APPENDIX

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

This presidential address of Acharya Kripalani, delivered at the 54th session of the Congress, is typical of his many ideas and concerns. The address has been referred to in the body of the thesis. Acharya Kripalani's presidency covered broadly the period of 1946-47. This address contains his ideas and ideals with regard to the Simla conference, the constructive revolution, democracy and non-violence, decentralisation of industry, agriculture and food problem, national unity, Constituent Assembly, and India and the world. The address provides a word picture of one of the makers of the modern India. The address is not reproduced here in entirety. Omissions have been effected for reasons of brevity and space. The portions relating to the Indian states, untouchability, South Africa, Ceylon, and Burma have been more or less dropped and small cuts have been introduced in places in the paragraphs dealing with the other themes.
Friends,

I am grateful for the honour you have conferred on me by electing me to preside over your deliberations this year. I am not so vain as to imagine that I am the fittest person for this signal distinction, nor will I insult you out of mistaken modesty by suggesting that you have elected one who is altogether unworthy of the task you have called upon him to undertake. Our veteran leaders, who have filled this office with distinction in the past, have now other burdens to shoulder and are no longer free exclusively to devote themselves to the service of this organisation. Maulana Abul Fazal Azad, who piloted our ship through the most perilous voyage it has yet undertaken in its stormy and hazardous career, needed much-deserved respite from the cares of office. I was free to devote myself to your service, and you have chosen me as your first servant. Though I am fully sensible of the great honour, I am even more sensible of the great responsibility it carries. Gandhi has called it a crown of thorns, and a crown of thorns it is, more so today than ever, when our ship is nearing the harbour which has been so heavily mined. But I have no doubt that if we remain true to our mission and if we stand united, no power on earth can prevent us from reaching our goal.

RETROSPECT

We are meeting after full six years—years momentous in the history of the world, and no less momentous in the history of our own struggle for freedom. During the period, we came twice into open conflict with the British Government. In 1941, we started the Individual Civil Disobedience movement to vindicate the right of
every Indian freely to express his opinion about the war in which India was dragged against her will. It succeeded in attaining this limited objective.

The second was the all-comprehensive "Quit India" struggle. When the Congress on 1st January, 1930, re-defined its goal as the attainment of Purna Swaraj or complete independence, it was a notice to the foreigner to quit. But it was an indefinite notice ignored by him and not enforced by us. But as conveyed in 1942, it was a peremptory order to quit. Caught in the net of her own imperialist ambitions, Britain had involved herself in a second world war. She was ill-prepared for a major conflict, and soon found herself in a life-and-death struggle. Her reaction to it on the different fronts is a lesson in democracy. While on her own soil where the people were sovereign, she rose heroically to the occasion, despite the fact that the threat there was the most serious, here in India where her rule was enforced against the wishes of the people, she lost her nerve and grew panicky and demoralised. Frightened by the threat of Japanese invasion, the authorities drove out people from their homes and fields, destroyed their crops and even deprived them of their means of livelihood. The people so harassed could not even complain. All channels of free expression and association, the platform and the press, were effectively gagged by virtual martial law. The choice before the country was to suffer all these indignities lying low, or to take up the challenge and offer resistance. The Congress could not possibly ignore this challenge. If it had, it would have acted as the Social Democratic Parties did in European countries threatened with Fascist and Nazi aggression. Social
Democracy failed ingloriously without striking a blow in the defence of its ideal. Gandhiji, at the time of this supreme crisis, decided to take up the challenge. He invited the Congress to die fighting, if necessary. The Congress and the nation had the wisdom to follow his lead.

Many wise politicians shook their heads in doubt. For an unarmed people to fight Great Britain at a time when all its armed might was mobilised, when the in-exhaustible resources of America were at its disposal, appeared sheer folly. But then these wise men forgot that when the Congress under Gandhiji's lead took to revolutionary politics, it abandoned conventional political wisdom. It dared to risk and achieve. Was the Congress wise when it made the Khilafat issue, which it scarcely understood, its own? Was it again wise to resort to Salt Satyagraha to achieve independence? There was apparently no connection between salt and independence. And what wisdom could there have been in Gandhiji, walking with a flock of unarmed followers for 21 days, to pick up a pinch of salt on the sea-shore? What political or any other wisdom could there be in Pandit Motilal Nehru, manufacturing salt in his study, in a laboratory test tube, on a spirit lamp from a lump of clay? What wisdom was there in selecting individual satyagrahis to walk from place to place shouting anti-war slogans till they were arrested? The fact is, the Congress under Gandhiji's lead has never done the conventionally obvious thing, and if it does so before the freedom fight is over and complete independence won, it will have missed its revolutionary role.

After every movement, it has seemed that the Congress lay exhausted and prostrate. The foreign Government thought
it crushed for good. But after the struggle this seemingly
defeated Congress, when occasion arose, showed itself more
alive than ever and ready to exercise the added strength it
had gathered from its suffering and sacrifice.

The August 1942 struggle was over. The British had not
disappeared. They were there. The nation appeared to lie
prostrate. In those dark days many a false prophet taunted,
"Did we not not say so?" But as soon as the jail gates were
opened on Gandhiji and the members of the Working
Committee, there was no sign of either depression or frustration. What
we saw was a new and surging life everywhere. The leaders' 
march to Simla to negotiate with a Government that had boasted
that the Congress was crushed, was a triumphant march, and
not the march of the defeated and the humiliated. Then came
the elections, central and provincial. Nobody had any doubt
about about the results. Those who had seen no wisdom in
Congress politics lost no time in coming back to the fold and
offered themselves for Assembly seats and positions of power
which they thought might soon be available. They did not want
to be left behind. They hurried back to the fold and were
accepted too!

The elections proved that the nation's faith in the
Congress had increased. Those who had fought and suffered
triumphed. They had their reward. But many of those who had
striven most and suffered most were no more with us. They paid
for their patriotism with their precious lives. Today when we
are assembled to take stock of the past and shape policies for
the future, let us not forget to pay to the memory of these brave
soldiers in the national struggle, whether known or unknown, our
humble tribute of honour and respect. They suffered that others may enjoy. They died that others may live.

THE SIMLA CONFERENCE AND AFTER

The members of the Working Committee were released in June, 1945, in pursuance of a change in the policy of the British Government. The Viceroy called a conference at Simla of representatives of the main political parties to discuss the formation of a National Government at the Centre. The Conference failed because it was not allowed to function. The Viceroy chose to yield to the fanciful demands of the Muslim League, even though he did not think them fair and reasonable. The League leader would not allow any non-League Muslim, even a non-Congress Muslim, a nominee of the Viceroy, to be included in the cabinet. It was difficult to understand why the conference was ever called at such expense and trouble. There was disappointment and anger in the country. Many asked, how could those pledged to the 'Quit India' resolution consent to a conference called on the basis of the present reactionary constitution? But a satyagrahi is slow to fight and quick to come to terms when he sees an opportunity for a peaceful and honourable solution. If his fundamentals are conceded, he is willing to sit at the table with his opponents to discuss matters. Moreover, at this time the food problem was becoming acute and it was expected that a National Government could tackle it much better than the bureaucracy that had so woefully bungled in the past. The country also needed a period of quiet and rest to take stock of the national situation.
The Simla Conference failed, but the British Government announced that soon they would devise some other workable plan for the solution of the Indian problem. The British bureaucracy is a slow-moving machine. Moreover, the British always work for time. A favourable turn in the home or international situation may enable them to avoid inconvenient commitments. However, there was no favourable turn. The general elections in England went against the reactionary Tories. Labour came in power with an overwhelming majority. The international situation was charged with dangerous possibilities. India was the weakest spot in the Empire. A solution was called for. A roving Parliamentary Committee came for the purpose of study and inquiry. On its heels came the Cabinet Mission, headed by the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence. After a series of discussions with leaders of the main political parties, the Cabinet Mission announced their plan, in their Statement of May 16th, for the convening of a Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution of a free and united India and for the establishment of an Interim Government at the centre.

The history of the weary negotiations that went on for nearly three months in Calcutta and Simla is too well known for me to repeat here. The net result was that though the plan for the Constituent Assembly was accepted by both Congress and League no Interim Government could be formed at the Centre. The League leaders were so disappointed at the refusal of the Viceroy to invite them to form the Government without the Congress, that they afterwards announced that the Muslim League would not participate even in the Constituent Assembly. The Viceroy, therefore, in consultation with the British Cabinet, decided to
invite the Congress as the majority party to form the Interim Government. The task of bringing the Muslim league in was wisely left to the Congress. The Congress accepted the offer and the President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, contacted Mr. Jinnah. But as usual nothing could be gained from that quarter. The Congress was, therefore, constrained to accept office in September, 1946.

Soon the Viceroy began talks with the League leaders on his own initiative, without the consent of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Such a procedure was not contemplated. The offer made to the Congress was unconditional. Nevertheless, the Congress, always willing and anxious for unity, did not object. Through the Viceroy the Congress and the League resumed negotiations. The result again was failure. However, in the end, the League accepted the Viceroy's invitation to nominate five out of fourteen members in the Interim Government. Thus the League representatives are today in the National Government, working as colleagues with our own representatives. It is hoped that facing the same difficulties and solving the same problems, a workable unity will be evolved that will carry us over these troubled times.

**CONSTRUCTIVE REVOLUTION**

I believe that if the Congress had not taken up the challenge of British imperialism in August 1942, we would not be occupying the position we do today; nor indeed would the Muslim League and other minorities, though some of them may not like to admit the fact. True we have not yet achieved our goal
of Purna Swaraj. But our representatives and leaders have broken into the citadel of power. This is not the end of foreign domination, but it is surely the beginning of the end, provided we know how to utilise our opportunities. However, even when we have achieved our goal of complete independence we must not think that our task is done. National liberty is precious indeed. It is the very breath of a nation’s life. But however important, it is a negative achievement—a removal of external shackles. It is merely the hindrance of a hindrance. It is quite possible that when an individual’s shackles are removed, he may use his new-found freedom to his own injury. If we are wise we will not rest content merely with the removal of external restraints, but will so order our affairs that the freedom we gain is translated into concrete good to our people. This means that our revolutionary zeal, even while it destroys the old order, must constantly achieve creative expression in constructive activity.

This constructive effort should be nothing new for us. Our revolutionary movement, based as it is on non-violence, is unique in history. Usually, political revolutions have aimed at the destruction of the old order. Their strategy has been designed to capture power. All constructive effort to remodel the nation’s life has been done after the old order was completely destroyed and power captured. This process has inevitably led not to one but a series of revolutions before things could settle down and constructive effort begun. Not often, the process has led to civil war and ultimately to dictatorship. Both civil war and dictatorship have a tendency to defeat the aims of a revolution. It was so in the French and Russian Revolutions.
The Congress under Gandhi's lead has avoided over-emphasis on mere destruction or on the capture of power. It has, on the other hand, laid great emphasis on constructive programme. Its destructive and constructive programmes have been worked side by side for the last 26 years. Indeed, for Gandhi the only effective preparation for civil disobedience is the intensive carrying out of the constructive programme.

Now that Congressmen are at the helm of affairs in many provinces, and even at the Centre, we have some sort of a national government, it should not be difficult to intensify our effort and realise the full possibilities of the constructive programme, as enunciated by Gandhi and accepted by the Congress.

**DEMONSTRATION AND NON-VIOLENCE**

The content of our Swaraj has been getting clearer and clearer for us as our national struggle has progressed. Long ago we decided against the tactics of mere destruction and capture of power. We, therefore, discarded the use of the pistol and the bomb. We decided that our revolution must be an open conspiracy and it must progressively bring in the masses. It must, therefore, necessarily be non-secretive and non-violent. A revolution, brought about by the masses, and that non-violently, implies democracy. Our Congress organisation, therefore, has a democratic constitution. As a matter of fact, if democracy is to be real and effective, and not merely formal and institutional, it must be based on non-violence. And non-violence, if it is not a mere form or lip-expression, must necessarily lead to democracy. Non-violence and dictatorship are contradictory. We cannot today change this democratic character of the Congress, nor will it be desirable to do so. Let it, therefore, be clear that we are pledged to political democracy and our Swaraj shall be democratic. It shall not be the rule of an individual,
however great, or a family, however glorious. Nor shall it be the Swaraj under one particular caste, creed or class. It shall be the rule of the people, by the people, for the people.

We have seen that political democracy the world over tends to become a mere form, if it is not broad-based on some sort of economic equality. The democratic vote ceases to have much meaning in a society where there are great inequalities of wealth. We know that the smaller countries of Europe, like Norway, Sweden and Denmark, enjoy a more real democracy than the big capitalist countries, for the simple reason that their (small countries!) democracy rests on a larger measure of economic equality.

But economic equality may be of the Communist order based on centralised big industry, or it may be democratic and based upon a fair degree of decentralisation. I believe that economic equality in a society, whose economic system rests exclusively on big industry, inevitably leads to the concentration of power in the hands of a few. It leads to bureaucratic and dictatorial exercise of power. The rulers in that case not only regulate the political but also the economic life of the people. If political power has a tendency to corrupt the holders of power, this tendency is doubly increased by the combination of political and economic power in the same hands. Capitalism killed democracy because the capitalist class wielded, directly or indirectly, political power. Communism puts in the hands of the political dictator and bureaucrat the entire control of economic power. Herein lies as great a danger to democracy as under capitalism.
Therefore, if democracy is to survive, it must discover a means of avoiding concentration of economic power in the hands of the ruler or rulers, however selected or elected. Even a political democracy can be a dictatorship if there are no spheres of free activity left to the individual. The historical role of the Congress in the economic field has been its bold advocacy of decentralised industry. Ever since the Bengal partition movement, our political thinkers have stressed the importance of reviving village and cottage industry. After Gandhiji's advent in Indian politics, this advocacy has gained emphasis and has been translated into a concrete programme of national reconstruction. We have, therefore, at this stage clearly to define the content of our economic Swaraj which must be in the direction of as much decentralisation as is possible under the present circumstances. Nor may we forget that decentralisation alone will help effectively to solve the problem of chronic unemployment of the vast majority of our agricultural population.

The Congress appointed in 1939 a Planning Committee under the presidency of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This Committee has been at work for several years. It has collected facts and figures. It is time that its labours are utilised. But these cannot be utilised unless the Congress makes up its mind as to what industries are to be centralised and what decentralised. Unless that is done each province will go its own way. I am afraid that already there is a kind of competition, even among the Congress provinces, in the field of big industry. Each province wants to introduce as many mills and factories as
possible. We had thought that the cloth industry was the one most eminently suited for decentralisation. But even here each provincial government is vying with the other to set up new cloth mills. Some people believe that in the present state of scarcity of cloth all means of increased production must be utilised. They, however, fail to see that this necessarily creates new capitalist vested interests. As a khadi worker I believe that with less capital and less effort and in a shorter time more can be accomplished by a systematic encouragement of the charkha and the handloom than by opening new mills. I have taken the example of the cloth industry. But it is time that we took counsel among ourselves and decided what industries might best be worked on centralised and what on decentralised basis.

When I talk of decentralised industry, I do not necessarily mean the application of mere hand power. Electric power may well be utilised for increasing the scope and efficiency of the worker in his own home and village. That this decentralised industry will eliminate periodical waste of national wealth consequent on industrial conflicts, strikes and lock-outs, is too obvious to be mentioned. To the extent these conflicts are avoided, there is good neighbourliness among the people. This decentralised industry may be organised on a co-operative basis. There should be production and distribution co-operatives. If production co-operatives are not immediately possible, distribution co-operatives can certainly be started by public bodies and the provincial governments. The village worker does not find so much difficulty in producing goods as in marketing them.
AGRICULTURE AND OUR FOOD PROBLEM

Our agriculture too must largely follow the pattern of decentralised industry. It must chiefly consist of peasant proprietorships, with a provision that no plot shall be subdivided, whether on account of inheritance, debt or any other cause, beyond what would maintain a village family. Decentralised industry and agriculture must supplement and complement each other. The latter too should be managed, as far as possible, on cooperative basis, both for farming and marketing purposes.

The Congress is pledged to the elimination of the middleman between the tenant and the State. Recently, in response to a non-official resolution moved in the A.I.C.C., it was decided by the Working Committee that the provincial governments be asked to send to the A.I.C.C. office their schemes for the abolition of the Zamindari system. The material received should be systematised and placed before the Working Committee for consideration. I hope the direction of the Working Committee in this matter will be speedily given effect to and a body of experts appointed to prepare a comprehensive plan for the elimination of the middleman in our agricultural economy. This body of experts may also suggest plans which would meet, with suitable modifications, the different requirements of the various provinces. In the U.P. an official Bill will soon be introduced in the legislature for the abolition of the Zamindari system. A committee has already been appointed to draft a Bill on the lines of the resolution which has been passed by the U.P. legislature. It is hoped that the bill will have a smooth passage. The zamindars should have no objection as the Bill provides for adequate compensation.
The food problem which assumed dangerous proportions during the War continues to be our great concern even today. We are still dependent on what foreign countries may choose to dole out to us. This dependence on the foreigner must be eliminated where the most primary needs of existence are concerned. With appropriate agricultural reform it should not be difficult to feed the present population of India and any immediate increase. Our agricultural production is extremely low. In Japan they raise per acre 3909 lbs. of rice while India gets only 939 lbs.; of wheat Japan gets 2010 lbs. per acre as against 774 in our country. Here is a great deal of leeway to make by well-directed agricultural research. There is enough waste land that can be brought under cultivation by well and canal irrigation and proper manures. There should also be a judicious readjustment between food and money crops, and as far as possible, the profits to the cultivator from the two sources should be equalised. If that is not done it will not do merely to advise, induce or oblige the cultivator to abandon the better paid for the worse paid crops. The best plan to avoid famine and the threat of famine in the future is to divide the country in such agricultural regions or units, big or small, as would be self-sufficient so far as the essentials of human nutrition are concerned. Care must be taken that these regions produce what may constitute a scientifically balanced diet. The health of our agricultural population, the backbone of our nation, cannot be improved unless the peasant has two square meals a day consisting of food which is properly adjusted to form a scientifically balanced diet. Proper food is the first condition of rural health and hygiene. In the matter of balanced diet more research is needed. But enough has been done, thanks to Gandhiji's efforts, to make a useful beginning.
At the Centre we have today our esteemed leader Shri Rajendra Prasad, a careful and conscientious Minister in charge of the Department of Food, and I have no doubt that he will not only enable us to tide over our present difficulties, but ensure such arrangements for the future as would never oblige us to go begging for our food at foreign doors.

If democracy in the modern world is not possible without a considerable economic levelling up and down, it is no less inconsistent with international rivalries resulting in periodic global conflicts. In war there is always a concentration of power. War increases the power of political bosses and bureaucrats. Civil liberties are curtailed. The rights of free association and free expression of opinion, whether on the platform or through the press and the radio, are greatly diminished. Modern wars tend to be global. Few countries can keep their neutrality. Even in neutral countries the fear of war diminishes civil liberties and increases state control. If, therefore, democracy is to function properly and fully, international strife and war must yield place to mutual goodwill and co-operation. However, this is a problem which cannot be solved by the attitude of a single nation towards war. As long as there are empires, whether fascist or democratic or socialist, war must remain the only means of settling international rivalries. I have said socialist empires. It will be objected that socialism and imperialism are a contradiction in terms. But so also are democracy and imperialism. And yet we have imperialist democracies. Like democracy, socialism can in practice be consistent with political and economic imperialism. Bolshevik Russia has yet to convince the world that it has abandoned the Czarist policy of nibbling at its neighbours. The Socialist Government of England shows no convincing signs of
relinquishing its hold upon its imperial possessions. What steps have been taken in India are halting and tardy and give rise to a suspicion that they are more due to the international situation than to any genuine desire to shed imperialism.

To sum up then, the historical evolution of our freedom movement, pledged as it is to non-violence and the good of the masses, demands a social order, free from exploitation, functioning democratically and turned to international cooperation and peace. Such a society will be in consonance with the highest ideals of the age and time we live in. The Congress under Gandhiji's lead has been working for these objects. Now it must define the objects more clearly and work more consciously towards their realisation and utilise its newly acquired power towards that end.

Today we have some kind of a national government at the centre and provinces have their popularly elected governments. In a short time we shall be assembling to form a new constitution for India. Freedom, if not achieved, is surely in sight. The British can no longer deny it to us, whatever their intentions. If today we miss our goal, the fault shall be ours. It will be due to the mistakes of commission and omission we make at this critical juncture. The greatest danger to a patient is not when the disease is active but when he is convalescing. The doctor's vigilance is relaxed and he has to take care of himself. We are in that critical condition; and the worst of it is that our enemies are clever and vigilant. The greatest strength of British imperialism in India is that it has been possible for it to carry out its nefarious designs through the instrumentality of the Indians themselves. India was conquered by Indian money, Indian resources, Indian soldiers and often with Indian trains.
Our tragedy has been our divisions and differences and our tendency to subordinate larger national interests to those of caste, creed and party. We give to the smaller units the loyalty that is due to the whole. Herein lies our greatest weakness.

Of all the political virtues, unity is the greatest and the most important, provided this unity is not super-imposed by force but is natural and spontaneous. In this the British excel not only the Indians but also other European nations. At every critical moment of their history the British have ignored religious, party and class differences. Even as early as the 16th century, when sectarian differences led to religious wars and the Catholic hated the Protestant more heartily than either of them hated the non-Christian, as soon as the English shores were threatened by the Spanish Armada, sent by a Catholic Emperor, English Catholics, even though persecuted, stood shoulder to shoulder with their Protestant countrymen to repel the foreign invasion. This has continued up to the present time. In the last war, the Socialists had no hesitation to work under reactionary, snobbish, caste-ridden Churchill, when the national emergency made it necessary for them to do so. But in India small differences produce unbridgeable gulfs. Common points are forgotten, petty disagreements over-emphasised. We must, if we have to live and progress as a nation, check this inherent centrifugal tendency.

I, therefore, hold that a Hindu who believes a Muslim to be an alien not only does wrong to his religion but is an enemy of the freedom and progress of India. On the other hand, if a Muslim who is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, believes and acts as if he were an alien on Indian soil, he does equal harm
to his community and to the nation. We have almost everything in common except religion which should be a personal matter. To fight on questions of faith is the way of a barbarian. I know the present fight between Hindus and Muslims is not a religious fight. It is purely a communal conflict. It has nothing to do with political or economic issues that concern the masses of both the communities. The masses act as tools in the hands of the clever and often unscrupulous politicians. But whatever the causes, we must recognise the fact of the existing tension and bitterness, and steer our course so as to avoid any major conflict.

I have already in my public statements, made after my election, said that the Congress must yield to the demands of the minorities, Muslim or any other, but not at the expense of the good of the nation. Such yielding in the past has largely been responsible for our present troubles. Also when facts are conflicting and confusing, it is best to fall back upon basic moral principles. Some compromise on principles may be made only when there is no doubt about facts. The basic principles involved in the communal conflict are those of nationalism and democracy. Nationalism historically is a higher principle than communalism and democracy higher than sectional domination. In whatever, therefore, we do, we must not allow the communal and undemocratic principles to triumph over nationalism and democracy. Viewed thus, I have no doubt that the Congress was wrong in accepting separate electorates which are anti-national and undemocratic. I believe much of our present trouble could have been avoided had we boldly refused to accept the undemocratic and anti-national principle of separate electorates. The communal conflict has today assumed not only a serious but a vicious aspect. It is quite possible that to avoid immediate trouble we may accept principles that cut at the root of
nationality and democracy. If we do so, we shall not only be betraying the nation, but ultimately the Muslims and other communities. I hope our elders will guard themselves and the country against being coerced or cajoled into making any anti-national and undemocratic compromises in the future.

If we are to be worthy of freedom we must learn to live together and respect each other's sentiments. Hindu and Muslim minorities are scattered all over this country. No amount of police or military protection can permanently and effectively protect them from the wrath of the majority communities if the latter lose all sense of moral obligation towards them. If no Hindu's life, property and honour are safe in a Muslim-majority area and no Muslim's in a Hindu-majority area, then civilized life becomes an impossibility. Even Mr. Jinnah's dream of Pakistan, though it has made the problem what it is, holds out no prospect of its solution for it leaves the minorities where they are. Did his scheme envisage a total and wholesale transfer of populations and the concentration of all the Muslims of India in one compact territory, so that no Hindu, Sikh, or Parsi is left in the Muslim State and no Muslim left anywhere else in India, the scheme might at least have the merit of being a logical solution of the problem, however costly, tragic and inhuman it might be to carry it out. Even if the Muslims must have a theocratic state of their own, they cannot be allowed to impose it on Hindu, Sikh and other minorities in their territory. These minorities have at least as much right of self-determination as the Muslims claim for themselves in India as a whole. Nor can the rest of India be reasonably expected to harbour large sections of population in its midst who openly repudiate their citizenship in that state. If the Muslim League claims Pakistan on religious and communal grounds,
let it face all its implications and not try to eat the cake and yet have it. This is a terrible solution, as detrimental in the long run to the Muslim interests as to the Hindu but it is a logical consequence of the communalism with which the League is infecting its followers and which is making a common civilized life difficult. But in no case must we allow the poison of communal strife further to disintegrate our national and corporate life. In no case must we allow ourselves to be bullied and blackmailed by a section of the population into sacrificing the just rights of others.

I hope, however, that the leaders of the fanatics among both the communities will have more sense and humanity than to take recourse to desperate and mediaeval remedies. The problem is easy of solution if only we accept the obvious fact that if there are two nations in India, they are the exploited and the exploiting of both or all the communities. The Hindus and Muslims have a common enemy, and that is poverty, disease, and ignorance. If only we realize what we really are, there need be no quarrel between us.

I have laboured this point at length, because this is the greatest stumbling block in our path to freedom and progress. Even at this late hour I hope, now that the Muslim League is in the Central Government and shares responsibility with the Congress, the orgies that were enacted in Calcutta, East Bengal, Bihar and to a lesser degree elsewhere, will be nightmares of the past. We shall write anew on a clean slate of brotherly love and co-operation as children of a common motherland.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

We shall soon be meeting in the Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution of free India. It will be a democratic
constitution and will be federal in character. He may not, however, forget that, in the administrative as in the economic field, centralisation, more than is absolutely necessary, is inimical to liberty. It is good, therefore, that the provinces in free India shall have the maximum autonomy consistent with external and internal security. But some of our provinces are each as big as a country in Europe. There may be over-centralisation in the administration of the provinces, which we must avoid. Long ago, how long history does not record, the Indian genius worked out the institution of the village and local panchayat. It remained our fort through many a turbulent period. Kings and dynasties fought and failed, empires rose, ruled, misruled and disappeared, but the village’s life maintained its even tenor, away from the din of battle and the rush of rising and falling empires. He had a village-state which protected his life and property and made civilised life possible. Progressively, we must delegate to the village panchayat judicial powers in petty criminal and civil cases; the local police too might be put under the charge of the panchayat. If we build upon this village unit of self-government, rehabilitate it to the altered conditions of today, we shall be working in consonance with the genius of our people. This is the natural and the easy way. Merely to copy the West should not be our object. We may also not forget that the West has made, more specially in the big countries, democracy complex and expensive. West has evolved the official red-tape which makes the democratic machinery cumbersome and slow-moving. All these drawbacks we must try to avoid in the new constitution that we may devise.

Our judicial system must be simple and effective. The law's delay and expense and complicity must be avoided. Also there must be ample provision made for the enjoyment of civil
liberties. They must be protected even from the arbitrary action of a democratic and representative government. We may not forget that power corrupts even the patriot in office. Ample provision, consistent with the larger interests of the country and the masses, must be made for the protection of minorities. Their language and culture must have free scope for development. There must be absolute tolerance in matters of faith and religion. Every individual and every group must be free to propagate his and its ideas, consistently with the maintenance of peace and public morality.

**INDIA AND THE WORLD**

The Congress has for many years taken keen interest in international happenings. These affect us and today no country can, for long, remain indifferent to what is happening elsewhere in the world. With our national struggle based on non-violence, we have naturally always stood for international disarmament, peace, co-operation and open diplomacy. Through our sufferings we know what aggression means to a subject people. The hard cruel strokes of foreign domination have taught us to value international peace and goodwill. These lessons, learnt in adversity, we hope, shall not forget in happier and more prosperous times, when we have achieved full freedom.

We believe in a new world order based upon goodwill and co-operation. We believe that these objects can be achieved by an international organisation consisting of free and equal nations. We believe that so long as imperialism exists, whatever international organisation is devised for peace, will inevitably be turned into an instrument of ambition by powerful...
and unscrupulous nations. It will not be based upon equality, justice and fair play, but upon the combined might of a few dominant nations. There will always be the Big Three, Four or Five. That way lies danger. International thieves and robbers, even as ordinary thieves and robbers, sooner or later, and sooner than later, fall out among themselves, and when they do they shake the very foundations of the earth, as they have done twice within the last thirty years. As long as there are dependent nations and peoples, so long will there be conflict and war.

Further, we believe that the smooth and successful working of an international organisation, even as of democracy, is not merely a question of external and institutional arrangements. Law and constitution, international courts and armies, are good as far as they go, but just as human passions have to be subdued by an inner self-discipline and then helped by external devices, so must the passions and ambitions of nations be first regulated by a reform of the heart, before any external device can succeed. Humanity must learn to honour only such leaders and politicians who would lead people to peaceful and fruitful rivalry rather than those who would rouse their passions and ambitions by placing before them rosy pictures of power, wealth, empire and domination. When this is done and nations have cultivated the will to be honest, just and fair in their dealings with each other, external devices of constitution and law will not be difficult to devise and work. India stands for a society of nations, where every country, big or small, important or unimportant, free or under international guardianship, has as in a democracy, one vote each. As in internal politics we are against the dictatorship of the one or the few, so are we against the international dictatorship of one powerful nation or a number of them in combination. It is difficult to maintain democratic institutions in a world of nations with unequal international status.
Even while the war was going on, the fundamental freedoms for which it was advertised to be fought, were repudiated in practice by the Allies. The stress of war was invoked as an argument to justify every violation of moral principles. But even after the war fundamental freedoms are as still-born as ever. The Peace Conference is anything but peaceful and the U.N.O. anything but united. The nerves of all nations are on edge and already their minds are haunted by the fear of a third world war. What the big nations of the world are thinking is not how to remove the causes of war, but how to make bigger and better atom bombs. It should have been clear from the start that atomic energy could not be used for peaceful purposes without it being available for purposes of destruction. Today the experts have given their considered opinion on the same lines. If the use of this energy is not somehow banned, then with national rivalries, ambitions, ideas of revenge and retaliation being what they are there is danger not only to world peace, but to the very existence of the human race on this planet.

The treatment meted out to the defeated nations leaves a trail of bad karma of fear, resentment and revenge. In the case of an anti-social individual, punishment, revenge and retribution are not the best or the most civilized methods of cure. What is true of the individual is true of the nation. If it is unjust and inhuman in the case of an individual to visit the sins of the father on the son, much more so is it in the case of groups to visit the sins of one generation on another. The defeated nations should not be parcelled up, or made to serve as pawns in the game of international power politics. Every effort should be made to put them on their legs, and every opportunity afforded them to live a normal, healthy, political and economic life.
A free India will have in the field of international affiliations, connections more natural and more suited to her geographical position than she has had under foreign domination. As a matter of fact up to now we have had no free connections at all. We were bound to the wheel of British international affiliations. Whoever was a friend of imperial Britain was India's friend; whoever was Britain's enemy became automatically India's enemy. For the sake of British alliances and enmities, India was twice dragged into war at the cost of untold suffering and loss of life. Free India must cast off this heavy burden. We must have a foreign policy of our own.

We have no past commitments and no imperialist ambitions for the future. We are concerned with achieving and maintaining the freedom of our country so that our nationals at home and abroad may have their rightful opportunity to full and free development, according to their resources and their genius. We have no enemies. We would like to forget even the wrongs that Great Britain has done to us, once she has made amends and withdrawn her yoke from our necks. We would have no quarrel with South Africa if in the insolence of racial pride its white minority did not seek to deprive the Indian domiciled there of their elementary rights of citizenship, after having enticed them from home.

We respect the right of every people to choose the form of government that suits them best without depriving others of the same right. We watch with equal interest the Russian adventures in Communism, the British experiment in democratic socialism, and the American faith in private enterprise. We wish to imitate none of these forms, though we may have a great deal to learn.
from each. We would like to maintain a friendly intercourse with all these great peoples on a basis of equality and mutual respect for each other's rights. We must be on our guard against being misled by the propaganda that is being carried on in a section of the world press against Russia, and in another section against the democracies. We must not be duped by ideological claptrap into taking sides in international rivalries and thus entangle ourselves in a third world war, in the mistaken belief that we are serving the world. We should have enough scope at home for our reforming zeal without attempting to reform other nations.

Though we must develop and maintain equally friendly relations with all nations, our associations with our neighbours in Asia and Australia will naturally be closer. With China and Japan we have long historic and cultural associations. Even today, thanks to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who in the fitness of things is our foreign minister, we have cordial relations with China. But we are so much separated from our next-door neighbour that no cable can come from China direct here. It has to come via London and takes often more than 24 hours. All this must be changed. As soon as democratic Japan, free from its imperial nightmare, comes into existence, India must cultivate its friendship. We may not be obsessed with other people's prejudices, to their of the East or the West. We have also cultural bonds with Indonesia and the eastern islands, which we must develop. Our trade can most profitably flow in these lands to mutual advantage. India and Australia have nothing to lose and much to gain by closer intercourse. Central Asia and the Middle East are other lands with which we have cultural contacts. A fourth of our population professes in common with the inhabitants of these lands the faith of the
Prophet. We must renew those contacts and forge new links of friendship. With Soviet Russia too our relations must be closer. With all that we must keep up the connections we already have with the western democracies.

In the past our organisation, whenever occasion arose, freely expressed its views upon current international affairs. Now that our representatives are in the seats of power, we will have to observe greater restraint. We must realise that free governments have innumerable channels through which they get information concerning the trends of thought and action in other lands. They have their regular diplomatic services and their intelligence agents in other lands. They have scholars studying in foreign universities, They have their merchants and industrial and trade agents. They spend millions of pounds to maintain these sources of information. Apart from international press agencies, they have thus many channels through which information about other countries flows to them. Even then, often the information they collect from all these open and secret, official and non-official agencies proves to be misleading, if not wrong. We must realise that today most of these sources of information are closed to us. We have yet to establish this network of international agencies. At present most of the information on international affairs that we get is from one or two tainted press agencies. All this makes it desirable that we must be guarded in our opinions about other countries. We have to realise that today, more than ever, any irresponsible expression of opinion on our part may involve responsibilities we are not yet ready to shoulder. We must, therefore, observe in this matter reserve and restraint. Our aim remains the same, which is to contribute our best as a free nation towards democracy, the emancipation of the oppressed,
international peace and co-operation. We shall fulfil these aims better by trying to realise them in our own institutions and ways of life than by sitting in judgment on other peoples.

There is an aspect of our international relation about which it is necessary, in the interest of peace, that we should make our stand clear. And that is, that though we make no fetish of national sovereignty and are willing to subordinate its rights to the claims of world peace and co-operation on the basis of perfect equality between all peoples, we will not tolerate interference with the right of our people to choose their form of government or violation of the territorial integrity of India. Whether it is the presence of British troops in India against the wishes of our chosen representatives, or foreign-paid propaganda to create dissensions in our ranks, or the continued occupation of portions of our soil by the Portuguese and the French on whatever pretensions, it is a violation of those fundamental freedoms of which no nation can be deprived.

If the British can quit India, as they have unequivocally promised to do, it is ridiculous for the Portuguese authorities to claim that Goa is part of their country thousands of miles away. I congratulate Fr. Narasimhar Lohia for having exposed the gross injustice and indignity to which our compatriots are subjected in Goa. I assure our people there that they have our full sympathy in their fight to vindicate their just rights and that free India will never tolerate their subjection to alien tyranny. I appeal to the Portuguese authorities not to complicate an already complicated international situation by claiming what is not legitimately theirs and to build an enduring foundation of friendship between our two nations by undoing the wrong that has been done. The days of empires are over, and today, when even big and powerful nations are being obliged to
give up their empires, it is time that the small nations, in their own interest, should gracefully withdraw from theirs and thus help to remove the main cause of wars between nations.

OUR ORGANISATION

Let us clearly understand what the Congress is. We hear today about Congress Governments. This is a misleading term. The so-called Congress governments are popular democratic governments. What Congress has done is to organise the country for the formation and smooth functioning of those governments. Today the Congress has organised the people of India for shouldering state responsibility. For many years our people were organised and led by the Congress in their struggle against the arbitrary rule of the British Government in India. It may be that again the Congress, instead of organising the democratic state, may go into the wilderness and resume the struggle for freedom. Let us hope it will not be necessary to do so. But the point that I would like to impress upon you is, that the Congress is merely the agency for the organisation of the people of India for effective national service. This service may take various forms according to changing circumstances.

The Congress, thus, is a democratic organisation seeking to represent and act on behalf of the people of India. It has done this through service, sacrifice and suffering. It could not be otherwise, for it had to dislodge from its position of power a foreign imperialism that had crushed and emasculated the country. We must clearly understand that the Congress is not the Government. It is a volunteer organisation. That is its strength as well as its weakness. A volunteer organisation is
not buttressed by the physical might of the state. It does not rely for its discipline or for the carrying out of its orders upon the magistrate, the constable and the soldier. It functions only through the willing loyalty of its members. Its authority is moral and not physical or coercive. The utmost that the Congress can do is to expel a member from its organisation.

The first condition, therefore, of the existence and effective functioning of such an organisation is unity. This unity is not superimposed by a dictator or a bureaucrat. It can be only achieved if its members learn consciously and deliberately to subordinate personal and party considerations to the larger interests of the whole. They must realize that the larger embraces the smaller. This realization is the more necessary in India whose bane through the centuries has been parochial loyalties of caste, creed, class and the narrow geographical unit. This does not mean that there should be no difference of opinion or no groups or parties in the Congress. It only means that the different groups and parties should realize that in an organic unit one cannot be true to a part unless one is true to the whole. We may in this respect take a lesson from England. An Englishman's loyalty to his country transcends all family, local and party loyalties.

This can be done if we try to emphasize what unites us rather than what divides us from one another. It should not be difficult because in reality the points of agreement between groups in the Congress are more numerous and more important than the points of difference. Let us not elevate small disagreements to the seemingly heroic heights of principles. We must also cultivate personal contacts, for men and women are often better
than their ideas and ideologies, and this can only be discovered
by social contacts. Above all let no group act as a liquor shop
in a respectable neighbourhood, drawing to itself the wayward,
the disappointed and the disgruntled of the family.

The second condition of healthy and effective functioning
of the Congress is discipline. This must be self-imposed. We
must build up such traditions and conventions as would
make indiscipline difficult, if not impossible. Anybody indulging
in conduct that is likely to harm the organisation or the
country must lose caste in the Congress. There must be things
that simply cannot be done by Congressmen because they are not
done. Nor must there be scramble for power or a desire to
capture the organisation. Power must flow from service and
must be used for greater service. The Congress organisation is
not a government. We can get out of it only as much as we put
in it by the service of our people. In their affection we must
realise, as Gandhiji does, our highest reward and fulfilment.

In our struggle against foreign imperialism we have learnt
and employed certain methods of agitation and struggle for the
attainment of our goal of independence. Because these methods
have paid us in the past, we are likely to believe that they are
of universal application. We imagine that they will serve us
also against the democratically established governments which
we have now ourselves installed in power. We have put them
there to advance the cause of freedom. The methods employed in
our agitation against the foreign government may not, therefore,
be quite appropriate in the case of our own. The foreign
government provided us with no means of influencing, much less
regulating, its policies. If we made any constructive
suggestions, they were not heeded. There was no democratic
device by which we could displace the executive. The British,
in spite of their admiration for Churchill and appreciation of his war services, could throw him out, because for problems of peace they wanted a more suitable leadership. But here in India we had not the power to change a village constable, if he chose to make a public nuisance of himself. The only remedy under such circumstances was agitation and criticism, which were largely necessarily negative. No constructive suggestions were tolerated or accepted. We had also resorted to direct action for the achievement of our independence. Today, when we can change our legislators and ministers, direct action should be out of the question. Even in our criticism we must be careful and considerate. Our ministers in the provinces and at the Centre are harassed by so many political and administrative problems that they need our understanding and sympathy. The nation wants too many things done quickly. We have desired freedom so keenly and so long that we have come to believe that its advent will solve all our problems. We are therefore, apt to be impatient and to overlook the difficulties our representatives have to face in a government that has no traditions of service and whose officials have always acted as the masters of the people. The machinations of the vested interests, official and unofficial, native and foreign, also make the task of a National Government at this initial stage difficult. Our criticism must, therefore, be constructive and sympathetic and never merely destructive. We must give our representatives breathing time to clear the mess that they have inherited.

Against the foreigner we could justifiably claim exclusive patriotism. Such a claim would sound hollow against our tried and trusted leaders who have proved their credentials with at least as much suffering and sacrifice as we ourselves have put in the cause of the country. I know that power corrupts
even the patriot and the servant of the people. But the risk of power corrupting can never be avoided. In the complex society of today, the executive must have requisite power to discharge its onerous duties. It will not do to repeat parrot-like the 19th century liberal slogan that, "that Government is the best which governs the least." Today society must be defended against the action of individuals and associations who in subtle legal ways seek to exploit it. The State must protect the rights of the citizen against such individuals and associations. It is, therefore, obliged to take upon itself tasks which no ancient ruler ever conceived it possible. If, therefore, the National Executives have to discharge their duties well and efficiently, they must have the requisite power. Today even in democracies the executives have such wide powers as Charles the First never dared to claim for himself. The only remedy against state power then is eternal vigilance. This is possible by the widest diffusion of knowledge, general and political.

In the meantime, let us make our suggestions to the Executives through channels we have already created. Let nothing be done or said which will be used by our enemies to discredit our representatives in the Government.

So much for the would-be critics. But those who are in the Government must also never forget that they are the servants of the people, not their masters. They must remember that they cannot afford to kick the ladder that has taken them to their present eminence. Let them, therefore, always remain loyal to the Congress and through it to the people of India. From them they derive their strength and to them is their first and foremost responsibility. They must also see that they are not swallowed up by the bureaucratic machine. They must reform and simplify it. They must have less of red-tapism and consistently
with their public duty they must be accessible to the people. They must also dispense with much of the paraphernalia of pomp and power that a foreign government thought necessary to keep its prestige. Their prestige is derived from service and voluntary poverty which they embraced before office came their way.

It is our great good fortune that we of this generation have been afforded an opportunity to be the instruments of a noble cause. It is not merely the freedom of our people from foreign yoke that we are called upon to strive and work for. Such an opportunity has come to many people in history. Ours is a unique opportunity. It is to win our freedom by non-violent and truthful means and to work for high ends by moral means. Ours is the opportunity to bring about a fusion of different castes and creeds and racial and religious types. Ours is the opportunity to unify what appear to be differing and conflicting cultures. We have to work to build up unity in diversity and produce a mosaic of many colours. We have to combine various and often dissonant sounds and notes to produce a symphony that was never before heard on land or sea. We may not forget that today humanity must find a peaceful solution to its conflicts, social, economic, political, racial and cultural, or perish. There can be no violent solution. Violence has over-reached itself. It threatens to destroy the patient with the disease. Some other method must be found. India has found the method and tried it to some purpose, under a leadership that comes once in many centuries. It is a new method. There have been lapses. But remember, no revolution in history was less costly in the loss of life, property and the dislocation of normal life, and created less hatred and strife than the Indian revolution, which, if we are not negligent, is on the verge of
success. But whether immediate success crowns our efforts or not, let us not forget that we are engaged in a good and great cause. In such a cause there can be no ultimate failure. But if the cause is to succeed, the agents working for it must themselves be good and great. Slavery works neither for goodness nor for greatness. But the darkness of centuries can be removed the moment the light is brought in. In India the light has been lit. Let us keep it steadily burning and let us follow its lead, and all shall yet be well with us —

Bande Mataram.