
the New York Times, this article by C. F. Andrews caused
some rumblings in the official circles in India. They
denied that salt tax was a crushing burden on the Indians.
They also explained that Gandhi's operation in the jail was
a result of a long-standing trouble and not of any bad
41  Cornelia Sorabji, a practising lawyer at the Calcutta High
Court, was educated in England and was awarded Kaiser-i-Hind
Gold Medal in 1909. She was a great friend of Katherine Mayo,
the author of *Mother India*. 
Moreover, he exposed the British failure in India in the field of education; the terrible poverty of the Indian people due to heavy incidence of tax, especially land tax; and the evil of racial discrimination which was prevalent under the British Government. He, again, utilized the occasion to interpret Gandhi, his constructive programme, and the non-violent methods in which he conducted the Indian struggle. (42)

**British Propaganda in the USA**

The British officials in India and England were quite conscious of the role of world opinion, especially American opinion, on the Indian problem. John Coatman, who had been Director of Public Information in the Home Department of the Government of India in the late 'twenties, manifested this consciousness while taking part in the discussion on the paper read by Rushbrook Williams before the East India Association in London on 19 June 1930. He maintained that world opinion was bound to be one of the deciding factors in the final solution of the Indian problem and of world opinion one might say that American opinion was the most important ingredient. When he was Director of Public Information in India, it was part of his duty to study the foreign press on India, and he devoted more attention to American comment than to

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those of any other country. (43)

Prompted by the considerations of the importance of the American opinion and further by the desire to counteract the effect of the efforts of the Indians in the USA, the British did their best to present their own side of the case before the American public. One of the main forms of doing this was the utilization of the platforms provided by American organizations or institutions to the visiting dignitaries from England. Rushbrook Williams, currently Foreign Minister of Patiala but formerly Chief of the Public Information Bureau in the Home Department of the Government of India; Lord Meston, former Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces; and Sir John Simon, Chairman of the Statutory Commission which visited India in 1928, were some of the important persons connected one time or another with the British administration in India who visited the USA in 1930 and did effective work in favourably interpreting the British policy in India.

Rushbrook Williams reached New York on 9 May 1930 and lectured on the Indian situation at the Council on Foreign Relations there. He also addressed meetings at several universities including Yale, Chicago, and Michigan. He forcefully denied that what was happening in India was a revolution reminiscent of the American War of Independence of 1776. "The outbreaks", he

43 Williams, n. 1, pp. 503-4. As already pointed out, S. K. Ratcliffe, the British journalist, was also of the opinion that the state of public opinion in North America could not be a matter of indifference to the British. See Chapter II, pp. 82-83.
said, "had been sporadic and could not be classed as constituting a revolution throughout India, any more than a riot of students in Barcelona could be justly described as a rising against the government of Europe." (44) Other points which he emphasized was the disunity of the Indians; the absence of disturbances in the Princely States of India; the willingness of the Princes to participate in the coming Round Table Conference; and the Soviet instigation behind the troubles in Peshawar which had caught so much attention in the American Press. (45) The Nation noted the arrival of Rushbrook Williams in the USA at this time and advised that the interviews given by him should be scrutinized. It expressed its difficulty in understanding why he should rush to Washington to report on the Indian situation to the British Embassy of a Labour Government, he being envoy of the Chamber of Indian Princes — "probably the most reactionary body in India" — at London. (46) The New Republic also sarcastically commented that the good luck which proverbially served the British Empire was never better exemplified than in the arrival of Professor Rushbrook Williams in the USA. At the moment when American liberal opinion was gravely concerned over the developments in India and was inclined to be harshly critical of British policy, on came Professor Williams to assure them that all was, on the whole, well in India! (47)

45 Ibid.
Lord Meston gave a series of talks on the problem of nationalism in India at the Institute of Politics, Williamstown, Massachusetts, in which he warned that the world would soon have a second China on its hands if the British withdrew from India prematurely. (48) He did not deny that India was a valuable market which Great Britain would try to retain but he emphatically denied, when challenged by Syud Hossain, the Indian nationalist in the USA, that England derived even one per cent of tribute from India. (49)

In the summer of 1930, Sir John Simon also visited the United States. At a dinner arranged in Washington by the Federal Bar Association of America on 28 August, he praised the British administration and its achievements in India and said that "Britain is entitled to the sympathy and support of the American people in the effort she is making to develop self-governing institutions in that Oriental continent." (50) Subsequently, he also addressed the New York Bar Association where, after explaining the problem of India, he made a passionate appeal to the American and British lawyers to pledge themselves to fostering good relations between the United States and Great Britain. Elocutently he said:

If in the future some shadow falls between us, let us recall our meeting of to-night and preserve, in the face of the passion of the mob and the excitement of


49 Ibid., 27 August 1930, p. 6. In this meeting, which was held on 26 August at the Institute of Politics, the British policy was very emphatically defended by Cornelia Sorabji also.

50 Ibid., 29 August 1930, pp. 1, 10. This speech was carried over a national radio hook-up.
the hour, the memory of the mutual friendship and esteem out of which may be built up and maintained the continued peace of the world. (51)

When Sir Simon concluded, the whole audience rose to its feet in response to his appeal. The Chairman John W. Davis, who had been Democratic candidate for President in the election of 1924, closed the meeting with the declaration: "This demonstration is the giving of that pledge." According to English Review, the effect of Sir Simon's speech in the United States was "invaluable." This led the journal to suggest that the name of Sir John Simon should be added to the Imperial scroll of those great Englishmen whose labour, courage and sacrifice had held together the British Empire. (52)

Besides these visiting British dignitaries, Edward Thompson, Lecturer in Bengali at Oxford, and "guest professor" in English at Vassar, one of the foremost women's colleges in New York, was on hand in the USA in 1930 to rebut the arguments of the Indians. He joined issue with Sailendra Nath Ghose on 15 February at the luncheon discussion of the Foreign Policy Association and declared that the choice before India was not a choice between freedom and slavery; rather it was a choice between becoming a weaker Mexico or a more ridiculous China, or becoming a self-respecting country. He also deplored the presentation of the Indian situation in such a way as to encourage the Americans to think that they were now seeing the scenes of their own revolution

51 Reproduced in English Review (London), 51 (December 1930), pp. 704-5.
52 Ibid., p. 704.
re-enacted before their eyes. (53) Later, in a speech before the Foreign Policy Association of Philadelphia, he conceded that a settlement of the Indian problem would be a bigger thing than the American Revolution but maintained that the people in India were still unfit for home-rule. "Under the Dominion Status of India, the Indians have more advantages than they could possibly have under home rule," he assured the audience. (54) Before a large gathering in Chicago, he went to the extent of betting Bishop Frederick Fisher, an admirer of Gandhi, a hundred dollars to fifty cents that India would get self-government before the Philippines did. (55)

**FACETS OF AMERICAN OPINION**

**Gandhi and the Salt Satyagraha**

When Gandhi embarked upon his Dandi march on 12 March, it attracted wide attention in the American press. The American newspapers and journals took a close look at Gandhi and the type of movement he was leading, and tried to calculate the possible effect the movement may have on situation in India as also in the entire East. The *Literary Digest* noted that in London the statesmen were debating if, how, and when the nations should disarm, but Gandhi, "a frail shell of a man," had challenged an

54  Ibid., 16 March 1930, p. 19.
empire "with a smile and a shrug." (56) "The Sermon on the Mount is his book of etiquette" and a "frail man" though he was, he "may yet sway the destiny of an empire and inaugurate a new era in the East." (57) The Baltimore Sun recalled that in the past Gandhi's most pacific moves had released forces which "shocked even him". But this time, it felt, it was quite possible that "the parade of seventy persons led by an old man will have profound influence upon the course of history." (58) The Springfield Daily Republican went so far as to say that "Gandhi's challenge to the salt monopoly may be as notable an incident as Boston's short way with tea." (59)

Even a journal like the Review of Reviews, generally pro-British in tone, carried a sympathetic article by Newton Phelps Stokes, II, a young man from Yale University, who happened to be in India when Gandhi began his civil disobedience campaign. Stokes had marched with the satyagrahis enroute to Dandi and had interviewed Gandhi when he stayed in a village about five miles from Surat. Every one was so optimistic about the success of the movement that it was impossible not to catch much of this spirit, he wrote, "It seemed as if such faith could really move the mountain of the British rule". (60) In a severe indictment of British rule, Stokes asserted:

57 Ibid.
59 Springfield Daily Republican, 14 March 1930, quoted in Harnam Singh, n. s., p. 279.
60 Newton Phelps Stokes, II, "Marching With Gandhi", Review of Reviews (New York), 81 (June 1930), p. 36. This article was interspersed with some photographs, one of them being that of Gandhi's followers crossing a river on their march to the sea. The caption overhead was "Like the Boston Tea Party."
It is evident that England is unduly influenced by business interests in India and that the British troops, supported by the country, are here partly because it is a handy and cheap way to train recruits and not because they are all necessary for the protection of the country. Moreover, it looks as if in some cases the police encourage Hindu-Muslim friction so as to interfere and justify their own existence. The serious differences between these two religious groups cannot be doubted, but it is at times exaggerated by British to support their pet theory—which has certainly had justification in the past—of the necessity of an independent controlling power. And finally there is no doubt that many Englishmen treat the Indians in a manner that is patronizing when not insulting. (61)

Stokes, however, failed to see how a self-governing India would be better off. He felt that in a self-governing India everyone would be squabbling and corruption would waste more money than the present "honest" government was doing. (62)

The Editorial Research Reports, whose function was to provide detailed and unbiased studies of current problems for the information of newspaper editors, came out with a long article by George B. Galloway on the political situation in India. (63) The author expressed the view that ever since Elizabeth's Charter to the East India Company, Great Britain's continuing interest in India had been its rich resources of raw materials as also in the growing markets which the country provided for the manufactured goods of Great Britain. "This interest is ever-present in the background of British policy in India," he noted. (64)

61 Ibid. Emphasis added.
62 Ibid.
64 Ibid., p. 217.
Resumption of the civil disobedience campaign by Gandhi and the anticipated report of the Simon Commission had again, according to the author, focussed world attention upon India. Whatever was done there would have a great effect in determining the political future of all other politically backward peoples, "For the eyes of the world are upon the work being done there." (65)

Galloway expressed concern that despite Gandhi's insistence on the necessity of non-violence, it might again be difficult for him to control his followers once they were aroused. It was possible that the outcome of the present movement might not be different from the results of his 1919 movement which had led to violent disturbances in Amritsar, Lahore, Chauri Chaura, and other centres in the country. (66)

The American press also noted some of the curious aspects of the Indian situation. The Labour Party under the leadership of Ramsay MacDonald was in power in England. This was a factor which, in the eyes of the American press, made the Indian development all the more intriguing. MacDonald was both a socialist and a pacifist and an advocate of a more sympathetic attitude towards India. (67)

The New York Times felt that the existence of a "Labor Government in England and its greater desire to avoid coercion" must have been

65 Ibid., p. 231.
66 Ibid., pp. 215-16.
67 See P. W. Wilson, "Crisis in India", Review of Reviews, 81 (June 1930), p. 40. See also Christian Century, 47 (8 January 1930), p. 36. For MacDonald's views on India, see his books The Awakening of India (London, 1910) and The Government of India (London, 1919).
calculated as a favourable factor by the Indian nationalists. (68) The Chicago Daily Tribune viewed the Indian development in a still larger perspective. It felt that the strength of the "supervising whites" was their weakness in these moral days when strength was "dreaded" and there was an avowed intention to make the next war civilized and painless. "A recognition of the altruistic predicament of the bossing races prevails in the leadership of the bossed," it wrote. (69) That Gandhi chose to violate the law which gave monopoly of such simple function as salt making — which could very well have been left to the natural forces — struck many American commentators as a "complete and impressive shrewdness" on the part of Gandhi. (70)

The progress of Gandhi's march to Dandi, his arrival at Dandi and taking out water from the sea to make free salt "reversing the Boston-Tea-Party" method, (71) and the forebearance of the Government of India from coming down upon him with a heavy hand were keenly observed by the American press. The Review of Reviews expressed appreciation of the British understanding that the days of imperialistic coercion were passing away at a very rapid rate. It felt sure that out of this realization they were meeting the situation in India "wisely and fairly." (72) As

69 Chicago Daily Tribune, 12 March 1930, quoted in Harnam Singh, n. 58, p. 276.
71 Ibid.
72 Review of Reviews, 81 (March 1930), p. 45.
against the attitude of this journal, there were some "hard liners" also. They regarded Gandhi's civil disobedience movement as a "rebellion" and therefore advocated firm handling of Gandhi and his followers. "But the oriental is not to be controlled by persuasion; the only argument that appeals to him is the strong hand," wrote the Philadelphia Inquirer. (73)

When Gandhi made his speech at the village of Aat in the Province of Bombay on 8 April calling upon the satyagrahis to lay down their lives before parting with the salt in their fists, a section of the American press reported it as by far the most violent speech since he had left Ahmedabad and the one which could not be reconciled with his avowed creed of non-violence. (74) Explaining the motive behind this, it was said that apparently disappointed at not being arrested so far, he now "seemed determined to run his head into the noose of the sedition section of the Indian penal code," which provided penalties up to life imprisonment. (75) When Gandhi repudiated the interpretation given in the British press that by his speech he had called upon the resisters to resort to violence, it was regarded as "astonishing" and as a "backing down" by the reporter of the New York Times. (76) Gandhi, again, was reported to be indulging in violent speeches when in a meeting at Chharvada in Bulsar (Bombay) on 26 April he

73 Philadelphia Inquirer, 14 March 1930, quoted in Harnam Singh, n. 58, p. 280.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., 11 April 1930, p. 13.
announced that soon he would be raiding the Dharsana Salt Depot to take possession of the government salt works there. An Eastern News Agency despatch from Bombay published in the New York World reported Gandhi to have said: "The prisons are no longer an attraction to us. Let us have more shooting and head-breaking, please." (77)

Gandhi's Arrest

Gandhi was arrested on 5 May. The fact of his arrest and the manner in which it was done became subject of wide and prominent publicity in the USA. "The Mahatma is Arrested and Spirited Away to Jail as Staff Sleeps" was one of the captions on the first page of the New York Times on 5 May. "It was in a bridal car (made in Detroit), with pink curtains pulled down, that India's saint was whisked off to jail", wrote the Literary Digest giving details of how Gandhi was arrested and taken to Poona. (78) It also posed the question which the American press was asking: "Will Gandhi's arrest improve matters or make them worse?"

As indicated earlier, many of the American editors were finding it difficult to reconcile Gandhi's recent utterances with his "long-preached doctrine of non-violence". (79) They had also been following the violent incidents occurring in India lately,

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79 Ibid., 105 (10 May 1930), p. 17.
e.g., the armed attack on the Chittagong Armoury on 18 April by some Indian revolutionaries and the refusal of the 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles to fire on the mob at Peshawar on 23 April when they had violently protested against the arrest of some local nationalist leaders. From this many of the American newspapers concluded that Gandhi's arrest was inevitable and also justifiable. So were the comments of the Philadelphia Inquirer on 6 May and the Christian Science Monitor on 8 May. (80) The New York Times did not comment upon the arrest directly, but a few days earlier when it was reported that the MacDonald Government had authorized the Viceroy in India to proceed with any decisive action he proposed to take, this paper came out with an editorial which praised the patience of the Prime Minister in strong words and decried what it regarded as "hurry" the Indian extremists were showing. It said:

That Mr. MACDONALD should have waited so long argues moral courage of a high order.... World opinion will agree with Mr. MACDONALD on the suffering and destruction that can be wrought by revolutionists in a hurry as against the slower but surer methods of progress. (81)

Moreover, on 5 May, i.e. the day on which it carried the news of Gandhi's arrest on its first page, in an editorial, it first reminded its readers that this was the year which marked the centenary of the French occupation of North Africa and then utilized the opportunity to shower approbation on the British Imperial experiment. It wrote:

80 See Harnam Singh, n. 58, pp. 283-4.
Thus far British statesmanship has been sufficient to keep in harness the wild hordes of imperial dominion. Under British sovereignty the sunburned peoples have been cared for and have flourished. (82)

As regards the question whether the arrest of Gandhi would improve the situation, the American press was not sure. The Chicago Daily Tribune may be regarded to express the general feeling that the arrest of Gandhi had answered only one question, i.e., whether the Government of India was timid or confident in the face of Gandhi's challenge. Whether "revolutionary activities were superficial or profound" and whether the British Government would be able to tackle the emerging situation were not clear. (83)

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, however, struck a sombre note when it said: "But Gandhi in jail may be much more troublesome than Gandhi outside..." (84)

The Business Week took note of Gandhi's arrest and opined that the motive of the Indian revolt was economic. "Surely he is a strange prophet. His sermons treat of supply and demand. The wilderness from which he seeks to lead his people is pauperism and low wages. He appeals to them as a messiah of trade and industry." (85) The journal believed that the consequences of India's revolt might be of tremendous economic significance to India, the British Empire, and the world. It, however, cautioned the Americans:

82 Ibid., 5 May 1930, p. 22.
83 Chicago Daily Tribune, 6 May 1930, quoted in Harnam Singh, n. 58, pp. 281-2.
84 Cleveland Plain Dealer, 6 May 1930, quoted in Harnam Singh, n. 58, p. 252.
Incidentally, Americans must not assume that the country [India] would be a happy hunting ground for our salesmen in case of independence. Mahatma Gandhi's plan calls for tariff walls, improved machinery, protection against outside labor. It is 'India for Indians.' (86)

After Gandhi's arrest, things moved fast in India and the main events such as the Sholapur incident of 8 May; raids by Congress volunteers under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu on the Salt Works at Dharsana, especially on 21 May; protest demonstrations in Bombay on 23 and 27 May and 21 June; raids on the Wadala Salt Depot on 26 May; and the unquiet situation in the North West Frontier Province in June got good coverage in the American press. (87)

Reports of the American Journalists in India

The reports which received the greatest disquietening attention in the United States during this time were those from three American journalists in India: Webb Miller, European news-manager of the United Press; Negley Farson, correspondent of the Chicago Daily News Foreign Service; and Charles Dailey, correspondent of the Chicago Tribune.

Miller, who visited India in May 1930 to investigate conditions there, was an eye-witness to the raids by Congress volunteers on the Dharsana Salt Depot on 21 May. (88) His cabled

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86 Ibid., p. 36.
87 See New York Times, 9 May, pp. 1, 9; 15 May, p. 7; 16 May, pp. 1, 9; 21 May, p. 11; 22 May, pp. 1, 9; 24 May, p. 7; 27 May, p. 12; 28 May, p. 12; 3 June, p. 5; and 22 June, pp. 1, 14.
88 For an account of how he received on 20 May a tip from a "friendly Gandhi sympathizer" that there was going to be a big demonstration at Dharsana and how he reached the place despite British efforts to prevent him from reaching there, see Webb Miller, I Found No Peace (New York, 1936), pp. 190-2.
despatches were censored and only a censored version of his report was published in the American newspapers on 21 May. (89) He had, however, taken care to send the complete story of the Dharsana raid by mail and this was published in the New York Telegram, again, on 11 June with an editorial note attached to it mentioning the censorship of the earlier cabled account. Describing graphically the "amazing", the "astonishing" and "baffling" scenes in which more than 2,500 Congress volunteers advanced towards the salt pans defying the police regulations and submitted themselves to the beatings of the police, he, inter alia, wrote:

In 18 years of reporting in 22 countries, during which I have witnessed innumerable civil disturbances, riots, street fights, and rebellions, I have never witnessed such harrowing scenes as at Dharsana. The western mind can grasp violence returned by violence, can understand a fight, but is, I found, perplexed and baffled by the sight of men advancing coldly and deliberately and submitting to beating without attempting defense. Sometimes the scenes were so painful that I had to turn away momentarily.

One surprising feature was the discipline of the volunteers. It seemed they were thoroughly imbued with Gandhi's non-violence creed, and the leaders constantly stood in front of the ranks imploring them to remember that Gandhi's soul was with them. (90)

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89 See New York Telegram, 21 May 1930. A part of this report was reproduced in The Nation, 130 (4 June 1930), p. 637. For an account of how some portions of his first cabled despatches slipped through the clutches of the British authorities and how by repeated threats to fly to Persia to send the whole story of the Dharsana episode to the Press abroad, he "bludgeoned" the British "young, Oxford man", the Secretary for Ecclesiastical Affairs, who in fact was acting as censor in Bombay, into agreeing to pass his story minus some points concerning the actions of the police, see Miller, n. 88, pp. 196-9.

90 New York Telegram, 11 June 1930. Lord Irwin, the Viceroy in India, however, gave a different picture to the King-Emperor. He wrote to him: "Your Majesty can hardly fail to have read with amusement the accounts of the several battles for the Salt Depot at Dharsana. The police for a long time tried to refrain from action. After a time this... contd. on next page
The impressions created by these reports were accentuated by the despatches under dates, Bombay, June 19 and 21 from Negley Farson published in the Chicago Daily News. In the first, he described the "baffling 'battle' between the non-violent yet indisputable mob and perplexed British police sergeants" outside Bombay's biggest departmental store, Whiteway Laidlaws. In the second, he gave a heart-rending picture of the "Heroic, bearded Sikhs several with blood dripping from their mouths, refusing to move or even to draw their 'kirpans' (sacred swords) to defend themselves from a shower of lathi blows..." and of the "Hindu women and girls dressed in orange robes of sacrifice, flinging themselves on the bridles of horses and imploring the mounted police not to strike male Congress volunteers..." (91)

Charles Dailey also described how more than 500 nationalists were wounded, including several women, during a series of police charges against a big rally which had assembled at the Esplanade Maidan in Bombay on 21 June to hear Motilal Nehru, the Acting President of the Indian National Congress. He characterized the police attack as a show of "savagery" and pinpointed that "only

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became impossible, and they eventually had to resort to sterner methods. A good many people suffered minor injuries in consequence; but I believe those who suffered injuries were as nothing compared to those who wished to sustain an honourable contusion or bruise, or who, to make the whole setting more dramatic, lay on the ground as if laid out for dead without any injury at all. But of course, as Your Majesty will appreciate, the whole business was propaganda and, as such, served its purpose admirably well."


the disciplined refusal of the Nationalists to attempt violence, averted what is generally believed would have been a slaughter, since authorities were prepared for any eventualities." (92)

These reports received wide publicity in the USA through the columns of newspapers and journals. As Miller says, his history of the beatings at Dharsana "caused a sensation when it appeared in the 1,350 newspapers served by the United Press throughout the world." (93) Moreover, the Indian residents of the USA got it printed as a leaflet and distributed more than a quarter of a million copies. To cap it all, Senator Blaine read the text of many of these reports into the records of the Senate on 17 July. (94)

What lent dramatic colour to the whole affair was the story of the censorship of Miller's despatches. This greatly annoyed the Americans because the British had denied the existence of censorship on despatches from India to the outside world. (95) This drew a protest from Robert P. Scripps, owner of the Scripps-Howard papers, to Lord Burnham as also an editorial regretting censorship of Miller's stories. Miller, he contended, had gone to India as a neutral observer and to describe things as he saw them. The censorship had done no good to the British case. In fact, it

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92 *Chicago Tribune*, 22 June 1930.

93 Miller, n. 88, p. 119.

94 *USA, Congressional Record*, vol. 73, 71st Congress, Special Session of the Senate (7 July - 21 July 1930), pp. 214-19.

did more harm than good as the imagination of the readers filled in the gap created by it, the likelihood being that the imagined picture would be more revolting than what really had happened. (96)

These reports and the wide publicity given to them made deep impressions on the American mind and gave jerks to their souls. The New York World was of the opinion that it was difficult to imagine a more tragic dilemma than that which India presented to the MacDonald Government. It was impossible to strike hard and with conviction at those who refused either to parry the blow or to return it. But to tolerate the resistance was equally impossible for the type of resistance that Gandhi employed was far more dangerous than ordinary insurrection. Laying the blame of the developing crisis at the door of the British and highlighting the hopelessness of the situation, it wrote:

The peculiar force of the tragedy lies in the fact that the most civilized empire of the West should have failed after a decade of opportunity to come to an understanding with a leader of Gandhi's supreme generosity and fairness. The moral courage it would require to meet Gandhi on his own plane of action and to convince him now of the sincerity of any offer is perhaps more than can be expected of a harassed leader of a minority party in Great Britain. But the alternatives, though they call for less courage, would seem to be even more desperate. (97)

The Christian Century not only reproduced Negley Farson's account of what had happened in Bombay on 21 June but also commented in a deeply sorrow-stricken mood on the grave


97 Quoted in Unity, 105 (26 May 1930), p. 207.
implication of these episodes for the Christian civilization. It wrote:

Western civilization is beating itself to death with the clubs of the Bombay police. Every premise of the Christian gospel is being destroyed in India at this hour. And when the destruction of the Christian gospel is complete, the spiritual damnation of the Western life will follow with swift certainty. (98)

Sympathy for the British

This does not, however, mean that the picture given by these reports — of non-violence on the part of the Indians and violence on the part of the British — was the only one given to the Americans. The New York Times published despatches from Bombay or London which described the incidents in such language as to convey the impression that the nationalists were indulging in violence. It highlighted the mob-violence in Sholapur of 8 May (99), and its story of the Dharsana raids spoke of the civil disobedience volunteers having been injured in "a fierce fight in which the police repulsed attacks by 2,000 raiders on the salt works" and of Sarojini Naidu having seen "her followers make wild rushes at the police". (100) Again, while describing the protest demonstration in Bombay on 23 May, its London despatch spoke of the police having given way before "a frenzied mob of 200,000 Gandhi supporters after such scenes of disorder as have not been witnessed there since 1922." (101)

100 Ibid., 22 May 1930, pp. 1, 9. Emphasis added.
In its editorial opinion also, the New York Times was critical of Gandhi and full of praise for MacDonald. When Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy, in which he had announced that he would soon lead a raid on the Dharsana salt works unless Government removed the Salt Tax and the prohibition on private salt-making, was published (102), this paper found the letter "obscure" and designed "to threaten the British Government with violence, balanced by a lively apprehension lest he might play into the Government's hands." (103) It advised Gandhi that "unquestionably it would be better for his cause if the Nationalist campaign could be conducted wholly without violence, even without civil disobedience." (104) A few days later, it noted "the irony of the situation in India" in that a British Socialist Government headed by a "formerly avowed pacifist" found itself "compelled to employ violence against violence." One misleading word, in its opinion, was the "so-called non-violence of GANDHI". It did not think that either Gandhi's "apologies" for the excesses of his followers or his charge that violence had been deliberately provoked by the Government would stand serious scrutiny. Gandhi had initiated a revolutionary movement and the only way to avoid bloodshed was the complete and immediate surrender of the British which was an "impossible"


104 Ibid. The correspondent of The Times (London) took note of this editorial and conveyed it home. See The Times, 9 May 1930, p. 15.
expectation. "The British troops", it pointed out, "are not firing upon native crowds in defense of a Bourbon policy." Indian representatives had been invited to meet the representatives of Britain in a conference of which "the outcome is humanly certain to be a Dominion rule for India within a few years". Then tauntingly it wrote:

Very few reasonable men will contend that it is worthwhile to let loose revolution and repression for the sake of delay — in India of immemorial patience — or for the sake of the shadowy difference between independence and Dominion rule. (105)

The New York Times also took upon itself the task of assuring its readers that although the units of the Garhwal Rifles which refused to fire at Peshawar on 23 April were doubtless influenced by the civil disobedience movement, it did not follow that the other Indian troops could not be trusted in the present emergency. (106) Apart from the fact that there were splendid contingents among the Hindu troops, the Muslim troops were there who would be the main reliance of the Government if the worst came, because "aside from their prowess, they would prefer British to Hindu rule." Moreover, the Royal Air Force and the tank corps were all British and a great majority of the batteries too were British. This was a point, it advised, which should be taken into account while considering the position of the Government in the event of outbreak of disloyalty among the native troops. It reiterated that "the case for the fidelity of the native troops


is strong." For two generations these troops had faithfully served the Empire when it had been in danger and during the World War "they withstood a great deal of vicious propaganda."

A few days later, the New York Times came out with a more comprehensive editorial under the heading "Alternatives in India". It referred to the excesses of nationalism in Europe since the World War and the costs that were paid in Soviet Union and China, and pointed out that the right of the Indian people to work out their own destiny, cost what it may, did not awaken "quite the old thrill" in such a world. "Yet despite such reservations, the historic argument for liberty stands. If India is determined to be free, one cannot indefinitely be pleading the benefits of British rule. Neither one can use in the old form the argument that India is not yet ready for independence. In the old style 'not yet' meant practically never....", it conceded. What could not be seriously denied, it immediately asserted, was the fact that Britain, ever since the World War, had been engaged in helping the people of India to learn the art of self-rule. "Among the certainties of the near future is Dominion Status for India." And so it declared:

Were it a choice for India between perpetual subjection and independence with chaos, there might be only one answer. But the real choice seems to be between the dread uncertainties of immediate independence by violence on the one hand, and factual self-rule with peace on the other. (107)

Thus, this paper, one of the most important organs of public opinion in America, was convinced that the British policy towards India was correct and the stand of the Indian nationalists

wrong. It did not even relish that Senator Blaine should have proposed a resolution in the Senate. If the Senator thought that the request made in the resolution was quite right, (108) he would doubtless be ready to approve a resolution of the House of Commons directing the British Foreign Office to protest against the oppressive military rule of the United States in Santo Domingo, Haiti, and Nicaragua, it angrily remarked. (109)

An interesting aspect of the situation in this respect was that the tone of the Hearst press was changed at this time. Whereas in 1922 it outright condemned the British regime in India and upheld the cause of the Indian nationalists, (110) in 1930 Arthur Brisbane, in his column "Today" in the Los Angeles Examiner, expressed views which were critical of the nationalist movement as led by Gandhi. (111) He believed that while the 300,000,000 people of India kept millions of "untouchables" in horrible misery, "they will not gain freedom, because they don't deserve it." (112)

Opinion of the Liberals

When the resolution demanding complete independence for India was passed by the Lahore Congress, the American liberals, in the beginning, found it difficult to foresee what was going to happen in India. "Just what is Gandhi's purpose?", asked

108 For the resolution, see Chapter III, p. 131.
110 See Chapter I, pp. 34-35.
111 See Mackett, n. 96, pp. 172-4.
112 Los Angeles Examiner, 2 March 1930, p. 1, quoted in Mackett, n. 96, p. 173.
The Nation in an editorial para. (113) Gandhi had abandoned his earlier demand for Dominion Status and had committed himself to Complete Independence. Yet the Congress under his leadership, instead of immediately declaring the independence of India, had only authorized its executive committee to prepare a plan of passive resistance to be launched upon when it thought the opportunity had arrived. The journal pointed out the divisions in the ranks of Indians and expressed the earnest hope that Great Britain may not feel compelled to send additional troops to India. (114) A week later, however, it was clearer about Gandhi's motives in view of Gandhi's declaration that "the independence resolution need frighten nobody" since for him "dominion status could mean only virtual independence" and that the Congress will gladly respond if the British Government invited it to a conference "to discuss and frame, not any scheme, but a scheme definitely for an Independent Government..." (115) "Gandhi wants freedom for India, whether it is called dominion status or independence. He is willing to wait, and he will not refuse to consider new offers from Great Britain", the journal hopefully commented. (116)

The liberals were apprehensive that if there was no adequate response from Great Britain, the forces of violence may get encouraged in India. The hopeful feature of the situation was that MacDonald, the pacifist and a sympathizer of the Indian cause, was

114 Ibid.
115 See Young India, 9 March 1930.
at the helm of affairs in Great Britain. They, therefore, issued a manifesto appealing both to the people of India and the Government of Great Britain to choose the path of peace in solving the Indian crisis. They conceded that Americans had no direct power or responsibility in the matter. But in this little world they could not look unmoved upon this crisis. They urged:

We have not only a right but a duty to put the imponderable power of public opinion behind an urgent plea to the Indian people to persist in the non-violent paths in which they have chosen to lead mankind and to the British Government to justify confidence in its zeal and capacity as the pioneer of peace by agreement and good will. (117)

When Gandhi started his Dandi march, the liberals were under great suspense. The march was likely to result in Gandhi's arrest. They felt the world would soon learn just how far India was united behind its leaders; whether the movement would remain non-violent; and how wise or unwise the Government of India would prove to be in tackling this difficult and dangerous situation. (118) The New Republic warned that if Gandhi was imprisoned or he died as a result of some incident in connection with his present campaign, "the tidal wave of hatred would break, with consequences which it was impossible to foresee." (119) In the opinion of this journal,

117 New York Times, 10 February 1930, p. 6. This manifesto was signed by twelve American liberals headed by Professor John Dewey of Columbia University; Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of The Nation; and Norman Thomas, the Socialist leader. Other signatories were: Rev. John Haynes Holmes; Rev. J. T. Sunderland, Robert Morse Lovett; William Floyd; Roger Baldwin; Devere Allen; Charles Fleischer; B. W. Huebsch; and Louise Adams Floyd. It was issued through the India Independence League of America and a copy each was sent to the governments of Great Britain and the USA.

118 The Nation, 130 (March 1930), p. 313.

in no other country but India millions of people seething with hatred of the foreign ruler would just stand by while their leader performed the symbolic pilgrimage as Gandhi did. But in India, too, this was possible only due to the "personal power of Gandhi, one of the few great religious leaders of all time". "His disbelief in the use of force does not rest on mere expediency", it noted. (120) As the march progressed and there was no report of violence indulged in by the Indians, the liberal journals were still more convinced of Gandhi's adherence to the policy of non-violence and his abstinence from encouraging his followers to use force. (121) They also felt that India's demand for self-government could no longer be answered either by enumerating the good works done by the British government or by repeating the argument that Indians were not fit to rule themselves. (122)

On the eve of Gandhi's arrest and also thereafter, the liberals began to discuss the possible solution of the Indian problem in more positive terms. The New Republic came out with a long editorial article under the title: "The Alternatives in India". It saw only three possible choices confronting the British Government in India: "It (the British Government) can set India free; it can grant Dominion status; or it can appeal to the sword." (123) It felt that complete freedom for India,

120 Ibid.

121 See The Nation, 130 (2 April 1930), p. 383. At this time, this journal also noted that the British authorities, although prepared for all eventualities, had not till then taken any public steps to interfere with the march.

122 Ibid., 130 (23 April 1930), p. 478.

however desirable it may be, was a "political impossibility" at present since Great Britain could not be expected to yield to that extent in one sudden act. Recourse to the sword also was ruled out because it would plunge all India into a bloodbath laying intolerable burdens on the British tax payers on the one hand and causing moral reprobation of the British by the whole civilized world on the other. So there remained only Dominion Status "as a logical step on the road to complete freedom." It referred to the Vandenberg Bill in the US Senate promising independence to the Philippines after ten years with gradual transfer of governmental functions to the Filipinos in the meantime. (124) This could be the solution for India also. "There is no reason why the MacDonald Government should not similarly promise Dominion status to India, to begin three or five years hence", it suggested. (125)

The Nation, while taking note of Gandhi's arrest, apprehended that now the forces of "Nationalistic and other violence" would be released which, in turn, would be met with British violence. It referred to the arguments of the British and also to the various interests of the British in India and conceded that if England withdrew there seemed to be little doubt that chaos would follow in India. But the nationalists, according to it, would rather have chaos under their own rule than order imposed by some one else. And the Nationalists could not be ignored. So it submitted:

125 New Republic, n. 123.
The idea of national liberty is abroad in India for good or worse. Censorship of newspapers will not affect it. Neither will the arrest of Gandhi. If England is wise and farseeing the Simon Commission, whose report is momentarily expected, will find that India is ready for dominion status. (126)

A week later, The Nation became more forthright. Writing under an editorial article "The Terrible Meek", it pointedly asked what the attitude of the American liberals should be at such an hour? It called upon them to continue to urge that the Indians be given back their country, "to rise or fall as they decide."

What else could be their stand after all? It spiritedly submitted:

Dominion status for India is but another test of our faith in democracy, whether we believe in autocratic good government — although we deny that the British Government in India has always been good — or bad self-government. We cannot see how anybody who believes in American institutions and the principles underlying them can hesitate. India has just as much right to take over its own government today as the Americans had in 1776. (127)

Thereafter, it sorrowfully noted that blood was flowing "freely" in India at this juncture. It emphatically denied that this was the inevitable outcome of the non-resistance movement started by Gandhi, as alleged by some. But the masses, it recognized, would strike back when sufficiently provoked as at Sholapur on 8 May. What about "Gandhi, the Terrible Meek"? It was led into a rapturous praise of Gandhi at this point:

...he is beyond the reach of his jailors because his spirit soars over theirs; because his conscience is clear, his course of life and action open and

126 "Let India Go!", ed., The Nation, 130 (14 May 1930), p. 561. While recommending "dominion status", The Nation took note of the fact that in Gandhi's mind the terms "dominion status" and "independence" were interchangeable.

127 Ibid., 130 (31 May 1930), p. 588.
Frank; because his soul is buttressed by a noble, and an unimperishable truth. He well knows that if he die now it will not matter. Liberty is under way. And whether he is alive or dead, Gandhi's soul will go marching on. (128)

Around this time, the American liberals found that their hopes from MacDonald were belied. (129) They did realize that MacDonald was in a difficult situation. His party held only a minority vote in the House of Commons and if he took any step which indicated his capitulation to Gandhi, he was sure to arouse the Conservatives into a fierce opposition. Moreover, the permanent bureaucracy continued to run the British Empire. Yet, the liberals felt, it could not be said that MacDonald had done all that he could do. "Even with these allowances made," the New Republic wrote, "the Labor Government has done badly in regard to India." (130) The Nation, whose editor, Oswald Garrison Villard, was a personal friend of MacDonald and was in correspondence with him, (131) expressed its sincere sorrow at the "hopeless position" in which MacDonald was placed. If he yielded Dominion Status right then, his political foes would accuse him of weakening before conditions which called for a stern hand. If he did not, he faced bloodshed and rebellion in India. So, what should be do? The Nation clearly advised:

128 Ibid.
129 For a general appreciation of MacDonald as a man and Prime Minister, see The Nation, 129 (23 October 1929), p. 454.
131 For correspondence between Villard and MacDonald, see Villard Papers.
There is only one thing Mr. MacDonald should do: move at once for dominion status, accept Parliamentary defeat, and rely upon the justice of the British people and the progress of events to bring him back to office as the pro-Boers came back triumphantly in 1906. (132)

The Nation was sorry that instead of doing this, MacDonald had postponed the whole issue until 20 October when a conference was going to be held in London to discuss the problem of India.

H. N. Brailsford, a member of the Independent Labour Party of England, tried to sustain the hopes of the American liberals in the MacDonald Government during this time. (133) He narrated the circumstances in which MacDonald became the Prime Minister and emphasized that the Labour Government had "inherited a nearly hopeless situation" in India. It was an act of courage on the part of this Government to reiterate that Dominion Status was the goal of India and that there would be a round-table conference in which the Simon Report as well as any other report which the responsible Indians might suggest would be discussed. He believed that the Labour Government had done nothing till then "to earn the frowns of Liberals in other lands." "The future is as perilous as it is unpredictable and yet the test of the quality of the Labour government is yet to come", he wrote. (134)

132 The Nation, n. 127. See also New Republic, 63 (18 June 1930), pp. 111-12.


134 Ibid., p. 344. This article was written before the arrest of Gandhi. It elicited critical comments from Indians as also from Americans. See ibid., (16 July 1930), pp. 235-6; (23 July 1930), p. 292; and (20 August 1930), pp. 18-19. The last one is a communication from Ramanand Chatterjee, the editor of Modern Review.
This, however, did not assuage the feelings of the American liberals. When the New York Times reported that Labour Secretary of State for India, Wedgwood Benn, told the House of Commons that Gandhi had been arrested so that he could not disturb the good order existing in most parts of India, (135) the American liberals were profoundly disturbed. The Nation dug up quotations from the past writings of MacDonald in which he had pleaded for Indian independence. It sharply reminded the Secretary of State for India that it was not Gandhi who was the disturber, "but those countrymen of MacDonald's who insist on keeping India in tutelage." It declared:

Never has there been a clearer illustration of the taming effect of office-holding upon liberals and radicals than that afforded by the MacDonald Government in England on the question of India. (136)

The New Republic also felt that it was hard to see how the Labour Government's defense of its India policy differed from that which might have been made by any Liberal or even Tory regime of England. (137)

The American liberals were deeply moved when they read about the heroism of the Indians and the brutalities meted out to them by the British officials and other government police officials in India as reported by Webb Miller and other American journalists in India at this time. The Nation felt that "Never in the history of the world has there been such amazing self-control by great

masses of people." (138) The New Republic came to believe that the flames of revolt in India were being fanned by "a ruthless policy of suppression which is indistinguishable from that of the blackest Tory Government of modern times." (139)

A few weeks later, the New Republic reproduced parts of Negley Farson's report on the stoicism of the Sikhs in face of brutal lathi blows of the police in the city of Bombay and regarded the bravery of the Sikhs as an indication of the depth of the passion of the Indians for freedom which the British were now combating. It also wondered "how many readers of the New Republic there are who care deeply enough for any cause to suffer for it what these Indians did?" (140)

The minds of other progressive groups, too, were greatly exercised by the British policy in India. A. J. Muste, a leading pacifist and Chairman of the Conference for Progressive Labor Action, characterized the arrest of Gandhi by a government which was responsible to the British Cabinet headed by a fellow pacifist, MacDonald, as one of the major tragedies of the present era. This, according to him, had left MacDonald's friends in the USA powerless to say a word in his defense. (141) The Socialists were greatly puzzled as to the Labour Party's attitude towards India and the editor of their journal, the New Leader, sent a cable to

139 New Republic, 63 (18 June 1930), p. 112.
the Labour Party office in London seeking clarification of their policy. (142) Norman Thomas, the Socialist leader, felt that unless there was an attempt at conciliation, the British Government may go down in history as the "ruthless policeman". (143) Communists held a meeting on 10 May denouncing Great Britain for its policy on India and demanding release of Gandhi. (144) On 28 June about 1,000 of them tried to storm the doors of the British Consulate in New York to protest against the British rule in India. (145)

Opinion of Some Religious Groups

Gandhi and the civil disobedience movement led by him aroused great interest in some religious circles of the USA. This is reflected through the columns of the *Christian Century* and *Unity*, both published from Chicago. The former was an important non-denominational journal of religion and the latter, edited by Rev. John Haynes Holmes, the pastor of Community Church of New York, was, according to its announcement, "A Journal of the Religion of Democracy".

At the beginning, the *Christian Century* felt greatly bewildered as to which type of forces had gained an upper-hand at the Lahore Congress. It had also faith in the liberalism of MacDonald and Lord Irwin. A little later, it recognized that

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142 Ibid., 10 May 1930, p. 9.  
143 Ibid.  
144 Ibid., 11 May 1930, p. 24.  
145 Ibid., 29 June 1930, pp. 1, 2.
the Lahore Congress represented a victory for Gandhi, a victory for the principle of non-violence. There were, however, incalculable elements in the situation — for example, the vast illiterate masses who were potentially inflammable — which made the situation dangerous. It felt that India by switching over from the demand of Dominion Status to Complete Independence and China by issuing a mandate which set 1 January of the current year as the end of the period of extraterritorial rights for the foreigners, had placed the Orient in a new relationship with the rest of the world. (146) "The Orient is Not Bluffing!" was the caption of one of its editorial articles during this time. (147) It foreboded disaster in the Orient unless tact, patience, and wisdom were shown on all sides. (148)

Writing more specifically on India, this journal noted that Gandhi was in the control of the nationalist movement and that Lord Irwin had warned that any attempt to carry on a national programme of civil disobedience would lead to violence. It felt that "the probabilities are overwhelmingly on the side of the Viceroy's prediction." (149) It was also not impressed by Gandhi’s 11-point demand before the Viceroy, the implementation of which alone could persuade the Congress to participate in the proposed round-table conference in London. "It seems a strange twist to give the controversy to make the nationalists' future course depend on these requirements, none of which has figured

148 Ibid., p. 74.
prominently in previous negotiations", it commented. (150) It appeared to it that the situation in India was rapidly drifting toward an open struggle. It regretted the "apparent obliviousness of the British public, and most of the rest of the peoples of the West" of such a dangerous situation in India. (151)

Unity, from the beginning, was of the view that Gandhi was the supreme leader of the Indian people. It compared the Lahore Congress with the American Congress of 1776 and stated that the British Empire was quivering like "a great ship struck by a tidal wave." (152) Gandhi's 11-point demand before the Viceroy was taken by it as an indicator of Gandhi's pursuing the independence movement "with a persistence as steady as it is prudent." (153) It found that while Indians were exploring every way of peace consistent with the ends they sought, the British were sullenly relying upon the armed forces. It still had confidence in MacDonald and Lord Irwin as in Gandhi, but confessed that this was growing thin. (154) When Gandhi admitted that there were apparent inconsistencies in what he said and did but that these were inherent in the very situation and so could not be helped, and endorsed what the American philosopher Emerson had said on this question, (155) this journal did not find that there was any detraction from Gandhi's greatness.

150 Ibid.
151 Ibid., p. 196.
154 Ibid.
155 See Young India, 13 February 1930.
On the other hand, it only highlighted Gandhi's prudence. "Be as consistent with your ideal as you can without loss of effectiveness!" This is what Gandhi meant, this journal opined. (156)

Gandhi's march to Dandi was taken to be a phenomenon of immense import by these religious journals. "Never was Mahatma Gandhi a greater leader of men than at this moment.... Never before was there an application of the principle of non-resistance on such a scale and to such an end," commented Unity. The power of this principle was seen in the utter helplessness of the British Government: it could not let this demonstration go on as it would catch fire; it also did not feel emboldened to arrest Gandhi for fear of reaction. "We await breathlessly the outcome, persuaded only that the world has not seen such a spectacle as this since Jesus and his disciples marched to Jerusalem for the last Passover," wrote this journal. (157) It was also struck by this "new Gandhi, a more determined Gandhi, a more relentless Gandhi."

In 1920-21, Gandhi had stopped his movement when there were some violent occurrences. This time he was refusing in his campaign to be delayed or deterred by outbreaks of violence, since if violence came it was the English who were to blame "for resisting by force a righteous endeavor of a great people after liberty." (158)

The Christian Century was not very much convinced of the wisdom of precipitating the civil disobedience at this time from the point of view of practical statecraft. (159) It regretted the

157 Ibid., 105 (7 April 1930), p. 83.
158 Ibid., 105 (12 May 1930), p. 163.
unreadiness of the Indian nationalists to await the report of the Simon Commission and their failure to give sufficient consideration to the communal problem which would probably "scourge" India from the day the British control was withdrawn. It also expressed "an especial measure of sympathy for that long-time champion of Indian interests, Ramsay MacDonald" for the predicament in which Gandhi had thrown him. But from the point of view of religion and ultimate philosophy of life, it was deeply conscious of the immense significance of the method Gandhi had employed to achieve his end. The issue which Gandhi had raised by his salt satyagraha was far deeper than the immediate outcome of this campaign or even the securing of Swaraj for India itself:

It is an issue that transcends the fate of the British Commonwealth of nations. Stripped of all ephemeral aspects; the issue here joined is the choice of the means whereby, for the next hundred years or longer, men will seek to control the affairs of nations. (160)

Gandhi, in the opinion of this journal, had managed to set love in opposition to force; non-violence in opposition to the iron-hand; and soul-force in opposition to world-might. In other words, what he was doing was an "attempt to control the future of mankind on the basis of the New Testament!" (161)

The journal was sceptical of Gandhi's ability to control the movement which he had launched. Probably, he would not be able to do so. "Nevertheless", it asserted, "the prospect that Gandhi's effort to conquer the British might with no weapon save

160 Ibid., p. 489.
161 Ibid.
moral force is likely to end in disaster does not change the fact that the effort is actually being made." (162) The trials of this "strange-looking little man, this emaciated ascetic" had, in the opinion of this Christian journal, brought all the West to judgment:

Pilate's seat stands again in the midst of the nations. Does Gandhi appear to us fanatic, fantastic unfathomable? So likewise appeared another who confronted the mightiest empire of his time before the seat of a Judean proconsul, nineteen hundred years ago this week. "My Kingdom", he said, to the baffled and exasperated Roman, "my Kingdom is not of your world." Is the Kingdom which Gandhi seeks of ours? (163)

Gandhi's arrest corroded the conscience of this journal. It noted that some violence had occurred in India. "But all things considered, the amount of violence connected with the Gandhi movement up to date has been surprisingly small", it observed. Yet, with Gandhi in jail, the likelihood was that the hotheads would prevail and the movement would slip into "general rioting and bloodshed". That would make the problem for Britain much simpler, but "the ominous hour in the East" would have struck. (164)

The journal was so disturbed at Gandhi's arrest that it reverted to the theme a week later in a long editorial article. (165) It pensively noted that Gandhi in jail weighed heavily upon the


163 Ibid. The same type of feelings were expressed by Rev. Holmes in "Gandhi Before Pilate", Unity, 105 (9 June 1930), pp. 234-8.


conscience of mankind. But did the world realize what was the deeper meaning of the conflict in question? "Gandhi in jail is one philosophy of life awaiting crucifixation at the hands of another", it somberly observed. (166) Did the West know how to meet this challenge? "... the West, as it now is, has no answer. No answer, that is, different from the old answer of Rome." The journal got exasperated and pleaded for a qualitatively new answer to a jailed Gandhi:

The question posed by this strange figure in an Indian jail is not merely as to whether Britain shall go on ruling India. It is the question as to what shall go on ruling us... Until we can make an entirely different answer than candor today compels, there is probably nothing that the men who rule on our behalf can say to men of the Gandhi stripe but 'To Jail with You!' (167)

In agony but still with the remnants of a sturdy hope, some clergymen of America made a bid to save Britain, India, and the world from a major catastrophe. Over a hundred of them led by Rev. John Haynes Holmes sent a cablegram to MacDonald urging him to avoid the tragedy of a conflict in India by seeking an amicable settlement with Gandhhi and his people. The message read:

In the interest of India, Britain, and the world, we beg you to seek the way to amicable settlement with Gandhi and his people. As ministers of religion who cherish the principles of democracy, freedom, and brotherhood which you represent, and who believe in the spiritual ideals which Gandhi sublimely embodies, we refuse to believe that you and Gandhi cannot work together. We look to you, who hold the power and authority in this crisis,

167 Ibid., p. 649. Emphasis in the original.
to avoid the tragedy of a conflict which would mean catastrophe for Britain, India, and mankind. (168)

A few days later, Bishop Frederick B. Fisher of Calcutta, while addressing 8,000 persons in the world conference of Methodist Episcopal Bishops in Boston, declared that Gandhi was not a fanatic and that if Americans believed in the self-determination of people they must give him a chance in the "uprising of 320,000,000 Indians" for greater liberty. (169)

Around this time, there were also attempts to help the cause of Indian nationalism in a concrete way. Unity came out with appeals to its readers seeking gifts for the arrested and imprisoned nationalists of India. It reminded its readers that it was the receipt of French funds at critical moments of their own War of Independence that had turned "impending defeat into victory." It felt that the destiny of the Indian struggle may well hang upon the question whether enough funds could be raised far and wide throughout the world to meet the necessities of "this greatest of all human causes at this moment." It, therefore, appealed to its readers to help raise a fund for the relief of the sufferers of this "great non-resistant war for independence". (170)

About a month later, it reported an encouraging start for this

168 New York Times, 11 May 1930, p. 26. This cable caught the attention of the members of the British Parliament. In reply to a question, the British Prime Minister denied that any reply had been sent to the clergymen. Sir N. Grattan-Doyle, however, suggested that in reply there should be "an admonition of these well-intentioned people saying that we are capable of running our own affairs in this country." UK, House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 239, session 1929-30, cols 14-15.


170 Unity, 105 (5 May 1930), p. 147.
"Gandhi Relief Fund" and asked for more contribution speedily in view of the fact that a great number of men and women were being arrested, the flogging of the resisters was being resorted to, and behind the dark screen of censorship, "terrible things" were being done in that country. (171)

There were also attempts to make the Americans more appreciative of Gandhi and his campaign by reminding them of "the debt of the Indian saint to their own Liberator." (172) The role of William Lloyd Garrison in the anti-slavery movement of the nineteenth century was recalled and the influence of his doctrine of non-resistance to enemies on the philosophy of Tolstoy was traced. Gandhi had repeatedly testified his profound debt to Tolstoy; in fact he had named one of his colonies in South Africa as Tolstoy Farm. (173) It was thus sought to link Gandhi's thought to Garrison through Tolstoy. The idea with which Gandhi was shaking the very foundations of the British Empire was not, it was argued, "a strange new bit of oriental madness", but the common property of "a few choice spirits in all periods of the world's history." (174) The Nation referred to similar doctrines of other Americans, such as Emerson, the Transcendentalist, and

174 Unity, n. 172, p. 213.
Henry Thoreau, the author of *Essay on Civil Disobedience* (1849). Pointing out Thoreau's refusal to pay taxes as a protest against America's war with Mexico (1846-1847), it re-emphasized that the doctrine of non-violence was not exclusively Indian. (175)

**Factors Arousing American Interest**

It is evident that American interest in India was considerably aroused in 1930. Of the many factors responsible for this, three may be considered here: (1) Gandhi; (2) the presence of some American journalists, publicists, and public men in India on the eve of the Lahore Congress and thereafter; and (3) the publication of some books in the USA during this time.

Foremost of these factors was the personality of Gandhi and what he stood for. Gandhi so much fascinated the Americans that the average American, according to Negley Farson, was not, as a matter of fact, thinking of India at all — he was thinking about Gandhi. Explaining further, he wrote:

> Somewhat disgusted by the failure of our own churches, in the face of a plethora of gunmen, to produce any spiritual leadership, we are immensely intrigued by Mr. Gandhi's ideas of morality.... Taken all in all, we are more than half of the opinion that Mr Gandhi has something to offer us. We would like to see him get the chance to put his ideas to work — if only to see if he could get away with it. (176)

Gandhi, for the Americans, represented an interesting combination of "a holy man" and "a master strategist". What is more, his ingenuity as a master strategist did not seem to detract from his holiness. (177) Spirituality and vision,

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177 Ibid., p. 460.
shrewdness and practical wisdom—all seemed to exist as essential qualities in his personality. (178)

Gandhi's confrontation of the British Empire presented a dramatic spectacle before the Americans. This was a spectacle in which "A wisp of a man, gaunt, emaciated, unclad but for a loin cloth, flung defiance in the face of the world's proudest empire." (179) It was intriguing to find that Gandhi with his spinning wheel, "Ridiculed, beaten, flung into the gutter, ... believes still that his simple gospel of non-violence will win in the end—after all the bombs and battle-ships have done their work and failed...." (180) So, when the stories were flashed to America by American correspondents in India narrating how heroically the unflinching Gandhi satyagrahis bore the brutal blows of lathis coming over their heads from the British police without even raising their hands in retaliation, many Americans wondered at the achievement of Gandhi:

Here was an epic contest of faith against force, probably the most interesting battle of modern history.... Here was something infinitely bigger than unarmed Hindu versus policeman, even Hindu against Englishman; it was a test case of East against West. And in perfecting satyagraha, Gandhi had apparently produced a weapon to which the West could find no answer. (181)

During 1929 and 1930, a good number of Americans visited India, met Gandhi and other Indian leaders, witnessed the

180 Literary Digest, n. 56.
unfolding of the Indian scene with their own eyes and recorded their impressions in the shape of despatches, articles, or books published in the USA. Some of them, such as Kirby Page, the editor of World Tomorrow (New York), and Sherwood Eddy, Secretary of the Asian branch of YMCA, lived with Gandhi in his Ashram at Sabarmati near Ahmedabad for a few days and saw him from close quarters. They were highly impressed with him and felt that he was not only fighting the British but also the forces of violence, which, in his absence, might engulf the whole country. (182) Another American, William Kirk of Pomona College, was so impressed with the gift of goodness which Gandhi embodied in his personality that while walking away slowly from the Sabarmati Ashram after an interview, he found himself repeating: "Mahatma, great leader of a suffering people, I salute you!" (183) Herbert A. Miller, Professor of Sociology at the Ohio State University, found only two real forces in India—the Government and Gandhi. He also found the atmosphere in the Sabarmati Ashram so electric "as might have been expected at the general headquarters of an avowed army of revolution, but controlled, fearless, and confident." (184) He was convinced that the

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183 William Kirk, "Will India Follow Gandhi?", Sociology and Social Research (Los Angeles), 14 (March-April 1930), p. 357. This article represented the address given by Kirk before the Pacific Southwest Sociological Association on 25 January 1930.

Indians had actually started on the road from which they would not turn aside until independence was secured. (185)

An important American public figure who visited India early in 1930 was Dr. Norman F. Coleman, President of Reed College and one of the recognized educational leaders on the Pacific Coast. When he returned to the United States, an official of the Division of Western European Affairs of the State Department had a long conversation with him regarding conditions in India. Coleman stated that although thus far the nationalists had not advocated the use of force, there was a fear that the inefficiency of the boycott methods might lead to armed resistance. He himself felt that the withdrawal of the British authorities at this time would without doubt lead to a state of anarchy, and yet there seemed to be an uncompromising spirit resulting from a strong feeling of distrust of Britain's good intentions. (186)

All these reports along with the eye-witness accounts of some aspects of the civil disobedience movement sent to the home country by the American journalists (187) aroused great curiosity among the Americans about developments in India and they awaited with suspense the outcome of the Indian struggle.

Significant role in this respect was played by the publication of some books during this time in the USA. C. F. Andrews, through his book **Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas Including**

185  Ibid., p. 502.

186  Note of J. W. G. on conversation with Dr. Norman F. Coleman, 17 February 1930, 845.00/655, Records of the State Department.

187  See pp. 163-68.
Selections from His Writings (New York, 1930), presented an exposition of Gandhi's religious genius, his social and political aims, and his influence on contemporary life in India based on documentary sources. Kenneth Saunders, reviewing the book in the Saturday Review of Literature, highly commended it and advised everyone interested in the problem of race and the application of moral idealism to human affairs to read it. (188) The Christian Science Monitor was not impressed. Although there was much to admire in a lovable character like Gandhi, Western readers of the volume would find the word 'nonsense' coming again and again to their lips, it asserted. It further said that those most interested in the advancement of "the great India of many communities" would regret that Gandhi, who counted as the leading Hindu of the present day, was not more helpful for practical purposes. (189) Subsequently, Andrews edited Gandhi's autobiography and got it published in the United States. (190) Christian Century found the autobiography more captivating than fiction and more stimulating than romantic adventure. "Stark realism and strict honesty face you on every page....", the reviewer


wrote. (191)

Eminent Asians: Six Great Personalities of the New East
by Josef Washington Hall raised Gandhi to a very high pedestal.
India, according to the author, was floundering in the morass of
its own traditions when Gandhi came. Out of these traditions he
organized "a coherent doctrine and a forward movement, salted
with the definiteness of the Sermon on the Mount, applied with
the pragmatism and vigor of the West, and inspired by his own
sacrificing life." (192) Hall became almost lyrical about
Gandhi's greatness:

Gandhi is greatest of all makers of Asia because
unlike the other makers, he would sacrifice his
nation's hope of independence rather than commit
one act of violence or chicanery to attain it.
He is the world's unique leader, its modern prophet
of the gospel of love, whose spiritual
descent is
through the Buddha, Mo Ti, Jesus of Nazareth,
St. Francis of Assisi, and Tolstoy. Such men
last longer than their immediate causes, and become
a factor bearing upon every cause that stirs
humanity after them. Gandhi may be the George
Washington to the new Indian nation of the
twentieth century, but long after this now precious
hope shall have materialized, flourished, and

191 Christian Century, 47 (5 November 1930), p. 1345. For
other reviews, see Books (New York Herald Tribune),
28 September 1930, p. 5; Christian Science Monitor,
25 October 1930, p. 9; New York World, 25 September
1930, p. 14; Saturday Review of Literature,
7 (4 October 1930), p. 173; Review of Reviews,
82 (30 November 1930), p. 14; The Nation, 131 (3 December
1930), p. 619; and New Republic, 65 (10 December 1930),
p. 106.

192 Josef Washington Hall (pseudonym: "Upton Close"), Eminent
Asians: Six Great Personalities of the New East (New York,
1930), pp. 507-8. Hall had been a newspaper correspondent
in China, Japan, and Siberia during 1917-22; an investigat-
ing officer of the US Government in Shantung during
Japanese invasion in 1916-19; and lecturer on Oriental Life
and Literature at the University of Washington during
1922-26. He was author of several books including
The Revolt of Asia (New York, 1927). He visited India in
1929 and interviewed both Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.
slipped into the shadows like Asoka's empire, he will remain a Christ to peoples of many heritages — the Messiah of the Meeting of the Races. (193)

The canvas of Rev. J. T. Sunderland's book *India in Bondage: Her Right to Freedom* (New York, 1929), was wider than that of either Hall or Andrews. (194) The central contentions of his book were that the British rule in India was unjust and tyrannical; that to hold India, a great civilized nation, in

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194 Rev. Jabez Thomas Sunderland was born in England but he spent greater part of his life in the USA where he settled down. He was President of India Home Rule League of America and editor of the monthly journal *Young India* published from New York in 1919-20. He spent many years in India and wrote several books on the various aspects of the problem faced by the country; e.g., *India, America and World Brotherhood* (Madras, 1924); *The Truth About India* (New York, 1930); and *Eminent Americans Whom India Should Know* (Calcutta, 1935).

*India in Bondage* was first published in India in 1928. A few months after the publication, the Government of India proscribed the book and its publisher, Ramanand Chatterjee, editor of *Modern Review* (Calcutta), was charged with sedition and arrested. He was prosecuted under the Indian Penal Code. The Nation sarcastically noted that while *Mother India*, which through its inaccuracies and insinuations had greatly hurt the sensibilities of the Indians, was allowed to circulate freely in India, *India in Bondage* which was sympathetic to India's independence was proscribed. "It is a panic-stricken government that dares not allow both sides of a question to be stated", it remarked. See *The Nation*, 129 (17 July 1929), p. 55.

forced bondage as was being done by Great Britain, was a crime against humanity; that the Indian people were abundantly competent to rule themselves; and that American public opinion ought strongly to demand freedom for India since the subjugation of India did injustice to the USA by obstructing it from having free and unhampered political, commercial, and cultural intercourse with India.

There was still another book which made a strong plea for granting self-government to India. This was The Case for India (New York, 1930) by William James Durant. (195) In the preface of the book, the author wrote that he saw such things in India as made him feel that study and writing were frivolous things in the presence of a people—one fifth of the human race—suffering poverty and oppression bitterer than any to be found elsewhere on earth. He attributed India's ills largely to British imperialism and urged American opinion to offer its support to the Indian nationalists. (196) He was so bitter against the British authorities after his return from India that even Sunderland called him "hot" and his book "red hot". (197)

195 William James Durant, later Professor of Philosophy at the University of California (Los Angeles), was author of several books, including The Story of Philosophy (New York, 1926).


All these books had a mixed reception in the United States. Nevertheless, they served the purpose of drawing the attention of a large number of Americans to the oppressive nature of the British rule in India. They also interpreted Gandhi in sympathetic terms and highlighted the role he was playing in unifying the country for the fight for freedom on a moral basis. Several of them incurred the displeasure of the Government of India as also of the British authors. (198)

**American Opinion Ignites the British Wrath**

The British were very sensitive about American opinion on India. It has already been seen how the British newspapers in India reacted to Senator Blaine's first resolution on India in the beginning of the year. (199) The British reaction became particularly sharp when the Senator introduced his second resolution on India on 17 July. (200) This was followed by a series of articles by Edward Thompson on American opinion on India which were remarkable for their pungency. The fray was joined in by some American liberals subsequently. (201)

The *London Times* published a summary of Senator Blaine's resolution under the caption: US SENATOR AND INDIA: AN

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198 For the treatment meted out to *The Case for India*, see *India, Legislative Assembly Debates*, vol. 5, session 2, 1931, pp. 667-8.

199 See Chapter II, pp. 79-81.

200 For the resolution, see Chapter III, p. 131.

201 S. K. Ratcliffe had given prior notice to Oswald Garrison Villard that letters on India were in the offing. "Edward Thompson has weighed in with an exposition," he wrote. Ratcliffe to Villard, 13 June 1930, Villard Papers.
ASTONISHING RESOLUTION. The summary said that the efforts of a few Indian nationalists who had been busy in Washington for some time past had borne fruit in the shape of the resolution introduced by Senator Blaine in the Senate. It further said that Senator Blaine who was a "kindly man with such honesty as is possible when knowledge and experience are severely limited" had accepted without question the stories which the Indian nationalists had given him. (202)

Later, it editorially expressed surprise as to "how could anyone with the slightest power of judgment or knowledge of the world, such as is to be assumed in an American Senator, show himself so guillible?" As if this jibe was not enough, it further asked: "How could anyone with a sense of fairness or even of ordinary caution put his name to such mischievous twaddle without making any attempt to check the 'information' provided for his benefit?" (203)

The Times saw the need for providing better and authoritative information to the Americans on the question of India. That there was a great lack of such information in America was highlighted by Edward Thompson, the poet, novelist, and lecturer in Bengali at Oxford and for some time "guest professor" of English at Vassar College in New York. He published three articles under the title "America and India" in The Times on 21, 22, and 23 July and returned to the topic again on 18 and 29

September by way of replies to some of his American critics. (204)

Thompson referred to such statements of the Americans as the liberals' manifesto and the clergymen's appeal to MacDonald, and opined that although the British people had seen such items of news from time to time, they did not realize how intense was the interest felt by Americans in the Indian situation. (205) He conceded that Great Britain had friends there — "a great host of Americans" who believed that the British were anxious to do right by India. But his grievance was that these friends were silent while the "enemies" were creating an atmosphere unfriendly to the peaceful settlement of the Indian problem for which the British had long been working. (206) He wondered if the Americans knew "how widespread and how deeply felt is the resentment of the British now accumulating over many years, but never expressed." (207) He chided them by reminding that the British did not hold meetings to discuss the Negro problem of America, or America's policy in the Philippines, or its action in Latin America. Yet the British Government was "subjected to continual pressure from the American side." (208)

204 The July articles of Thompson were published in the form of a pamphlet by The Times priced at 2d, and lots of 25, 50, 100, 250, 500, and 1000 copies were offered at concessional rates to facilitate distribution in the United States. See The Times, 29 July 1930, p. 14.


206 Ibid., 23 July 1930, p. 15.

207 Ibid.

208 Ibid.
Thompson's specific criticism was that there lay a "mass of misapprehension" behind American thought about India. Everywhere was the belief that history ran along a few regularities liable to repetition; that the event of 1776 was being reenacted in India; that Gandhi's Salt Tax agitation was the Stamp Act agitation over again; that Indians also had a National Day of Independence; that the struggle in India was a struggle between a Saint and an Empire; that Gandhi's wish was the wish of India and that what Gandhi said or did was right and not to be questioned. (209) He lamented that the psychology of the British was "little understood or even guessed." He told the American liberals who had sent an appeal to MacDonald to settle matters amicably with Gandhi that they were not able to imagine "the resentment with which we note the assumption behind their appeal that all the decency of our people and all the chances of a peaceful solution in India are concentrated in one party Labour Party." He knew that Stanley Baldwin, the Leader of the Conservative Party, was "in every way as firm a friend of fairness and of peace as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald." (210)

Thompson's special target of attack was the liberal press in America, more particularly the New Republic. He accused the New Republic of being partial to Gandhi and unfair to the Viceroy. As an example, he cited the fact that whereas it published Gandhi's letter to the Viceroy in which he had described the treatment meted out to the satyagrahis by the police officials

and had announced that he would lead a raid on the Dharsana Salt Works, it did not publish Viceroy's reply to Gandhi at all. (211) An additional crime of the New Republic in this respect was that it gave an introduction to Gandhi's letter saying that the letter gave "a graphic picture of conditions in India as they were then, and are now." According to Thompson, the letter did nothing of the sort. It merely gave "a graphic picture of one suffering and overwrought man", whose statement, "honestly but emotionally set out", was not evidence. (212)

Thompson also took to task two American authors: Josef Washington Hall and J. T. Sunderland whose books, Eminent Asians and India in Bondage respectively, had, according to him, "more than any other influenced American thought about India." (213) He found Hall's book full of inaccuracies and Sunderland's book "crowded with false assumptions". Yet they had been enthusiastically reviewed by the best American journals. The pity was that whereas Hall and Sunderland had "a rejoicing and truthful public", the book Indian Commentary by a "generous, brave and careful" author (G. T. Garratt) "was reviewed sparingly and sold hardly at all." (214)

Thompson assured the Americans that there would be no resentment on the British side if only they could remove from

214 Ibid., 23 July 1930, p. 15.
the British mind the belief that "their [Americans'] public and publicists care little for accuracy". (215)

Thompson's articles were noted with unusual interest everywhere in Great Britain. But it aroused relatively less public comment because of the mistake committed by The Times in putting at the end of each article a specific warning against reproduction in whole or part. This, according to the New Statesman, was naturally taken by the press in general as a warning against quotation. (216) Yet there were considerable comments in the press expressing appreciation of the effective and timely work done by Thompson and pouring additional ridicule on the state of ignorance of the Americans. (217)

The British liberal press did not lag behind in congratulating Thompson for the "good service" done by him. The Nation & Athenaeum found the "carelessness" of and the "misrepresentation" in the American press, revealed by Thompson's articles, "extremely disquietening" and suggested that the Viceroy should be asked to broadcast an address to the Americans to offset the effect of these misrepresentations. (218) The New Statesman was also

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216 See New Statesman, 35 (16 August 1930), p. 585. This inhibition was eased when The Times brought out these articles in the form of a pamphlet.


218 Nation & Athenaeum, 47 (26 July 1930), p. 520.
greatly worried. It found the "ignorance and unscrupulousness" of the American publicists "incredible". "Their accounts of the wickedness of the British Raj and the virtues of the Swarajists must raise Homeric laughter in anyone who knows the facts", it sarcastically commented. (219) But this was a matter for tears, too. It was certainly "lamentable to see the American people stuffed with lies". What was worse, such behaviour of the American press was "discouraging to Englishmen who are struggling against the odds to find a solution of an exceedingly difficult problem." (220)

This journal returned to this topic before long. (221) After condemning Hall and Sunderland for what they had done in their books, it delved into the question as to why Americans were so much interested in India. The first factor, according to it, was the exit of Ireland from American news since 1921-1922 and filling up of this place by India as the most controversial of Britain's imperial problems. The second factor was Gandhi, who was given prominence in the American press, in the churches, and on the platforms, "going far beyond the position accorded to him in England." (222) It, however, pointed out, citing Professor Rushbrook Williams for corroboration, (223) that although certain

220 Ibid.
221 See "America and India", ibid., 35 (16 August 1930), pp. 585-6.
222 Ibid., p. 586.
223 See Williams, n. 1, pp. 495-6.
groups and interests in America were "irreconcilable just as certain Senators were incorrigible", (224) there were only few important organs of American opinion which did not hold the balance fairly "recognizing that, at least, the task of achieving self-government for India is more baffling than that of arranging for the freedom of the Philippines." (225)

Some of the American liberal journals took note of what Thompson had said in his articles. Unity stated that the British propaganda about India was being intensified and "you can't beat the British at this game!" It warned the Americans that copies of Thompson's articles in the pamphlet form being issued by The Times were expected in the USA very soon and a mass of falsehood would soon engulf the nation. (226)

The New Republic also reacted to Thompson's criticism and in an editorial article sympathised with the British concern at the American attitude towards India. (227) It conceded that there was hardly any other question at the moment which constituted a more serious threat to the friendly relations between England and America and that American support for their aspirations was an "important factor in determining the attitude of some of the chief

224 The reference here, presumably, is to Senator Blaine who had introduced resolutions in the Senate on the question of India.

225 New Statesman, n. 222. The point that the American critics of the British policy in India as described by Thompson did not represent the main segments of American opinion was also emphasized by "an American journalist" in Nation & Athenaeum, n. 215, and by Negley Farson in English Review, n. 176, pp. 456-64.

226 Unity, 105 (1 September 1930), p. 4.

227 "American Opinion and India", New Republic, 64 (20 August 1930), pp. 5-6.
Indian leaders". (228) It picked up the main points of Thompson's articles and, while replying to them in a measured way, stuck to its guns. It reminded Thompson that the only book about India which sold in large numbers in the USA in recent years was Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* which was the "most effective pro-British propaganda ever written" and that the source of news on India coming to America were mainly the British agencies or correspondents. (229) It then pointedly told Thompson that if in spite of all this, "many Americans lean to the cause of India, we suggest that perhaps that cause has some innate merits which are deserving of consideration." (230)

Quick came the reply from Thompson. (231) He did not agree that the British propaganda was operating in the United States as much as the *New Republic* believed it to be. He pointed to the Round Table Conference which was going to be held in London and felt that only Gandhi's refusal to join it would cause it to fail. Expressing again the displeasure at the possible

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228 Ibid., p. 5.
229 For sources of American news about India, see Syud Hossain's communication, ibid., 64 (22 October 1930), p. 260.
230 Ibid., n. 227, p. 6. The *Christian Century* sympathized that the feelings of "Our old friends of the Christian World" had been hurt by the expression of American public opinion on Indian developments. But it politely pointed out: "... it is ludicrous to assert that the British point of view on India is not being given full publicity in this country." It also pointed out to its British friends the futility of dismissing the accounts of the British atrocities in India given by such reliable journalists like Negley Farson and Webb Miller. *Christian Century*, 47 (20 August 1930), pp. 1003-4.
231 *New Republic*, 64 (10 September 1930), pp. 102-3.
unhelpful effect of unqualified praise of Gandhi by American papers, he wrote:

If you and other American papers are going to applaud everything he does or says, and refuse to criticize him even on the ground that his tactics are sometimes faulty, we may see this refusal. (232)

Thompson was not alone in getting uneasy at American opinion on India. Lord Meston who often went to America to lecture on the British administration in India, also, in a letter to The Times, emphatically confirmed what Thompson had described of the anti-British propaganda in the United States and warned that the mischief was "widespread, growing, and unchecked." He dismissed the attack of Senator Blaine as coming from a man not taken seriously in the United States, but added that "his tirade was symptomatic of what the American people are being continuously asked to believe." The British administration in India was presented to them as based solely on "treachery, fraud, forgery, and unprovoked aggression." He admitted that there were many Americans, especially those who had first-hand knowledge of India, who appreciated British difficulties in that country and deeply resented the attack on Great Britain. Despite this, Lord Meston apprehended, the situation would develop into a serious blight on Anglo-American relations. "The conviction that Britain has no case for refusing immediate self-government to India is rapidly gaining ground; and, apart from the unfairness of the verdict, it is cutting clear across the growth of a better understanding between England and America", he asserted. (233)

The correspondent of the New York Times regarded Lord Meston's letter as an illustration of the unquestioned fact that the British people were becoming "deeply aggrieved by the

232 Ibid., p. 103.
233 The Times, 11 September 1930, p. 11.
continuous criticism in the United States of the administration of India." He reported that many letters of protest against what were regarded as unfair and uninformed attacks in America, were received both by the British Foreign Office and India Office. But these were all quietly pigeonholed without comment, for the Government was determined "not to give any tinge of official status to the grievance which practically all educated people in this country feel, whether they are in public or in private life." (234) The British press, according to him, was equally reticent as far as editorial comment was concerned. This was because responsible editors shared the Government's anxiety that there should be no suggestion of counter-attack. Only an occasional letter, as of Lord Meston, gave expression to the pent up feelings of the British in this matter.

The correspondent further explained that there was no parallel between the American attack on Great Britain on the question of Ireland and the present attack on the question of India. On the question of Ireland, the British people themselves were divided and many felt that there was some justification for the American criticism. But as far as India was concerned, there was virtual unanimity in Great Britain that on the whole it had done "a mighty fine and decent job in India." That explained the universal and deep resentment of the British people in this matter. As an example of the great self-restraint of the British, the correspondent cited what an Englishman had remarked to him:

We are not going to throw stones back just because Americans may live in glass houses, but we wish Americans would not throw so many when there is no justice in it. (235)

No less a person than Ramsay MacDonald, the British Prime Minister, himself was very angry with the American liberals on the question of India. He was particularly angry with Oswald Garrison Villard, the editor of The Nation and one of his valued friends in the USA with whom he was in personal correspondence lasting over many years. One of the issues which figured in their correspondence was India. (236)

As already pointed out, as early as June 1929 when MacDonald was forming his Cabinet after the elections, S. K. Ratcliffe had warned Villard that the danger of the near future was India. (237) However, when Lord Irwin came out with a statement on 31 October 1929 with regard to the objective of constitutional development in India, the American liberals, as already indicated, found in it a ray of hope that the Indian problem might be amicably settled. But they were disappointed. Giving vent to this feeling of disappointment, Villard wrote to MacDonald:

India weighs heavily upon us Liberals in America, and I could not deny to you how disappointed I am that your Government has not followed up the

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235  Ibid.

236  For the various issues which figured in their correspondence and the ideas exchanged between them on those issues, see M. S. Venkataramani, "Ramsay MacDonald and Britain’s Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations 1919-1931: A Study Based on MacDonald’s Letters to an American Friend", Political Studies (London), 8 (October 1960), pp. 231-49.

237  See Chapter II, p. 54,
promise of the Viceroy in regard to the dominion status. Until that question is settled aright, it will be constant source of friction between our country and yours. I am particularly sorry that your Government has not been able to end the cruelties of the authorities in dealing with the followers of Ghandi (sic). (238)

Villard explained to MacDonald that in this matter of repression he did not rely upon the information received from Indian sources but upon the testimony of American correspondents who had been eye-witnesses of what had occurred in India during the salt satyagraha days, one of them being personally known to him as entirely trustworthy. He still hoped that MacDonald would take a favourable stand as to this in an early session of the British Parliament. He was interested to know if Phillip Kerr was to be the next Viceroy. (239) "We had hoped for a Labor man with a big heart and committed to the position that you took in former days," wrote Villard. (240)

MacDonald had been following the articles appearing in The Nation concerning India with considerable displeasure. This letter added fuel to fire. He poured out his anger:

There are far too many of you who have forgotten the scriptural injunction that those who say "Lord, Lord" are not necessarily to enter the kingdom. You are all so pleased with yourselves saying "Lord, Lord" that you forget that that pleasant little exercise may not only be futile but be mischievous. (241)

238 Villard to MacDonald, 25 October 1930, Villard Papers. At this time, Villard was on tour of Europe. This letter was written from Berlin.

239 Phillip Kerr (Lord Lothian) was a prominent British Liberal. With him, too, Villard was in correspondence.

240 Villard to MacDonald, n. 238.

241 MacDonald to Villard, 27 October 1930, Villard Papers.
MacDonald further told Villard that it was the easiest thing in the world for one with no responsibility to talk of the cruelties of the British authorities in India. If these complaints were to be subjected to an investigation, he was sure that ninety per cent of them would be proved to be false, the rest being only "the ordinary unfortunate results of the most severe provocation when men temporarily lose their good humour." He angrily asked Villard if he had been taught nothing by "the outstanding fact" that Gandhi by declaring a "sentimental non-resistance campaign, has spread hatred and caused bloodshed, has played into the hands of the very worst elements in Indian society...." (242)

As if this scolding was not enough, MacDonald sharply questioned Villard whether he was to place no responsibility upon men who professed to lead, and was he to ask them nothing as regards results of their conduct? Was he to rest content when all they could say was: "We did not intend this. It is the Lord. Events have happened which we never anticipated."? Then blowing both hot and cold, the Prime Minister, who only about nine months later was to betray the British Labour in a situation of acute crisis, flung the charge of cowardice at Villard, who through the editorship of The Nation during 1918-1932 and in the face of severe odds, stoutly and consistently championed the cause of liberalism in the United States. In a very reproachful vein, MacDonald wrote:

242 Ibid.
I am sure that you subscribe to none of these things. Then why do you not face the facts, and refrain from taking the easy-oozy way of facing life in a half dreamy and, I am sure you will not misunderstand me if I use a hard word, rather cowardly way? (243)

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The importance of American opinion was recognized both by the British and the Indians and both sides made attempts to win American sympathy in their favour. The British got worried at the reception — whatever its extent — given to the advocates of the Indian cause by the Americans. They were resentful that the Americans unduly simplified the issue and compared the civil disobedience movement to the American War of Independence of 1776 or the Salt Satyagraha to the Boston Tea Party.

Despite British complaints, the fact was that the British side of the Indian problem was fairly represented by the main organs of public opinion in America. Correspondingly, there was a sympathetic understanding of the British case but the public opinion, in general, was not fully convinced that Great Britain could not have done better. The revelation of the operation of censorship in India on the outgoing messages and the stories of repression of the non-resisting satyagrahis tended to instil scepticism in the minds of the Americans towards British protestations about their policies in India.

The liberals — both in politics and religion — were very sympathetic to the Indian side of the case. They began with hopes

from MacDonald, the Socialist Prime Minister of England, but soon were disillusioned to their great regret. What they wanted was a more definite commitment on the part of the British to grant real dominion status to India as demanded by Gandhi.

The personality of Gandhi attracted attention from all sections of the Americans. They felt that he combined in his personality both the astuteness of the politician and the holiness of the saints. They were doubtful if he would succeed in controlling the explosive situation in India to such an extent as to extinguish all possibilities of violence. But the fact that he was making new experiments in the field of politics and had succeeded in rallying a vast section of the populace behind his banner appealed to a large number of Americans immensely. Some of them went to the length of comparing him to Jesus Christ.

The sum total of all this was that considerable interest was aroused among the Americans in the civil disobedience movement in India in 1930 and the activities of Gandhi.