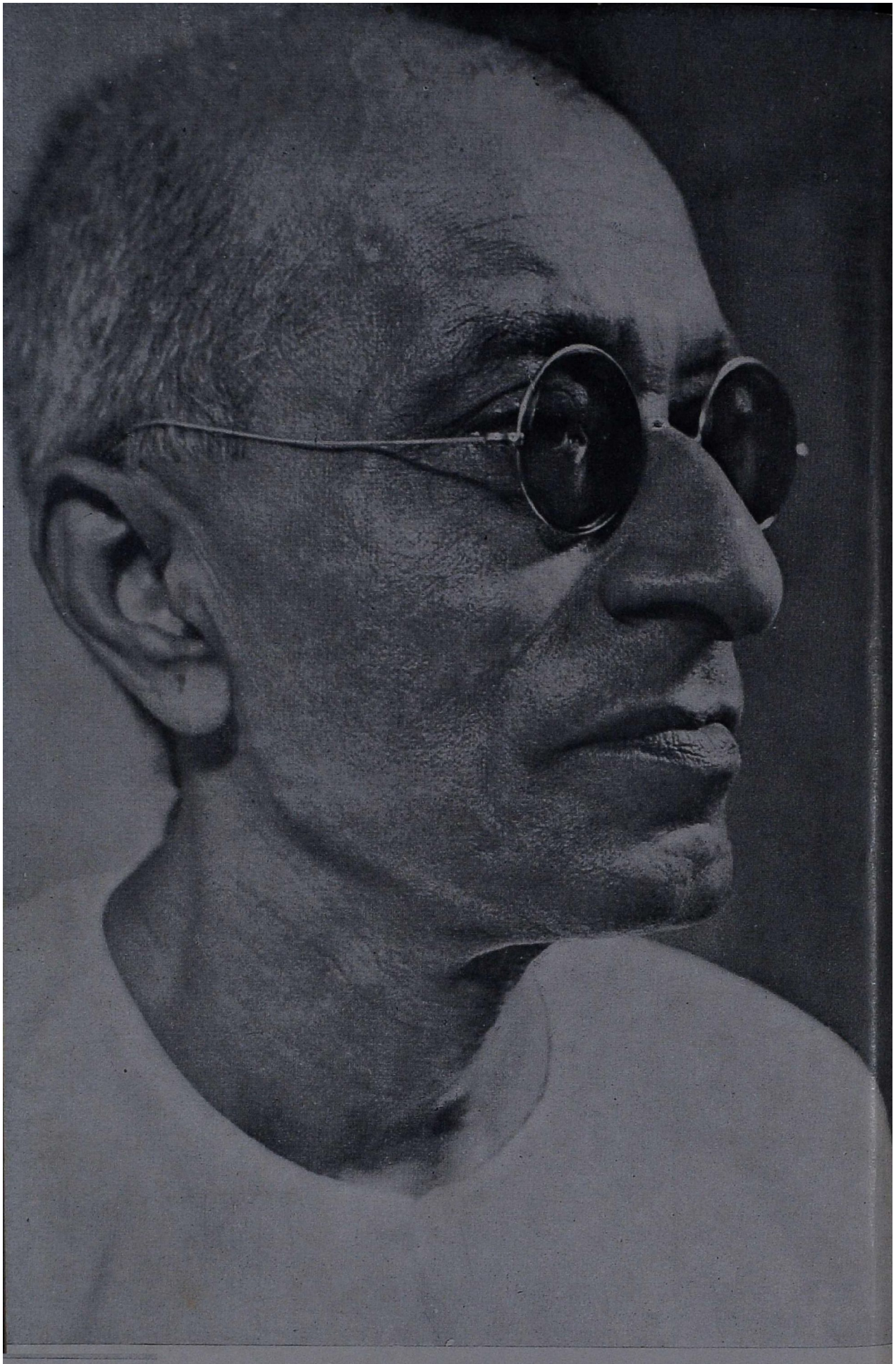


THE RAJAJI STORY

THE RAJAJI STORY

1

A Warrior from the South

RAJMOHAN GANDHI

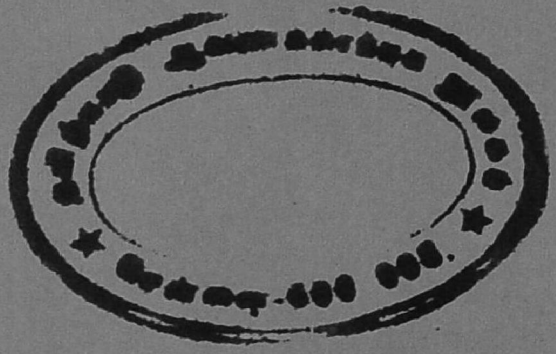


BHARATHAN

Rs. 45/-

© 1978 RAJMOHAN GANDHI

V211.21J7 M78
N78
212302



Published in India in 1978 by T. Sadasivam for Bharathan Publications Pvt. Ltd., Guindy, Madras, and printed by N. S. Ray at The Book Centre Ltd., Sion (East), Bombay-400 022.

Contents

	Preface	...	vi
1.	Rajan	...	1
2.	The Extremist	...	15
3.	Manga	...	25
4.	A Glimmer on the Horizon	...	41
5.	The Enlistment	...	61
6.	India Astir	...	74
7.	The Fight	...	88
8.	Prison	...	105
9.	Hero of Gaya	...	122
10.	Setback	...	135
11.	To the Wilderness	...	146
12.	The Ashram	...	155
13.	The 'Only Possible Successor'	...	165
14.	A Demon Opposed	...	179
15.	A Declaration of War	...	193
16.	Vedaranyam	...	201
17.	A 'Second Door' to Swaraj	...	216
18.	Prison Again	...	230
19.	The Unyielding Gates	...	242
20.	Coimbatore Central Jail	...	253
21.	A Switch in Strategy	...	262
22.	A Strange Desire	...	273
23.	'Free as a Bird'	...	279
24.	The Return	...	289
	Appendix: The ancestors of C.R.	...	297
	Sources and Bibliography	...	299
	Notes and References	...	302
	Index	...	333

Preface

TO THOSE knowing even a little about him, a biography of Rajaji or C.R., as Chakravarti Rajagopalachari was known, needs no justification. However, a word may be in order for others from whom Rajaji's life is curtained by time or geography.

In the movement for freedom he was Gandhi's southern general. Of him the Mahatma declared in 1927: 'I do say he is the only possible successor.' However, in 1942 Gandhi was to state that 'not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor,' and, following the Mahatma's death, Nehru was the nation's choice as leader and Prime Minister. Yet, succeeding Mountbatten as Governor-General, Rajaji did become the first Indian head of free India.

From the late fifties, when he was close to eighty, to 1972, when he died at the age of 94, he battled again, this time against what he saw as the undemocratic practices of the new Raj. In the process he became the period's most notable dissenting Indian.

Crusaders for liberty are not always skilled administrators or successful authors. Rajaji was both. He was seen, too, in the sage's role, counselling the nation with the written and the spoken word. If not always heeded, he was always respected.

His longevity — he bridged Victoria's times with ours — adds interest to his story. When he was born, the revolt of 1857 and, on the other side of the earth, the assassination of Lincoln were recent events. When he died, the twentyfirst century had started figuring in people's plans.

There is intrinsic interest, too, in C.R.'s relationship with Gandhi, of whose relevance he had been convinced ahead of most Indians and earlier than, for instance, Nehru or Patel. The

Mahatma called C.R. his conscience-keeper; Rajaji's attitude to him had a depth inadequately conveyed by the words disciple, apostle or interpreter.

Rajaji's biography is inevitably a story of the freedom struggle with a South Indian emphasis. Not many existing books recording the struggle focus on southern India; a portrayal of Rajaji's life and times helps towards filling the gap.

* * *

'We have to hunt for facts and dates and details with great difficulty even when dealing with men recognised in their own lifetime as makers of history.'

The words are Rajaji's, written with Bal Gangadhar Tilak in mind. They apply to the attempt to write Rajaji's biography. I have rebuked myself for not being alert to the need for biographical detail regarding him while he was alive; facts which months of research have not fully unearthed could then have been elicited in ten minutes.

On the ground that 'when a man writes about his own life he cannot help putting himself at the centre of everything,' Rajaji was opposed to autobiographies. He thought that 'even when confessing errors' a man writing about himself would 'so do it as to reflect credit on oneself.'

At one stage it looked as if this hostility towards autobiographies might be reflected in a crippling absence of documents. Fortunately, this did not prove to be the case. While there are gaps, the papers available clarify many an obscure phase of his life.

* * *

This book was initiated by the Rajaji Biography Committee, consisting of Mr. K. Santhanam (chairman), Mr. T. Sadasivam (convenor), Mr. C. R. Narasimhan and myself. My senior colleagues on this committee, who have advised me throughout, are responsible for improvements and corrections thought not for the faults that must remain.

Mr. Santhanam, C.R.'s close colleague over many years and a veteran of the freedom struggle; Mr. Narasimhan, Rajaji's son, who has remembered many personal and national developments and has made valuable documents available; and Mr. Sadasivam, who cares for Rajaji's memory as he cared for his person — all

three have regarded this work as their own. I am indebted to them.

Mr. C. R. Krishnaswami, Rajaji's eldest son, Mrs. Namagiri Ammal, C.R.'s older daughter, who looked after him and ran his home for decades, and Mrs. Lakshmi Devadas Gandhi, Rajaji's younger daughter, have shed useful light and given access to important papers.

Thanks are due to the authorities of the following institutions for permitting a study of files and books in their care: the National Archives, New Delhi; the Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras; the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi; the India Office Library, London; the *Hindu,* Madras; the *Statesman,* Calcutta; the *Hindustan Times,* New Delhi; Bharathan Publications, Madras; the Rajghat Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; Mani Bhavan, Bombay; Mahajana Sabha, Madras; Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya, Madras; the University of Madras Library; and Gandhi Ashram, Tiruchengodu.

Central College, Bangalore, supplied brochures referring to C.R. Mr. M. E. Pannirselvam of Madras University ferreted out the results of C.R.'s exams at the end of the last century and Mr. D. Soundarapandian of the Madras High Court found the year of C.R.'s enrolment as a vakil in that court. Mr. C. Samachar helped me with C.R.'s genealogy and with other information.

The late Mr. S. A. Govindarajan, Mr. D. Venkatesan, Mr. V. Ramaratnam, and Mr. K. Vedamurthy gave valuable help at different times, with research or translation. Miss Meher Ghyara, Miss Linda Pierce and Miss Sallie Wood gave able secretarial assistance. Mr. Michael Brown designed the photo pages.

To all of them I am grateful — as well as to the many who gave information and impressions in interviews or through letters. A list of all their names would be too long for a preface; but I should like to mention Lord Mountbatten, the late R. V. Krishna Iyer, the late T. T. Krishnamachari, the late B. Shiva Rao and Chellamma, sister-in-law of Rajaji's wife, as some of those whose memories helped construct this story.

I am thankful to Miss Margaret Tait, Mr. Richard Wood, Lord Glendevon, the Earl of Mar and Kellie and Mr. N. Ram for letting me have, for use in this book, the photographs of their fathers — Professor Tait, Lord Irwin, Lord Linlithgow, Lord Erskine and Mr. Navaratna Rama Rao, respectively.

To my wife, Usha Gandhi, I owe a special debt. She has supported me secretarially, with research and with useful criticism of the text.

I would like to dedicate this work to Alarmelu Mangammal, Manga for short, Rajaji's wife and the mother of his five children, my grandmother, who, dying in 1915 at the age of twentysix, could not share her husband's struggles or fame but whose memory was his companion through all his days.

Bombay,
August 1978. RAJMOHAN GANDHI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For permission to use copyright material the author expresses his gratitude to the Navajivan Trust, the *Hindu*, Mr. Pyarelal Nayar, Mr. Narayan Desai, the *Times of India*, Mr. Geoffrey Ashe, Mr. Ian Stephens, Mr. Kanu Gandhi and the heirs of Rajaji.

Extracts from unpublished crown copyright material in the India Office Records in London appear by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

REFERENCES AND SPELLING

Sources of quotations and of information used in the text are given on pages 304 to 331, against the number of the page and paragraph in which a quote (or piece of information) appears. To avoid cluttering the text numerals or other identifying symbols have not been used. The system employed is explained on page 302.

In the English rendering of Indian names the letter 't' has generally been used instead of 'th', and the 'i' ending has been chosen over the 'y' one; e.g., Krishnamurti instead of Krishnamurthy.

The English spelling of Rajaji's name varied while he lived from Rajagopalachar, favoured early in his career, to the usual Rajagopalachari, the respectful Rajagopalachariar and the rare Rajagopalacharya. The abbreviations most resorted to were Rajaji and C.R.; these have been freely employed in the text.

Indian towns have been given the spelling they had in the period under reference. Thus Madura instead of Madurai and Cawnpore instead of Kanpur.

CHAPTER ONE

Rajan

BRITAIN'S presence in India seemed permanent in 1878, the year in which Chakravarti Rajagopalachari was born. Though only twenty years had passed since the Rising, the embers of that fire were cold.

London's mood towards its eastern colony was self-assured. Securing in 1876 the title of Empress of India, Queen Victoria had sent a serene message to a Delhi assembly: 'We Victoria have been touched by the evidence of their [the Indians'] loyalty and attachment to our house and throne.' She looked forward to 'yet closer affection' between 'ourselves and our subjects.'

That the Queen's 'sovereignty and power may remain steadfast forever' was the Maharaja of Gwalior's prayer. And Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, declared that 'Her Majesty . . will not abandon to any enemy the great inheritance she holds in trust for her descendants.'

The West, stronger and more efficient, had subdued the East. In South India the last prince to defy Britain, Tipu, was defeated and killed at Seringapatam in 1799, and England's military successes had been followed by consolidation of the white man's rule.

Good as well as greedy Britons had set foot on India. One of the best was Sir Thomas Munro, who reached Indian shores in 1780 as a 19-year-old seaman and died as the Governor of Madras in 1827. He understood the feelings of a subjugated race, and wrote that the advantages of British rule 'are purchased by the sacrifice of independence, of national character, and of whatever renders a people respectable.' He observed, too, that 'the natives of British provinces may . . enjoy the fruits of their

labour in tranquillity; but none of them can look forward to any share in the civil or military government of their country.'

Munro enabled South Indian peasants to obtain titles to the lands they were tilling. He also devised a system of district and village administration. Under his system a village had a munsiff, or headman, who collected land tax, wrote reports for district officials, communicated and explained the Raj's orders to the villagers, drafted their petitions and settled petty disputes. Chakravarti Venkatarya, father of Rajagopalachari, was the munsiff of Thorapalli village in a north-western corner of Salem district.

* * *

He was a Tamil-speaking Brahmin. The quick-minded Brahmins of South India were and are a very small part of the population, fewer than three in a hundred. If their tongue is Tamil, they are likely to be either Iyers or Iyengars. While the Iyers descend from the followers of Sankara of an ancient era, the Iyengar guru is the eleventh-century saint, Ramanuja. The Iyengars are Vaishnavites, worshippers of Vishnu.

Chakravarti Venkatarya was an Iyengar. An ancestor of his figures in South Indian lore: Nallan Chakravarti. Living in a distant and unknown century, Nallan ('the good') is believed to have defied orthodox rules by performing the last rites for a dying wanderer from a lower caste. For a period Venkatarya's forebears had resided, it would seem, near Tirupati, the trusted Hindu shrine. From this Telugu region they moved to the village of Pannapalli in the Balaghat plateau in the domain of the rulers of Mysore.

Its greater part about 3000 feet above sea level, Balaghat was often visited by drought. The population in it was sparse but diverse, speaking Tamil, Kanarese, Telugu, Hindustani or even Marathi. In 1792, when a number of adjoining pockets fell to the British, Balaghat stood unconquered; but seven years later, on Tipu's death, it was ceded to the European power. Venkatarya's ancestors became the subjects of a sovereign across the seas.

The British included Balaghat in the district of Salem in Madras Presidency and called it the taluk, or sub-district, of

Hosur, that being the name of the principal settlement of Balaghat. Cession to British India did not erase the territory's links with Mysore, which was now under Hindu princes who acknowledged British paramountcy. The city of Bangalore, just across the border on the west, featured in the ambitions of the men of Hosur taluk. Old inhabitants related stories of the battles Mysore's Muslim rulers, Haider and Tipu, had given to the British, and recalled that Tipu had not disturbed his Hindu predecessors' gifts of land to the area's tiny Brahmin communities.

Around the year 1840 Narasimhachar, who would beget Venkatarya, moved fourteen miles from Pannapalli to the village of Thorapalli, also in Hosur taluk. He married a girl called Rangamma and lived in the house that her father, Srinivasa, who had no sons, had settled on her. Rangamma and Narasimhachar had three sons, of whom Venkatarya was the first, and three daughters.

While in his twenties, Venkatarya was made the munsiff of Thorapalli, which had about eighty dwellings at the time and a population of around four hundred. The office was hereditary; we can therefore suppose that his maternal grandfather, Srinivasa, was the munsiff before him.

Thorapalli's red earth produced rice and *ragi*, coconut and mango. A few acres of it were owned by Venkatarya and his kinsmen. Though its climate is dry and its trees are scattered, the setting of Thorapalli is not unattractive; on occasion the sun plays picturesquely on clouds and low hills. Its dwellings densely occupy a rocky terrain that slopes quite steeply and is washed at its feet by a slender, shallow stream, the Thenpennai. Rangamma's house, now a national monument, is on the higher slopes, where in her time and for decades before and after only Brahmins lived. The back of her house joins the village wall or 'fort', as it is still called; there is even a moat of a kind. A temple, built around 1750, stands about sixty feet from the house.

The house is humble. The walls and floor are made of mud, the roof of bamboo and cheap tiles. The family lived and slept in a large central room with an opening in the roof to let the light in and a channel in the floor to drain the water out. A room for eating, a kitchen, a bathing area and a 12′ by 6′ 'store' completed the house, which was adjoined by a narrow seasonal

well. In 1968 a descendant sold the house, almost in its original condition, for Rs. 2,750 or about 340 dollars.

A girl named Singaramma from Kuppam in Chittoor district, now part of Andhra, was married to Venkatarya when the latter was fifteen. They waited many years for a child; eventually a boy, Narasimhachar, arrived. He was followed by Srinivasa and then, on December 10, 1878, by their third and last child, also a boy, Rajagopalachar. All births took place in the dark windowless 'store' in grandmother Rangamma's house.

* * *

The two years from 1876 to 1878 had seen the worst of South India's recorded famines. When Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, journeyed from Calcutta to Salem and Coimbatore in September 1877 he found that 136,941 famine deaths had been registered in Salem district alone. Drought was followed by untimely rain drowning the crops and then by 'locusts shutting out the sky and covering square miles in their flight.' Mercifully the northeast monsoon of 1878 brought 'the finest crop seen in the district': 'stocks were replenished, prices fell . . and the weary officials were at last released from their heavy tasks.'

Rajagopalachar's birth coincided with the revival of fortune. Called Rajan by his parents, the child went to the village 'school', played marbles on the sandy patches beside the stream, frequented a sweet tamarind tree and forced his father to buy an instrument played by a mendicant. He also, on one occasion, set fire to a cloth hanging to dry and watched the leaping flame until it was put out by an aunt invited by him 'to share in the entertainment.'

His mother Singaramma, whom he 'sometimes helped . . in her chores' and at whose side he ran down the slope to the stream where she fetched water, amused and taught him with stories. So did two aunts. As the boy grew older Singaramma gave him practical tips: one was that 'a ladder should not be placed too steeply against what was to be climbed up but at a stable angle.'

Venkatarya must have demonstrated abilities, perhaps during the drought, for in 1883, when Rajan was four, he was named munsiff of Hosur. The promotion was noteworthy, for Hosur, known once for its silk, was the seat of the Raj in the taluk and

had a population at the time of over five thousand. It was less than six miles from Thorapalli, towards Bangalore. The family moved by bullock cart.

Because of the clan and the caste to which he belonged, Venkatarya usually went by the name of Chakravarti Iyengar. Tall, strongly built and light-skinned, he walked with a proud bearing. His head was shaved clean, saving only a tuft at the back; this style, required of Brahmins, made him look completely bald to those facing him, who could also notice, on a large oval face, a curled lip that seemed to expect compliance. Each morning he marked his forehead with the 'namam', the Vaishnavite insignia consisting, in the case of his wing of the Iyengars, of a vertical red line within a white U.

He wore his white dhoti in the *panchakachcham* ('tied in five places') style expected of married Brahmins of the south, which resembles the way in which most North Indian Hindus wear it, the long cloth enclosing each leg separately, and differs from the cylindrical form used by a majority of Tamils.

Above the dhoti an *angavastram* ('cloth for the body') — a large white cotton scarf, probably, in Venkatarya's case, red-bordered — draped the chest; when the temperature fell a shawl gave additional covering. Bare-footed at home, Venkatarya used leather chappals for going out, which was not yet a general Brahmin practice. (The orthodox custom was to walk unshod or in wooden sandals, leather being thought unclean; but increasingly Brahmins were accepting chappals made by cobblers, giving rice or *ragi* in exchange.)

As the Hosur munsiff Chakravarti Iyengar's monthly salary was five rupees. He commanded prestige rather than wealth, and was careful with what he had of the latter. His frugality ran to excess; once, it seems, Singaramma tried to shock him into loosening the purse strings by removing her ornaments and dressing herself like a widow.

Though unable to speak English, Chakravarti Iyengar had access to Salem district's British officials who called at his house and on occasion asked him to accompany them in their horse carriages. He gave the officials uninhibited advice. If Chakravarti Iyengar fitted into the pattern of the Raj, he also remained loyal to the culture of his forebears. Fluent in Tamil and Telugu, he

had a fair knowledge as well of Sanskrit texts, which he read or wrote out in the Telugu script. It was an asset that others tapped.

He obeyed tradition regarding food, abstaining not only from meat, fish and eggs but also from vegetarian things not cooked by persons of his caste. Associating with white people conflicted, it is true, with strict doctrine, for they ate beef. But they were rulers, and there was an ancient view that Vishnu's grace descended on those who ruled, irrespective of their practices. This belief had enabled Brahmin administrators to serve Haider and Tipu. It also enabled orthodox Brahmins like Chakravarti Iyengar to serve the Raj.

At Hosur's Government School, founded in 1858, the munsiff's son was not a diligent student, but the chief reason was the boy's acute myopia. He saw the blackboard as a blur in the distance and the teacher's writing on it not at all. When he asked his father for spectacles the stern Chakravarti Iyengar refused. Nobody under fortyfive was wearing glasses in Hosur and he thought that his son's desire for them was vanity.

Smaller in size and strength than other boys of his age, the thin-faced eagle-nosed Rajan found that his defective eyes made games difficult, too. He could not master swimming but learnt some wrestling holds from an unusual Muslim who was devoted to the figure of Hanuman. A rock-carved Hanuman existed, and exists, a mile from Rajan's home. Coach and pupil often visited it.

The coach was probably the 'fine old Muslim gymnastics instructor,' unsuccessful in making an athlete or gymnast out of Rajagopalachari, whom the latter recalled in 1948 while addressing cadets at the Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun:

> How hard he tried to make me do what you are now doing! . . My instructor was very fond of me and said, 'You stand by me and watch the others.'

The impediment at school encouraged truancy, which was not entirely a waste. Rajan scouted the fields and observed the ways of the peasants and their cattle. Though he was to move at an early age to a city, he took with him a familiarity with rural life. 'A handful of rice prepared in the kitchen' would in future remind him of 'the peasants that brought these grains of

rice into existence . . not excepting the women of the village called in for transplantation and, after that, for weeding the field.'

Slow as he was to understand his son's handicap, the munsiff had spotted the boy's intelligence and was saving for his education. Hosur offered nothing after 'middle' school. However, Bangalore was near, and its British-run Central College prepared boys for matriculation and graduation. Chakravarti Iyengar decided that it was to this city of palaces and gardens, commerce and learning, that he would send his son. The village boy thrust into it was eleven years' old.

The lad slept in a Brahmin hostel in Chickpet and took his meals (for two rupees a month) in an eating house run by a clansman. When his hair, worn long in Brahmin style, gathered lice, he yearned to be looked after by his mother.

At thirteen, having spent two years at Central College, he matriculated. His two brothers, older than him by twelve and six years, did so at the same time, though not, it would seem, as Central College students. In 1891, the year in which Rajan wrote his matric exams, there were 8051 boys qualified to take the tests in the whole of Madras Presidency, including its Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kanarese districts.

Two other events occurred when Rajan was thirteen. One was that he got his glasses. At last the munsiff had conceded his son's need. Rajan's life was transformed. He had not 'quite known', until now, 'what green was.' And he found that 'it was a marvellous experience to see the stars not just as a vague mist of light but with points and corners and colours and to wake up in the morning and see the shapes of the leaves and the trees.' The second event was the start of a remarkable friendship.

Navaratna Rama Rao, of Mysore-domiciled Maharashtrian stock, was two years older than Rajan but junior to him at Central. Attracted by Rama Rao's brains and brightness and by his familiarity with English literature, Rajan 'sought him out and left a letter in his room on the top of an eating house, asking for his friendship.' It was not a minor venture on the part of the sensitive boy of thirteen. He had risked a rebuff, but Rama Rao responded positively.

The two read a lot together in college, mostly Rama Rao — 'the greater connoisseur of us two,' as Rajagopalachari was to

put it — reading for Rajan. They also 'laughed and enjoyed humour and talked metaphysics and educated each other.' In Rajagopalachari's words, 'Our friendship was an astonishment and a mystery to our college mates but they tolerated it and gathered round both of us . .' It was to last nearly seventy years.

The favourite teacher of the two, clearly first in 'a list of carefully prepared preferences,' was John Guthrie Tait. Whenever in later years Rajagopalachari spoke of the Scots professor he used the name in full — and with an affection and respect undiluted by time.

Tait taught the boys 'to know and love literature'; more than that, the professor, 'careful in concealing his benefactions', became their 'beau-ideal of what was good and brave and noble in man.' Rajan himself was one of the beneficiaries. The sums of money father provided were nowhere near enough for him to read, board and lodge in Bangalore. A college scholarship and help out of Tait's personal funds met the balance.

Studying for examinations went against Rajan's grain and custom, but Tait and John Cook, the principal, obviously liked him and Rama Rao. Tait, it seems, described the two as the best students he had had. To their surprise they were offered a cubicle within college grounds for lodging.

The favour was not extended to others, and the eight feet square space, 'luxuriously furnished with two benches which served as sofas by day and beds by night,' became a sanctum to which the proud lodgers admitted only a chosen few of the students, 'such as Arunachalam, Babu Rao and Ranganatha Rao.' Residence on campus enabled contact with men like 'old Hanumanthiah, the Mali, who on a meagre income brought up a large family of orphaned children.'

Decades later Rajagopalachari and Rama Rao recalled:

> Often we used to spend part of the night lying on the lawn under the star-spangled or moonlit sky, in grave or merry talk, till the clock warned us in solemn tones of the midnight hour. One night we slept in the open — to be accessible to whatever other spirits might be abroad — and though there was no response to our invitation, the cold night breeze made mock of our thin blankets, and while we

vowed we rather liked it, we resolutely denied ourselves repetition of the pleasure.

* * *

Rajan's holidays were spent in Hosur or in Kuppam, where his mother's relatives lived. He seems to have been imaginative. The Kuppam people once observed him scaring a group of children with a ghost's mask and then revealing himself; he was dispelling the children's fear of ghosts.

A bullock cart took Rajan and his parents to his eldest brother Narasimhachar's marriage, held in the bride's village. Observing that the 'common nautch girl' dancing as part of the festivities 'had hideous features, her black face painted white,' Rajan 'wondered what people found in her.'

In the classroom euclid, as geometry was described at the time, was a favourite with Rajan; his memory was unusually strong; and he learnt a number of mathematical short-cuts. Through Cook, who taught physics, he found, as he later put it, 'a living interest, not merely a temporary enthusiasm, in science.' The irascible but well-meaning Cook was an experimenting teacher: X-rays having been discovered, he showed Rajan the back of his hands made hairless by the new rays.

He tried to draw Rajan into a career in science, but the student not only did not respond, he refused, despite his interest, to study the subject with zeal. An enraged Cook would shout at Rajan, 'You rascal! You humbug! You rogue!' Rama Rao was a fanatic for sports: for friendship's sake Rajan tried to acquire an interest in them and 'to some extent succeeded.'

Introduced to literature by Tait, Rajagopalachari was introduced by literature to liberty. A believer in the Raj and one of its finer specimens, Tait had, in retrospect, won Rajagopalachari only in order to lose him. The future would find Tait profoundly unhappy (and later proud) in relation to the former pupil from Hosur. For the moment, however, only the seed had been sown and neither teacher nor pupil seemed aware that it would grow into a thorn of revolt, as Tait would view it.

Rajan and Rama Rao 'knew intimately and loved everything in the college, from the lawn and the cricket field to the venerable trees which bounded them . . to the austere red college building

with the gaunt clock tower keeping watch over it.' Since it was affiliated, at the time, to Madras University, it was in Madras, in January 1896, that Rajan wrote his B.A. examination, in the three branches of English, Science and Tamil. He was seventeen.

To Cook's disgust he had left everything until the last minute; now he sat up most of the night in a lodging house to swot up facts for the physics papers the following day, one entitled statics and the other dynamics. His father, who was with him, ordered Rajan to bed after he had finished teaching himself statics.

Getting high marks in statics and a zero in dynamics, he passed Science as a whole in the second division, with 218 marks out of 400. The periods assigned to Tamil had been devoted to amusement, and Rajan, destined to be acclaimed as a skilled craftsman of the language, failed his test in it. In English, though placed in the second division, he was ranked fifth in the university. (His English score was 138 out of 240.) Many years later, at a Central College gathering, the principal, A. B. Mackintosh, complimented Rajagopalachari on 'passing out first in English and in Science;' this was probably the ranking among the Central College examinees. Despite his Tamil result he was declared a graduate.

* * *

He decided to study law. This could be done in Madras. For long Madras had been England's headquarters in the south of India. From here Englishmen oversaw a large area, the presidency of Madras, which even included, for a while, Java. Their head was successively called Agent, President and, from 1785, Governor.

Though there were no premises for a law college yet in the city, the subject was taught in the university's showpiece, the Senate House on the shore of the Bay of Bengal. Completed in 1879, the ornate four-towered edifice with stained glass windows sported European columns, Islamic minarets and Hindu decorative motifs. A canopied statue of Queen Victoria enhanced its dignity.

Rajan's law lessons began early in 1896. His attire in class accorded with the rule that 'graduates who are in the habit of wearing native costume shall be clothed in white, and shall

wear either a white, red or black turban, which may have a gold border.' Attendance for three terms, taking about a year and a half in all, would enable him to write the First Examination in Law; after another three terms he could appear in the Bachelor of Law tests.

Because of his failure in Tamil Rajan was obliged, for the first two terms, also to attend lectures in Tamil — in the pink-domed Presidency College, five hundred yards down the beach from Senate House — and to write a fresh exam. In January 1897 he narrowly cleared the hurdle, securing 46 marks out of 120. 'I have at last broken loose from the Tamil devil,' he told his father.

If the Hosur youth's classes were held in grand surroundings, his hostel too, kept for students from Mysore by a certain Biligiri Iyengar, was impressively located — in an eighteenth-century building called Castle Kernan. Also facing the blue sea, about a mile further to the south from Presidency College, Castle Kernan was popularly known as Ice House; ice that chilled the whisky for British residents in Madras used to be brought round the Cape of Good Hope from the Americas and stored in it. (In the twentieth century Castle Kernan would successively become Sister Subbalakshmi's home for widows and a hostel for a teachers' training college.)

Still receiving occasional assistance from Tait, Rajan ran on the inviting Marina sands for pleasure or exercise, and had a brush with danger when a boat filled with students including himself almost capsized in a storm. A young Mysore engineer working in Sind and meant for big things, M. Visvesvaraya, visited Ice House in 1896. Another guest was Swami Vivekananda, who arrived in January 1897, fresh from his successes in America and Europe. Rajan noticed and remembered the Swami's 'specially bright dark eyes.'

'Why is Krishna painted blue?' Vivekananda is said to have asked at a meeting. Rajan's hand, it seems, went up, and his voice followed with the answer, 'Because the sky and the ocean, the symbols of infinity, are blue.'

Queen Victoria celebrated her golden jubilee in 1897. The '*Hindu,* founded in Madras two decades earlier, wrote:'

> Everywhere Her Majesty's name is blessed and cheered to the echo by millions upon millions of voices of Hindus. In every Hindu temple and home, prayers such as can only swell forth from the pious Hindu heart are being raised to the feet of the Almighty to bless our gracious and noble Queen-Empress . . !

The *Hindu* had exaggerated. In reality the bonds were not as warm. Formed in 1885 by a group of Indians and Englishmen, the Indian National Congress had been petitioning the white masters for representative government — with little effect. Wenlock, the Madras Governor, had perceived economic injustice. A year before the *Hindu's* rhapsody he had written to Lord Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India in the British Cabinet, that it was 'a monstrous shame that Lancashire should rule India' and that it was difficult 'to maintain that we rule India for the benefit of the Indians and not of England.'

The clearest voice of dissatisfaction was Bal Gangadhar Tilak's. In the jubilee year the leader from Poona was sentenced for 18 months after a trial for sedition that had made him a hero. A year later, with six months left for Tilak's term to end, Rajan was attending an evening lecture when a friend, G. A. Natesan, rushed in with a poster announcing Tilak's release. Rajan was thrilled.

The student probably liked aspects of the Raj. He was devoted to Tait, who was proud of the Raj. Yet Rajan doubtless felt the tug of honour, for which the heroes of the books Tait recommended were ready to die. The seed quietly entering his soul in Bangalore had begun to sprout, even if imperceptibly as yet.

* * *

Four months earlier, in May 1898, he had passed the First Examination in Law, in the second division. (Why he did not write this test in May 1897, by when he should have completed the required three terms, is not fully clear. There is, however, a hint that his family was needing money at about this time, and that Rajan worked for a while as an amanuensis and translator at the High Court to earn it.) Before long he would own a valuable degree, Bachelor of Law. But a blow was in store.

A telegram arrived at Ice House stating that his mother was ill. He hastened to join her. The last leg of the journey had to be done in a horse-drawn *jutka*. While engaging one he thought he heard a Muslim driver say in Urdu to his fellows that the young man's mother was dead. Fearing confirmation he asked no questions. The passenger in the *jutka* that bumped along to the munsiff's house was completely silent.

His ears had not deceived him. Singaramma was dead, a victim of cholera. Rajan accused his father of not taking care of her. 'In my hurt and shock I rebuked him. I have regretted it ever since,' he was later to confess.

After his mother's death marriage was proposed to Rajan. Offers came from richer families, the munsiff responding to some of them. Rajan turned them down. 'You will end up marrying a poor girl,' an aunt, Singaramma's sister, told him. 'I want to marry a poor girl,' replied Rajan.

His mother had been raised in the largely Telugu settlement of Kuppam, where slow trains between Bangalore and Madras momentarily halted. Rajan knew that she had thought of a girl for him, Alarmelu Mangammal, called Alamelu or Manga in practice, of the village of Lakshmipuram, two miles from Kuppam.

Her father, Tirumalai Sampangi Iyengar, was a humble itinerant preacher, gentle of heart, whose hereditary role was to confirm the orthodoxy of young Vaishnavites by tattooing their arms with small designs of a conch and a wheel. (Rajan had his arms similarly marked.) He was willing to offer his daughter to Singaramma's son.

It was arranged that Rajan would see Manga offering worship in the temple in Lakshmipuram. Charmed, he said he would accept her. The marriage ceremonies, lasting five days, took place in a modest courtyard, decorated with flowers and banana-tree branches, in Kuppam. Sampangi Iyengar declared before guests that he would give Manga to Rajan. Next day, while the priest recited ancient texts, the pair, bride behind groom, took seven steps round the sacred fire, and Rajan held Manga's hand in the bond of wedlock. Like many an Indian bride of the time, Manga was ten years old.

The child-wife stayed with her parents. The groom returned to Madras for his studies. In January 1900, at the age of 21,

he passed the Bachelor of Law exams — in the third division. Possibly the death of his mother and his marriage had affected his reading. Nonetheless, it would seem that his approach to studies was casual and that he lacked the examination temperament of a gold medalist.

College behind him, a career in law looked natural. Some bright young men no doubt went to Britain to appear in tests for the Indian Civil Service; if such a scheme entered Rajan's or his father's mind, the former's eyesight and the latter's poverty would have ruled it out.

Chakravarti Iyengar probably hoped to see his son a judge one day. On his birth an astrologer had prophesied a viceroyalty, which sounded absurd, but a judgeship, which was big enough, was not impossible.* The bar could lead to the bench. Son and father decided that the profession should be practised in Salem, headquarters of the district to which Thorapalli and Hosur belonged, and seat of the munsiff's ultimate boss, the Collector.

* Chakravarti Iyengar did not wholly dismiss the astrologer's word. Hearing, it seems, of a prediction that the son of an acquaintance would become a Dewan (Premier of a principality), Iyengar reportedly commented, 'That is nothing. My son will become Viceroy.'

Chapter Two

The Extremist

SALEM town stands in a valley between the sizable Shevaroys that rise in the north and lower hills undulating on the southern horizon.

At the turn of the century, when Rajan, soon to be called C.R. by friends and clients, arrived in Salem, it had a population of about 70,000. Coffee had been successfully tried on the hills, but there was little industry of any scale in the town or near it.

Thousands of Salem's lowly homes, however, echoed to the whirr of the handloom. Europeans frequented Yercaud, 4,500 feet above the sea in the Shevaroys. The town's Indian elite consisted of a handful of officials (not in very senior posts, which were British preserves) and of advocates.

Renting a home in the second street of the *agraharam*, the Brahmin quarter, Rajan, very much his father's pride and hope, was soon joined by the latter, who chose to retire from his Hosur job. Chakravarti Iyengar's older sons were by now in clerical service, attached to the district administration, on occasion riding on mules to collect revenue or facts.

Shortly after his arrival, C. R. was told that the case of his first client was unexpectedly 'on board.' Picking up a bicycle, he pedalled as hard as he could to the court, where he found an English judge presiding and an experienced lawyer opposing. Hiding his unpreparedness, he opened with an unrecorded sentence designed to make the judge laugh. It achieved the aim and C.R. won the case, building the beginning of a reputation. Clients, including some accused of major crimes, learnt to make their way to his doorstep. Before the end of the year 1900 he had, in his words, 'already defended [his] first murderer.'

Navaratna Rama Rao had also studied law in Madras, a class or two behind Rajan, the latter tolerating, without seeking to emulate, Rama Rao's efforts in the hostel with the *veena* and the violin. Doubtless welcomed by his friend, Rama Rao tried practising in Salem; it would seem that he acted for a while as C.R.'s junior. Either Rama Rao was not cut out for the bar, or the bar for him, for in about two years he returned to his native Mysore and joined its administrative service, where he was to advance to the top.

Manga lived with her parents in Lakshmipuram until the end of 1901. An aunt of C.R.'s — his mother Singaramma's sister — and her husband equipped the bare *agraharam* house with cooking utensils. The couple also helped in running the house, assisted off and on by a widowed sister of Chakravarti Iyengar's.

Twelve when she went to her husband's home, Manga gave birth to a boy, Krishnaswami, on the day following her thirteenth birthday. In less than two years another boy, Ramaswami, was born. That his wife faced the pains of childbirth at so early an age was to embarrass C.R. all his life.

His flair in the courtroom was bringing in money — in larger amounts than the family had ever known. Many a newcomer had to wait for crumbs from a senior lawyer — cases that the latter was either too busy or reluctant to take up. Not so C.R., who discovered that he was a senior from the beginning.

Salem bar's (and Salem town's) leading figure at this time was C. Vijiaraghavachariar, who had attended, in 1885, the first session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay and who had been a colleague of men like Hume, Wedderburn and Dadabhoy Naoroji, the organisation's founders. C.R. received his friendship, the relationship surviving the younger man's increasingly competitive role.

* * *

The result of an international war and an Indian event now captured C.R.'s interest. In 1904 and 1905 Japan inflicted defeats on Russia, destroying the notions of European invincibility and Asian impotence. Then, also in 1905, Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, announced that Bengal would be divided into two parts, one mainly Hindu and the other with a Muslim majority.

Administrative convenience was the reason given, but Indian opinion saw the act as a design to divide the communities. Tilak was in a fighting mood and so were men like Arabindo Ghose in Bengal; a campaign of boycotting British goods was launched.

C.R. was drawn by the stir. He experienced, too, as he was to recall in the future, the pride in Asia that Japan had bequeathed to all Asians, including Indians, by her victory. His feelings were sufficiently strong for him to journey to distant Calcutta for the Congress of December 1906, the largest political gathering witnessed in India till then. This session marks C.R's entry into politics.

Naoroji, the 'grand old man of India,' was presiding. He asked for 'self-government, or *swaraj.*' The session straightened Congress out of the bent-knee posture to which it had been prone. Tilak was pleased; the 28-year old C.R. was thrilled. But Pherozeshah Mehta, the 'lion of Bombay,' who could speak with fire but was the leader of the moderates and had once referred to British rule as a wonderful dispensation, felt rebuffed. A moderate-extremist contest became inevitable.

Standing with the extremists, C.R. wrote in the *Hindustan Review* of July 1907:

> Extremist forms of lawful agitation are . . necessary to command the attention of the immovable statesmen who control the destinies of this country.

He added that while reform by instalments need not be opposed, there was 'a way of throwing crumbs which . . creates a debased canine nature of satisfaction without ambition, [and] which . . has to be actively resisted and prevented.'

Working on a few instalments of reform, Lord Morley, Secretary of State, and Lord Minto, Curzon's successor as Viceroy, considered creating an advisory council of Indian notables nominated by British officials. C.R. thought that such 'an assembly . . will be a fresh weapon in the hands of those whom we might . . now, though very reluctantly, call "our enemies." '

Attacking the proposal as being 'deceptive and cleverly divisive,' C.R. urged:

> Let us not, who have been so long able to abstain from

political power, unwisely yield to small temptation in the moment that decides.

Under C.R.'s influence, and with the backing of Vijiaraghavachariar, Salem became an extremist stronghold. For the trial of strength with the moderates at Surat — in December 1907 — a fervent C.R. took a number of southern delegates, paying, it seems, for the journey of some of them. His enthusiasm was of no avail; it could not even be put to use.

Steered by Mehta, the moderates tightly controlled the platform. C.R.'s hero, and that of a fair section of the country, Tilak, wanted to raise a question regarding the presidentship of the Congress. He was told not to speak. When he mounted the platform young moderate volunteers tried to drag him down.

Tilak stood 'facing the audience with folded arms, unmoved and defiant.' Suddenly a shoe hurtled through the air and hit Mehta. Pandemonium followed. Men rushed about 'yelling with fury and brandishing long sticks.' C.R. saw the session break up in chaos, the organisation split and extremists like himself ousted. The moderates were to possess Congress till 1915.

The expulsion of extremists did not satisfy the government, which seemed uninterested in considering even the moderates' demands. It sought, instead, to silence virtually all opposition through a Seditious Meetings Act and an Indian Newspapers Act.

For articles in *Kesari*, Tilak was sentenced to six years' rigorous imprisonment. Convinced of his innocence, he declared in court that 'it may be the will of Providence that the cause which I represent should prosper more by my sufferings than by my remaining free.' He was to spend the six years in a cell in Mandalay in Burma.

It was a pale Congress that met in December 1908 in Madras. Only those who accepted in writing the moderate creed could take part. C.R. fought for the right to attend without signing the creed. To this end he published a manifesto, in which he was joined by K. Natesa Iyer and R. V. Krishna Iyer, lawyer friends of his in Salem, criticising the moderates' methods. The document was used in different parts of the country.

C.R.'s bid failed. But so did the attempt of the moderates to detach Salem from C.R.'s influence. After combing Salem for

delegates sympathetic to the moderates, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, who later became president of the Servants of India Society, returned empty-handed to Madras.

The Madras Congress, at which C.R. and his friends were present as observers, rejoiced over the Minto-Morley reforms, announced shortly before. But disappointment was in store. Morley declared that the new scheme was not intended to lead to a parliamentary system in India.

Repression was breeding violence. In April 1908 a bomb had been thrown at a British judge in Muzaffarpur; he survived but two English women were killed. Khudiram Bose, who was responsible, was tried and sent to the gallows. The revolutionists killed an approver and two officials in revenge.

Yet it did not appear that the bomb would frighten the foreigner away. While he seemed in full command, his chief Indian opponents were out of action. A cell across the sea immured Tilak; and Arabindo was confining himself to Pondicherry, the French-ruled coastal pocket in the south.

In the years immediately following 1908, freedom seemed an unrealisable dream to C.R. and many like him. Their hopes, raised high, perhaps prematurely, in 1905 and 1906, now lay broken around them.

* * *

In 1906 C.R. had been enrolled for practice at the Madras High Court. That year Manga gave him a daughter, Namagiri. Their third son, Narasimhan, was born in 1909. Lakshmi, their second daughter and last child, was to come in 1912.

Wanting his clothes 'fresh and fine,' C.R. had his shirts stitched in Madras. The Vaishnava mark on his forehead, he donned, for the court, a silver-laced white turban. Two persons had 'to stretch the two ends of the turban cloth, before it could be folded and "ironed" in the homely way.'

Spruce under the turban in a white *panchakachcham* dhoti, a stiff-collared shirt, a black buttoned-up coat and black socks and shoes, C.R. had rapidly gained prominence at the bar. In a contemporary's view, 'from his very first year he had a roaring practice.' Clients were soon paying him a thousand rupees for a case.

His high fees were a device for saving time, which he wanted for friends, for recreation, for efforts he had in mind towards social reform. Saying that three hundred or five hundred rupees was a lot of money, Chakravarti Iyengar would urge his son not to send a client away, but rarely did C.R. yield.

A warm friendship began between him and T. Vijiaraghavachar, revenue divisional officer in Namakkal, about 30 miles away, where cases frequently took C.R. T.V., as he called his friend, was to become, successively, Dewan of Cochin and of Udaipur.

Others close to C.R. at this time included B. V. Narasimha Iyer, a lawyer who became a member of the Madras Legislative Council; K. G. Venkatasubba Iyer, also a lawyer and a former lecturer at Madras Christian College; M. D. Subbaroya Iyer and Sadagopa Mudaliar, lawyers; K. Seshu Iyer, vice-principal of the Salem Municipal College; V. T. Krishnamachari, an official who would become deputy chairman of the Planning Commission; N. V. Krishna Chettiar, who, with C.R.'s help, founded the Salem Urban Cooperative Society that later became a bank; T. Adinarayana Chetty, a merchant who studied in Dublin and London and became a barrister; and R. V. Krishna Iyer, a young lawyer in Salem later to hold twice the post of secretary of the Madras Legislature.

The friends held converse — on cultural, scientific or political subjects — at the Salem Literary Society or in the home of one among them. A Book Club they formed dissected new works. Music too could be had. 'Salem' Godavari's singing at a farewell party for a British judge in C. Vijiaraghavachariar's home impressed C.R.

There was sport at the Literary Society. C.R. became a reasonable tennis player, had a shot at billiards and played cards; but after a dispute during a game he gave up cards for good.

Buying the dogcart and horse of Tantoni Srinivasa Iyengar, an elder at the bar, and also taking over the latter's syce, C.R. soon learnt to guide a horse himself. There were murmurs of praise in some Salem circles following an occasion when the steed, having bolted, was galloping through crowded streets and C.R., keeping a cool head and a tight rein, allowed the animal to exhaust itself and stop.

Baby, a white animal, was sensitive to 'the gentlest and most delicate suggestions' of C.R.'s fingers. Its hoofs announced to Salem streets that the lawyer was passing in his dogcart. One day the syce, an 'untouchable', came running to C.R. and announced, 'Baby is very ill.' When C.R. went to the horse, Baby looked up, saw his master's face and fell down dead.

* * *

A view of some of C.R.'s traits during this period has been provided by Krishna Iyer. He noticed knowledge ('If there was any information lacking we used to go to him.'), intelligence, and 'a tendency to take the opposite side even though inside he agreed with you.' T.V., it seems, once told Krishna Iyer, 'If you have a good case do not discuss it with C.R. He will soon convince you that it is a very bad case.'

Krishna Iyer also observed liberality. 'His hospitality became a byword. Donations to this cause and that cause, endlessly.' Though his father disapproved, C.R. had given, while he was still in his twenties, a thousand rupees that he had saved to V.O. Chidambaram Pillai for a national shipping company.

Guests often partook of the fare at C.R.'s home, where 'two very able cooks' were hired. At the district court, three miles from the heart of the town, the tiffin brought for C.R. was generally sufficient 'for at least ten persons' and shared with the lawyers present.

In an incident witnessed by Krishna Iyer, a porter at Salem station, to whom C.R. had given a six-pie East India Company copper piece, said, 'I am starving. Please give me more.' C.R. took out a rupee coin from his pocket and gave it to the porter.

However, the young lawyer was not gullible. When a man claiming to be a visiting teacher in distress asked him for money, C.R. sent a telegram, checking the story, to the school where his caller was supposed to teach. Learning that it was false, he prosecuted the trickster, got him convicted — and paid the fine himself.

T.V. saw depth in his friend. In 1934, looking back on their relationship, he remarked that C.R. had helped him 'endure things which life seems to make it impossible to bear.' T.V. was a particularly near friend. It cannot be assumed that the spirits of

all in the group around C.R. were similarly fed, but the comment is certainly noteworthy.

His income growing, C.R. first rented (in 1909), and shortly afterwards bought, a larger house, a yellow dwelling on the first street of the *agraharam* with a margosa tree in front. He furnished it with spring beds. A coach too was bought, superseding the dogcart.

Very much the cultured, flourishing, prominent citizen, C.R., had also been devoting thought to the bringing up of his children. 'When showing something to my child,' he had written in 1907, 'I have often observed him make a remark which ninetynine percent of our teachers would have considered a mere child's vagary,' whereas the fact was that 'the child was exercising most surprising memory.' He added:

> What an enormous wrench from the right path the infant brain would have had, if, instead of perceiving the association, I had chid him for wandering.

The lines were penned to deplore the incompetency of primary teachers, then completely untrained and described by C.R. as 'intellectual assassins.'

His own children (four in 1910) were not the only youngsters in his house. His brother's son Doraiswami, his cousin's son Samachar and Manga's brother Ramaswami were among the seven others who, over a period, lived under his roof in Salem and were educated by him.

When, in 1909, C.R. collected young Samachar, his father, living in a village near Hosur, tried to give a bedding for the boy. 'There are six beds for the boy to choose from in Salem,' said C.R., not accepting it. 'From that moment he looked after me as his own son,' Samachar was to recall.

One of C.R.'s methods of training the young was to give them turns at being 'master' of the house. The 'master' had to ensure that the younger children were bathed and fed on time and equipped for school. Manga, twenty in 1909, and the older children all played 'master' by turns.

It was on a night in this period (around 1909) that a bullet C.R. fired under a misapprehension nearly killed an innocent man. A revolver beside him, C.R. was asleep on a bullock-cart that

rolled overnight towards Salem from Namakkal, where he had argued a case.

Dacoities had taken place on the road, which was crossed at a few places by toll-gates. A voice shouting *panam*, Tamil for money, woke C.R., who thought that he had been accosted by a highway robber. In the darkness he lifted his gun and shot at the voice.

A man hearing the shot hurried with a lantern and C.R. saw in its light that he had hit someone posted at a toll-gate. The bullet had pierced the man's forehead and come out behind the ear. C.R. took him to a hospital in his cart, where it was discovered that mercifully the bullet had missed the skull.

Compensating the man, C.R. went to C. Vijiaraghavachariar to tell him what had happened. There was a prosecution, the old gentleman appearing for C.R., which resulted in C.R.'s exoneration, but his licence was taken away for a while.

* * *

From his earliest Salem days C.R. was looked upon, appreciatively by some and critically by more, as a social reformer. Opposition had started, it would seem, because of the Narayana Iyer incident.

An I.C.S. official, R. Narayana Iyer, had crossed the high seas, thereby violating an orthodox injunction. Welcoming Narayana Iyer in his home, C.R.'s friend Seshu Iyer, the lecturer, had committed, in orthodoxy's eyes, a fresh error. A priest called Krishna Sastri who performed an absolving service for Narayana Iyer had committed a third.

Defending all three, and associating openly with Narayana Iyer, C.R. initiated a monthly subscription for Krishna Sastri, whose income had been slashed by boycott. Orthodoxy marked C.R. down as cheeky.

Soon he fought for something more radical: the right of two *panchama* or 'untouchable' boys to admission in the Salem Municipal School. He was warned not to seek notoriety. The school authorities were warned that the two hundred caste boys would leave. But C.R. insisted, successfully. Their schooling paid for by him, the two 'untouchables' made good. The way was paved for more mixing until it became normal.

Also controversial was a reformist marriage arranged by C.R. It was unusual in three ways: one side was Vaishnavite, the other Saivite*; the bride was a widow; she was also above the age of puberty. The press wrote about the marriage. Chakravarti Iyengar was not pleased. 'Ha!' he said to C.R. 'You call this social reform — but the pair must have run away with each other.'

Criticism had the effect of strengthening C.R.'s zeal, and at a social reform conference held in Kurnool in 1910 he strove for a general acceptance of inter-caste marriages. C.R.'s friends, travelling with him, received fresh evidence of his mental quickness on the train journey back from Kurnool.

Venkatasubba Iyer had let a valuable wrist-watch slip from his hand across the window. While others commiserated or blamed, C.R. was gazing at the window — counting telegraph posts. At the next stop he gave the station-master the number he had counted. The watch reached its owner within a few days.

Caste was not the only field where C.R. innovated. A young man called B. V. Namagiri started, at C.R.'s instance, a Swadeshi store where only Indian goods were sold; the venture proved successful. Wishing South Indians to be at ease in the north, C.R. organised a Hindustani class which was attended for a while by him and some of his lawyer colleagues; he also learned the Urdu script. 'He was solicitous about Muslims,' a quality not liked by some of his friends.

Interest in finding Tamil words for scientific terms was also shown by C.R.; it was to grow. He was seeing Tamil, an infliction in college, in a new light, as a vehicle for carrying knowledge to the masses. At the end of 1909, accompanied by friends, C.R. journeyed to Pondicherry. On New Year's day he met South India's patriot-poet, Subramania Bharati, who had taken refuge in the French colony. The poet entertained C.R. and his friends and sang to them; after returning C.R. got Salem schoolchildren to learn Bharati's songs.

Extremist in politics, its intellectuals exploring social reform, Salem was spoken of in this period as the Poona of the south.

* Preferring the worship of Siva.

CHAPTER THREE

Manga

STILL very young, Manga had grown by now into a gracious housewife. Slim of figure, light of skin, her height an inch under five feet, her long flowing black hair soft and straight, she had a slender attractive face. According to a sister-in-law, 'her appearance made an instant and favourable impression even on women and she had a beautiful complexion.'

She looks shy and quaint in the only picture that exists of her, enlarged out of a group photograph taken in the home of her husband's friend Venkatasubba Iyer. Before leaving their yellow house for Iyer's place, C.R. had embossed a fresh red vertical line on Manga's forehead, the *tilak,* or sign, of a married woman.

It was the second time that day that her busband had thus marked her forehead; he did it, and liked doing it, every morning. And it was Manga's endeavour to keep the *tilak* unsmudged through each day.

The plaited tresses of her hair were tied at the end, as was the custom, with a strip torn off a plantain tree. Her blouses sleeved to the wrist, she wore nine-yard large-bordered Dharmavaram or Conjeevaram silk saris, often in a mixture of red and yellow. (It was not supposed to be proper for Brahmin ladies to have their saris in cotton.)

She tied half the length of the sari as a dhoti, its folds descending to each ankle; the other half gave a fresh waist-to-knee wrapping before draping the left shoulder; brought round to the front, the loose end was tucked in at the waist, on the left. This was the Iyengar form.

Prosperity after marriage did not turn Manga into a

demanding wife. She seemed content with the saris her husband chose for her and the jewels he gave her. For the period the latter were unostentatious: rubies for the nose and ears, and a necklace, a chain and bangles of gold.

After she had saved money for three or four sovereigns, C.R., buying three or four more, would ask a goldsmith to make a fresh piece for her; Manga, 'known for not being overfond of jewellery,' would be more than satisfied.

Saturday was alms-giving day. Manga stored cereals for the purpose in tin vessels near the front-door, rice for Brahmins and harder grains, *ragi* or *kambu,* for the others.

And she enjoyed feeding her husband's friends, at home and on journeys. 'Mrs. C.R. had prepared and sent a basketful of sweets which all of us ate with relish,' Venkatasubba Iyer recorded during a round of travel.

A glimpse of Manga has been given by her brother Ramaswami's wife Chellamma. Ramaswami had lived as a boy in C.R.'s home; and Chellamma was now a frequent visitor.

She was told once by her mother-in-law, Manga's mother, not to speak to C.R.; as Chellamma has related, 'It was thought an impertinence to speak to one's male in-laws.' 'Generous and broadminded,' Manga 'advised her mother to treat her daughters-in-law like her own daughters and avoid formalities of any kind with them.'

Looking after, in addition to her own children, the wards that her husband had taken into the house was evidently not grudged by Manga. One of them has stated:

> I was not her son. I was her husband's cousin's son. But there was absolutely no difference in her treatment of her children and of myself.

In a household brimming with youngsters — not all of them could have been models of steady good behaviour — Manga had to be firm. Namagiri, or Papa as she was called, Manga's third child, has recalled how her coffee would be withheld in the morning for two hours and more — 'until I had cleaned my mouth with tooth-powder.'

There were times when the young mother's patience snapped. Once, exasperated by the children, she brought cinders from the

kitchen-fire to threaten them; gripping her hand, C.R. led her back into the kitchen.

Taking hold of a person's hand and steering him out of the scene of his offence was C.R.'s method of conveying disfavour. His children or wards do not remember any instances of being struck by him. And it does not appear to have been often that he lost his temper with them — or with those helping in the house.

Narasimhan, the youngest of his sons, has recalled:

> A pebble was found in the rice. Father sent for the cook and in complete silence, with dignity and ceremony, presented the pebble to him. This was his reprimand.

* * *

'I would like to send you to England,' he told Krishnaswami when his oldest boy was ten years old. This would have been in 1911, the year in which, at the age of 32, C. R. was elected to the Salem Municipal Council, defeating K. T. Paul, later well-known as a leader of Indian Christians.

A year earlier C.R. had joined in the founding of the Salem Lodge of Freemasons, seeing in freemasonry a means of assisting persons in need and of bringing communities together. The Collector of Salem, L. F. Buckley, was the first worshipful master of the Lodge; C.R., who aided many schoolchildren through the Lodge, was the second.

In 1912 C.R. bought a French car, a light-grey Darracq. He was thought to be 'the first in [the] region to purchase a motor car.' While he learnt to drive it himself, C.R. also hired the services of a Muslim chauffeur called Ghouse.

Manga had been reared in strict orthodoxy; for her parents food cooked by hands other than their own, even if they were Iyengar hands, was taboo. Yet she accepted without fuss her reformist husband's ways.

And during some of his spells of illness, which were not uncommon, Manga would go beyond caste. She would not only send offerings to a Vaishnava temple, asking for an *archana,* a rite of worship, there; she would also give money to a sweeper for a nearby Mariamman shrine and to Ghouse for a mosque, tokens of a plea to God for her husband's health.

Though she had never been to school, Manga has been spoken of as an intelligent wife. She was also warm-hearted; her relationship with the wives of her husband's friends was cordial. 'Much attached to her parents and her two brothers,' she was also a thoughtful daughter-in-law towards Chakravarti Iyengar; and the ex-munsiff was evidently very fond of her.

On special days Manga drew brightly coloured *kolams*, decorative patterns, on the floor. At the Navaratri festival, C.R. would set up rows of dolls in the early hours of the morning for Papa to see on waking. She was seven in 1913.

Lakshmi, C.R.'s and Manga's last child, had come in 1912. The mother now of three sons and two daughters, Manga was in poor health. So, too, was her husband, troubled by asthma and, while still in his early thirties, referred to at times as an old man.

Silent about her weakness, Manga would send Papa to the temple to arrange *archanas* for C.R.'s health. She would also present poor *sumangalis*, brides or young married women, with 'flowers, combs, nose-screws and even *thalis* (bridal necklaces of gold)'; tradition asked for such gestures from a wife desirous of a long life for her husband.

The periods when husband and wife were both well were now rare. C.R. would often teach the children during such spells, Manga joining them as a pupil. At the beginning of her marriage she could only read Telugu. Her husband taught her to read and write Tamil. Namagiri remembers:

> Father asked us all to write 'Avvaiyar'* in Tamil. Mother was the first to spell it correctly, and was delighted.

Her voice gentle and pitched somewhat low, Manga seldom argued with her husband. Yet she could react with spirit. Krishnaswami has recalled:

> Father had returned late, as he at times did, from a marathon talking session with friends. Mother refused to let him in and shouted, 'Go and sleep at Krishnan's [Krishna Iyer's] place.'

* The name of an ancient woman saint of the south.

If an occasional exchange of this kind spiced their relationship, that relationship was clearly marked by faith and love. Though preserved by C.R. for years, the letters they wrote each other, in Tamil — when C.R. was out of town for a case, or Manga was visiting her parents — are lost.

They are not needed, however, to prove their love. 'There was absolutely no discordant note in their relations with each other.' This is the view of Chellamma, a sister-in-law who would have noticed disharmony. And according to Krishna Iyer, Manga was 'in every way a perfect match for C.R.'

* * *

Devoted as C.R. was to his home and the courtroom, the two did not absorb all his soul. His emotions were also intertwined — involuntarily, he could not help it — with India's political condition. Pride and honour said that India had to be freed. But would it be? Could it be?

In his mid-twenties, when Japan was succeeding in its war against Russia, C.R. had indeed day-dreamt about armed revolution — only to realise that it was 'a hopeless task to overtake' the Raj 'in the art of warfare.'

The cult of the bomb, practised in 1908-9, also held no promise for C.R. He saw that 'even if twenty or thirty people were killed there were more people to take their places, firm, determined and perhaps worse people.' As far as political change in the country was concerned, C.R. was in despair.

Something, however, was animating South Africa. From 1906 onwards, newspapers had published items about a Gujarati barrister called M. K. Gandhi, of the Bania or trader caste, who was battling there for the rights of Indians. The accounts impressed C.R.

An Indian deported from South Africa called Asari had visited Salem in 1907, stayed awhile in C.R.'s home, and told a group, 'Gandhi is small in size but his heart is bigger than the Shevaroys seen from Salem.'

Then C.R. picked up, by chance, from the desk of his friend Narasimha Iyer, *Civil Disobedience* by Henry Thoreau. He found the book 'very interesting.' It seemed to supply the theory for what Gandhi was practising.

Soon another book made an impact — Gandhi's *Indian Home Rule,* banned in South Africa and sent to C.R. by a deportee he had met in Kurnool in 1910.

Reading the book 'with very great avidity,' C.R. was struck more by Gandhi's freedom from timidity and by his refusal to 'recognise the English as superior' than by his defence of non-violence.

Indian Home Rule was written as a dialogue between the author, cast as 'Editor,' who advocates a non-violent struggle, and a friend, described as 'Reader,' who often argues as a believer in violence. It seems that the book was first reviewed in India by C.R.

In his review, of which only a sentence has been traced, C.R. could not suppress a dig. 'Naturally,' wrote C.R., '"Editor" is a better debater.' The insinuation was that the case for violence had not been presented well enough.

Not yet 'quite convinced that the use of violence was wrong,' C.R. even thought that Gandhi might be induced to join the revolutionaries and, with his qualities, lead them to success.

Chagrined by moderate politics, quite a few, at this juncture, wondered about 'the chances of the revolutionaries.' At a discussion in Salem, when someone said, 'There is no chance any more, the revolutionaries have all been crushed,' Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, a visitor who had met some revolutionaries as well as Gandhi in London, countered, 'No, wait till Gandhi comes to India.' Present at the discussion, C.R. thought that Dr. Rajan perhaps had a point.

In any case, Gandhi was enlivening. Prompted by his experience, C.R. spoke to friends of the need to 'accustom ourselves to a *ragi* diet as preparation for possible jail life.' An incident at a police sports meet also probably owed something to Gandhi's examples in South Africa.

The superintendent of police, an Englishman, had invited leading Salem citizens to the meet. Noticing, on arrival, that there were separate enclosures for the British and the Indians, C.R. proposed and led a walkout of all the lawyers.

C.R.'s mood during this period is disclosed by a conversation that he described to Rama Rao. An Englishman sharing a first-class compartment with C.R. had said, 'It is a very hot afternoon.' 'Not hot enough,' replied C.R.

'Not hot enough? What do you mean?' 'Not hot enough,' said C.R., smiling, 'to keep you gentlemen out of our country.'

However, the Raj's confidence was intact. It had been dramatised by the Imperial Durbar held in Delhi on December 12, 1911, with George V on the throne. The partition of Bengal was annulled and Delhi was named the new capital, but Indian dissatisfaction was not assuaged.

A year later, in Delhi's Chandni Chowk, a bomb was hurled at Lord Hardinge, the new Viceroy; seated on an elephant in an inaugural procession, Hardinge received minor injuries. The regime was unshaken.

Soon C.R. was to learn 'that there was no hope of catching [Gandhi] into the movement of violence.' Gandhi's account of his three terms in prison, published in 1913 in the *Modern Review* of Calcutta, left no room for doubt. Then a missionary in Salem with South African links lent C.R. a book on Gandhi by a cleric named Doke; it conveyed the same conclusion.

If C.R.'s mind was cleared of a false hope, his heart was stirred by the picture of the suffering an evidently just man was inviting on himself. It was moved afresh when he heard, in September 1913, that Gandhi's wife and young sons had been arrested for peacefully opposing a racial tax.

He reprinted *Jail Experiences* with his own money and, indeed, his own labour. Standing in front of a treadle, treadling the machine himself, he took off the sheets for the booklet. C.R.'s introduction, in which he asked for funds, showed how the Bania was affecting the Brahmin. He wrote:

> Shall we sit happy in our homes, or shall we give only our tears? It is not given to all to exhibit the strength of M. K. Gandhi. He must be ranked with the *Avatars* . . .
>
> Let us give up perhaps a few luxuries and support them in the holy battle they have resolved to fight once again. It will chasten our characters [and] bind us by a fresh and direct tie with those brave countrymen of ours . . .

Collecting fifteen hundred rupees, C.R. sent the money, 'with heartfelt reverence,' to Gopalkrishna Gokhale, the Poona

leader for whom Gandhi had a deep regard. Gokhale forwarded the sum to Gandhi.

Though Gandhi's struggle seemed confined, at the time, to South Africa, its reports suggested to C.R. 'a weapon which we can wield . . in India.'

* * *

An account left by Rama Rao of a visit C.R. paid him in 1911 gives a picture of C.R. as a friend:

> Then a sub-divisional officer in Shimoga district, I was camping in a village called Rajagonda Halli, miles off the main road, looking for refuge from a recent tragedy. I had run away from friends, whose expressions of consolation can often merely be a reminder of sorrow.
>
> One day, while I was finishing the morning's work, I saw someone approach my tent, a bicycle beside him. Imagine my surprise and joy when I saw it was C.R.! He was covered with dust and sweat and looked dead tired, but his face was lit with that usual smile . .
>
> In my grief I had often wished for his company, but Shimoga is far from Salem and I did not think he could come. He had gone to Shimoga first. Learning that I had left for Chennagiri, he took a bicycle from the Tahsildar and proceeded there, where he was told that I was in Rajagonda Halli. He pedalled his way there, on the rough jungle path, doing forty miles in all that day.
>
> For four days he moved with me as I did the rounds of different villages. Though filled with my bereavement he did not utter a word about it. Yet his unobtrusive love consoled me.

Also, C.R. diverted Rama Rao's mind.

> 'What will you do if a banned book is brought to you?' he asked. 'I will hand it over to the police for tearing or burning,' I replied. 'Here it is,' he said, giving me Savarkar's *War of Independence, 1857*. Though not accurate as a record,

it was a moving story. Not only I but many of my friends read it.

I had flown into a rage at one village, finding that my tent had not been set up. C.R. delivered a lecture to me: 'The peasants pitching your tent and helping you in other ways are working out of custom and convention, not for wages.'

The justness of his reasoning dawned on me only when I was resting in the tent after the mid-day meal. The villagers must have been surprised at the patience and sympathy I began to show them, for which C.R. was responsible.

* * *

Between 1900 and 1919 C.R. and his senior friend C. Vijiaraghavachariar were perhaps the best-known lawyers in the districts of Salem, Coimbatore and Trichinopoly.

Although C.R. was registered at the High Court in Madras in 1906 (Dr. S. Swaminadhan, the Law College principal, moving the enrolment), it would seem that he seldom pleaded there; and instances of proceedings taking him to the towns of Coimbatore and Trichinopoly were rare.

His principal arena, reached by his horse-carriage or Darracq, was Salem town's courthouse, where in the hot months a servant raised a breeze with a *punkah,* a large swinging fan of framed cloth. However, he often made the overnight bullock-cart journey south to Namakkal; he travelled, too, though less frequently, to courts in the northern settlements of Salem district — Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri and Hosur.

His lot was to defend persons accused of murder or dacoity or forgery or something similar. Unlike Vijiaraghavachariar, C.R. specialised in criminal proceedings. Though, when he saw his father in action in the courtroom, the twelve-year-old Krishnaswami 'did not think much of a job where you were on your legs all the time,' C.R. was showing remarkable results. 'He won,' according to a lawyer who for some years was a contemporary, 'practically all his cases.'

This could be an exaggeration. Yet the remark was once made, and passed round, that offences in Salem were growing

because of the confidence of the district's criminals in C.R.'s skill.

There is a record, partially quoted later in this book, of the legal action that brought C.R. the attention of the whole of the south: the Madura sedition case of 1919. However, no transcripts of proceedings in Salem courts when C.R. practiced there seem available. His output in the courtrooms of Salem cannot therefore be properly sampled. Nonetheless, a picture of his style emerges from the impressions recorded by lawyers who watched him perform.

His voice mellow, his thoughts clear, precise in argument, deliberate in delivery and forceful in advocacy, the turbaned, black-coated C.R. brought life to a courtroom the moment he rose to speak. Where his veteran compeer Vijiaraghavachariar was exhaustive and flowery, C.R. was brief and terse. His cross-examination was sober rather than intimidating, but it was deadly.

In murder proceedings and in less serious cases he would ask only a few questions, some appearing innocent or pointless. Yet 'the picture presented with the answers would normally demolish the case of the prosecution.'

Thus it was not difficult for him to obtain, as he did, an admission from a forest officer, who had charged a client with tresspass, that 'he was at home making himself merry in the company of his wife and children at the very hour when he was ostensibly . . rounding up the culprits cutting wood in the forest range belonging to the government.' And C.R.'s technique was equally effective in more important cases.

Proud of a favourite son, Salem circles before long claimed that 'even Nugent Grant could not come near C.R. in cross-examination.' Of British extraction, Grant was the criminal law expert holding sway at the Madras bar.

A factor enabling C.R. to outclass competitors was his skill with the English language. Among other qualities observed in him were 'a unique courtroom behaviour,' and 'an intuitive power to attack the weakest points in his opponent's case.'

And a strong memory. A judge before whom he appeared in Coimbatore has related how, at the outset, C.R. filed scores of documents 'giving their dates and details and explaining their relevancy.' Upon the judge asking him how he could narrate all

the data without holding 'even a scrap of paper' in his hands, C.R., it seems, 'tapped his forehead with his forefinger and said, "My notes are here." '

Argued towards the end of C.R.'s Salem days, the Mohanur adoption suit caused a fair amount of interest. Wanting a son to perform his last rites, Vedantachar, an ageing rich landlord of Mohanur village in Namakkal taluk, had adopted a poor and distantly related minor boy. On Vedantachar's death his widow repudiated the adoption. In the case that resulted Vijiaraghavachariar was engaged by the widow, C.R. by the minor's natural father. C.R. succeeded in establishing the factum and validity of the adoption.

It was C.R.'s view, and one that he obviously acted upon, that a lawyer 'should not put the case at once to the judge but lead the judge little by little and let him feel that he has himself discovered the truth.'

The magistrates hearing C.R., on occasion 'sleepy' and 'irate,' clearly respected him, and it seems that 'the European judges liked his short cross-examinations and his to-the-point approach.'

Clients 'generally felt that if C.R. handled a case it would surely end in success.' Yet because of the range of his interests C.R. frequently referred those approaching him to other lawyers, describing the latter with modesty though not with truthfulness as cleverer than himself.

'There was no sessions case or criminal appeal of any importance which was not handled by him,' and *vakils* who lost in lower courts assumed that 'once C.R. had taken on an appeal nothing more was needed.'

Apart from excelling in it, C.R. loved his profession. Yet he was conscious that greed entered it and that lawyers frequently dragged out quarrels. 'A client,' C.R. observed, 'comes to a *vakil* because he is already in some trouble; it is immoral for a *vakil* to take advantage of the client's trouble and extract all the money [he can] from him.'

Joining C.R. as his junior, K. Narasimha Iyengar, later a leader himself of the Salem bar, received a piece of practical advice. 'Fix your fee for a case in advance,' C.R. told him. 'Otherwise, even when the case is won the client will think less

about your success and more about the sum that he finds he has to pay.'

If his own fees — levied, as was the custom, for a case as a whole rather than for each day of hearing — were large, the number of cases C.R. accepted was small. Not surprisingly, he would often urge an out-of-court settlement of a civil dispute. To facilitate this he and his friend B. V. Narasimha Iyer started an arbitration tribunal manned by non-officials respected in the area.

Many guilty men were doubtless saved by C.R.'s skill. Such persons were not always penitent. A client rescued from the gallows by C.R. approached him one day and said, 'Sir, I would like to have my knife back. It is an heirloom in my family.' C.R. drove him away. He was angry at the man — and at himself and his profession.

'I can understand,' he is reported to have said at the time, 'and even forgive, a harlot who sells her body for a price, but I can never forgive a lawyer who prostitutes his intellect. I am looking forward to the day when I shall quit the profession.'

The sweeping attack on his vocation could not have been his considered opinion, but his conscience was clearly raising questions. And the time was to come before long when, albeit in a different context, he would quit law.

* * *

The First World War was triggered in August 1914, England ranging itself against Germany. Cooperating with the Raj, the moderate Congress 'expressed its profound devotion to the throne . . and its resolve to stand by the Empire at all hazards and at all costs.'

The Congress had met in Madras. Extremists such as C.R. were still kept out. When Lord Pentland, the Governor, paid a visit, the deferential delegates cheered.

New shades were, however, entering the Indian political picture. A few weeks before the War's outbreak a large police car had deposited Tilak, finally free after six years in Mandalay, outside his Poona home.

Returning from South Africa to India in January 1915, M. K. Gandhi set out on a countrywide study tour. Though he spent

four weeks in April and May in Madras Presidency and in Bangalore, he did not visit Salem; and C.R. did not, it seems, meet him elsewhere in South India.

Some Indians were now being elected by limited voting groups to provincial legislative councils — fewer, however, than the members, British and Indian, nominated by the Government. C.R. was asked by Narasimha Iyer if he intended to seek an elected place in the Madras council. When C.R. said that he did not, Iyer contested and won a seat.

As an extremist, C.R. was not enthused by the apparent agreement between the moderates and the Raj on the limits of dissent. Health, his and Manga's, was another factor restraining him. When, in 1914, his municipal council term ended, he chose not to seek re-election.

In February 1915 he fell seriously ill. He had contracted a chill in Coimbatore and wired Dr. Mathias, the district medical officer, to fetch him from Salem station. The chill turned into severe asthma and, it would seem, pneumonia.

On the 14th his condition was judged critical. Dr. Mathias told C.R.'s friend of his view. Calling on C.R., Venkatasubba Iyer found his friend 'explaining to his father how his assets should be distributed after his exit' and 'taking leave of his wife and children.' Iyer wrote in his diary that the doctor's prognosis was 'probably right.'

Dr. Mathias, who had been a friend as well as a doctor to C.R. and his family, lost his self-control and began to weep. Noticing this, C.R. struggled to say: 'Dr. Mathias has lost his head. Send for Dr. Narayana Iyer.'

Manga herself had a high and indeed alarming fever that night. Yet, determined to pray befittingly for her husband's life, she tidied up her room, unlocked the box containing her valuables and took out her best jewels.

Wearing the ornaments and dressed in one of her finest saris — after giving herself, mindless of her illness, a thorough 'head bath,' as was decreed by custom —, she supplicated Lord Venkateswara. If her husband recovered, she promised, she would offer the jewels to the Tirupati shrine.

That night C.R. slept surprisingly well. The morning found

him better. Manga's petition seemed granted and recovery came before long.

* * *

However, Manga herself was weakening. She needed more air and space than the yellow *agraharam* house gave. Selling it for four thousand rupees, C.R. rented the ground floor of the Masonic Lodge at Sooramangalam, outside Salem town.

The two-storey Lodge stood back-to-front on a rise in about an acre of arid ground, a lone tamarind tree emphasising rather than relieving the barrenness of the compound. Approached by a ramp along its side, the front of the house was round. On the lower floor the frontage was extended by a long pillared verandah curving from end to end. The verandah's roof formed a terrace for the upper floor, which was used for masonic gatherings.

Bought for the Lodge in 1910 as a trust property, the building had been held in the names of C.R. and his friends Narasimha Iyer and Venkatasubba Iyer. A client of CR's had evidently donated the land; C.R. himself and some of his friends contributed towards the Lodge's purchase of the house. He knew it well; in 1911, when plague hit Salem town, he and some of his friends had lived in it for a while with their families.

One of the two large rooms facing the verandah became Manga's sick-room, the other C.R.'s study, where his desk, surrounded by law books, was lit at night by a canopied kerosene lantern. Both rooms had *punkahs*. Chakravarti Iyengar, the children, Manga's mother, who was helping to look after her daughter, and any visiting relatives occupied three other rooms as well as the passage that ran, along the middle, from the verandah to the rear.

If you stood, looking out, on the verandah, the ramp was to your right; an elevated pathway to the left led to the kitchen (where firewood was the fuel) and a room for dining, where the family sat on the floor to eat and where at night the two cooks slept.

Apart from the cooks and Ghouse the chauffeur, the staff at the Sooramangalam residence consisted of two men who drove a bullock-cart, looked after the bullock and the three or four

cows that C.R. was keeping and washed men's clothes, a woman who cleaned and swept and a scavenger.

Water was daily fetched in a barrel on the bullock-cart from a well three houses away owned by a Chettiar. (The trading Chettiar caste had a high status.) If the water was needed for the kitchen, only one of the Brahmin cooks could draw it, not a cartman. Employing a watch-dog, and evidently enjoying its company, C.R. also admitted a pair of pups; a duty of one of the cartmen was to find meat for the dogs.

There were wooden beds for Manga and for Chakravarti Iyengar, the rest sleeping on mattresses on the floor. After dark kerosene lamps, daily cleaned by a servant, diffused the light they could in the different rooms.

* * *

Loved as well as envied among the women in her circle, the twentysix-year-old Manga was, we can assume, a loyal and fond sharer of C.R.'s hopes.

It is true that she could not have imagined the measure of adversity, and fulfilment, that her thriving husband's future would contain. Yet she knew enough to realise that the years to come would be uncertain. For one thing, his growing interest in Gandhi and his radical methods could not have been concealed from her.

We can picture him showing to Manga, and translating for her, the booklet he had himself printed, describing perhaps Kasturba's prison-going. Did Manga know that destiny was pulling C.R.? There is no whisper that she tried to shield him from its pull, if she did know.

She was declining. There were occasions when, unable to walk to the kitchen or the dining room, she had to be carried in a wooden chair. Venturing out of the house now seemed almost impossible.

It was an event when she went with all the others in the Darracq, Ghouse at the wheel, for little Lakshmi's ear-pricking at a Rama temple. Subdued by their mother's long spells inside her room, the children would be delighted even to find her sitting on the verandah, or talking to them. One day, seeing that Papa, aged nine, was trying to help, Manga said to her, 'Daughters are useful.'

For two months or so, a Madras doctor called Annasami Mudaliar, recommended by T.V., stayed in the Sooramangalam house to be of assistance. Some doctors said she was having dropsy. Others saw a flaw in the heart, perhaps also in her blood.

C.R. virtually laid aside his practice and nursed her day and night. Salem doctors having done all they could, he sent for a noted Bangalore physician, Dr. Nanjappa, who advised placing steamed shawls on Manga's stomach. Someone else recommended goat's milk; a goat was brought to the house. The prescriptions were unavailing.

Nights without sleep were now frequent for C.R. After one such night, he was driven by a client on a motor-cycle for a case in Namakkal. C.R. returned home exhausted but with a money-filled briefcase. He opened it before Manga, hoping that the contents would cheer her. She looked at the bundles of notes and gave a sad smile that seemed to say, 'They can do nothing for me now.'

On the afternoon of August 22 Manga asked Krishnaswami if he had eaten *dal;* it was what he liked. He said that he had, and Manga was happy. At six in the evening she asked Chama, as Samachar was called, to offer prayers at the Lakshminarayana temple in town. By the time he returned she had grown very weak. 'Look,' said C.R., 'Chama has returned with *prasadam* from the temple.' She opened her eyes, nodded, and closed her eyes again.

Earlier, she had managed to say to Papa, 'Go and sleep. It is time for you to sleep.' Fear had now entered the Sooramangalam house. To divert his mind Krishnaswami was trying to read Greek history.

To comfort Manga, who was in great pain, C.R. had taken her in his lap. After some time, his legs benumbed, he gently replaced her on the bed. She said:

'I am such a burden. How long is it possible for you to hold me in your lap? There must be a limit to the endurance of the greatest love.'

Ten minutes later, shortly after nine at night, she seemed to have stopped breathing. 'Manga,' C.R. cried. 'Manga.' There was no response. She was dead.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Glimmer on the Horizon

DURING her mother's last weeks the three-year-old Lakshmi had often been admonished to keep quiet.

On the morning after Manga's death, noticing the crying in the house, the girl said, 'People should not cry. Mother will be disturbed.' Later that day, his wife cremated, C.R. returned to a home that felt empty.

He was thirtyseven and could conceal his feelings. To thirteen-year-old Krishnaswami, the oldest of his children, he said, 'I will have time for practice now.'

Inside him, however, a struggle had been going on. Even before Manga's death, seeing her anguish and finding himself, in his words, 'unable to relieve or share it,' he had 'rebelled against God's will.' Before long he came to terms with Providence; but the fact that he had moved Manga from his lap ten minutes before she died was to be a lasting regret.

If C.R. grieved over the limitation of human caring — over what he called his 'breakdown ten minutes too early' — his friends thought that they had observed a rare degree of devotion. T. V. wrote to Krishna Iyer:

> I have not come across in my life any man who nursed his wife with such care and loving attention and who tried to be such a source of courage and hope to her as C.R, was during the last months of his wife's illness.

Obliged to be both father and mother to his offspring, C.R. had little time to dwell on his bereavement. Among the children, twelve-year-old Ramu, as Ramaswami was called, seemed affected the most. For two weeks he scarcely uttered a word. It

was a blessing that Manga's mother could stay on at Sooramangalam — Narasimhan was only six and Lakshmi three. Also needing care was C.R.'s father, now old by the standards of the time.

After giving the children a spell in Bangalore for a change of scene, C.R. sought to broaden their education. Before long the principal of the girls' section of the Salem Municipal School, an Englishwoman, was engaged to give painting lessons at Sooramangalam to Papa. The girl, dressed for school in an ankle-length skirt, shirt and shortcoat, also had tuition in English in the home of the British superintendent of prisons, from the latter's daughter.

The boys went to school in round dark caps, shirts and *veshtis* — lengths of cloth round their legs tied at the waist. Ramu liked his studies. On one occasion, fortified by the knowledge that father was not at home, the venturesome Krishnaswami managed to lay hands on the former's revolver; aiming at the trunk of the tamarind tree, he thrice pulled the trigger with the forefingers of both hands.

The boys and the dogs had the run of the ample grounds of the Lodge. When the pups died of disease there was a sorrowful burial beside the house; a tree was planted to mark the spot. Run over by a bullock-cart, the watch-dog, a black-lipped, reddish-brown Combai, had to be destroyed. 'The dog has received mercy in hospital,' C.R. told Krishnaswami.

Almost continuously ill since her husband's recovery, Manga had died before she could fulfil her promise to Venkateswara. C.R. partially implemented it after her going. Taking Krishnaswami and Ramaswami to Tirupati for their *upanayanam* — the age-old rite initiating boys into a period of learning and discipline — he left some pieces of Manga's jewellery at the shrine. (The remaining pieces were not destined to stay in the family. In 1921, a servant called Perumal — 'God' — removed the valuables that Namagiri, married by then, was keeping; these had included her mother's jewellery.)

About a year after Manga's death a client of C.R.'s, also an Iyengar, asked if C.R. would marry his daughter. Remarriage was not unusual for widowers. However, C.R. did not take kindly to the proposal.

'I do not wish to have a sixth child,' he replied. His tone was final as well as angry. 'I am not going to marry again.'

The truth was that the blow that smote C.R. had not narrowed his concerns; on the contrary, it had turned his soul outward. Now he would increasingly seek satisfaction in politics, not within domestic walls.

* * *

Meanwhile the War continued. Declaring that the Empire had to be supported, Tilak issued a loyalty manifesto. His silence about the hardships he had faced in Mandalay moved C.R.

Gandhi was in London, on his way from South Africa to India, when the War started. Saying that Indians should 'share the responsibilities . . of the great Empire' if they wanted to 'share its privileges,' he raised an Indian Ambulance Corps in London.

Indian troops fought for the Empire. Schoolgirls all over India, including Papa in Salem, were asked to knit for them. The endurance of the brown soldiers in the winter battles of 1914-15 in France and Flanders won acclaim. Within India, however, those wanting to widen political rights were seriously restricted by the new Defence of India Rules.

Seeing in England's military difficulties a political opportunity for India, Tilak sought a bargain: Indian recruits against a promise of Home Rule (in which the Imperial connection would be retained). To strengthen India's negotiating position he founded, in April 1916, a Home Rule League.

Holding similar views, Annie Besant, a radical Irish lady who had made India her abode and Indian emancipation her goal, also popularised the Home Rule cry. 'Working-together-separately' with Tilak, she too formed a Home Rule League.

Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta, leaders of the moderate Congress, had died in 1915. In the following two years, Mrs. Besant, bursting with energy, and Tilak, physically weak but strong of will, caught the imagination of multitudes and held the political stage.

Gandhi was in the countryside, quietly sowing his strange seeds. They had germinated in South Africa, but would they work in Indian soil? One of the first Indians to feel that they would was C.R.

A paper he wrote in February or March 1916, 'M. K. Gandhi: His message to India,' brings this out. Unlike Tilak and Mrs. Besant, Gandhi had stood for unconditional Indian help to the Empire in the War. This disappointed most extremists, to whom Gandhi appeared more moderate than the moderates.

Not, however, C.R. He discerned that Gandhi's 'notion of loyalty does not involve acceptance of unrighteousness in current rule or government.' And he seemed to perceive that once Gandhi decided to oppose an injustice he would fight harder than anyone else, including the extremists.

The Raj's real and imagined benefits had not blinded Gandhi, C.R. showed, to the indignity it heaped on Indians; Gandhi hated India having become 'effeminate and permanently unfit for self-help' because of the 'unmanly protection of outside help.' He was, moreover, prepared to attack not just the symptoms but the source and strength of the Raj — the civilisation that elevated greed and love of comfort.

According to Gandhi, C.R. went on, there was 'no use blaming the English, for they came and remain only because of us . . By adopting their civilisation we retain them . . But for [Indian] lawyers and judges and policemen, who are first cousins, no foreign rule would be possible.'

The solution was to expel the imported civilization — remembering, at the same time, that 'child-marriage, baby-mothers, girl-widows, polyandry, inequalities of caste, prostitution in the name of religion, or animal sacrifice' were not 'part of our civilisation.'

Above all, C.R. pointed out, Gandhi (referred to as Mr. Gandhi in the paper) was ready to 'disregard unjust commands,' laws 'repugnant to . . conscience,' and to 'accept the penalty for [their] breach.' This was something that the most vociferous extremists had not thought of doing, yet it was what any willing moderate, too, could do.

In South Africa Gandhi had demonstrated that 'there are no limitations to the power of human character with resolution and suffering.' Whether or not Indians should turn to his approach, pitting 'soul force' or the force of gladly invited suffering, against 'the force of arms,' was 'a great question that has to be considered some time or other.'

Such were the convictions C.R. expressed about Gandhi early in 1916. Seeing Gandhi for the first time later that year, Jawaharlal Nehru, born in the U.P. of Kashmiri parents, found him 'very distant and different and unpolitical.'

Of Gujarati peasant lineage, Vallabhbhai Patel had been playing bridge when, the year before, Gandhi first came in his sight. Patel 'took stock of him, was not impressed and returned to the game.' Before long he and Jawaharlal were to revise their opinion.

In 1917, in his province, the Bihari lawyer Rajendra Prasad watched Gandhi in action among the indigo peasants of Champaran. Abul Kalam Azad, the Bengal-based Muslim scholar-writer, met Gandhi in 1920, after a five-year internment under the Defence of India Rules.

Not only did these five — C. R., Jawaharlal, Patel, Prasad and Azad — join Gandhi. They were to form for nearly three decades the core of Gandhi's political team. As Jawaharlal put it in a letter to Prasad two years after freedom, 'the public generally have looked up to us five persons' as 'the old guard of the Congress.' Apart from Azad, all were lawyers, as was Gandhi himself.

Of the five C.R. was the fourth to meet Gandhi, Azad being the last, but perhaps the first to note the glimmer on the horizon. And inside C.R. the heart had responded ahead of the mind. This was evident even in 1913. One of the opening sentences of his 1916 paper confirmed the fact. Said C.R.:

> Led by him our brothers and sisters of South Africa had so acted that Indians may forget their unworthiness for a time and walk proudly in the world.

Somewhere C.R. had acquired a portrait of Gandhi and Kasturba; it was while presenting it to the Salem Literary Society that he had read his paper.

For a while the portrait had hung in his home. 'Don't use *avan* while speaking of him,' he told ten-year-old Papa. *Avan* is 'he' without respect. 'Why not?' asked Papa. 'Is he a Brahmin?' 'He is not a Brahmin,' C.R. replied, 'but he and his wife are like Rama and Sita.'

* * *

He had an ear for other tunes besides freedom's. The felling of a Salem tree, reported to C.R. by a distressed English friend, produced a letter from him in the Madras *Mail*. And in 1916 he launched, with some associates, the Tamil Scientific Terms Society. The society brought out a *Journal* in October, edited by C.R. and Venkatasubba Iyer.

'The greatest difficulty that confronts those who wish to produce books in the language of the country,' said the *Journal* in its first issue, 'is the absence of adequate and precise terms for scientific ideas.' The society aimed 'at reducing the chaos' in the field.

Only four issues of the *Journal* came out, proposing Tamil equivalents for terms in botany, chemistry, physics, physiology, astronomy and arithmetic.

It has not been possible to discover whether the terms suggested by the *Journal* entered popular usage. After a year the society merged with the larger Tamilian Education Society of Madras, and the work of the *Journal* was carried on by the *Tamilian's Friend* of the Madras Society.

Returning to his interest in subsequent years, C.R. wrote Tamil booklets for the layman, including *Can it be Done in Tamil? Chemistry on the Front Verandah* and *The Domestic Life of Plants*.

Meanwhile, in 1916, C.R. had joined the Home Rule League. At his initiative a unit of the League was formed in Salem. He also spoke for Home Rule in Madras, where 'audiences . . at once recognised in him a new force in the movement,' finding 'no bitterness in his reference to the British,' only 'unassailable logic.'

Congress met at Lucknow in December 1916, Tilak, still a hero for C.R., attending a session of the body for the first time since the Surat split of 1907. Doubtless with C.R.'s encouragement, the Salem Home Rule branch cabled Tilak urging that Congress demand Home Rule.

Lucknow asked for a proclamation from Britain that she would 'confer Self-Government on India at an early date.' The Muslim League had been convened in Lucknow at the same time; the Congress and the League agreed on a scheme of Self-Government with a fixed percentage of Muslim seats in provincial

legislatures and in a Central Assembly. The League demand for a separate electorate for Muslims was conceded.

Tilak, Mrs. Besant and Mahomed Ali Jinnah, the League President, were the architects of the *concordat*. 'In its general outlook . . the Muslim League stands abreast of the Indian National Congress,' said Jinnah with pride.

Denying the charge that the Hindus had given away more than they should have, Tilak said, '. . we could not have yielded too much.'

Interestingly, C.R. had expressed a similar sentiment in his paper on Gandhi. Hindu-Muslim unity, he had said, could be achieved by 'the Hindus, who pretend to greater education and who are superior in numbers . . not opposing any demand for special concessions.'

Raised now by both Hindus and Muslims, the slogan of Home Rule spread, despite stringent press laws, 'to the remotest parts of the land.' Two Governors reacted on behalf of a perturbed Raj. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, in the Punjab, accused Home Rule champions of 'revolutionary and subversive' intentions. And the Madras Governor, Lord Pentland, residing for the summer, with his government, in Ooty in the hills, was equally blunt.

'All thought of the early grant of responsible Self-Government should be put entirely out of mind,' he said. Addressing the Legislative Council, essentially a nominated body, he said that Home Rule was not 'within the range of practical politics' if it meant elected councils with a real say in government. Then he referred to the 'possibility of coercive measures.'

Pentland and C.R.'s teacher John Tait were friends; they had schooled together at Edinburgh Academy. It was at Pentland that C.R.'s first public attack on a British official was directed.

In a letter published in the *Hindu*, C.R. asked Madras Presidency to express itself clearly 'so that there will be no mistake about what people think of His Excellency's pronouncement.' After reminding the Governor that in the agitation for Home Rule 'so far not a single act of violence or even technical illegality has been noticed in the Presidency,' he turned to the threat of 'coercive measures.'

'Our consciences being clear,' he said, 'we can but await

calmly the effect of such repressive measures on a people hitherto peaceful and law-abiding.' And he warned that if 'repressive measures are inaugurated,' the Governor and his advisers would be 'alone responsible before the bar of the British Nation.'

A protest meeting in Salem followed; 'the large representative gathering' (it included Muslims) unanimously passed a resolution moved by C.R. criticising the Governor's 'astonishing and unconstitutional attitude.' C.R.'s speech contained a key Gandhian expression. 'We should,' he said, 'use our entire *soul force* to resist all attempts against that ideal [of Self-Government].'

Tait's friend acted. Mrs. Besant, and her associates Wadia and Arundale, were interned on June 16 under the Defence of India Rules. C.R. and allies 'met informally' next morning and convened a public meeting for the evening.

Despite heavy rain a large crowd assembled in the Siva Temple *mandapam* and cabled its protest to Prime Minister Lloyd George. Next day the Salem Home Rule League demanded Lord Pentland's recall. At a subsequent 'monster gathering' at Gokhale Hall in Madras, C.R., Narasimha Iyer and two others represented Salem.

Gandhi proposed a non-violent march to the Nilgiris, where Mrs. Besant was interned, but Tilak disapproved and the idea was dropped. Passive resistance was being weighed when Edwin Montagu, 36, replaced Austen Chamberlain as Secretary of State for India.

On August 20 Montagu made an unexpected declaration in London. 'Substantial steps' would be taken, he said, in the direction of 'the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.'

As a gesture, the racial bar which excluded Indians from the King's Commission in the Army was removed; and Montagu announced that he would soon arrive in India to consult representative Indians and the Viceroy regarding constitutional reforms. The hopes raised by the August declaration were increased when, on September 16, Mrs. Besant and her associates were released.

Her name now on most people's lips, Mrs. Besant left Coimbatore on the night of September 20 for Madras. To forestall demonstrations of support the Government banned the

sale of platform tickets at stops on the way. An important halt, reached in the middle of the night, was Salem.

A fair crowd gathered at the station despite the lateness of the hour. On its behalf C.R. asked for platform tickets.

'Not being issued,' he was told.

'I will keep the crowd calm,' assured C.R. 'Please sell the tickets.'

'Sorry. They are not being sold.'

'You are depriving the railway of revenue,' C.R. argued.

'We have orders not to sell.'

The train came. All eyes turned towards C.R. With a shake of the head he signalled to the others to follow him to the platform. They followed, welcomed Mrs. Besant — and remained calm. The railway wanted to prosecute C.R. but did not do so. News of the little triumph pleased the Salem public.

While in detention, Mrs. Besant had been chosen to preside over the Calcutta Congress of December 1917. C.R. did not, it seems, attend the session. However, as in the previous year, Salem pressed for a strong stand.

'A crowded mass meeting' of the people of Salem town and district welcomed Montagu, endorsed the Congress-League scheme and asked that the Government of India be made responsible to elected members of the Imperial Legislative Assembly. Its resolutions were telegraphed to Montagu, the Viceroy and Tilak.

The Calcutta session welcomed the Montagu declaration and visit and asked for the Lucknow scheme 'to be immediately introduced by a statute.' Parliament in London was also urged to name a date for the establishment of a responsible government in India.

* * *

The Empire asked India for fresh recruits in 1918, the fifth year of the War. India seemed willing to help, at a price.

The price was going up. By proclaiming the principle of self-determination, President Wilson had whetted India's political desires. Indian soldiers returning from the front were beginning to ask for equality of treatment. Inflation and shortages, products of the War, led to unhappiness.

Yet it looked as if a handsome political offer might satisfy

Indian feelings and retain sympathy for the Empire. (In a poor country some recruits would offer themselves in any case, even without sympathy for the Empire.)

It was known that an offer was going to be made. The youthful Secretary of State, Montagu, had arrived from London in October 1917 to explore reforms. He was the first holder of his office to visit India. Touring and receiving deputations on a prodigious scale, he had invited much speculation on the measure of self-government India would get.

Meanwhile, however, Tilak was being rebuffed. The bureaucracy of the Raj distrusted him and his pro-War statements.

He wanted to lobby in the U.K. for Home Rule and to sue the writer Sir Valentine Chirol for libel, but his passport was cancelled. And he was kept out of the War Conference called in Delhi in April 1918 by Lord Chelmsford, the new Viceroy who had succeeded Hardinge.

A South Indian team of three set sail for England to advocate Tilak's ideas. Resentful at the treatment of Tilak, C.R. was to have been one of the three. He dropped out because he had failed to persuade an aunt, one of Chakravarti Iyengar's sisters, to look after the children in his absence.

However, the delegation, which included Narasimha Iyer and George Joseph, a Madura lawyer, was not destined to reach the U.K.: at Gibraltar they were asked to return their passports.

Curiously enough, Annie Besant was modifying her views. Perhaps she had hopes in Montagu's package. Urging India to help with the War, she seemed unwilling to ask for conditions.

Unconditional support for the War was still Gandhi's stand. In the previous year he had waged a battle in Bihar for the rights of indigo peasants, and won. Now he was striving, without much success and with some damage to his health, to recruit soldiers in Gujarat's hot countryside. Yet injustices in India were reducing his warmth towards the Empire.

Sharing Tilak's views, C.R. fought against unqualified support when the south's politically-minded intellectuals gathered in Conjeevaram. It is with this Madras Provincial Conference of May 1918 that C.R. leaves the periphery of Indian politics and enters the stage.

Sarojini Naidu, the poetess who had met Gandhi in London

in 1914, was presiding. Mrs. Besant proposed a resolution of unconditional support. An amendment to make the support conditional was moved by S. Satyamurti, later a prominent figure in South Indian politics and in the Central Assembly.

Backing Satyamurti's amendment, C.R. said that Tilak 'had made it clear that it would be idle to ask the intellectual class to . . join the army unless a change was made in the political situation.'

Popular opinion, he added, 'should on no account be subordinated to the changing views of a few leaders.' This was obviously directed at Mrs. Besant, the president of the Congress and, as a Madras resident, the biggest name in the southern province.

'They must tell the Government plainly,' C.R. went on, 'that they were prepared to help . . if [the Government] would give them the preliminaries.'

Mrs. Besant defended her position. When hands were counted, 140 were for Satyamurti's amendment and 118 against. It seemed that C.R. had won. From Mrs. Besant's side, however, came a demand for voting against a roll-call. C.R. at once objected.

Policemen were present in plain clothes. While hands raised by a seated flock were almost anonymous, 'ayes' pronounced when their names were individually called would expose supporters of the amendment.

Mrs. Naidu, however, ruled in favour of a roll-call. C.R. said, 'If, after a declared victory, the supporters of the amendment should lose their cause by the means proposed, they had no voice in the matter. They should obey the chair.'

The result was a tie, each side obtaining 118 votes. Fear had neutralised 22 participants. Mrs. Naidu's casting vote went against the amendment, amidst loud cries of 'shame.'

The *Hindu* wrote that those who demanded a roll-call 'unfortunately laid themselves open to the imputation of playing into the hands of the CID officers and of influencing the votes by an illegitimate expedient.'

Unafraid, C.R. had stood up to Mrs. Besant. He had also been alert, instantly seeing through the roll-call plea. He had taken an unfavourable ruling with dignity. And his persuasive powers had been in evidence. Writing to the *Hindu,* a Tinnevelly

lawyer who had been present thought that C.R. 'would convert many others.'

In the course of his Conjeevaram speech, C.R. had described Tilak and Gandhi as 'our leaders.' The reference to Gandhi in this vein was unusual, for many politicians still found him out of key.

At least one person left Conjeevaram with the impression that 'if there was to be a leader who could lead the south as Tilak was doing in upper India, it was none other than C.R.'

Could he, however, lead from Salem, out of the sight and reach of most of the south? He was urged to shift to Madras city. Answering K. S. Venkataraman, one of those making the suggestion, C.R. wrote that he did not want to disturb the studies of his schoolgoing children.

* * *

In June came the reform document, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, named after the Secretary and the Viceroy and soon to be known as the Montford Report. It proposed partial self-government for the provinces, worked by elected legislatures and 'Cabinets' of Indian Ministers.

The catch was that vital subjects were 'reserved' for the Governor and the Executive Council that he nominated; Members of the Council were to be far more influential than Ministers of the Cabinet.

And Central powers were not to be shared at all. What to Montagu was a leap (Curzon, now Foreign Secretary, was to call the proposals 'rash and revolutionary') appeared a crawl to a large section of India.

Not, however, to the moderates. They welcomed the Report. To offset them a Nationalists' Association was formed in the south, with Kasturiranga Iyengar, editor of the *Hindu*, as chairman and C.R. as secretary.

A Madras Provincial Conference looked at the Report in the first week of August. Proceedings opened with patriotic verses sung by eighteen-year-old Devadas, Gandhi's son, who was teaching Hindi in Madras.

Asking for action rather than adjectives, C.R. said that Congress had to think about 'the form of agitation . . that we

should organise in order to compel more genuine reforms.' 'Herein lies,' he added, 'the true difference between the Right and the Left, and not in "accepting" or "rejecting."'

The Russian revolution was only a year old. Its meaning was unclear and some of its aspects were worrying. Yet the Left seemed to stand for change, and the C.R. of 1918 appeared to welcome the Leftist label.

Madras sent a fair contingent of Nationalists to Bombay, where Congressmen gathered from all parts of India for a special session. A South Indian envoy had visited Calcutta to enlist Bengal's support.

With some others from Madras C.R. lodged at 'Sirdar Griha,' the hotel where Tilak normally stayed. He was there again but under restrictions regarding speaking in public. Though in Bombay, Gandhi was ill and absent from the session. Moderates sympathetic to the Report were holding a parallel rally. It was a step towards forming the Liberal Party.

With Tilak curbed and Gandhi still outside its arena, the Congress session's leading lights were the candid Chitta Ranjan Das, Bengal's foremost lawyer, and the dignified Madan Mohan Malaviya of the U.P., spokesman of the conservatives. Both seemed interested in C.R., Malaviya trying to soften him. But Das gave 'a protecting hand.'

In a demonstration of unity Malaviya moved a resolution first drafted by Das. Modified by C.R., the resolution reminded the Government of the Lucknow Scheme for Home Rule and termed the Montford reforms 'disappointing and unsatisfactory.'

Das acknowledged C.R.'s role. 'A mutually acceptable solution was eluding our grasp,' he said. 'We were worried. Then came on the scene,' continued Das, pointing to C.R., 'this thin Madrasi, who put a comma here, a semi colon there, inserted a phrase here, removed one there, and within a few minutes, to the astonishment and joy of everyone, he was able to give us an acceptable resolution.'

C.R.'s success delighted the Madras contingent. 'Returning home we felt as if we had conquered an empire,' wrote Venkataraman.

The pressure to have him in Madras grew. It was reported that Tilak, with whom C.R. had talked in 'Sirdar Griha,' had

said that Salem was too small a place for the forty-year-old lawyer. A letter went from Kasturiranga Iyengar, the editor, urging C.R. to make Madras his base.

Meanwhile, 'very great enthusiasm prevailed' at a political conference that C.R., supported by his friend Adinarayana Chetty, organised in Salem. There were '300 delegates and 1,500 visitors present.'

* * *

Increasingly playing a political role, C.R. was also, at this time, the chairman of the Salem municipal council. He had been elected to the post on June 18, 1917, when he was not on the council.

Though the rules permitted a municipal council to select a chairman from outside its ranks, the provision was rarely used. Salem in 1917 must have had reasons for doing so. Some of them can be guessed. Plague had visited Salem for the fourth successive year. An extension to the town had been planned. A chairman of ability was needed.

The courtroom giving him only partial satisfaction, especially since Manga's death, C.R. was willing to accept the charge. However, the Governor, Lord Pentland, had to sign his approval. C.R. had attacked Pentland, over Annie Besant's arrest, on June 17, the day before his election. And on June 18, at his instance, the Salem unit of the Home Rule League demanded Pentland's recall. Not surprisingly, the Governor's assent was somewhat delayed. Yet the district Collector, E. W. Legh, had endorsed Salem's choice, and C.R.'s two-year appointment was gazetted on July 10.

The symbol and arm of the Raj in the district, the Collector was empowered to take over a municipality if the need arose. Relations between Legh and C.R. were, however, marked by understanding and respect. When, on the inaugural ride of a railway connecting Salem town and Sooramangalam, fourteen-year-old Krishnaswami was introduced to Legh by one of C.R.'s brothers, a subordinate of the Collector, the latter spoke warmly to the boy.

In the first year of C.R.'s term the municipality earned Rs. 94,794, of which Rs. 35,392 came from house-tax and

Rs. 33,346 for water and drainage. Tolls fetched about Rs. 10,000. Next year the town's income rose to Rs. 114,852.

Running a few schools as well as Salem College (where students were taken half-way to graduation and also given high school classes) and looking after the Queen Alexandra Hospital were some of the municipality's chief cares.

The civic body was expected, too, to supply the town's water, remove its refuse, clean and light its streets and, if possible, add to its classrooms and dispensaries. However, the tools at its disposal, financial and technical, were unequal to the tasks.

For example, about all that the building budget allowed, during C.R.'s chairmanship, was a structure for the Fort Jubilee Muhammadan School. His council did not even have the money, C.R. was to complain, to pay a doctor for a periodical glance at Salem's schoolchildren, scarcely a multitude at the time.

Since such funds as the council had were rigidly earmarked, C.R. had to turn to donations from citizens when he wanted to install public water-taps or open modest schools for the 'untouchable' children. M. G. Vasudevayya, a Brahmin lawyer who had been C.R.'s junior at Central College, offered to meet part of the yearly costs of a new *panchama* school at Nanjampatti, pledging a piece of his land as security.

Vasudevayya's carefulness would have pleased C.R., who, according to a British official, sought 'to put [the municipality's] finances in order, even at the cost of much harshness.' When a clerk appointed by him reported a second illness within the space of a few days and asked for long leave, C.R. ended his services, observing that 'the municipal office cannot afford to employ a sickly person.'

It was a period ravaged by disease. In 1917 there were 671 deaths from plague in Salem, 115 from imported cholera and 108 from small-pox. As a plague-fighting measure C.R. had 'a scheme for removing to a new location outside the town the places for the storage of grain.'

In order that plots might be allotted, 'on certain principles, to the poor inhabitants of Shevapet,' C.R. asked the government to acquire the bed of the Chakli Eri tank and adjacent lands north of Shevapet. What came of this project or the one against plague is not known.

Though Salem College had been sanctioned a new building, costing a lakh of rupees, construction was being withheld. C.R. sent a forthright reminder to the Government. 'The council has been daily expecting commencement,' he wrote, 'but is unaware of the reasons that delay the work.'

The scheme of Salem Extension owed something to C.R.'s initiative. The municipality needed governmental permission to acquire land at the edge of the town. Along with Narasimha Iyer, C.R. had visited Madras to get the clearance, well before he was thought of as chairman.

Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, Member of the Executive Council, was helpful; the new colony was afterwards named Sivaswamipuram. When, in March 1917, the municipality auctioned sites in the new extension, C.R. had bought a plot himself. Four months later he became chairman.

Gavel in hand, desiring rich bids for the town's land, C.R. personally auctioned a fresh batch of sites. Profits from the auctions helped reduce the town's accumulated arrears.

* * *

During his spell as chairman C.R. selected, for life-long opposition, two demons: drink and untouchability.

Liquor was pauperizing Salem's handloom weavers. At C.R.'s prodding the municipal council asked the Government to withdraw a majority of the licenses for selling country liquor in town, and to compel remaining licensees to trade outside town limits.

Persuaded by C.R., the weavers made a similar appeal, at 'two remarkable meetings,' to the Collector. A joint council comprising Legh, C.R., P. P. Sweeting, the Superintendent of Police, and some others then decided that the number of arrack shops should go down from fourteen to six, and that the shops still licensed should leave the centre of the town.

This body also curtailed the hours of sale and banned the employment of women inside liquor shops, even if they were relatives of rentiers.

If the measure was unusual, so was the cooperation in carrying it out between an extremist and a Collector. Legh had shown 'unique sympathy' for the step and given 'every assistance possible.'

Three incidents revealed C.R.'s stand on the question of caste. One involved a preacher belonging to a depressed caste, Swami Sahajananda, who visited Salem in 1917. Encouraged by C.R., a group of friends arranged a feast for Sahajananda in the home of Yagyanarayana Iyer, the Brahmin principal of Salem College. The chairman was present.

In the gradation of improprieties, feeding a man of Sahajananda's background in one's home occupied a high place. Abettors shared in the guilt.

The horrified majority of the town's Brahmins ostracised the principal, C.R. and the other Brahmin participants. At weddings and funerals they were excluded. More serious was their being told that Salem's priests would not officiate at the annual ceremonies for the dead in their homes.

For some years after the controversial feast such ceremonies were performed by priests invited from neighbouring regions. To reduce reliance on priests some of the 'culprits' themselves memorised the religious texts. Occasionally helping out C.R. in this situation was Manga's father, Sampangi Iyengar.

The second incident was directly related to C.R.'s chairmanship. In different wards in the town, the municipality's employees turned on the water every morning and turned it off every evening.

In July 1918, one of them, a *panchama,* deemed untouchable, was assigned to the public tap in the *agraharam,* the Brahmin locality. It had been the doing not of C.R. but of the engineer responsible for the town's water supply, A. V. Raman. All the same, the 'untouchable' was defiling the Brahmins' water. There was an outcry.

A hundred 'respectable and responsible ratepayers' asked the council to move the employee to another ward, and C.R. was attacked in the letters column of the *Hindu.* But the 'untouchables' saw hope. 'There was a sensational meeting of the municipal council' on the issue. 'A number of *panchamas* crowded round the meeting hall.' Inside, a Brahmin deputation pressed its view.

The council was evenly divided. C.R. cast the chairman's vote to keep the employee in the *agraharam.* Brahmin widows now 'cast looks of hatred' at C.R. A friend asked him, 'Do

you wish to kill my grandmother? She has not eaten for two days.'

C.R. was unyielding. After a while the resistance subsided. The *Mail* of Madras, British-owned, had written that the opposition to the tap man in Salem displayed India's unfitness for Home Rule. C.R. argued that the municipal proceedings proved the opposite; councillors who belonged to the higher castes had shown that 'they could sink and ignore caste . . prejudice.'

Some years later, appearing before a U.K. parliamentary committee awed by the obstacles of caste in India, K. T. Paul (C.R.'s rival for a municipal seat in 1911) cited the episode as evidence of the changes in caste rigidities.

Hurdles again faced C.R. over two 'untouchable' students who he felt were fit for a course in Salem's secondary training school. The Indian headmaster and the European inspector were unwilling to take them. C.R. was asked to send the boys to an institute in Madras. Insisting on admission in the Salem school, C.R. dared the authorities to refuse and had his way. The boys completed the course and found responsible jobs.

Goaded by his conscience, C.R. was taking an attitude that was, in the words of K. Kamaraj, Chief Minister of Madras from 1954 to 1962, 'revolutionary at that time.'

Unable to discard the views with which he had grown, Chakravarti Iyengar must have thought his son impatient. Discovering once that his grandson Narasimhan, then six, had drunk lemonade in the nearby home of an Anglo-Indian railway official, violating the caste code, he berated the boy. 'You did nothing wrong,' C.R. told his son. Chakravarti Iyengar was again 'furious when father gave us boys a close crop because lice had entered our long hair.'

The *agraharam* reaction over the tap hit the ex-munsiff hard; he wondered whether a priest would preside at his cremation. There is no record, however, of his asking C.R. to retrace his steps, or even to go slow. In Chakravarti Iyengar's feelings about his son, pride and admiration easily outweighed disagreement.

* * *

There was no controversy in Salem regarding C.R.'s sense

of duty. As unpaid chairman he was often spending six hours a day in the municipal office, forgoing professional earnings and combining in himself the twin roles of a municipal chairman and an executive officer or commissioner of the future.

Legh told the Madras Government that C.R. was giving 'personal attention to public business,' and his successor, E. A. Davis, stated that C.R. 'seems to have devoted a very large part of his time to municipal affairs.' Davis observed, too, that a chairman's responsibilities were so pressing that it was 'almost imperative that there should be an executive officer of some standing to assist the chairman.'

C.R. was receiving, all the same, the assistance of the district medical officer, Dr. Mathias, and of A. V. Raman, who had joined the municipality after qualifying as a public health engineer in England. Though thirteen years younger, Raman became one of C.R.'s close friends, sharing, with a scholar's flair, C.R.'s interest in Tamil equivalents for English terms.

A year after he had been inducted, 'the energy and ability of the Chairman' of Salem municipality was recorded by the Government in Madras. Seven months later, at the end of January 1919, C.R. resigned his position. Factors described later made this necessary.

Attending the council for the last time (he had chaired over fifty of its meetings), C.R. spoke of the 'liberal and sympathetic attitude' of Legh, who was leaving Salem. C.R. added that Legh was not one of those who believed that they could not serve under Indian ministers responsible to the people of this country.'

Here C.R. was anticipating swaraj, for which, in retrospect, his role at the head of the Salem council was a useful apprenticeship.

His colleagues on the path to swaraj, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and Subhas Bose, also chaired municipal councils — in Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Patna and Calcutta, respectively. A difference, however, may be noted. C.R.'s experience of local administration preceded his entry into the Gandhi-led struggle. In the case of the others, civic responsibility followed entry into the struggle.

By July the ex-chairman of the Salem municipality had not

only actively joined an agitation against the Raj; his role was known to the Raj's officials. It is, therefore, of interest that Davis, Salem's new Collector, wrote that month of C.R. as a person 'of whose work I have heard nothing but good.'

CHAPTER FIVE

The Enlistment

FORTY at the end of 1918, his mental and physical energies in their most favourable combination, C.R. had stretched himself in more than one direction.

Active in his political and civic roles, he served also, in lesser realms, as the local scouts commissioner and as a freemason. Records of the Salem Lodge indicate that until 1919 there were instances of his setting 'competitive examinations for boys applying for . . financial assistance from [the] Lodge,' correcting the answer papers and contributing 'personally . . for deserving boys.' In 1919, for the second time, he was installed as the worshipful master of the Lodge.

Withal, C.R. was a lawyer, though his practice had inevitably been curtailed. And it was as a lawyer that he drew the interest of the whole of the south in 1918-19.

Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu, a popular Tamil speaker, had said some unpleasant things about the Government while addressing a few thousand mill workers in Madras. He was arrested and charged with sedition.

This was towards the end of August in 1918. C.R. was in Bombay at the time, assisting Das with his resolution on the Montford Report. Madura lawyers perhaps had good reasons for not defending Naidu; perhaps they were disinclined to invite the wrath of the Raj; perhaps, again, Naidu insisted on having C.R.

In any event, it was C.R. who took up the case, which commenced in Madura on September 27. Appearing opposite him was Madura's special public prosecutor, D. M. Durai Rajah. The large crowd that gathered outside the court was fired at; two

were killed. Next day, ignoring a machine-gun placed atop the court house and 'the marching of the military up and down the town,' 25,000 assembled to protest.

South India remained interested in the proceedings which, because of vacations and an appeal, lasted until April the following year. Throngs daily waited outside the courtroom. The papers reproduced every word uttered inside. The Madura courtroom of S. V. Nargunam, sub divisional first-class magistrate, became the south's principal political battleground in the last quarter of 1918.

The sedition law sanctioned prosecution on the recommendation of the Governor-in-Council. The Madura public prosecutor, C. Krishnan Nair, showed the court a telegram from Ooty, the presidency's summer capital; that, he said, was the authority for Naidu's arrest.

'Does the telegram clearly prove the sanction of the Governor-in-Council?' C.R. asked Nair. The Madura official admitted that the wording of the wire did not contain sufficient proof.

It was on the case's merits, however, that C.R. wanted to win. He disputed the accuracy of the text of Naidu's speech given to the court and, according to the *Hindu*, 'showed how the report was inaccurate.'

The Government claimed that a police stenographer had taken down the speech in Tamil shorthand. Pointing out that the slowly developing art of Tamil shorthand could not have coped with Naidu's talking, which was particularly rapid, C.R. asked why the text lacked repetitions, which were normal in public speeches.

Moreover, C.R. argued, a transcribed speech, even if accurate, was not the same thing as its oral original; put in black and white, words acquired an edge they might have lacked when uttered.

Quoting other Indian spokesmen, C.R. demonstrated that Naidu had 'treated in far milder language' than theirs 'matters of the deepest importance to us.' Even the Government's version showed that Naidu had not challenged India's connection with the Empire; this, C.R. maintained, ruled out sedition.

He requested the court to cite the passages in Naidu's speech which were regarded as seditious. 'I am not arguing for a favour

but for bare justice,' he said.

The judge replied, 'I have framed the charge, there it is. That is all I have to say.'

'That is to say, Your Honour is refusing the request,' rejoined C.R., asking the court to record his request and the refusal.

The day before a three-week vacation, giving the judge a list of the witnesses on whom he proposed to rely, C.R. made a plea that the names be kept confidential until the court assembled again after the break. He feared that the witnesses might be pressurised by the Government.

The Judge: It is always my practice to give the list [to the other side].

C.R.: Whatever might be the practice in this court, it should not be held valid in the present case . . .

The Judge: I do not see any reason to deviate from the practice.

C.R.: This is the first case of this kind. I do not think Your Honour has decided such cases.

No South Indian lawyer had spoken in court like this. C.R.'s large audience — the public of the south — was thrilled.

After a marathon defence, C.R. left the 'judgement in the care of Your Honour's sense of justice, religion and conscience.' Conscience, C.R. reminded the judge, was a greater power than 'the King's authority'; if the judge had been one of a jury, he would have taken, added C.R., 'the common oath that between His Majesty and the accused [he] shall do impartial justice.'

Though Nargunam heard him with courtesy, C.R. did not expect an acquittal. A man like Nargunam had two capacities: he was a judge and also a district officer under the Collector. He could hardly decide against the Government.

Soon after the trial began, C.R. had frankly aired his misgivings. He asked at a Home Rule meeting in Madura:

> How could they possibly expect, when the Crown was so directly . . against the accused person, that the accused person could have a fair . . trial at the hands of a Magistrate who . . held the appointment at the pleasure of the Crown?

The Government pondered suing C.R. for contempt of court

but dropped the idea. It would have alienated the public afresh, apart from adding to C.R.'s popularity.

Nargunam pronounced as anticipated, sentencing Naidu for 15 months of rigorous imprisonment. 'A gross miscarriage of justice has occurred,' wrote the *Hindu*. The paper commented, too, that C.R.'s defence had been 'ably conducted' and 'carefully prepared.' It had also been spirited.

An appeal went to the Madras High Court, where K. Srinivasa Iyengar, Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer and C.R. were named for the defence.

In April 1919 the Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Ayling and Mr. Justice Sadasiva Iyer acquitted Naidu, without discussing his speech, on the technical ground that C.R. had spotted at the outset in Madura: the lack of proof of the sanction of the Governor-in-Council.

* * *

The War had ended in November 1918. Papa, aged twelve, showed C.R. the headline in *Swadesamitran*. He nodded. At the December Congress in Delhi the King was congratulated. Loyalty to him was reaffirmed.

Congress's unhappiness with the proposed Montford Reforms had grown since August, but the severest critics were as yet unwilling, or unable, to go beyond constitutional protest. As 1919 opened, India seemed a reliable, even if dissatisfied, member of the Empire.

True, since July the previous year the proposed Rowlatt legislation had been a sword threatening to fall. Sir Sydney Rowlatt, an English judge, had headed a committee charged with finding ways of controlling sedition. It recommended, for suspected seditionists, arrests without trial and trials without appeal, and suggested that offences like carrying a seditious leaflet in one's pocket be made punishable with two years' imprisonment.

Who would determine sedition? Government officials, advised Rowlatt, not the courts. If the proposals were enacted, men uttering the kind of words Naidu uttered, or even thinking his kind of thoughts, would not have the right even to his kind of trial.

Yet many Congressmen chose not to see the Rowlatt hazard;

their eyes were fixed on the Reforms. C.R. belonged to the small minority that was alive to the danger. On January 27 he proposed nine practical steps to stall it, including a mandate by Congress to Tilak (who was in the U.K., having finally secured a passport) to petition the Secretary of State to hold back the legislation.

A fortnight earlier, in Trichy, C.R. had complained that 'the Rowlatt Committee recommendations have not received a tithe of the attention which the Reform Scheme has been honoured with.'

Adding that they would lead 'to the permanent disablement of national life,' C.R. regretted that

> even our Bar Association have not thought it fit to examine the proposals, which threatened to set aside all legal traditions . . , not temporarily but for all time.

The Trichy speech, made by C.R. as president of the Home Rule League Conference, was a significant utterance. He anticipated, in the short address, many of the key goals, short-term and permanent, of the coming struggle.

Looking forward to 'the highest degree . . of resistance power . . shown by all communities,' he exhorted:

> Never allow yourself to be injured or insulted. Stand up for your rights always.

Yet India *versus* the Raj was not the sole fight. 'We lost our liberties,' C.R. said, 'by reason of weakness in national life.' For instance, 'real chivalry' towards women was absent. He asked:

> Have you noticed, on the crowded railway platform, the man carrying the tickets and running on in front and the lady hurrying up from behind carrying a big bundle and a child or perhaps two?

His most important remark, however, related to what he called 'this disastrous legislation' — the Rowlatt proposals. Said C.R.:

> The matter is serious enough for an anxious examination of the principles and propriety of *opposing it with the entire soul-force of the nation.**

* Author's italics.

He ended on an intriguing note of expectancy:

> Greater things will come to pass than we have hitherto heard. Shall we be unprepared for the glorious gift to come, shall we not hasten to make ready our homes for returning freedom?

The sword fell on February 6. Two Rowlatt bills were introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council in Delhi. The non-official members of the Council opposed the measures with eloquence and logic, but the decision of the nominated majority was a foregone conclusion.

Political India could lament. It could warn. Could it do more? One man had the grit to turn dismay into defiance. Ill with a damaged heart, Gandhi decided to pit satyagraha, or soul force, against the bills: he would refuse, he declared, to obey the bills if they became law. This was in the second week of February. A month after he had given expression to it in Trichy, C.R.'s yearning had received an answer.

* * *

It was in the second half of January 1919 that C.R. finally made up his mind to migrate to Madras city.

He had enjoyed his years in Salem. His life with Manga had been lived there. The town had appreciated his worth. A section, true, had been critical. Some were jealous. And his role as municipal chairman inevitably involved 'occasions for friction with private individuals.' The thorns pricked but were forgotten in the warmth offered by the rest of Salem.

Though it was obvious that he could earn more in the bigger city, it is unlikely that money was tempting him. His children studying in the more advanced schools of Madras was an appealing prospect, but the chief reason for moving was not domestic or economic.

The truth was that Salem limited his growing public role. Many had reminded him of this fact, including Kasturiranga Iyengar, editor and owner of the *Hindu*, and men such as Venkataraman who looked up to him. Now he was ready to follow their advice. 'You have won after all,' he told Venkataraman towards the end of January.

He resigned as municipal chairman. In the first week of February his resignation was accepted. Thanking him for his nineteen months' stint, the council referred to 'the valuable services he rendered to the town in the matter of solving the drink problem.'

Kasturiranga Iyengar was not only of the view that C.R. should come to Madras; he informed C.R. that a house he owned on Cathedral Road was available. Recently returned from a voyage to England, Iyengar, not surprisingly, had been criticised for crossing the high seas. Defending himself, Iyengar said:

> If there be any conflict between the principles of nationalism and Hinduism, which I believe there is not, I will pursue the path marked out by the former.

Endorsing Iyengar's statement, C.R. suggested that not only sea voyages but every beneficial action be saved 'from the prohibitions of orthodoxy.'

The Rowlatt bills had been launched in the meantime. Convalescing in Ahmedabad, Gandhi asked for men who would sign a pledge of resistance. On February 24, six men and women present in Ahmedabad, including Vallabhbhai and Sarojini Naidu, joined Gandhi in signing it.

A Satyagraha Sabha began functioning in Bombay. Then Gandhi journeyed to Delhi. Calling on Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, he urged a withdrawal of the bills from the Imperial Legislative Council.

Others had similarly endeavoured. It was, in essence, a vain exercise. Though consideration of one of the bills was postponed, the other was hastening through the Council. It was a sufficient fetter. There were many to revile the bill but Gandhi wanted 'covenanters' ready to 'undergo every form of suffering' to oppose it. Still in Salem at the end of February, C.R. was stirred by Gandhi's declarations regarding Rowlatt. They possessed the tone for which he had openly longed.

He felt that Gandhi should be invited to Madras; soon he would be there himself. The idea was put by him to Kasturiranga Iyengar, who sent a letter inviting Gandhi. The latter was glad to get the word. On the whole, topranking Congressmen had avoided him. They were not sure about satyagraha. Madras offered

an opening. Though still shaky in health, he decided to take it.

Undertaken in the middle of March, the long train journey from Delhi to Madras was 'eased by his love for southern India;' 'the Tamil and Telugu labourers in South Africa had been among his staunchest fighters.' His secretary, Mahadev Desai, was travelling with him. He told Gandhi on the train that the man behind the request from the south was C.R.

* * *

Meanwhile, C.R.'s last weeks at Sooramangalam had been busier than ever. He would return home late — and study. One night, wanting to draw his attention, Papa, aged twelve, asked him, 'Are you reading for a law case?' Her father smiled, and said, 'I am reading about breaking laws.' Then he added, seriously, 'Sometimes a bad law has to be broken.'

'We are going to Madras,' he announced one day. Then, in the first half of March, accompanied by Papa, Narasimhan, aged nine, Lakshmi, who was six, and Manga's mother, who had continued to look after Lakshmi, C.R. took the train for the capital. His father as well as Krishnaswami, aged sixteen, and Ramaswami, nearly fifteen, who needed to complete their terms at Salem College, were left behind with C.R.'s brother Srinivasa.

Also left behind was a house slowly rising on C.R.'s plot in the Extension. His young colleague on the municipality, A. V. Raman, had drawn a design for it. To begin with, only Papa went with her father to the family's new residence, No. 2, Cathedral Road, Mylapore, Manga's mother taking Lakshmi and Narasimhan for some weeks to the house of her son, who worked with the Madras municipality.

Built on two floors, the Cathedral Road house was surrounded by a broad ground on part of which coconut and mango trees grew. Houses in Salem did not have a drawing-room; even the ground-floor of the Lodge had been no exception. The Madras house, for which C.R. paid a monthly rent of Rs. 230, had two of them, one above the other, a kitchen and a dining-room. There was plenty of space for sleeping.

Two cooks were found. Ghouse brought the car. The valuable law books, bundles of them, were moved. Deciding to make the upper drawing-room his study, C.R. furnished it with a desk

and chairs made in the School of Arts; a sculptured chest of drawers with brass handles went against a wall.

In a few days Gandhi would be his guest. The fact is noteworthy, considering that the lawyer from Salem preceded Gandhi into Madras by less than a fortnight. 'Shall we not hasten to make ready our homes for returning freedom?' C.R. had rhetorically asked two months earlier in Trichy. Now, within a week of occupying his house, he was hastening to make it ready for the visiting Gandhi.

Dressed in a *kurta* of thick rough white cotton and a *dhoti* of similar texture, and donning the white cap that he had recently designed, a weary Gandhi, aged fortynine, arrived in Madras on the morning of March 18. Desai was with him. C.R. stood inconspicuously in the welcoming group at the station.

In the evening word came that the Legislative Council in Delhi had passed the Rowlatt bill. Only the Viceroy's assent remained. The previous day C.R. had signed the satyagraha pledge against it. Yet there was a question: how precisely would one disobey the Rowlatt law?

Gandhi wrestled with the question. An unjust order not to attend a meeting or enter a town presented no problem to a satyagrahi; he simply went to the meeting or the town, inviting the consequences. The Rowlatt law, however, was a threat, not an order. How did one fight a threat?

There were meetings in the city and visitors in the house, including distinguished ones like Sarojini Naidu and Salem's C. Vijiaraghavachariar. Bharati turned up in frayed clothes. 'He is the national bard of Tamil Nad,' C.R. told his guest. Teaching Hindi in Madras, Gandhi's young son Devadas was often in.

One day 250 striking tramway-workers appeared. Gandhi spoke to them, C.R. translating. But the main question on Gandhi's mind was Rowlatt. He was talking about it with C.R. For the first two days of his stay, though, Gandhi had not known that the bespectacled lawyer was his host. Aware that the bungalow was owned by Kasturiranga Iyengar, Gandhi thought that he was the editor's guest.

Desai corrected him, also advising Gandhi to cultivate C.R., 'who from his innate shyness kept himself constantly in the background.' Gandhi acted on the advice. For three successive

days he and C.R. discussed Rowlatt.

Papa was introduced to the guest, who asked her, in English, if she had read *Alice in Wonderland*. She was pleased to be able to say that she had recently done so. Gandhi next asked her if she knew what a spinning wheel was. 'I have read about it in some English stories,' she answered. 'They have it in England.'

'India also had it,' said Gandhi, 'but under foreign rule we have forgotten it.' Then he told her about *khadi*, the cloth he was wearing, made of yarn spun on the wheel.

On March 20 he had publicly urged the Viceroy to withhold his assent to Rowlatt. Two days later word came that Lord Chelmsford had signed the bill.

That night Gandhi slept over the question in his room on the first floor. Early next morning, while he was still in the 'twilight condition between sleep and consciousness,' an idea broke upon him, as if in a dream. An hour or so later he told C.R. about it.

> We should call upon the country to observe a general *hartal*. Satyagraha . . is a sacred fight . . . Let all the people of India, therefore, suspend their business on that day and observe the day as one of fasting and prayer. . . It is very difficult to say whether all the provinces would respond to this appeal of ours or not but I feel fairly sure of Bombay, Madras, Bihar, and Sind.

C.R. 'was at once taken up' with the suggestion of his guest, who drafted a call to the nation to fast and shut business on April 6.

Gandhi had found the next step and was at peace. One step always seemed enough for him. The same day, March 23, after five nights under C.R.'s roof, he left for different towns in the south, to explain the *hartal*.

His host was fully involved in the step proposed. He had contributed to the thinking that led to it. Two days after Gandhi left the city, the Commissioner of Police informed the Madras Government of the opening of a branch of Gandhi's movement 'in the home of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, late of Salem.'

He had learnt, the official added, that a few who were asked to be secretaries of the Madras branch were 'reluctant to accept

the nomination on some ground or other.'

This was understandable. Gandhi's proposal was untried; it could also land sponsors in trouble. It was C.R., late of Salem, who became secretary of the Satyagraha Sabha of Madras and who moved, at a meeting on March 30, the resolution asking the south to observe the *hartal*.

Under the Rowlatt law, he said, the Government will 'have power to intern, gag, arrest and imprison without trial or public inquiry whomsoever it suspects.' This would lead to an 'oppression of informers, spies, *agents provocateurs* and police underlings.'

'Mr. Gandhi,' continued C.R., had taken up 'the gospel of suffering and love' and 'grafted it on the political doctrine of civil disobedience which was . . transformed into the spiritual force of satyagraha.'

The appointed day, April 6, was a wonder. Nobody knew how it all came about. 'The whole of India, from one end to the other, towns as well as villages observed a complete hartal.'

C.R. marvelled. He had not imagined this outcome while proposing Gandhi's southern visit. Referring to Madras, he wrote:

> As if by magic the whole city [was] stilled to prayer. The busy and crowded thoroughfares that had never seen rest, the *mundies*, the godowns, the big shops, the small shops, the petty fruit stalls of women, the street stalls, the coffee shops [and] the meat markets all were closed down, whether Hindu, Mohamedan or Christian.

In the evening 'it was one surging mass of humanity' from 'Napier's Bridge to San Thome' that gathered on the beach, listening to speeches relayed by human voices from a series of spaced platforms.

An intelligence officer named Moore had submitted an identical report to the Government:

> All shops, big and small, were closed. Coffee hotels and vegetable and milk stalls were also not open. Vendors of curd were not seen, and even the women who sell rice cakes in the morning did not do so today.

Moore said, too, that the crowd on the beach was 'unanimously considered to have been the largest gathering . . on such an occasion at Madras.'

A week earlier C.R. had spoken of 'Mr. Gandhi.' Now he employed the phrase Mahatma, first used for Gandhi by the poet Tagore. 'The fiat of the Satyagraha Mahatma,' said C.R., 'had been observed by all India, by the high and the low, as if he had all the armies and the police forces . . of the Indian government behind his word.'

'Can soul-force,' he asked, 'be any longer denied?' C.R. had expressed faith in soul-force from 1916. Now the force had been demonstrated.

Within days the movement entered another phase — of peaceful and open sale of banned books, provided they were free from violent thoughts. These included the Mahatma's *Hind Swaraj* and his translation of Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. Gandhi also brought out some issues of a weekly, *Satyagraha*, that was deliberately not registered.

In Madras, with C.R.'s help, *Satyagrahi*, similarly unregistered, was published. Sheets supporting disobedience were written by C.R. and litho-copied in his house. Va. Ra., later well-known as a poet, and V. A. Sundaram lived with C.R. and assisted with the production of illegal literature.

In one of his leaflets, dated May 12, C.R. said that the question was one of principle, not of race:

> Let it be clearly understood that we would oppose such legislation vesting in the executive Government the absolute right to suspect and imprison without trial even if the Government is democratic and purely Indian, and not bureaucratic and foreign . .

'We have at last arrived.' C.R. had proclaimed, 'at the realities of life and politics; and he who runs may read the ultimate success of the satyagraha movement.'

The realities changed C.R.'s life and politics. He had heralded satyagraha and its author. Now he would place himself at their disposal. Although he had foretold the new way, there were chains tying him to the old. They were to be removed one by one.

For all their value, the courts were sustaining the Raj. This

was Gandhi's view and C.R. had agreed. Now he ended his practice, before quite beginning it in Madras. The law books carefully brought from Salem were never unpacked.

He would cease wearing his finely textured clothes; following Gandhi, he and his children would clad themselves in *khadi.* Capable of being made by the poorest in their homes, *khadi* was, to Gandhi, the key to economic independence for the millions. It was to spread across India as the livery of revolt and a symbol of identification with the lowly.

When one day a large green roll of coarse thick fabric turned up at home, seven-year-old Lakshmi asked her father if it was a carpet. It was not. She and her sister and brothers were going to be clothed in it.

CHAPTER SIX

India Astir

SUPPORTED by C.R., the Mahatma had stirred the nation over the Rowlatt Act. The awakening contained an entirely new element: Hindus and Muslims were acting as one. Gandhi, for instance, was invited to speak in a Bombay mosque, and Swami Shraddhananda, leader of the Arya Samaj, in Delhi's Jama Masjid.

The breadth of opposition hurt the Empire's prestige. Hitherto India's staunchest nationalists had assumed that her future lay within the British-led association of nations. True, Swaraj would make India a partner instead of a dependency, but even the militant Tilak had not visualised India turning her back on the Empire.

On its own, the Rowlatt question would have damaged but not destroyed India's faith in the Empire. The confidence was wholly lost when India felt, in 1919 and 1920, the impact of two fresh blows. The first was administered in April 1919 in the far north — in Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs in the Punjab.

The Punjab had been tense for some time. Methods used to recruit soldiers and raise loans for the War had caused resentment. On their part the British had heard, and were disposed to believe, rumours of an Afghan invasion.

The April *hartal,* enthusiastically observed all over the province, passed off fairly peacefully in Amritsar. But hostility was in the air. Two Congress leaders, Dr. Satyapal, a Hindu, and Dr. Kitchlew, a Muslim, pressed Gandhi to visit the Punjab and calm it.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor, had viewed

the *hartal* with extreme disfavour. He prevented the Mahatma's entry. On April 10 Gandhi was taken off his train at the Punjab border and compelled to return to Bombay under escort; during part of the journey he was confined in a goods train.

O'Dwyer also had Satyapal and Kitchlew arrested and removed from Amritsar. Protesters took out a procession. It was fired at. In revenge the infuriated crowd killed five or six Englishmen in their offices. Miss Sherwood, a schoolmistress, was assaulted.

Next day Amritsar was taken over by General Reginald Dyer, a professional soldier born in Simla. He prohibited meetings, but his ban was proclaimed only in English. On the afternoon of April 13, over 10,000 people, Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims, assembled at Jallianwala Bagh, a public ground enclosed on three sides by five-foot high walls. Speakers sat on an elevation on the open side. Most of the audience were unaware of Dyer's ban. None had fire-arms.

Suddenly, the meeting barely begun, Dyer appeared with fifty rifle-carrying Gurkha and Baluchi soldiers and occupied the space holding the speakers. Without a single call to the audience to disperse, he ordered fire. His men obeyed, for ten death-filled minutes. The trapped gathering could only shriek and fall in heaps. Almost every bullet got a man; according to official figures, 379 were killed and over 1,100 injured.

What followed was equally unbelievable. O'Dwyer imposed martial law throughout the Punjab; a special censorship prevented news from escaping the province. In Amritsar Dyer decreed that any Indian passing along the street where Miss Sherwood was attacked would crawl; that Indians on vehicles or horses would dismount at the sight of a British officer and salaam him; that thousands of students would walk 16 miles a day for roll-calls.

Violators were flogged at a public whipping post. Elsewhere in the province men were stripped and beaten and women were tortured; and in two places groups of peasants were bombed from the air. A non-existent revolutionary plot was crushed.

Yet for weeks India was ignorant of the Punjab happenings. O'Dwyer's censorship was effective. However, travellers carried the news in bits and pieces. Govardhan Dass of Lahore spoke about Jallianwala in Madras in May. For publishing an editorial

based on Dass's account, the *Hindu* was ordered to furnish a security of Rs. 2,000. C.R. helped organise a protest. And he articulated a rising national demand — redress of the Punjab wrongs.

It was C.R.'s belief that the Punjab violence would have been averted had the Mahatma been allowed to enter the province. Two days before the Jallianwala killing he had assailed O'Dwyer's bar against the Mahatma and said that if any one could 'keep the satyagraha movement true to its principles it is Mr. Gandhi.'

The Mahatma, however, divided the blame between the Raj and his countrymen. The latter had rioted in Bombay and Ahmedabad when he was forcibly turned back at the Punjab border. Shocked at their violence, Gandhi had undertaken a three-day fast which restored peace.

Though he shared the view that his visit might have saved Punjab its tragedy, the Mahatma was disturbed as much by Indian violence in the province as by the atrocities of the Raj. He concluded that he had committed, in his words, a 'Himalayan blunder' in launching his campaign without disciplining the masses. The satyagraha was suspended.

Saddened as he was by the suspension, C.R. urged the south to honour it. In a letter to C.R. the Mahatma explained that 'the spiritual cause of the temporary setback' was the impurity of the satyagraha. At the end of a subsequent letter Gandhi said:

> I have written so much in order to share with you my inmost thoughts as they came to me this morning. It is now 6.30 a.m. For on you and the few we are will be the burden.

Three months after meeting him, the Mahatma was relying a good deal on C.R.

Though C.R. recorded that 'ardent spirits' were 'disappointed and dispirited' by the suspension, his regard for the Mahatma had grown. The latter was plainly interested in the integrity of his struggle.

Yet the Punjab Government termed Gandhi a 'conspirator' in some of its martial law prosecutions. To C.R., who was stung, the accusation was 'shameless.' He urged that Gandhi ask to be tried on the charge.

The Mahatma replied that 'the Punjab authorities have looked sufficiently foolish by naming me as a conspirator and yet leaving me alone'; to ask for a trial would take away from the effect.

The slur against Gandhi was not withdrawn despite the fact that in May the Director of Central Intelligence, Cleveland. had assessed that 'violent revolts were not part of [Gandhi's] intention or hopes.' Cleveland had also informed the Government that 'so far no traces of organised conspiracy have been found in the Punjab.'

Willingdon, Pentland's successor as Governor of Madras, called Gandhi a 'Bolshevik.' In the Raj's bureaucracy the tough school was gaining ground.

In London some men tried to take a balanced view. Montagu, Secretary of State, said in a private cable to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy:

> I have never heard of a case in which the appearance of Gandhi has not had a tranquillising effect. It certainly had in Ahmedabad and Bombay during the recent riots . . So far as I can hear, Gandhi is a man who has always kept his word.

But the sahibs in India saw things differently. According to a later British view, they had 'stiffened into amoral solidarity: Englishmen backed each other right or wrong.' 'The quality of their life was not only coarser than at home but becoming more so.'

They were showing signs of cowardice, carrying weapons everywhere, and digging deep into the budget to pay for internal security. The war had roughened them, 'their tempers had shortened and their will and ability to do good had declined.' It was this deterioration that made Jallianwala, and its subsequent laboured defence, possible.

Indians sympathetic to the Raj were horrified by Jallianwala. Tagore renounced his knighthood at the end of May and the Indian Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Sir Sankaran Nair, resigned in June.

In July the Government formed a commission under Lord Hunter to sift the Punjab evidence and publish the facts.

Doubting the Raj's sense of justice, Congress set up an inquiry body of its own, manned by Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, the successful Allahabad lawyer, and C. R. Das of Bengal.

* * * *

First Rowlatt, then Punjab and finally Khilafat struck at the concept of Empire.

The Allies were considering the terms to be imposed on Turkey, which had been defeated in the War along with Germany. The Sultan of Turkey was the Khalifa, or head of the faithful; the vast majority of Indian Muslims, the Sunnis, gave him allegiance.

Under Islamic law and tradition the Khalifa had a bounden duty to protect the holy places. To enable him to perform this duty his suzerainty over the Arab lands containing the holy places — his Khilafat — was recognised. Indian Muslims had made it clear that any encroachment on this suzerainty would be regarded as an affront to Islam.

Premier Lloyd George had said that the Allies were not 'fighting to deprive Turkey of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor.' Depending on this assurance, a number of Indian Muslims soldiered for the Empire against Turkey.

Now, in August 1919, it transpired that Britain meant to end the Khalifa's suzerainty and set up a puppet Arab chieftain in charge of the holy places. To Indian Muslims this was a betrayal and a sacrilege. Roused as seldom before, they sought to undo the wrong.

They found a champion in Gandhi — and also in C.R. A believer in Hindu-Muslim partnership from his South African days, Gandhi had been heartened by signs of entente during the anti-Rowlatt agitation. To him Khilafat was an issue on which Hindus had to make common cause with Muslims.

As over Rowlatt, Congress was slow to respond to Gandhi. As then, C.R. was on the Mahatma's wavelength.

'Is it not a beautiful thing,' he said to Gandhi when the struggle over Khilafat was being planned, 'that India could present the spectacle of one religion not merely tolerating but actually fighting for a sister religion?' Gandhi's 'eyes flashed' as he replied, 'Isn't it beautiful?'

In August C.R. made his first Khilafat move. He initiated a resolution at the Madras Provincial Conference in Trichy asking London to ensure that the regions associated with the Islamic holy places were not detached from the Khalifa's sovereignty. Some Muslim leaders arrested during the War for alleged pro-Turkish attitudes were, C.R. reminded his audience, still in jail, including the outspoken Ali brothers, Shaukat and Mahomed. C.R. added that many Muslim papers 'had been gagged' and that 'Muslim feeling in India ran high.'

The police was understandably watching C.R. and his doings, which were not all political. The mathematician Ramanujam, as yet insufficiently recognised and struggling, had been his house guest for a month.

The Government of Madras informed Delhi in November that C.R., 'a Salem Vakil who has for some time been working to promote Hindu-Muslim entente,' had used persuasion with the Hindus 'with the result that on the 17th [of October] most of the shops and the Bazaar were closed.'

To the Raj a Hindu-Muslim alliance was neither natural nor welcome. But it began to take shape. The Khilafat-ists met in Delhi towards the end of November to consider steps if the feared Turkish terms materialised. Gandhi was asked to preside.

Searching for a suitable riposte on behalf of the whole of India, Muslim and Hindu, Gandhi came up with 'non-cooperation.' Resort to arms was impossible as well as undesirable. Yet the betrayal was humiliating and the Mahatma said that India 'could not do otherwise than non-cooperate.'

Non-cooperation was not spelt out but it sounded a weapon with a sharp edge. However, the Turkish terms were not final as yet and Gandhi was prepared to wait, hoping for a revision.

Meanwhile, there was some comfort for the Raj in the continuing extremist-moderate division. By now the moderates were meeting outside Congress and calling themselves Liberals.

The Nationalists (the extremists) of the southern presidency gathered in Madras in November, Kasturiranga Iyengar presiding. C.R. and T. Prakasam, a Telugu barrister destined to play a leading part in South India, were elected secretaries; the former asked for 'sustained work for the national cause.'

Congress met in Amritsar in December. The venue was a

reminder that Jallianwala remained to be redressed, but Gandhi thought it possible that the Hunter Commission would recommend justice. And he noted two positive signs — the release of the Ali brothers while Congress was in session, and the fact that the Rowlatt Act, while not repealed, was not being used.

For the Amritsar session C.R. made his first journey to North India. Motilal Nehru presided but Gandhi was the central figure. Also commanding respect was Tilak, just returned from his English visit. C.R. had welcomed him in Madras on December 17.

The Ali brothers arrived at Amritsar straight from prison. Mahomed Ali announced that he was holding 'a return ticket.' The phrase was to be repeated by thousands in the following years.

The resolution on Jallianwala proposed at Amritsar called for the removal of Dyer from his command, the resignation of O'Dwyer and the recall of the Viceroy; it also expressed the hope that the Hunter body would recommend justice.

That was not enough for the Mahatma. He asked the session to regret and condemn the Indian excesses of April. This was a hard pill and Gandhi had to fight for its acceptance.

It was true, he said, that 'the Government went made at the time.' But, he added, 'we went mad also.' Then, in a sentence, he defined successful satyagraha:

> Do not return madness with madness but return madness with sanity, and the whole situation will be yours.

The pill was swallowed.

Congress agreed to work the Reforms Act, which had just come into force, while expressing disappointment at its inadequacies. The sword of non-cooperation, bared for a brief moment over Khilafat, lay quiet and unnoticed in its sheath in Amritsar. Gandhi hoped that it could remain there.

* * *

C.R. played no part in shaping the resolutions. For him Amritsar was an opportunity to meet men who would be colleagues in the future — among them the Nehrus, father and son,

Das, whose friendship he had made the previous year, and Rajendra Prasad of Bihar.

Invited by Prasad to Patna, C.R. visited Benares on the way, buying a sari there for Papa. He was accompanied to Patna by Devadas, the Mahatma's 19-year-old son. Devadas obviously admired C.R., who described the young man's friendship as a 'gift with which God has most unexpectedly chosen to brighten my life.'

On returning to Madras C.R. posted 23 books to Devadas — on literature, science, geography and Greek, Roman, English and Indian History. Writing what he himself described as 'a school-master's letter' to Devadas, C.R. said, 'Remember that the last one or two letters in a word have the same right to be legible as the rest.' The two were to find a closer relationship in the future.

Before his northern trip C.R. had shifted, with his children and father, to a somewhat smaller house, 'Venkata Vilas,' on Luz Church Road in Mylapore. They were living on his savings, and economies were called for.

Krishnaswami was now a student at Pachaiyappa's College. A tutor coached Papa at home. Narasimhan and Lakshmi were going to the P. S. High School in Mylapore.

Within days of C.R.'s return Chakravarti Iyengar was taken seriously ill. C.R. 'had hopelessly to look on while [his] father suffered convulsions and excruciating pain,' but he noted that his mind had 'not yet rebelled against God's will.' Iyengar recovered and was to live for another year and a half.

Meanwhile C.R. had experienced the flavour of a struggle in industry. Wanting to strike because bonus for 1919 was not being paid, workers of the Aluminium Company of Madras had sought C.R.'s advice. C.R. said that they could strike provided they gave due notice, worked diligently till the strike was to begin and avoided hostility towards the employers in speech or thought.

His directions were faithfully followed. Though no bonus was given the bosses raised wages by 25 per cent. To C.R. this was a 'success of the law of satyagraha.'

'If Bolshevism were not to enter this land,' said C. R. in March, 'laws should be so framed as to adequately represent the interests of labour.' He was asking, at the first Madras Labour

Conference, for 'full representation of labour in the legislature;' he wanted, also, space and time for the mid-day meal in all factories, and a probe into the condition of women workers.

Serving as the Mahatma's southern lieutenant, C.R. was also counselling the former. Elections to legislatures, provincial and central, were due at the end of 1920. The Reforms Act had given the bodies some new powers.

C.R. offered to draft for Gandhi a bill repealing the Rowlatt Act for the Central legislature and to 'see to the constitutional difficulties' that might 'have to be got over.' He had suggestions, too, for the new constitution for Congress on which the Mahatma was working. Amritsar had asked Gandhi to revise the structure that existed.

The Mahatma was sued for contempt by the Bombay High Court for an article in *Young India,* the weekly that he was now editing. C.R. sent ideas for his defence. The lieutenant's role was evident in C.R. undertaking to spread the teaching of Hindustani in the south.

* * *

In 1920 an explanation of Jallianwala prepared by the Punjab Government — the accused party, in the eyes of Congress — was published in Britain.

On two grounds C.R. objected. The Punjab Government's report had not been shown to India. Secondly, its subject-matter was *sub judice*; Lord Hunter's body was examining it. C.R. urged Congress to publish its report speedily.

Drafted by the Mahatma, the Congress report came out on March 25. It concluded that there was no conspiracy, that Martial Law was unjustified and that Jallianwala was a 'calculated' and 'unparalleled' piece of inhumanity. Evidence included in the report had been meticulously examined. It has been claimed that 'not a single' fact stated in it 'was ever disproved.'

All over India the demand for redress grew. Appointed Convener for Madras Presidency of the Jallianwala sub-committee of Congress, C.R. found himself representing the Punjab to the south.

His task of mobilising opinion was aided by the Hunter Commission's Report, published on May 25. The Report con-

firmed the grim facts but drew weak conclusions. The Indian public's resentment was roused on both counts.

Dyer was relieved of his command after the Report, but O'Dwyer — and other offending Punjab officials — emerged unscathed. The justice for which Gandhi had nursed a hope in Amritsar was missing.

Shocks followed the disillusionment. The House of Lords passed a resolution justifying Dyer. British admirers gave him a sword of honour and £20,000. The Raj forfeiting Gandhi's loyalty, the recruiting-sergeant of 1918 and the 'moderate' of December 1919 unsheathed the weapon of non-cooperation in the middle of 1920. It was lured out by Khilafat as well as by the Punjab; the former, in fact, was the stronger influence.

A Muslim deputation had waited on the Viceroy in January 1920. It was reminded that Turkey had drawn the sword for Germany. On February 28 C.R. conveyed to Gandhi the assessment that 'the Khilafat question is assuming most serious proportions' and advocated 'a big agitation in India.'

It was imminent. Mahomed Ali went to London to call on Lloyd George but the Premier did not grasp Indian sentiment. 'Germany has had justice, pretty terrible justice. Why should Turkey escape?' he asked. India's reply was that 'the terrible, stern justice to Turkey must be tempered with the pledged word . . of the British Empire.'

A reply of another kind was a day of mourning over Khilafat, observed on March 19. Gandhi and C.R. spoke together that day in Bombay, along with Muslim leaders.

The Mahatma's 'loyalty to the British connection' was alive on March 19. He said so. But it was dying. He warned of a 'complete withdrawal of cooperation from the Government' if adverse decisions over Khilafat were not corrected.

A few broke with the Raj before the Mahatma gave the signal. Of them the first was Hakim Ajmal Khan, a noted physician and popular figure of Delhi; he returned his medals and title at the end of March.

C.R. pushed the agitation in the south, pledging, at a meeting on April 9, the support of Hindus to the Muslims. About a week later he was elected to the executive of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee. He was clear about his objective: turning

Congress in Madras towards a struggle.

Nearly 6,000 attended a Madras Presidency Khilafat Conference on April 21, chaired by Shaukat Ali. C.R. backed a resolution called for 'progressive abstention' from the Government, beginning with a surrender of titles and offices and ending with a refusal to pay taxes.

He was also raising money for Khilafat. Some helped with fervour. Jamal Mohammed Sahib, a city businessman, gave C.R. a blank cheque and asked him to fill it. C. R. wrote 'Rs. 20,000.'

India learnt on May 14 of the final terms imposed on Turkey and the Khilafat by the Treaty of Sevres. They were as harsh as feared. Later in the month the Hunter Report came out, followed by the House of Lords' approbation of Dyer. The Raj had simultaneously repelled Muslim and non-Muslim India.

* * *

The national body formed over Khilafat, mainly comprising Muslims, resolved on non-cooperation under the Mahatma's guidance, but the All-India Congress Committee, meeting in Benares on May 30, shifted the burden of decision to a special session in Calcutta in September.

The Khilafat movement was being questioned on several grounds. Should India fight over distant events? Was the agitation not mixing religion with politics? Could it be maintained that Turkish rule over the Arab territories containing the holy places was preferable to rule by Arab chieftains?

To the last argument the Mahatma replied:

> Have the Arabs selected these kings and chiefs? Do the Arabs like the Mandate being taken by England? . . They may not like Turkish rule but they like the present arrangement less.

The public, in any case, seemed ready even if Congress was not. Gandhi decided that he would not wait for the latter's approval; preceded by a day of fasting and prayer, non-violent non-cooperation would be launched on August 1 by him and his Khilafat friends.

In all that he was attempting, the Mahatma not only had C.R.'s wholehearted and valuable loyalty; he evoked in the latter a feeling in which discipleship and admiration merged with love. Its nature is conveyed by a letter written by C.R. to Gandhi shortly after the two had attended a Khilafat conference in Allahabad. The context of the letter is not known.

> My dearest Master,.. Had your telegram. Words fail me altogether. I hope you have pardoned me. Yours most sincerely, Rajagopalachar.

The spread of Hindi was part of Gandhi's programme. It became one of C.R.'s concerns. Early in July he announced: 'The Hindi Prachar Karyalaya will provide teachers free of cost to schools and colleges throughout the Madras Presidency if students wanted to learn Hindi.'

Yet non-cooperation was the main goal. In July, in a private report to Delhi, the Madras Government described C.R. as 'conspicuous' among 'the most energetic public advocates of non-cooperation.' At the end of June a Madras Provincial Conference had recommended non-cooperation; the Government informed Delhi that 'this result is regarded as due to the exertions of C.R. Achari.'

He was needing to exert. Non-cooperation had influential opponents in the south. Some Hindus held that a Muslim cause was not necessarily an Indian cause. The moderates and Mrs. Besant were opposed on principle to the new policy. The constitutionality of non-cooperation was questioned by S. Srinivasa Iyengar, who had resigned as Advocate-General of Madras to join Congress and was an admired figure.

Other prominent intellectuals like the *Hindu's* Kasturiranga Iyengar, A. Rangaswami Iyengar, editor of the Tamil daily, *Swadesamitran,* and Satyamurti, who had been C.R.'s ally in Conjeevaram, were also antagonistic. They had been looking forward to the councils created by Reform Act of 1919.

Never enthused by the Reforms, C.R. nonetheless had been ready to see some usefulness in the councils. He had signed, and probably helped draft, an election manifesto of the Nationalist Party, of which he was a secretary. But by the time the manifesto was published, on April 27, he was well on the way to non-

cooperation. Now, with faith in the Raj gone, councils seemed irrelevant to him, as they did to Gandhi. Not so to the three Iyengars and Satyamurti.

Under Gandhi the country's politics, and therefore the nature of Congress, was being changed; an elite debating society, often brilliant and patriotic, was being converted into a mass movement just when it could have taken over the gleaming councils. Not all liked the conversion or agreed with the Mahatma that the gold lay in a struggle outside.

As early as January C.R. had regretted the tendency in the 'educated classes' to return to 'the pre-satyagraha days' standard.' Besides being unexciting in comparison with elections, non-cooperation carried a discouraging risk of discomfort and prison terms. A secret report from the Madras Government to Delhi, dated July 1, said that some leaders opposed non-cooperation for 'fear of the logical results with regard to themselves.'

Stronger than the reluctance of Congress intellectuals was the factor of caste. South India was in fact witnessing two concurrent struggles: one against the Raj and the other against Brahmin influence.

It was C.R.'s endeavour to convince the non-Brahmin majority that the struggle against the Raj included a fight for reform and justice. At the end of March he had urged a conference of school-teachers 'to fight the caste spirit and work for the removal of untouchability so that the nation would achieve Brahmin/non-Brahmin and Hindu-Muslim unity.'

And on April 6, when a meeting observed the anniversary of the previous year's hartal, C.R. successfully pressed that the chair be given to the writer T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, even though the latter had shortly before backed a resolution 'not to return any Brahmins to the Legislative Council.'

Hitherto, Congress leadership in Madras, moderate or Nationalist, had mainly come from Brahmins. Founded in 1917, the Justice Party attacked Brahmin domination and Congress in the same breath.

The Government welcomed the new party as a rival to the Congress. Supporting the Montford Scheme, the Justice Party hoped to capture power in the 1920 elections. Fearing that boycott of elections by Congress would ease the Justice Party's

path, a section of the southern Congress was chary of non-cooperation.

Finally, there was opposition to C.R. from a quarter of another kind. His old teacher, John Tait, expressed alarm at the activities of one who had been a favourite pupil. The two talked at College House in Madras on July 31, on the eve of non-cooperation. He was surprised, Tait said, that C.R. should get mixed up in an 'unconstitutional and superstitious' movement like Khilafat. The former pupil heard Tait with respect but was unrepentant.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Fight

FORTY minutes after zero hour on August 1, 1920, Lokamanya Tilak died in Bombay, his health sapped by diabetes and by years in prison. He had been uncertain about non-cooperation: to him the path opened up by the Reforms Act, unsatisfactory as it was, was worth treading. 'Accept what you get and agitate for more' was his advice. But he was conscious of the public sentiment and prepared to support Gandhi.

Stirred by his death, all of Bombay seemed to turn out for the final procession. Gandhi and Shaukat Ali were among those who shouldered the bier. Tilak, said Gandhi, was 'a maker of modern India' and one who brought Swaraj 'nearer by many a year.'

To C.R. Tilak's passing came as a personal blow. He was unable to hold back his tears. Tilak's bravery had impressed him from his adolescence, and the Lokamanya had extended 'gentleness' and 'friendliness' to him.

Not long after Tilak's death, C.R. wrote interestingly about him and Gandhi. The two, he said, 'were strange contradictions of their respective philosophies.' Gandhi's gospel was peace and non-violence but his nature was 'essentially of the military type.' Like Napoleon, Gandhi could 'stand unmoved on the fierce battle-field amidst physical pain and intensest suffering.' Tilak, 'who spoke the doctrine of Force, really could not bear to see a fly hurt, and would break down if he saw any slaughter of human beings.'

Again, while Gandhi was 'an exponent of Truth,' and Tilak of 'Expediency,' in practice it was Gandhi who used 'the highest arts of diplomacy and tact,' whereas Tilak's 'soul refused to

solve weaknesses and difficulties by compromise.' 'If life and example are greater than precept,' ended C.R., 'the most rigorous doctrines of suffering and non-cooperation can find no greater leader than Lokamanya Tilak.'

* * *

The Mahatma returned his medals on August 1. He had received them for his South African work, and he felt a pang handing them back. Yet now he had 'neither respect nor affection' for the Government.

In reply the Viceroy called non-cooperation 'the most foolish of all foolish schemes.' The Indian masses did not think so; they rallied round Gandhi in unprecedented numbers.

C.R. invited him to Madras and Salem. Addressing over 50,000 on August 12 on the beach, the Mahatma asked for boycott of the councils and of foreign cloth, for the return of titles, the suspension by lawyers of their practice and the withdrawal of children from Government schools and colleges.

Gandhi took the chance in Madras to call on C.R.'s ailing father at 'Venkata Vilas.' C.R.'s children were curious and also fearful about the encounter, for their grandfather had prophesied dire results, to Gandhi's disadvantage, if the latter were ever to meet him. Chakravarti Iyengar claimed that the Mahatma was going to be worsted for having 'ruined the entire family by mesmerising my son.'

However, when Gandhi arrived, the ex-munsiff, dressed in his best and rising with an effort, joined his palms in a courteous welcome. Bowing before him, the Mahatma spoke of C.R.'s national service. To the children's astonishment Chakravarti Iyengar said that he was happy with what his son was doing.

The youngsters demanded an explanation from their grandfather as soon as Gandhi left. 'He mesmerised my son and today he mesmerised me,' said the ex-munsiff. 'Let him come again. I will have it out with him.'

Banter apart, it would seem that to some extent the meeting pacified Chakravarti Iyengar's mind. Two anxieties remained, however. On August 1 Krishnaswami and Ramaswami had been removed from their colleges and Narasimhan from his school; how were these grandsons going to be trained? The ex-munsiff

also feared that non-cooperation would bring the shame of a prison term to his son.

Arresting C.R. was apparently considered by the Government of Madras. Delhi sent its view that 'a premature prosecution of the leaders could result in making martyrs of them.' But it clarified that 'association with Mr. Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, will not confer immunity from prosecution on even the most prominent of his co-workers . . .'

The Mahatma's visit did not convert non-cooperation's principal opponents in the south. However, C.R. received the support of a group of young lawyers including K. Santhanam, S. Ramanathan, N. S. Varadachari and K. Rajagopalan, who heeded Gandhi's call and dropped their careers.

Determined, despite all resistance, to take Madras into the Mahatma's camp, C.R. was partially rewarded shortly after Gandhi left. The Provincial Congress Committee accepted non-cooperation in principle, though a majority of members voted against Gandhi's proposals for implementing it.

Congress was to accept or reject non-cooperation at a special session in Calcutta in September. C.R. arrived at the head of some 200 Madras delegates on a train placarded as 'The Khilafat Special.' Presiding at the session was Lala Lajpat Rai, the Punjab leader who had spent the War years in America.

The old guard seemed set to defeat the Mahatma. Only Motilal Nehru left its ranks to support him. Not knowing whether he would carry Congress as a whole, Gandhi assembled the Home Rulers among the delegates. Mrs. Besant had left the League, and in April the Mahatma had accepted its presidentship in order to propagate non-cooperation. If Congress said no, Gandhi would still have the League for his cause. Motilal Nehru, C.R. and Umar Sobhani of Bombay were made its Joint Secretaries.

Bipin Chandra Pal, who had been a central figure in the protest against Bengal's partition, and C.R. Das, among others vigorously opposed Gandhi at the Congress meeting. But the gathering before them was different from the ones they had known. It included many from the lower middle-class, some of them clad in *khadi,* a few using Hindustani or Bengali in addition to English. Congress was blending with the masses.

By 1855 votes to 873 the session adopted the plan of non-

cooperation that the Mahatma proposed: surrender of titles; boycott of official ceremonials, of the November elections and of foreign goods; and a gradual withdrawal of students from Government schools and colleges and of lawyers from the Raj's courts.

The voting of the Tamil bloc was 161 to 145 in favour of Gandhi's proposals. Some opponents of non-cooperation had come from Madras with Rangaswami Iyengar and Satyamurti; others, it seems, were recruited in Calcutta from the ranks of 'Madrasis who were employed in the firms and factories there.'

The Government publicly hoped that 'the sanity of the classes and masses alike would reject non-cooperation.' Evidence came in November that the classes and masses were embracing it. Almost two-thirds of India's electors — many millions, despite the limited franchise — stayed away from the polls.

Sir Valentine Chirol, the writer, found that at 'a freshly swept polling station' near Allahabad, where 'the presiding officer with his assistants sat at his table with his freshly printed electoral roll,' not a single voter showed up from eight in the morning till noon.

In Madras C.R. led the boycott, his car, still being driven by Ghouse, carrying a 'Vote for None' sticker. Abstention in the south was fair, even if not spectacular.

* * *

There was sadness on the domestic front when Janakiammal, Manga's mother, died while on a rare trip away from C.R.'s home with one of her sons. She had devotedly looked after her grandchildren ever since her daughter's going more than five years earlier.

The Calcutta decision was ratified when Congress met in Nagpur for its regular year-end session. Spending Rs. 36,000 from his pocket, Das had brought 200 delegates from Bengal and Assam in a bid to reverse it.

After an all-night discussion with the Mahatma, Das himself succumbed — and moved the resolution declaring non-cooperation. Lajpat Rai seconded. Presiding at Nagpur was C.R.'s senior friend C. Vijiaraghavachariar; while not wholly happy with the policy, he bowed before the tide of opinion.

Nagpur altered the creed of Congress. 'The attainment of Swaraj . . by all legitimate and peaceful means' now substituted the previous goal of 'self-government within the Empire.'

One man found this too much. Aloof, westernised, uncomfortable among the new breed of Congressmen, Mahomed Ali Jinnah left Congress at Nagpur. Hardly noticed at the time, his departure was, in retrospect, the first step in the creation of Pakistan.

Also changed at Nagpur was the constitution of Congress. The amendments that Gandhi had been asked to prepare were accepted. The new scheme provided for democratically elected committees at all levels — the village, town, taluk, district, 'province' and all-India. The 'provinces' were linguistic areas and did not necessarily coincide with the provinces of the Raj. Thus Madras would have a Tamil Nad Congress Committee and a separate Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee.

The All-India Congress Committee would choose a Working Committee, which would be the decision-making and round-the-year organ of Congress, consisting of the President, the General Secretary, the Treasurer and about a dozen others. Elected annually by the provincial units, the President would be first among equals and no more.

As early as January C.R. had proposed, for the Mahatma's consideration, 'a regular second or revising chamber,' representing all areas and democratically elected, meeting 'a little in advance of the Congress.' This would provide, C.R. felt, 'for proper deliberation . . without reducing the demonstrative value and driving power of Congress in its main assembly.'

The idea was incorporated by Gandhi in the new constitution; henceforth the AICC — comprising members from all regions — would meet as the Subjects Committee two or three days before the open session, formulating guidelines for the latter.

Nagpur raised C.R. into national leadership — he was chosen as a General Secretary of the Congress for the coming year. Also drafted as General Secretaries were Motilal Nehru and Dr. M. A. Ansari, a leading Muslim figure from Delhi.

* * *

The movement was entering an epic phase. Inaugurating

revolt, the Mahatma had enjoined strict non violence. 'If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she . . will cease to be the pride of my heart,' he said.

His was a negative as well as a positive programme. Of the first variety were the boycotts. They were to climax in mass civil disobedience, perhaps in a refusal to pay taxes.

The positive targets were a rupees one crore fund in Tilak's name, to be used for national activities, two million *charkhas* (spinning-wheels) and one crore members for Congress. Hindu-Muslim partnership and the elevation of untouchables were the broader goals. Also sought, in a lower key, were the spread of Hindi (or Hindustani) and the prohibition of liquor.

If the targets, positive and negative, were all achieved, said Gandhi, there would be 'Swaraj in a year.' The Mahatma was not predicting a formal transfer of sovereignty from British to Indian hands within twelve months. What he saw was the creation of a parallel and self-sufficient Indian Establishment, owing allegiance to the people of India and not to the Raj. Sooner or later, as the network grew, the Raj would find that its power had vanished.

As the first step, the visit of the Duke of Connaught, uncle to the King, who was arriving to open the new legislatures, was boycotted. In Madras 60,000 attended a Congress beach rally when the Duke was in town; the provincial Government informed Delhi that 'no serious breach of peace' resulted from boycott activities.

Three thousand Calcutta students walked out of their institutions. National educational bodies were formed in Ahmedabad, Patna, Benares, Maharashtra and Calcutta. Twenty-five-year-old Subhas Chandra Bose resigned from the Indian Civil Service to head the Bengal National College.

Withdrawn from their colleges, Krishnaswami and Ramaswami, C.R.'s sons, engaged themselves in spreading *khadi* in and around Salem.

A 'Swadhinata Vidyalaya' (Independence College) started in Madras at C.R.'s initiative, 'open to students withdrawing from college classes and desiring to complete their equipment for national service or as teachers in national schools.'

The Madras Government issued orders banning municipalities

from supporting 'national' educational institutions. And Knapp, the Chief Secretary, told Delhi that in 'several districts students have been induced to leave their schools after attending meetings held for the purpose.' After meeting C.R. in Trichy, 18-year-old T. Sadasivam left studies to join the movement. He was to serve C.R. with filial devotion in the future.

Hindus and Muslims were fraternizing in hitherto unheard-of ways. Muslims dined in orthodox Hindu homes. At Id cows were not sacrificed. Courts continued to function and the vast majority of lawyers attended them. Yet an impressive number opted out, entering a life of uncertainty and often of poverty. Some of them were of the highest quality.

Das and Motilal Nehru led the exit. C.R. had stopped his practice before non-cooperation was launched. Vallabhbhai Patel in Gujarat and Rajendra Prasad in Bihar were others who threw away rich practices. In June C.R. announced that 36 lawyers, including T. Prakasam, had left the courts in the Tamil region.

Gandhi's close colleagues during this phase, when the Raj perceptibly declined and the parallel organism grew, consisted of the following: the Ali brothers, Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru and his son Jawaharlal in the north; Das and Abul Kalam Azad in Calcutta; Prasad in Bihar; Patel in Gujarat; and C.R. in the south. It was a talented team that the Mahatma had assembled.

* * *

To Gandhi's remarkable feats of generalship all over India, C.R., travelling ceaselessly and speaking at meetings and through the press, was giving unsparing support from the south.

Amid the campaign he arranged the marriage of Namagiri, now nearly fifteen, to Varadachari, 26, a journalist with a position in Rangoon. C.R. had asked Papa to wait awhile but girls of her age whom she knew had husbands, and her father's constant travelling had made her insecure and keen on marriage.

The wedding, a day-long ceremony, took place in February at the foot of the Tirupati shrine. After it C.R. moved from 'Venkata Vilas' to 'Gem,' on Poonamallee High Road, a smaller and less expensive lodging.

He had been realising that 'living on my little savings . . in Madras . . is simply an "irrational," as they say in Mathematics.'

By the middle of 1921 'Gem' too was given up; the Darracq, the chest of drawers and the desk and the chairs obtained from the School of Arts were sold; Ghouse was farewelled; and C.R. was back in Salem, staying in his unfurnished house in the Extension.

* * *

There was tangible progress on the liquor front in the south. Delhi was informed that 'the Temperance movement has now appeared in most of the districts of the Presidency . . .The consequent decrease in revenue is likely to be considerable . . . The recent sales of arrack shops have been boycotted . . .'

Five months later, another report admitted 'a comparative failure in the sales of toddy shops through the Presidency . . ,' and acknowledged that 'the preaching of non-cooperation and in some cases the picketing of liquor shops have contributed largely to the result.'

In one ten-day period Congress membership in the Tamil area went up from 8,000 to 30,000. A new provincial Congress Committee, loyal to C.R., came into being in July. However, the transition to C.R.'s helmsmanship was not smooth.

Despite the Calcutta resolution boycotting councils, Srinivasa Iyengar had contested and won a seat in the Madras legislature. Satyamurti and Rangaswami Iyengar had stayed out of the elections, but hardly with conviction. Kasturiranga Iyengar, editor of the *Hindu* and till mid-1921 president of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee, had come round to supporting non-cooperation, yet his newspaper directed some sharp words at C.R.

The *Mail,* South India's British-owned daily, had published a story in which C.R. was called an 'autocrat'; a writer in the *Hindu* quoted the charge. A *Hindu* editorial also accused C.R. of thrusting out well-known leaders from committees and of haste in carrying through Congress elections. There was, in addition, a concealed insinuation regarding his management of public funds. Rangaswami Iyengar, editing *Swadesamitran,* joined in some of the criticism.

In a forthright denial of the *Hindu's* charges, C.R. said, 'The urgency [in holding elections] was to secure the representation of our province in the new AICC.' He added:

> Errors, omissions and irregularities I shall freely admit. But I am satisfied that I have tried to do my very best . . [the] charges of extravagance and other suggestions . . are too contemptible to be touched by me . . I assure the editors of the *Hindu* and *Swadesamitran* that if I lose the confidence of the public it shall not be because of carelessness or dishonesty of any sort in the administration of public funds.

The hint of lack of responsibility regarding funds was clearly baseless and was never repeated. Why then was C.R. assailed? It is possible that he displayed an excess of zeal in promoting non-cooperation. He might also have been individualistic. Perhaps, too, the fact that the leadership of Congress in Madras was passing into C.R.'s hands was grudged.

Finally, C.R. was an all-out Gandhian. The others were not. Some of the shots fired at him were meant for the Mahatma and for non-cooperation: it was easier to attack C.R. than directly to oppose the Mahatma.

Balancing these difficulties was C.R.'s success in securing the wholehearted support of three prominent non-Brahmins: E. V. Ramaswami Naicker, the future founder of the Self-Respect movement, T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, editor of *Navasakthi*, and Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu. Others on whom C.R. relied included Dr. T. S. S. Rajan of Trichy and the young lawyers, Santhanam, N. S. Varadachari, Ramanathan and Rajagopalan. Backed in addition by the Muslims, C.R. was able to take Madras to the battlefield.

* * *

Hindu-Muslim discord dogged the freedom struggle from the start. Differences between Hindus and Muslims were not created by the Raj, but the latter found them convenient.

Lord Hardinge, the ex-Viceroy, was to write in 1926 to Sir Harcourt Butler, Governor of the U.P., that Hindu-Muslim riots 'served as a very useful object lesson to idealists of the necessity of the British Raj.'

The Moplah riots, among the most tragic in modern Indian history, took place in 1921 in Malabar, then part of Madras

presidency. Muslims descended from Arab immigrants, the Moplahs had a tradition of fanaticism. Many of them were tenants of Hindu landlords.

In February 1921, C.R. and Yakub Hassan, a Khilafat leader from Madras, visited the Moplah region with the declared aim of preaching non-violence. Hassan said that he would not talk of non-cooperation. However, the Government banned their speaking. In a press interview C.R. asked the public 'not to fall into the trap set by repression and commit violence.'

Later some local leaders advocating non-cooperation were arrested and martial law was imposed in the two Moplah taluks. C.R. expressed his fear that the Punjab tragedy might be repeated in the Moplah country. Officials on the spot seemed to him to possess 'an old-world faith in the infallibility of repression.'

Poorly led, the Moplahs blundered. Alleged insults to their priests suddenly brought them into rebellion in August — first against the Government and then against the Hindu landlords. 'Independence' was declared, arson and murder took place, and some Hindus were forcibly converted.

The Raj moved thousands of troops into the area. In the full-scale military action that ensued, 2,339 were killed and 24,167 convicted of rebellion or lesser crimes, figures withheld till much later. The grim tragedy included the episode of the 'death-wagon.' After nearly 150 Moplah prisoners had been packed into a wagon of a goods train, death by suffocation claimed 66 of them.

As Congress Secretary C.R. tried, in September, to visit the Moplah area for organising relief. Permission was refused, and he was told that the Government would 'deprecate [the] multiplication of relief agencies.'

Beginning with the struggle over Rowlatt, Hindu-Muslim trust had grown hearteningly all over India. The Moplah outbreak injured the trust. Exaggerated accounts of forced conversion spread elsewhere in the country, and movements for strengthening the Hindu community were launched. Some of these movements in turn caused disquiet among Muslims.

* * *

In April Lord Reading, the former Rufus Isaacs, ex-Attorney General and Lord Chief Justice in the U.K., had succeeded

Chelmsford as Viceroy. He sent for Gandhi: they had six talks totalling 13 hours. Reading found the Mahatma 'supremely courteous, with manners of distinction.' C.R. expected nothing new or striking from the talks, but he did not share the apprehension of some that Gandhi would be softened by the new Viceroy.

The Mahatma was achieving astonishing results. As the year advanced it was clear that he would surpass the Tilak fund target. He recruited six million members for Congress, a phenomenal number. In their thousands young men enrolled in the National Volunteer Corps and penetrated squalid villages and industrial slums. *Khadi*-clad shock troops of Swaraj turned up everywhere in the land, teaching spinning, promoting literacy and deprecating drink and untouchability.

India was astir — and altering. The revolt against the Raj was matched by a revolution in hardened customs. The Mahatma's doctrine reduced to a small size the element of hate in the Indian ferment; and in any case the Raj knew how to tackle hate — by a sufficient use of force. What unsettled the Raj, and shook its morale, was the injection into the populace of the conviction that they were right and the Raj wrong.

In the altering of India the impact of C.R., the Mahatma's man in the south, was nation-wide. A gift of his was the ability to explain Gandhi and his at times baffling moves.

The skill was evident in his introduction to *Freedom's Battle,* a collection of the Mahatma's speeches and articles, published in March 1921. According to *Young India,* C.R.'s introduction provided 'crushing replies' to the 'stock objections against non-cooperation.'

Had India, especially its Hindus, gained by worrying about Muslims in the Middle East? Yes.

> The Indian support of the Khilafat has, as if by a magic wand, converted what was once the pan-Islamic terror for Europe into a solid wall of friendship and defence for India.

Was non-cooperation not negative? It was positive. It was building unity among Indians.

> Even if we had no grievances against this Government, non-cooperation with it, for a time, would be desirable in so far

as it would perforce lead us to trusting and working with one another . . .

C.R. dealt, too, with the plea for a 'constitutional' path to freedom:

An Act of Parliament can never create citizens in Hindustan. Liberty unacquired, merely found, will on the test fail like the Dead Sea Apple . . .

* * *

By July the tempo was high. The Turkish Sultan had become a pathetic puppet of the British. Kemal Ataturk was leading his country's nationalists against the Treaty and fighting a British-backed Greek invasion. In fiery speeches in Karachi, the Ali brothers called upon Muslims in India to leave the police and the army.

To end dependence on foreign cloth, bonfires of imported textiles took place. Gandhi himself set a pile alight in Bombay on July 31. His defence of the step was that he was diverting the public's hatred from (British) individuals to inanimate things.

When he heard of the Moplah outbreak, Gandhi decided to go with Mahomed Ali to Malabar. On their way, at Waltair, Mahomed Ali was arrested. Shaukat's arrest followed. The Karachi speech of the brothers was described as the reason. At Trichy, C.R. at his side, the Mahatma declared that had he been in Karachi he would have backed the brothers.

On the train between Trichy and Madura Gandhi showed C.R. a statement he had prepared. It announced that henceforth he would reduce his raiment to a length of cloth covering the body from the waist to the knee.

This would be, said the Mahatma, in mourning for the arrest of Mahomed Ali. It would also answer the objection about *khadi's* cost: his new *khadi* dhoti would be cheaper than a standard-length dhoti of imported cloth.

Though he 'employed all kinds of arguments to dissuade the Mahatma,' C.R. failed. Next morning, appearing in his diminished garment, the Mahatma smiled at a distressed C.R. and said, 'I may not be able to convince you, but I am absolutely clear about the correctness of the step I have taken.'

The sartorial change interested the Raj. From Madras, Governor Willingdon wrote to the Viceroy:

> I hope he would not die of pneumonia as a result!
> Though his demise might save us all a lot of trouble.

Their southern campaign took the Mahatma and C.R. to Salem, where Chakravarti Iyengar lay unwell in his son's newly completed house in the Extension. C.R.'s friends governing the Salem municipality presented an address to Gandhi in a sandalwood casket. Prior to recent events, the casket had been intended for Willingdon.

Untouchability in the south was thus described by the Mahatma:

> Nowhere is the 'untouchable' so cruelly treated as in this presidency . . . His very shadow defiles the Brahman. He may not even pass through Brahman streets. Non-Brahmans treat him no better. And between the two the *panchama*, as he is called in these parts, is ground to atoms.

It was an evil that Gandhi and C.R. would jointly oppose in the years to come.

The arrest of the Ali brothers had intensified the political fight. Gandhi, who was told to keep out of Malabar, wrote that 'sedition has become the creed of the Congress.' And he added that 'Non-cooperation . . deliberately aims at the overthrow of the Government.' Yet the Government did not lay hands on the Mahatma, for fear of the people's reaction.

Early in October C.R. joined a gathering in Bombay of leaders from all over India. In a manifesto the leaders said that it was everyone's right to speak about the propriety of citizens associating themselves with the Government. Their own view, they added, was that 'it is the duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood.'

There was some criticism of the Mahatma at the Bombay confabulations, chiefly over the emphasis on *khadi*. It was led by Vithalbhai Patel, Vallabhbhai's elder brother, and Kelkar, who had been a colleague of Tilak's. C.R. defended Gandhi, his

V 211.5 21y7 M18 N7

'keen intellect' proving effective in 'refuting the arguments of his opponents.'

After defying the Government to do its worst, the Mahatma and C.R. travelled together to Ahmedabad where a car took them both to Sabarmati, Gandhi's Ashram. The 1919 hospitality was being returned. After walks and talks at the Ashram the two journeyed to Bombay, along with Lajpat Rai.

* * *

Aged about seventyfive, his health eroded by diabetes, Chakravarti Iyengar was struggling against a fever. In his incoherent speech he seemed to be asking for 'Rajan.' His condition was serious, and C.R.'s boys sent their father a wire.

There was a moment of recognition when C.R. arrived, after which Chakravarti Iyengar relapsed into delirium. On October 20 he was dead.

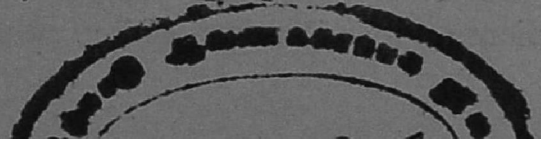
By then C.R. had suffered another loss. His eldest brother Narasimhachar, at fifty-four his senior by eleven years, suddenly died two days before his father — in Oorgum in the Kolar goldfields, where his son-in-law was working.

Sending Krishnaswami to represent him at his brother's rites, C.R. arranged his father's obsequies. These possessed the odour of sanctity, with proper priests serving; Iyengar's fear of a caste boycott at his last rites proved false.

Proud, thrifty and hopeful of major things from his son, Chakravarti Iyengar had overcome to a large extent the unhappiness he felt when C.R. gave up practice. What remained of it was probably compensated by the regard that his son was receiving from many of his countrymen.

His responsibilities as General Secretary of the Congress had restricted C.R.'s times with his ailing father, whom he respected. Years later, looking back on this period, he felt some dissatisfaction with his filial role; he thought that he could have done more as a son, without injury to the cause.

The Ali brothers were awarded two years' rigorous imprisonment. The Mahatma replied by announcing, early in November, that he would lead mass civil disobedience in the Bardoli taluk of Surat district in Gujarat. The people of Bardoli would simply refuse to pay taxes.



'When the Swaraj flag floats victoriously at Bardoli,' said Gandhi, 'then the people of the taluk next to Bardoli . . should seek to plant the flag of swaraj in their midst. Thus, district by district . . throughout the length and breadth of India, should the Swaraj flag be hoisted.' But he warned that 'the slightest outbreak of violence in any part of the country' could lead to a stoppage of the movement.

The Prince of Wales arrived on November 17. India observed a *hartal* on the day, but violence in Bombay smeared its success. Those staging a welcome for the royal guest were attacked in the streets by rowdy elements. In the riots 58 were killed. An eye-witness to mob scenes, Gandhi said that the Swaraj he had watched stank in his nostrils. He fasted until the non-cooperators made peace with the cooperators — and he postponed the Bardoli rebellion.

Speaking provocatively to the Mahatma, C.R. was able to draw out an interesting reasoning. He suggested to Gandhi that the boycott of the Prince was 'a political manoeuvre,' involving no sacrifice. The Mahatma replied, 'You do not understand the pain I suffered in not meeting the Prince.' The discourtesy, he said, had caused him pain; the sacrifice lay there.

To the Raj the *hartal* was an act of defiance, indeed a snub. The Government was still not ready to arrest Gandhi, but it banned, in different parts of the country, the volunteer organisations of the Congress and Khilafat. Political meetings were forbidden.

Thousands peacefully and openly disobeyed the bans — and filled the Raj's prisons. Among them were Das, the President-elect of Congress, Lajpat Rai, Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru — and C.R.

The Madras Government had issued an order banning gatherings. C.R. declared that he would disobey it. Leaflets were printed announcing that he would address a meeting in Vellore on December 14. When it was known that Motilal Nehru one of the Congress Secretaries, had been arrested, some Congressmen wondered whether it was right for C.R., another General Secretary, also to court arrest.

However, C.R. was clear. 'If I withdraw now from disobedience, it will demoralise people,' he wrote to Gandhi.

The Mahatma concurred.

On the 14th over 5,000 gathered at the Vellore ground to hear C.R., who asked them to maintain communal unity and to 'keep to the path of non-violence under all provocation.'

At eight the next morning he was served with summons. 'I feel today as young as yourself and so buoyant,' he wrote to Devadas at noon. Brought to trial at 4 p.m., he admitted disobeying the order and invited the maximum sentence. But the prosecution was not ready, and the case was adjourned till the 19th.

His sons were in the Extension house in Salem, under the care of his brother Srinivasa, who was also looking after the children of the deceased Narasimhachar. Lakshmi, now nine, was with Namagiri and her husband Varadachari in Rangoon.

Sending the addresses of his children to the Mahatma, C.R. also informed the latter that he would ask for the full sentence. Gandhi sent a wire which read: 'Good. Hope you will get maximum penalty.'

Repeating the sentiment in *Young India,* the Mahatma wrote:

> I hope that the magistrate will oblige him (C.R.) and transfer from friends to gaolers the care of his ailing body . . Like Pandit Motilalji he has been wearing away his body ever since the commencement of non-cooperation.

Using the four days before his trial, C.R. went to Erode to support E. V. R. Naicker, who was also being prosecuted, and to Madras, where he invited volunteers who would 'boldly stand up to official repression.'

On the 18th he wrote to Devadas:

> Think of me and pray for me . . that I may not lose faith and hope. We are in great times.
>
> Bapu is like a trunk shorn of all hands and feet. All his companions in all provinces including even little me have simultaneously decided to run away into prison voluntarily.
>
> You don't go to prison. You should remain free for work

outside. Harilal* has cheated you by going first.

Along with Subramania Sastri, President of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee, C.R. was tried from the 19th to the 21st. The two were sentenced to three months' simple imprisonment each.

'It is so pleasant to go to jail,' C.R. wrote the Mahatma. 'When I realise your anxiety and your loneliness now, I feel guilty of having deserted you. I hope you will pardon me.'

'I do not know when we shall next meet or under what circumstances. But I feel I am realising the object of my life as I am approaching the prison.'

* The Mahatma's eldest son.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Prison

C.R. WAS locked up in a cell in Vellore Central Jail at about 5.45 p.m. on Tuesday, December 21. As the key was carried away he became conscious of a 'rather strange and new' feeling. The realisation that he was a prisoner soon gave way to another mood; for the first time in his life he felt that he 'was free, and had thrown off the foreign yoke.'

He had with him some clothes to wear, a pillow, a *jamakalam* (thick sheet to lie on) and a shawl, a flask, a quire of paper and a few books — the Bible, the *Kural,* a Shakespeare volume, *Robinson Crusoe,* a work on Socrates and the *Mahabharata* in Tamil and English.

While waiting to be escorted to prison C.R. had written Gandhi a teasing letter. He hoped, said C.R., to find India free on his release and the Mahatma, as a result, pursuing his normal vocation — research in dietetics.

Even as a general welcomes the capture of a new enemy stronghold, the Mahatma hailed every fresh arrest. But the general knew what his officers would go through.

'My head reels and the heart throbs,' he had written on December 15, 'when I recall the lives of Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das in their palatial rooms surrounded by numerous willing attendants . . and when I think of what is in store for them inside the ugly . . prison walls where they will have to listen to the clanking of the prison's chains in the place of the sweet music of their drawing rooms.'

The Mahatma steeled his heart with the thought that 'it is the sacrifice of just such heroes that will usher in swaraj.'

In affluence C.R. had not been in Das's and Motilal Nehru's

class, but life in Vellore jail proved one of extreme physical discomfort to him. Gandhi's hope that jailors would take care of his weak and tired body was belied.

C.R.'s solitary cell, entered from a verandah, was $11\frac{1}{2}'$ long and $8\frac{1}{2}'$ wide; at its highest point the arched roof was 10′ from the floor. A 4′ by $1\frac{1}{2}'$ barred opening in the rear wall, just below the roof, occasionally let in urine smell from a drain along the wall's outer side.

The cell door had bars through which light and air could enter but their flow was impeded by partition walls in the verandah. A second solid-wood door was, in his case, left open. Yet there was not 'the least movement of air' inside the cell while 'the breeze outside whistle [d] through the leaves of the trees all the night long.' Flies often filled the cell by day and mosquitoes by night.

A brick platform was the bed; a straw mat and a blanket provided by the jail formed the 'mattress' on which C.R. spread his *jamakalam* for sleeping. Four feet from the bed lay two uncovered, unglazed absorbent mud vessels serving as chamber-pot and commode at night. C.R. tried in vain to cover one with the other; the edifice wobbled. The open pots did 'not make the place sweet.'

Prisoners awaiting execution occupied neighbouring cells. They cursed and wailed and at times prayed through the bars. C.R. heard the clanking of chains; for a period, each of nine cells to the left of C.R.'s contained a Moplah in bar-fetters, charged with having rioted in another jail.

To begin with, the cell was totally dark after sundown. On the fourth night, which was Christmas eve, he lit a candle from a packet given by a fresh arrival, Mahomed Ghouse. In a diary he was keeping C.R. noted, 'Never did I see a candle give such quiet holy light before.' The following morning he wrote: 'It is Christmas day for our rulers. May the Spirit of Christ purify their souls and give them Light!' Later he was permitted to buy candles and a candlestick with money he had deposited with the prison authorities.

His food, for some weeks, was rice-porridge (of which he took only the liquid) at about 6.30 a.m. and rice and *kolambu* around 11 a.m. and again around 5 p.m. The *kolambu*, 'unparal-

leled in horrid taste,' was made of radish root and leaves, chillies, tamarind, salt and oil and contained 'dirt, grit, hair, wool and all sorts of things.' It could only be swallowed by remembering the many who 'in their own homes get less variety and worse quality.'

Along with others C.R. was let out of his cell for meals and ate standing or sitting on his toes on a filthy piece of ground under menacing crows; it was 'like beggars being fed.' After a while the food improved and C.R. was granted the option of eating inside his cell.

He had been given, on the fourth day, his 'medal:' a disc, stuck on a piece of wood, bearing his number — 8398 — and the dates of his entry and scheduled release. He wore it with a string round his neck. No newspapers were allowed, but C.R. could write and receive a letter in thirty days and have a monthly interview.

Many of the imprisoned activists, especially from Andhra, were kept in other blocks and not allowed to meet C.R. Conversing with some inmates was possible over a meal in the open air or on the way to the privy or to a bath at the prison welly — and when a violent eruption of boils sent C.R. to the foul-smelling prison 'hospital.'

Often had C.R. spoken, during the stir, of the probability of jail. But there had been no time to speculate on a prisoner's living conditions. Vellore's impact was therefore strong. C.R. fought back. 'We are not going to break for all this treatment,' he wrote in his diary. 'Government does not know that this merely.. strengthens our determination. Special comforts would undermine our strength in a subtle manner.'

* * *

By the time Congress met for its annual session in Ahmedabad in the last week of December, more than 20,000 civil resisters were already in jail. Gandhi declared that Bardoli was ready to cease paying taxes.

This would be the climax. In direct defiance of the bans on the Volunteer Corps and on public meetings, Ahmedabad asked all those committed to non-violence to join the Corps and hold meetings.

Das being in jail, Hakim Ajmal Khan was elected to preside.

C.R. was chosen, in his absence, as General Secretary for another year, and Gandhi gave his opinion in *Young India* that C.R. 'knows the science of Satyagraha as no one else perhaps does.'

* * *

On January 14 C.R. had his first interview. His son Krishnaswami, his brother Srinivasa and Dr. Rajan were allowed to meet him. C.R. learnt of his reappointment and of other developments. The Prince of Wales had just visited Madras city. The Congress-sponsored *hartal* was effective but not peaceful.

A mob had attacked and damaged the Wellington Cinema, which hoisted 'loyal' flags, and another threatening crowd had prevented Sir Thyagaraja Chetty, leader of the office-holding Justice Party, from leaving his house.

The news saddened C.R., who had persuaded fellow-prisoners to reject an idea of fasting on the day of the Prince's arrival in Madras. The royal visit was an occasion, C.R. advised, for disapproval, which the imprisoned had already shown by courting arrest, and not for grief; only the latter could justify a fast. Besides, a fast in jail would suggest an animus against the Prince as a person.

The Government, C.R. was informed, was going after the press; some papers had been forced to close down. In Allahabad a hundred volunteers, led by Devadas Gandhi, were producing hand-written copies of the *Independent*.

From Rajan C.R. learnt, too, that an All-Parties' Conference would start that day in Bombay. Malaviya and Jinnah had convened it to reconcile Congress and the Government. 'Truce' had been talked of since mid December. Prison had not changed C.R.'s view that Congress 'should think of settlement' only 'after Gujarat has given an account of itself.'

He expected nothing from the meeting. 'Cutting down our demands or suspending the Congress programmes,' he wrote in his diary, would be 'unthinkably wrong just now, when victory is nigh.'

The Mahatma, who was ready for 'many truces and settlements and several abortions before we come to the end,' attended on behalf of Congress. He was urged by the Conference to postpone his Bardoli step; the Government was requested to release

those arrested, withdraw the bans and convene a Round Table Conference. Gandhi put off Bardoli till February 1 but the Viceroy rejected the Bombay proposals.

Bardoli's men and women had learnt a discipline on which Gandhi could rely. Some of them were Gujarati veterans of the South African struggle, now back in their homeland. On January 29 four thousand khadi-clad Bardoli-ites pledged their readiness to stop paying taxes and 'to face imprisonment, and even death . . without resentment.'

On February 1 the Mahatma sent Lord Reading an ultimatum: if in seven days there was no declaration that prisoners would be released and the press freed, the Bardoli tax strike would commence. The Viceroy replied, on February 6, that the Government would stand firm; next day Gandhi sent a rejoinder. India was agog.

Though he did not know of these moves, the incarcerated C.R. shared his countrymen's suspense and expectancy. His censored monthly letter could not contain 'politics,' and C.R. had to content himself with saying to the Mahatma, on January 24, 'I guess you have not started for Bardoli and Anand yet.'

After informing Gandhi that his asthma persisted and that he had gone down from 104 lbs. to 98 lbs., C.R. exercised the privilege of pulling the Mahatma's leg:

> Your eyes would flow with delight if you saw me here in my solitary cell spinning — spinning not as a task imposed by a tyrant faddist, but with pleasure . . . The spinning wheel I have is a real beauty.
> It is a . . younger brother in my cell.

The Mahatma passed on this word to another prisoner, Lajpat Rai, asking him to copy the example of C.R. and add the wheel to his literary pursuits.

By accident or design C.R. had also managed to convey his longing for a bigger entry into the Raj's prisons:

> This Ashram is very much less congested than yours at Sabarmati and I wish more people understood the real advantage of this retirement and discipline.

Gandhi published the letter in *Young India* under the heading 'From his Solitary Cell.' An accompanying note he wrote showed his capacity to put himself in a friend's place:

> Rajagopalachari's loss of flesh is a . . serious matter . . if the solitary cell is like anything I know it must be almost death to an asthmatic patient. When you are locked up in a cell you are in a box with a few holes for just enough ventilation to keep you alive.
>
> There is little light and no cross-ventilation. The air in a short time becomes thick and foul with your own exhalations. And you are doomed to rebreathe your own emissions. The least that humanity demands is that C. Rajogapalachari should have, if he has not, all the fresh air he can get day and night.

Three weeks after the Mahatma's remarks were published, the Raj moved C.R. to a general ward.

* * *

By then the climax had proved to be a stunning anti-climax. On February 13, at his second interview, C.R. learnt from Ramaswami Naicker that Mahatma had called off the Bardoli offensive.

What had happened?

On February 5 a small police party with little ammunition fired at a procession of non-cooperators in an obscure place called Chauri Chaura in eastern U.P. When their ammunition was exhausted the policemen took refuge in their outpost. A violent section in the procession set fire to the outpost and hacked the fleeing constables to pieces. In gruesome enactments twenty-two policemen were killed.

The Mahatma read of the incident in the morning papers of February 8, the day after sending his rejoinder to the Viceroy; the facts were immediately confirmed in a report that arrived from his son Devadas, who was in the U.P. and had visited the scene.

Chauri Chaura hit Gandhi with tremendous force. He felt that through it God had spoken. Though the number of all-India arrests had gone up to 30,000, though Bardoli was eager, the

action had to be cancelled. A voice tempted him to press on, but the Mahatma disobeyed it.

> 'What about your manifesto to the Viceroy and your rejoinder to his reply?' spoke the voice of Satan. It was the bitterest cup of humiliation to drink. 'Surely it is cowardly to withdraw the next day after pompous threats to the Government and promises to the people of Bardoli.' Satan's invitation was to deny truth and, therefore . . to deny God Himself.

'Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so-called defeat,' said Gandhi, who was convinced that 'the cause will prosper by this retreat.'

Thus ended a bid about which the Governor of Bombay at the time, Lord Lloyd, said, 'He (the Mahatma) gave us a scare. Gandhi's was the most colossal experiment in world history, and it came within an inch of succeeding.'

* * *

When he learnt of the stoppage C.R. was dismayed and hurt. 'Victory is nigh,' he had said and believed. There was dark defeat instead. The Mahatma, he thought, had erred. He wrote:

> In spite of my tenderest and most complete attachment to my master and the ideal he stands for, I fail to see why there should be a call for stopping our struggle for birthrights [because of] every distant and unconnected outburst.

'The opponent' would 'glory in our humiliation,' the Mahatma had anticipated. Rousing C.R. from his bed in the early morning of February 15, the Jailor jubilantly told him that 'non-cooperation had gone to sleep' and that 'Gandhi had cried halt to civil disobedience.'

Stung, C.R. counter-attacked and complained bitterly about the violation of a settlement that he and the Superintendent had reached about the treatment of political prisoners.

A despondent C.R. asked himself what 'all the terrible sacrifices that we, non-cooperators, have made' had achieved. 'Self-purification and strengthening.' yes. But this was 'alas, not what the "earth" in us can be satisfied with.'

Fighting his depression, C.R. told himself that 'we have to

carry on many campaigns before we can reach our goal,' and prayed for light. Reflection brought him some assurance. The switch 'from war to peace' might not be logical, and 'with the mass mind a retreat is a great handicap,' yet 'God leads us right where logic may not.' And the news that Gandhi was fasting for five days (in penance for Chauri Chaura) turned C.R.'s unhappiness with the Mahatma into anxiety for his health.

C.R. realised, too, that 'in seclusion and without materials' he could 'not judge well.' Unlike Motilal Nehru and Lajpat Rai, who wrote the Mahatma angry letters from their jails, C.R. refrained from seeking to acquaint Gandhi with his views. He did not know whether the censors would let him; more important, even a General Secretary had no right or duty to advise from prison.

Four months later, after he was free and had gathered facts and perspective, C.R. was to make a wholly different assessment:

> In February last, when the probability of violence stared us in the face, firmly believing in Non-violence as the essential condition of liberation and progress, in spite of every temptation that urged us to advance and fully realising all the losses and risks which sudden halt involved, we deliberately chose to stop our aggressive activities.

* * *

Though he accepted it as a 'privilege,' life in jail tested C.R.'s spirit. In his fellow prisoners and some of the prison servants he found 'devotion and brotherliness' but 'no love such as my heart wants.'

He treasured the stipulated interviews (to which one or more of his boys came) and 'chewed and consumed every line and word' of the monthly letters from his children. At times he was prey, thinking of them, to 'a sudden weakness of heart;' he fought the pangs by comparing his 'insignificant share of suffering' with the deprivation of others.

He referred tenderly in his diary to Manga (without ever naming her) and to his mother:

Somehow my poor mother haunts my mind and sweetens

my thought today. She could not imagine that her fond child, her pride and hope, would be in a common gaol, imprisoned and locked up under a 9 ft. arch. I can fancy to myself all the pleasures of explaining to her the necessity and the beauty of this retirement and this struggle.

Yet another soul there was who has now passed away from this earth, from whose mind too the idea was farthest, that I should ever be in prisons, a fate from which, to her delight and pride, I had saved so many of my clients.

On another occasion he wrote:

Today, as I was at my evening prayer, the sweet music of the village *Nagaswaram* that came from some happy home in the hamlets lying outside the prison wall, brought with it such an irresistible rush of happy recollections that I could not for long get them out. The music of these pipes is to me, and I suppose to every man and woman in this land, a sound that brings on its back a world of sweet recollections, a *vahana* (vehicle) of happy youth, of joy and hope.

These thoughts render me weak. All my strength is needed for the battle, and I cannot aford to let my mind wander thus into the garden of sweet flowers that yield only tears. All that I shall say to my God is, if she is anywhere and is still subject to pleasure and pain, keep her happy and free from pain or sadness; and give me strength to endure and to perform my duties.

As he had written Gandhi, the charkha (sent by a friend) was like a 'live' cellmate; while some 'hard labour' prisoners twisted rope for the Government in their cells, C.R. spun yarn for himself, morning and afternoon, in his.

'What would prison life have been but for the wheel!' he exclaimed in his diary. It made up for his 'ignorance of Sanskrit and music,' which he felt were 'the two greatest defects' in his equipment for prison.

The enforced break enabled C.R. to render into Tamil the 'Trial and Death of Socrates:' this and *A Jail Diary* are his first written works. The latter is a trenchant report of life in one

of the Raj's prisons, apart from being a record of C.R.'s term.

He daily rose at 5.30 a.m. and retired at about 8.30 p.m.; spinning, reading, writing, eating, cleaning the aluminium dishes and the cell, washing his thick *khadi* clothes (which he found taxing) and prayers filled all the time in between. Boils in the legs, asthma, a mosquito-induced fever and stomach disorders harassed him.

For eleven days he was kept in the prison 'hospital;' patients used a space adjoining C.R.'s twelve-bed ward as a general latrine after dark, making the hospital a 'hell at night.' For the last twenty days of his term C.R. lived in a block of sixty-odd political prisoners, a 'sort of halfway house . . into the outer world.'

Talkative warders filling 'the night with noise,' bugs, mosquitoes (stinging 'sharply . . through thick *khaddar*') and, above all, his asthma had given C.R. a number of sleepless nights. On February 17 he wrote:

> Passed a night of real terror . . . Sat up like a ghost, and found some relief in lighting my candle and heating some water on it for sipping. A solitary cell is not the place for asthma . . .

As the weeks passed C.R.'s integrity — and ill-health — produced a change in the way he was treated: his food became better and the prison officials started showing him respect. Nidhan Singh, a Sikh prisoner-cook, was allowed to bring. along with a 'Vande Mataram' greeting, two thin *chapatis* every morning for C.R., instead of the rice-porridge; bread and milk (at mid-day) and milk (or butter-milk) and sago (in the evening) replaced rice and *kolambu*.

On occasion he even had butter and raw tomatoes. 'I never understood the beauty of the taste of simple foodstuff as I do now in prison,' wrote C.R., later also remarking, 'I don't think a prince could enjoy a better breakfast.'

In places in C.R.'s diary Major Anderson, the English Superintendent, is described, not without bitterness, as the Prison King. The King could be brusque at his weekly inspection of prisoners (the 'parade,' as C.R. called it). 'None at all,' was his reply when C.R. once asked if newspapers would be allowed. He was

stringent: an interview had to stop 'at the exact minute.'

With time, however, the Major became 'friendly and considerate;' on his part C.R. shed his resentment and was prepared to concede that 'any limitations that we find in [Anderson's] liberality of conduct are due to interference from above or absence of scope in the codes and rules.'

The respect that prison officials came to have for C.R. was demonstrated during the 'close prison' episode. Many of Vellore's 'hard cases' were placed in the close prison; each morning they were expected to carry their night-pots a distance of some 200 yards. Some of the politicals among them objected to the task on the ground of religious scruple.

When their objections were not heeded, they struck; others joined them in refusing to carry the pots. The jail authorities retaliated by withdrawing the pots (which obliged the prisoners to dirty their cells) and by punishing the offenders with hard labour; those unwilling or unable to perform the severe tasks were placed in fetters.

The Superintendent sought the help of C.R., who urged the politicals to perform the tasks prescribed, unless they had genuine religious difficulties, and the Major to find a way out. His advice was accepted by both parties, and the Superintendent not only cancelled the punishments but moved all the politicals out of the close prison. 'For the way in which this little tempest was calmed,' C.R. offered 'humble and thankful' prayers to God.

Next in rank to Major Anderson was the Jailor. Without provocation he had hit a prisoner, Subba Rao. C.R. asked the Jailor to apologise to the victim, which he did, with witnesses present. On being told by Subba Rao that 'Providence brought about the incident so that it may change the Jailor's heart,' C.R. wrote:

> How beautiful is the path of charity and love, when once we gather wisdom and strength to walk on it . . .

Others, too, exhibited a difference. The acting Jailor 'came and made a long confessional history of his official and private life' to C.R.; and the junior doctor, of whom C.R. had written that he was 'more a jailor than a doctor and more a tyrant than anything else,' dropped entirely 'the manner which was so re-

pulsive.' 'Insults of the grosser variety are gone,' C.R. could say on behalf of the inmates.

Towards his fellow-prisoners C.R. was sympathetic. The politicals, however, were held by him to a code. They had to 'extort the admiration of the ignorant . . and of those at first ill-disposed.' The warders were drawn from a set of ordinary convicts and 'the advent of educated men in prisons should not be a source of disgust or annoyance to . . the poor imprisoned slaves.'

So he disapproved of the defiance over the carrying of pots. 'We would not deserve to go under our leader's flag if we fought to be relieved of such work,' he told the strike leaders. And he was disappointed to find some men insincerely claiming religious scruples. This was letting 'Satan' find his way 'into our fortress.' At least one prisoner admitted his dishonesty to C.R. and resumed the chore.

Shortly after C.R.'s arrival at Vellore, a poor Moplah, tears welling 'from his manly eyes,' had said: 'We feel so cheerful and hopeful when we see big and rich people coming into jail like you.' When he was in 'hospital,' some Moplahs told C.R. that they would gladly serve four more years if that would remit his three months. Besides the Moplahs, whose heavy punishments saddened him, C.R. made other Muslim friends. Of Shafiuk-ur-Rahman of Aligarh he wrote, 'I have not known a better bred young man or a more self-restrained . . soul.'

He valued, too, the chance, after his transfer to the big ward, to come 'in the closest contact with some of the best Andhra types.' Andhra had sent more prisoners, more recruits to 'the National Army,' than the Tamil country, he noted; and he found the news about the Andhras 'invigorating.'

There were also the Sikhs, including Nidhan Singh, 'the indefatigable, decorous, brave and patriotic Sikh prisoner' who took seriously ill before C.R.'s release, and the 'cheerful' Hira Singh, serving a life sentence for 'conspiracy' and for trying to escape from Hazaribagh Jail where, 'for six years . . he says, he never saw the sun.' C.R. 'promised to write to Hira Singh's brother Ram Singh.'

* * *

Occupants of neighbouring cells were vividly described by C.R.:

> Just now there is a young Mussalman lad of Ambur, sturdy, bright, and handsome, as made by God, and condemned .. for some outburst of animal spirits, some assault in company with friends, as he says, or it may be for a more serious deviation from the law ... A heavy wooden door is drawn across the iron bars of his cell door and bolted, so that God's light and air may not reach him ...
>
> On the other side .. are four young men awaiting death by the gallows ... always sitting close against the cell door, for it is the nearest approach to freedom and light ... They watch, and sometimes, I believe, jeer at me in natural jealousy, as I move about without a guard, enjoying comparative luxuries such as going to the tap to bath, or wash my dish, or bring water, and pass in front of them, a Brahmin .. clean, and in white clothes, as if to mock at their condition.

Four condemned prisoners, with whose 'foul abuse and oft-repeated attempts at humour and .. prayers of desperation' C.R. had become familiar, were hanged during his term. C.R. had drafted an unsuccessful mercy petition for one of them, and all four had become part of his life:

> Appadurai, the butler, is to be hanged tomorrow. Night after night, I used to hear the chatter of gallows friendship. 'The Sepoy' would cry 'Appavu! Appavu!, Nagiah, Nagiah!' and they would carry on a conversation, each from his own cell... 'Nagiah!' ceased for some months past: for the poor fellow was hanged one fine morning. For some days, the leader in the conversation, the Sepoy, was talking of Nagiah being in Heaven and eating his full meal with God — eating is the chief event in prison ... Then, after two or three days there was nothing more about Nagiah. From tomorrow 'Appavu!' also will disappear likewise.

The Sepoy, too, disappeared (facing death bravely, C.R. was told) but not before the jail authorities, prodded by C.R., had given him the food he wanted.

The lack of notice and of religious assistance before execution concerned C.R.:

> Without ministration of religion or prayer or any thoughts of God [the condemned prisoner] is seized one morning when he does not expect anything like it, and taken away, arms bound, and there at the gallows his legs are fettered and a cap put over his head and in a few minutes the platform goes down and he is despatched . . .
>
> The jail authorities won't give a single thought to whether Appadurai may not make peace with God before he yields up his life. That is not their concern. They are concerned only with getting the execution done without any hitch on the day fixed.

The bureaucracy was scathingly described:

> What does the bureaucrat care for religious ministration or prayer unless there comes a distinct G.O. about it when, of course, it will be scrupulously attended to . . . In fact, the grand principle . . in a bureaucracy, is that only the lowest grade shall be fully responsible, and all the others shall, as far as possible, be free from blame . . . The ascending order of irresponsibility is the life-principle of bureaucracy.

Observing the work exacted from the convicts and the absence of any attempt to reform them, C.R. called the Jail 'a mere factory for slave labour, giving the absolute minimum of food, and intending to get maximum work.' 'The slaves,' he went on, 'are not owned, but hired for a limited period. So there is no abiding interest in their health or morals . . . '

In the solitude of prison, away from the heat and dust of struggle, C.R. could think calmly and listen to the promptings of conscience. A clarifying of the mind and a purifying of the spirit were Vellore's gifts to him. His view regarding non-cooperation with an alien government was confirmed:

> To refuse to cooperate in the process of reducing ourselves to foreign rule . . is the natural law and instinct. We forgot this law of national life, and cast our minds into the terrible slough of unfelt slavery.

If non-cooperation was right, so was non-violence and the elimination of hate:

> The purest determination and freedom from all stain of anger on our part is necessary to produce the beautiful effect of suffering and love.

That C.R.'s own soul was generous to the antagonist is revealed in passages in the *Diary*:

> The music and din of the wedding in the Jailor's house is sweetening the air as I sit praying in my cell . . . I fancy I see the busy crowd of men, women and children hurrying up and down and helping to make the noise and happiness of the wedding. What a sweet world full of love and happiness! If we but took care to live in God's ways, how happy we could all be. Can't we teach every man and woman and child to pray for more love and yet more love being sent down. . ?

> I regret many of the unkind and uncharitable thoughts that I have allowed myself about these unfortunate jail officials without giving them a sufficient chance to change their attitude or create a better understanding between us.

Turning hardship into spiritual richness, C.R. passed the Vellore test. And he remained humble. He wrote:

> In spite of strenuous prayers the vision of the true God has not yet come to me. It is a hard task to keep the wandering mind steady, and even after that the mind does not find its real objective but dwells on family, self, friends and country, and formulates desires instead of purifying itself.

A passage in the *Diary* was often to be quoted, for its foresight, after freedom:

> We all ought to know that Swaraj will not at once or, I think, even for a long time to come, be better government or greater happiness for the people. Elections and their corruptions, injustice, and the power and tyranny of wealth and inefficiency of administration will make a hell of life as soon as freedom is given to us. Men will look regretfully back to

> the old regime of comparative justice, and efficient, peaceful, more or less honest administration. The only thing gained will be that as a race we will be saved from dishonour and subordination.

* * *

C.R.'s release was preceded by an event he apprehended — the arrest of the Mahatma.

Early in March the AICC ratified the stoppage announced by Gandhi, but not without murmurings against his actions. Some Congressmen voiced doubts about the policy of civil disobedience. Finding non-cooperation irksome and disconcerted by the abrupt ceasing of the aggressive campaign, a section of the Khilafat leadership withdrew its loyalty from Gandhi and offered it to the Raj.

Emboldened by the weakening in the nationalist ranks, the Raj finally laid hands on the Mahatma. He was arrested at his Sabarmati Ashram on March 10 and tried for sedition in Ahmedabad. Pleading guilty, Gandhi said that preaching the Government's overthrow had become his creed and duty. Judge Broomfield sentenced him for six years.

In the 'political' block to which he had been transferred, C.R. was able, it would seem, to learn of outside developments. On March 12 he wrote in his *Diary*:

> We had news . . at noon today that Gandhiji was arrested. The news was received fairly calmly, and we resolved on a 36-hour's fast and prayer.

Joint Hindu-Muslim prayers were held in the evening. Non-political convicts 'instinctively came and joined.' Next day, his release due in a week, C. R. wrote:

> What is the country going to do now after Gandhiji's arrest? . . What can I do outside, with every fellow-worker and Mahatmaji in prison? I wish my term had been longer.

It was on the day of his release, March 20, that C.R. heard of Gandhiji's six-year sentence. His *Diary* entry was:

> Learnt that Pilate gave six years S.I. to Christ. God gave

us a man to lead us, but the Government claim the right to take him away . . . Their will be done!

Parting from his jail 'family' was sad, indeed painful, for C.R. He left the prison at about ten in the morning. Major Anderson followed him through the gates and asked if the jail did not look better from outside.

'The inside is not so bad as it is thought to be,' replied C.R.
'Don't come again,' said Major Anderson.

CHAPTER NINE

Hero of Gaya

TO set eyes on the Mahatma was the freed C.R.'s greatest desire. He and Devadas were the first to interview the prisoner Gandhi. On April 1, through the bars of the heavy gates of Poona's Yeravda prison, C.R. saw 'the old and familiar source of inspiration and joy' emerging from an inner barrier; his 'heart leapt.'

Located on the first floor of the tower at the entrance, the Superintendent's office afforded a view of the large jailyard. First the Mahatma and then C.R. and Devadas were led up the steps to it.

The 'Prison King' sat in his throne; next to him, also seated, was the Jailor. The prisoner and his interviewers stood on the grey slabs of stone. That his father was obliged to be on his feet while the two officials sat comfortably in their chairs reduced 22-year-old Devadas to tears.

Cross-examining the officials and the Mahatma on his treatment in jail, C.R. prised out facts that Gandhi had chosen to ignore. He had a flimsy blanket for a mattress and was using his clothes and some books as a pillow; he was locked inside his solitary cell at night and made to petition Government for religious books; and he was denied newspapers and periodicals.

The Mahatma said that he did not want the press to refer to his prison conditions. 'You should trust my judgment in the matter,' countered C.R.

C.R. gave his findings to the press, remarking that the Raj's officers did not realise their 'privilege of being custodians of a man greater than the Kaisar, greater than Napolean . . greater than the biggest prisoners of war. . .' His account 'roused,'

according to the Bombay Government, 'the indignation of the Indian Press as a whole.'

The regime tried to refute C.R.'s allegations; his rejoinder was devastating, and in a private letter to New Delhi the provincial government seemed to admit that C.R. had won the debate. In any case, the treatment of Gandhi improved, and C.R. was thus able to do for the Mahatma in Yeravda what the latter had done for him in Vellore.

Before the month ended C.R. commenced editing *Young India,* an arrangement proposed before his arrest by the Mahatma. Though the journal continued to be printed in Ahmedabad, the editor was functioning from Salem.

The freed General Secretary was expected to give a lead. On his release *Young India* had asked for his 'help to steer the national bark along the right and proper course' and added:

> Many a crucial problem is awaiting his attention at this critical moment... We fear he cannot any longer confine his activities to Madras alone. He will not find India the same country as he left her three months ago.

India was confused and considerably demoralised. The confusion was the result of Gandhi's decision to call of the battle at a moment when he held the advantage. The demoralisation flowed from his arrest.

Just before his arrest Gandhi had suggested a fresh strategy — a switch to a phase of preparation, of training through constructive work.

Congressmen, he said, were 'now bound not to rush to civil disobedience but to settle down to the quiet work of construction. I would urge them to be indifferent to the clamour for immediate action.' He counselled that 'we should . . concentrate all our energy on the tasteless but health-giving economic and social reform.'

Yet *khadi,* Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of drink and untouchability — items in the constructive programme — were unexciting alternatives to revolt, and many Congressmen craved, despite Gandhi's advice, for disobedience, even if it had to be of a limited kind.

Some others, however, questioned the practicability of the whole policy of disobedience and non-cooperation. Indirectly at

first and later openly, they proposed a return to the pre-Gandhian technique of constitutional protest, of agitation within the rules of the Raj.

To C.R. the latter was unthinkable. But his heart could not accept the Mahatma's recommendation of the constructive programme as the sole policy; he hoped for early demonstrations of disobedience, even if it was obvious that these could not now wrest Swaraj.

Not hesitating to use its unexpectedly strong position, New Delhi made a number of fresh arrests in the first half of 1922. Editors and publishers were among the victims. There were other restrictions; C.R. was ordered, a few days after his release, not to take part in 'a mass meeting to communicate Gandhi's message' in Trichy.

His return had restored 'the motive power for the movement' in the south. To the provincial Congress he proposed that 'if normal Congress work is rendered impossible or extremely difficult by orders of magistrates,' civil disobedience should be considered as part of the reply.

In his eve-of-arrest utterances the Mahatma had discouraged even this 'defensive disobedience.' However, C.R. thought that 'enlisting of volunteers in large numbers, picketing [of liquor shops] . . and boycott of foreign cloth, if carried on vigorously, will supply an exciting programme when interfered with by the Government of India.'

Doubtless influenced by his view, the provinces of Madras and Andhra were, according to an intelligence report, 'in favour of defensive civil disobedience on a very large scale.'

Shorn of its numerous imprisoned members, the AICC met in Lucknow in June, Motilal Nehru, just released, and C.R. guiding its proceedings. The constructive programme was advocated—and a Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee (CDEC) was asked to tour the country and explore the possibilities of disobedience.

Besides Nehru and C.R., this Committee included Hakim Ajmal Khan, Acting President of Congress (Das was in prison), Vithalbhai Patel, Dr. M. A. Ansari, a respected Muslim figure, and Kasturiranga Iyengar.

In *Young India* C.R. was using the language of war:

> The demand for individual civil disobedience is becoming irresistible . . the injunctions (discouraging disobedience) issued by Mahatmaji . . are straining the loyalty of Congressmen to the utmost.

The Government was one 'which we openly seek to overthrow.' 'We have challenged the Government to a mortal combat.' Yet could disobedience be launched afresh? The rank and file were exhausted. Moreover, influential voices were beginning to question disobedience.

At the end of April Mrs. C. R. Das (with the approval, it was said, of her imprisoned but accessible husband) had suggested that non-cooperators should consider capturing, 'if necessary, even Provincial councils, where . . their task would be to obstruct all work, good or bad.'

C.R. had instantly attacked the suggestion, calling it fatal, but at Lucknow and during the CDEC tour it became clear that a weighty group would press council-entry as a programme.

Among the pro-council men were all-out cooperators, 'responsive' cooperators (who would base their strategy on the Government's performance) and wholesale 'wreckers from within.' What they had in common was a coolness for the constructive programme and for disobedience. Together they proposed an invasion of the councils.

It was claimed that the councillors could exercise a moral influence on the regime, C.R., whose chief concern now was to combat the new doctrine, pointed out that only cooperators could wield such an influence, not wreckers, and warned that participation in councils would, on the other hand, expose Congressmen to 'the dangers and the temptations which experience has taught us to dread.' He predicted that wreckers would end up as cooperators.

'Those who do not believe in . . non-cooperation,' suggested C.R., 'should form themselves into a distinct and separate party (within the Congress) and work along the lines of their own faith.' He reminded Congressmen of the Mahatma's words written the previous December:

> I would welcome an efficient and able organisation containing men who believe in using Government institutions and finding what warmth they can give them.

What the pro-council faction wanted, however, was to capture the Congress, and not to function merely as a minority party. A battle for the Congress thus ensued between the 'pro-changers', who wished to enter the councils, and the 'no-changers', led by C.R., who wanted to adhere to the boycott.

* * *

For some months the CDEC tour took the heat out of the controversy. It enabled C.R. to visit, for the first time, Sind in the west and Assam in the east.

From his 'cabin in the steamboat as it throbs in its course up the great . . Brahmaputra,' he wrote that 'Assam with its forest-clad hills and broad-bosomed Brahmaputra is a beautiful country,' and added that 'Assam's greatest beauty is the family loom'.

He contrasted the 'sisters in Assam . . plying the shuttle and making garments for themselves and their children' with the 'high-born ladies' elsewhere in India 'laboriously picking and choosing from the silks exhibited in the bazaar.'

Travelling did not affect his *Young India* commitment. Often he would send four or five pieces a week. And the range of his comments was wide.

'What became of the Bombs?' he asked, and answered, 'It is the Mahatma's hold . . and the truths he . . drove home into the mind of India that have . . made secret crime a thing to be ashamed of.'

Non-violence would be a contribution to the world:

> To get Home Rule somehow may be an achievement so far as we are concerned, but to wrest our birthright by non-violence will emancipate the world for ever . . .

While confined in Vellore, C.R. had been dismayed by the Chauri Chaura halt. Three months after his release, having absorbed Gandhi's reflections on Chauri Chaura, C.R. appeared to concede that the Mahatma had been right.

Writing of 'the heights to which [Gandhi's] strong soul rose in those storm-tossed days,' he made a Gandhian diagnosis of the reason for failure. While physical hurt was not caused or contemplated by the vast majority of Congress troops, there was hate, anger and a wish to embarrass the enemy. True non-violence did not prevail.

On the ground that 'the aim of the Congress is worldly,' the Mahatma's emphasis on non-violence and self-suffering was being criticised. C.R. countered that 'religion and morality have . . a place in everything, in commerce, in art, even in science, certainly in all human activities, including politics.'

Non-cooperators, C.R. advised, should put at ease the cooperators, the European planters, the capitalists and the small minorities who seemed to find security in the Raj. They should keep their 'faith and politics intact while striving to make others look upon us not as wolves but as friends that may be trusted.'

The note of tolerance is also evident in C.R.'s remarks on 'Indianisation' of the services, an oft-repeated demand. He thought that it was 'a mistake to lay undue emphasis on . . Indianisation.'

> The self-respect of India does not depend on the colour . . of its officers. It depends on the complete control which the representatives of the people of India have over the officers . . . Then it matters little whether [the bureaucracy] is composed of Englishmen or Scotchmen or Indians.

Here C.R. was anticipating his own role in the late thirties when as a democratically chosen Premier of the presidency he would utilise without hesitation the services of British officers.

Also being urged was a boycott of all British goods, to be accompanied by increased imports from other countries. To C.R. this was 'the road from one prison to another, not to emancipation.' Moreover, singling out British goods for a ban would suggest malice.

All this reflected the thinking of the Mahatma, whose release was C.R.'s chief human desire in 1922. The thought that Gandhi 'at the age of 53 [had] to rot in jail for six long years' agonised C.R.

'What is outraged love doing?' he asked, and exhorted Indians 'to marshall their invincible strength' to accomplish the

wish to see Gandhi free.

As the Mahatma's interpreter, C.R. was asked if physical force in self-defence was permissible. His answer was that whereas a 'full satyagrahi' might never use force even in private defence, others could legitimately use it in strictly private matters and to protect one's dependents. 'No one may surrender to wrong,' but no Congressman may commit violence for political objects.

Joined by Mrs. Besant, the Liberals had opposed non-cooperation and urged a constitutional course. They seemed to think, wrote C.R., as if 'it were only a bucketful of water that was needed to put out the fire.'

'Constitutional agitation . . [was] a kind of parasite that wants always someone else to live upon.' Non-cooperation was the force behind constitutionalism. 'We should not grudge it if we are described as a growing menace that should be checked by the speedy grant of all that cooperators demand.'

Pointing out that the public debt was 'increasing at a pace that should alarm all honest administrators,' C.R. made the radical proposal that Congress should 'give notice that any further loans floated on the sanction of the present . . sham legislatures of India will be repudiated.'

The aim of the Congress was freedom within the Empire, if possible, and outside the Empire, if necessary. The former meant Dominion Status. In C.R.'s view there were 'two great impediments for Swaraj within the Empire' — the 'spirit of inequality under which Indians in the white colonies of the Empire suffered' and the risk that the Commonwealth might drag India 'into wars with . . the Muslim States of Asia.'

Yet he was ready to contemplate Dominion Status if the blocks were removed. With their removal, 'membership in the Commonwealth will mean nothing more than an honourable alliance.'

In December 1929, along with the rest of the Congress, Gandhi and C.R. were to adopt Complete Independence as the national goal, following a campaign spearheaded by Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru. Yet in 1947 Nehru, supported by C.R., was to accept Dominion Status. And in the fifties and the sixties he was to defend India's membership of the Commonwealth, using a logic similar to that employed by C.R. in 1922.

In September came the year's first Hindu-Muslim riots — in Multan in the Punjab. While pointing out that 'the outrages have no manner of connection with any political incident,' C.R. wrote that 'the whole nation is our charge and not only our organisation.' And he warned that 'the spirit of vengeance clothed in the tempting robes of justice will invite people to complete the havoc.'

The same month, however, saw an example of brave non-violence provided by the Sikhs. A reformist section, the Akalis, sought to rid Sikh shrines of corrupt *mahants* (abbots).

At the Guru-ka-Bagh shrine, ten miles from Amritsar, a group of Akalis were felling trees for the sanctuary's communal kitchen — a traditional practice. Following a complaint by the *mahant*, who resented their presence, they were beaten by the police.

Another group that went to fell wood was also beaten — to wound but not imprison was the Government's policy. Batch after batch went to fell wood and peacefully accepted the beating. The exercise ceased only when a new leaseholder of the lands gave the Akalis the right to collect fuel.

The terror of imprisonment had already been overcome by thousands. Now, said C.R., the Akalis had shown by their forbearance — which in C.R.'s view was natural to the martial Sikhs — that the terror of torture too could be conquered.

Turkish developments were partly pleasing but chiefly disconcerting. Kemal Pasha defeated the Greeks and acknowledged the help nationalist India had given with her posture. Many Indians shared what C.R. called the 'joy of the East in finding itself strong,' but Kemal had also deposed the Sultan and abolished the office of Khalifa. Swept away along with the Khalifa was the *Khilafat* question.

Striving to salvage what was left, C.R. drew attention to the fact that the Sultan had become a puppet of the British. Indians should help, he wrote, 'to restore to strength and freedom the State which is Islam's real protector,' and not be 'concerned with who the temporal officers or the religious dignitaries are.'

He pointed out, too, that Europeans were still governing Islam's holy places which Turkey (a Muslim power, even if non-Arab) once ruled. Still, the triumph of Turkey on the one hand

and unhappiness with European control over Muslim areas on the other did not add up to the emotion contained in the rallying cry, '*Khilafat* in danger!' A major fuel for the nationalist drive had disappeared.

The CDEC submitted its report on October 30. C.R., fighting a recurrence of asthmatic spasms, was unhappy that 'instead of merely investigating the possibilities of civil disobedience,' the Committee 'took up an absorbing controversy' over council-entry.

Unanimous in the view that the country was not ripe for mass civil disobedience, permitting limited civil disobedience but not giving a steer as to where and how it might be tried, the CDEC was evenly divided on the question of council-entry.

Vithalbhai Patel, a council enthusiast from the start, was supported by Hakim Ajmal Khan, and, to C.R.'s disappointment, by Motilal Nehru. Das had been released in August. Later in the month, 'when some of the prominent men of India met in Calcutta in connection with the wedding of [Das's] second daughter,' Motilal Nehru 'was weaned away from civil disobedience and converted to council-entry.'

For a while C.R. feared that Dr. Ansari, too, would desert him, but in the end Ansari, along with Kasturiranga Iyengar, joined C.R. in advising that the council-boycott should continue.

On one issue, the proposed boycott of all British goods, which he opposed, C.R. found himself in a minority of one in the Committee; he felt, all the same, that he 'would be doing grave wrong if [he] did not stand by Mahatmaji's oft-emphasised view.'

C.R. now regretted that Congressmen — himself included — had not concentrated upon the constructive programme proposed by Gandhi. The urge for stimulating action had led to a futile search for a programme of disobedience and a time-wasting debate regarding council-entry.

And he added:

> We have been working too much at the top, we should go down to the base. The villages should be the scene of our activities . . A network of . . rural organisations functioning in the villages without any connection with Government will be the true foundation for a civil revolt.

As C.R. saw it, the constructive programme did not merely mean social reform. It was a 'direct, deliberate preparation for political action.'

* * *

The conflict over councils was now nearing its climax, Das, Motilal Nehru and Vithalbhai Patel leading the attack on the boycott. The valuable support of Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad was available to C.R., but the latter had to assume the leadership of the Gandhian forces.

Das, Nehru and Vithalbhai were men with resources and of acknowledged stature. Das, in addition, was Congress President. C.R., on the other hand, was a comparatively recent figure on the national platform, handicapped by a small-town background.

Though he was a General Secretary, there was no 'bloc' or faction that he could command and he possessed but little influence on moneyed men. But he had *Young India* and he owned a sharp intellect.

His arguments were not easy to refute. Elections, C.R. pointed out, would cause 'a fatal drain on resources,' drawing off the funds, the men, the time, the energy and the talent meant for constructive work (and for preparation for the next round of battle). They would also have the effect of dividing communities; competition for seats and offices would lead to the exploitation of caste and communal feelings.

Council advocates represented, reminded C.R., 'the whole gamut of political views'—from cooperation to conscientious objection to the oath of allegiance required of council members. They had no common policy except to have the bar regarding councils lifted.

The bureaucracy had ample powers to rule through certificates and ordinances; the legislature's assent was a decoration which the Raj was prepared to dispense with. 'Wrecking' the councils by entering them would be an attempt to tear the outer form of the Raj while 'leaving the reality to flourish.'

Moreover, said C.R., members elected to councils on the Congress ticket might ignore or defy Congress mandates; there could be 'a gradual corruption and disintegration of the Congress organisation.' Besides, elections would 'surely place the policy

of the Congress in the hands of the wealthy and their friends.'

The President, Das, was 'our eminent and trusted leader;' he was 'grieved,' said C.R., to have to campaign against Das's considered advice.' Yet he was forced by 'a compelling sense of duty.'

Restricting the clash to the realm of ideas, C.R. asked his supporters to desist from making 'base insinuations' against men like Das. 'Strict adherence to truth in speaking as well as in reporting what others say [was] a sacred duty.'

The first trial of strength took place in November, when the AICC met for six days in Calcutta. An array of lawyers and tried leaders combined to oppose council-boycott on different and at times contradictory grounds. C.R. made a powerful defence and it was clear that the majority was with him. But a decision was postponed to the end-December annual session of Congress at Gaya.

Das and Nehru mounted an impressive effort to bring their supporters to Gaya. A letter from Nehru to Satyamurti — the latter, Srinivasa Iyengar and Rangaswami Iyengar were the chief advocates of council-entry in the south — gives an idea of their bid:

> It is now time to work hard to see that persons in favour of running elections are returned as delegates in large numbers . . . If we can count on the support of even one-fifth of the delegates from Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Karnataka, victory will be certain.

On the sandy banks of the Phalgun, not far from the Bodhi tree under which, 2,500 years earlier, Gautama had become the Buddha, the delegates gathered. A profusion of white tents, a cluster set apart for the leaders, had sprung up to house them. The temporary settlement was named Swarajyapuri. Rajendra Prasad and Braj Kishore Prasad, Bihar's leaders, 'discharged their duties as hosts' with 'unfailing sweet temper.'

Lodged in a tent among the mass of the delegates (and not among the 'leaders'), the fortyfour-year-old C.R., bespectacled and dressed in a white *kurta* and dhoti with a folded *angavastram* draped over one shoulder, was a focus of attention. So were President Das and Motilal Nehru.

Discussion went on for days. Formal meetings were followed each night by informal but often decisive talks at the different tents. C.R. would go to Das's and Motilal Nehru's; Nehru came to his. Vallabhbhai was merciless towards the pro-changers at these informal get-togethers, not sparing his older brother Vithalbhai. But the no-changers' hopes of triumph rested on C.R.

For his unflinching loyalty to Gandhi and his programme, and because of a similarity in physical appearance, he was satirised by some opponents as the 'Deputy Mahatma'. Gaya as a whole, however, called him Rajaji, a form probably coined by Mahadev Desai, the Mahatma's secretary.

An early issue was the proposal to boycott British goods. Many of the no changers were sufficiently embittered by the Raj's policies to support this departure from Gandhi's view. The CDEC had voted five to one for the boycott. But C.R. fought pluckily against it, and the Subjects Committee voting, though going against him, was surprisingly close: 146 to 129.

At the open session the voting was reversed. C.R. was to cherish this result, describing it at the time as 'proof that the nation holds fast to the teachings of its imprisoned leader in spite of every temptation.' Rainy, Chief Secretary of Bihar-Orissa, informing Delhi of C.R.'s victory, reported that his words against a boycott of British goods had 'created a deep impression.'

He easily carried Gaya on repudiation of debts. His scheme had been called 'clearly Bolshevik,' 'immoral' and 'outrageous.' It was 'immoral and outrageous for any government to borrow beyond the capacity of the people it purports to govern,' retorted C.R. He quoted the Finance Member in Delhi who had admitted a large accumulated deficit (Rs. 92 crores) and a fresh current deficit (Rs. 32 crores) and had said, 'The turning is nowhere visible.'

'The solid wall of military expenditure,' claiming Rs. 62 crores in 1922-23, was to C.R. another reason for repudiation. Clarifying that only future loans would be repudiated, he said that borrowings 'till now . . will be deemed a lawful charge.'

Came the council question. Gaya heard the powerful oratory of Das and Nehru. Vithalbhai, Srinivasa Iyengar and Satyamurti ably supported them. Not really expected to win, C.R. countered.

Courteous, quick-witted and sure of his stand, he was in

compelling form. A voice from the audience urged him once, while he was speaking, to move forward in order to be seen better. 'I cannot show my back to the revered President,' replied C.R.

But he could cause the defeat of the President's policy. Das and Nehru were worsted in debate and votes. C.R.'s resolution retaining the council boycott was passed by 1,740 votes against 890.

'Great was their (the no-changers') enthusiasm and the hero of the day was the Madras leader, Mr. Rajagopalachari,' commented Subhas Bose. And P. C. Ghosh, a future Chief Minister of Bengal, observed, 'Mr. Rajagopalachari became the leader of the Congress at Gaya.'

Chapter Ten

Setback

'THE limelight into which the votes have forced me does not suit my temperament,' wrote C.R. Liking it or not, he stayed in prominence for another year, striving to protect the Congress from the fascination of councils. In the end he was unsuccessful.

Das and Motilal Nehru, untiring council crusaders, fired their first shot even before the Gaya delegates dispersed. A new party would be formed, they announced, christened the Swaraj Party, with Das as President and Nehru as Secretary. It would remain in the Congress, whose presidentship Das resigned, and aim to capture the councils.

Though troubled by the knowledge that some colleagues regarded his stand as obstinate, C.R. claimed that he stood 'acquitted of guilt before my own conscience.' He seemed, however, to expect the public's mood to alter. 'Do I not know,' he wrote, 'that the very majority that might adore today would ruthlessly condemn tomorrow?'

Abul Kálam Azad, released in January, made an immediate compromise bid; he was aided by Jawaharlal Nehru, also lately freed. 'Forced to accept the revolt as a fact and make terms with the rebels,' C.R. and his friends Vallabhbhai and Rajendra Prasad asked the AICC, meeting in Allahabad at the end of February 1923, to accept a truce.

C.R. moved and Motilal Nehru seconded a resolution calling on both sides to suspend, until April 30, all propaganda for or against councils.

Accompanied by Rajendra Prasad and Devadas Gandhi, a now well-known 'Rajaji' toured the Central Provinces, Bihar,

Bengal, Punjab and Sind to give a fillip to the constructive programme. Large crowds heard him, his words translated into Hindi or Urdu by Rajendra Prasad or Devadas. Years later, with characteristic modesty, Rajendra Prasad was to recall:

> It was my privilege to join him and also translate his speeches . . which, while giving me an opportunity of learning a lot, also saved me the trouble of delivering . . speeches of my own, which, I doubt not, would have fallen flat after his brilliant performance.

By April 30 some progress was made: Rs. 12 lakhs — rather than the Rs. 25 lakhs aimed at — were collected for the Congress; and over 10,000 individuals were enlisted as Congress volunteers — as against the target of 50,000. The volunteers were ready for reform or for disobedience, if the latter was to be resumed.

In Jubbulpore, in the Central Provinces, the travelling group sparked off a notable feature of 1923 — the flag satyagraha. The municipal committee wanted to hoist the national flag over the Town Hall to welcome the visitors; the District Magistrate vetoed the plan.

After C.R. spoke to the thousands 'who had angrily gathered,' local citizens resolved to disobey the fiat. 'The Flag calls You,' C.R. enjoined in *Young India,* adding:

> We cannot get a cleaner or a more beautiful battlefield . . . We should get ready for a severe struggle round this flag.

Peacefully ascending the well-guarded Town Hall tower was, however, a problem. A month later the Central Provinces regime offered a simpler opportunity for disobedience: it banned a street procession with a flag in Nagpur.

A defiance campaign was organised by Jamnalal Bajaj, a rich Marwari who was a trusted disciple and generous backer of the Mahatma. C.R. assisted through *Young India* and by enlisting an impressive batch of satyagrahis from the south. Flag in hand, hundreds from all over India trooped to Nagpur, where the Government arrested them by stretching a section of the Criminal Procedure Code meant for vagrants.

Taken into custody in June, Bajaj was awarded 18 months,

rigorous, and a Rs. 3,000 fine. To realise the sum his car was attached but not a man in Nagpur would buy it; it was sold, finally, in Kathiawar. Bajaj, said C.R., 'had tasted .. the sweets of domestic happiness, wealth .. [and] friendship with the great and powerful,' and yet had 'plunged into the thick of the fight like the humblest worker.'

After Bajaj's arrest the leadership fell on Vallabhbhai, who had based himself in Nagpur. The provincial government admitted that 'more volunteers than were anticipated have been attracted by civil disobedience at Nagpur.' The end of the struggle found the Governor entering into an oral agreement with Vallabhbhai and his brother Vithalbhai.

The right of the Congress to carry the flag along a route earlier banned was granted; Congress agreed to declare after one procession that the satyagraha was over. This done, all prisoners were to be released and allowed to participate in a final procession.

In a private message to Peel, Secretary of State, the Viceroy appeared to concede the satyagraha's success. 'The fact that the Congress representatives were admitted to parley,' wrote Reading, 'and that terms were concluded with them, has been advanced .. as evidence that persistent pressure on Government is not devoid of results.' However, the Congress was to wait till 1928 before it could again apply the pressure of disobedience.

Meanwhile, the Hindu-Muslim relationship was souring, Campaigns of conversion and re-conversion had divided the communities, especially in the Punjab.

C.R. urged the Hindus to tarry:

> Hinduism, . . . a non-proselytising religion, is flapping its wings in Punjab and has frightened Islam. 'If you may fly, why not I?' says she. 'Yes, you may,' says Islam. But it is consent extracted by logic; all the time Islam is grieved.

Early in May he wrote:

> [we have] earned the positive illwill of thousands of Mussalmans.

> Why do I reproach only the Hindu folly, and not point my finger of complaint at the Mussalman? . . Because I am not so pure . . as I must be before claiming to chastise him. I am a Hindu and have a . . birthright to speak harshly to my Hindu brethren.

The Raj repealed the Rowlatt Act in 1923, but offended public opinion on two issues: salt and Kenya. Against the wishes of the Assembly the tax on salt was doubled. C.R. called the act 'a calculated insult to the self-respect of the nation.'

Disapproval of measures to prohibit Indian immigrants in Kenya from buying space in the country's Highlands was shown by a nation-wide *hartal* in August. But no battle was offered on either question; the emotions of those who could have given a fight were engaged in Hindu-Muslim and intra-Congress quarrels.

The Mahatma was missed; by none more, perhaps, than by C.R., who went to the prison gates in Poona in April to welcome Shankerlal Banker, released after spending over a year with Gandhi in Yeravada. Banker brought no advice from the Mahatma.

Largely unaware of happenings outside his prison, the Mahatma was in any case resolved against counselling from jail. Nonetheless, meeting Banker cheered C.R., who found that his friend's soul had been 'polished by a masterhand' during his 13-month obligatory retreat in Gandhi's company.

An intriguing picture of the defence policy of a free India was given by C.R. in April. The country would be protected, he wrote, by

> One crore of men and women within . . ten years . . . Not a standing army drawing pay from our taxes, but . . employed in their peaceful avocations until they are required for defence.
>
> Our ambition is not that India should be a great military nation. As long as the rest of the world is wicked we must be strong ready to defend ourselves; but our flag will still carry the emblem of the Charkha and bear the message of peace to all the world.

In July C.R. learnt that because of his 1921 conviction he had

been expelled from the Masonic Lodge by its District Grand Master, who happened to be one of the Raj's senior officers in the south. Lodge members in Salem had made unavailing protests. Some resigned to show solidarity with C.R.

The expulsion was hurtful. C.R. answered by saying that he was glad to be freed from one of 'the governing caste's many instruments for political domination.'

The internal truce of Congress had ended on April 30. Stimulated by the start of the Nagpur satyagraha, C.R. had proposed a few days earlier that the 10,000 new volunteers of Congress be led into action in defensive civil disobedience. But the idea never got off the ground.

The Swarajists had used the truce well. In May a majority in the AICC backed a resolution disallowing propaganda against councils. This was a violation of Gaya and produced a strong reaction in C.R.

'We cannot submit,' he declared, and added, "All Congressmen and Committees have to decide whether they will accept the AICC's decision or the Congress resolution.' He, Vallabhbhai, Rajendra Prasad and three others resigned from the Working Committee; a new executive was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Ansari.

Though accused of 'unexplainable bigotry,' which, it was alleged, had 'rent the country into twain,' C.R. refused to yield. He would not bury the technique of the imprisoned Mahatma which destiny had entrusted into his care. *Young India* published categorical words from him:

> We have worked that policy (constitutionalism) for forty years, and at no time did it seriously threaten the life of the Bureaucracy. The only policy and the only programme that frightened the British lion are the policy and programme that we adopted at Calcutta in 1920 . . .
>
> If we have not yet succeeded in getting up the requisite capacity to carry it out . . it is a problem of work and time. It is not for us to throw away the new weapons and take to bows and arrows again.

Defying the Bombay resolution, C.R. opened the June 28

issue of *Young India* with the plain words, 'Don't vote.' The Swarajists, meanwhile, were placarding the country with calls to vote for them in the November elections.

In the south, where, as elsewhere, Das drew good crowds, the election campaign widened the Brahmin/non-Brahmin gulf; C.R. had warned of this consequence before Gaya. The *Hindu* thought that Das's visit had helped 'introduce the communal canker into Congress politics.'

Salem was on Das's itinerary; at a reception he and C.R. surprised onlookers by embracing each other. But the exchange of fire did not cease. C.R. used, in *Young India,* ammunition that the *Manchester Guardian* had supplied him. The British daily had prophesied that, contrary to its 'wrecking' proclamations, 'Mr. Das's new party will shortly be cooperating with government on the lines laid down for any sane opposition.'

C.R.'s fight-back had some effect. When it met again in July in Nagpur, the AICC refused, after a speech by him, to censure the Provincial Congress Committees of Tamil Nad, Karnataka and Gujarat for criticising the Bombay resolution of the AICC.

This led to the resignation from the Working Committee of Jawaharlal Nehru, who had asked for censure, Dr. Ansari and some others. Those elected to fill the vacated places gave the executive a no-change tilt.

From Nagpur C.R. went to Akola to meet some flag satyagraha prisoners. At the jail gate he was told that one of them, the frail ascetic Vinoba Bhave, was having to spend hours under the hot sun, breaking stones. The news produced an 'involuntary shudder' in C.R.

Early in September, a visit by Kasturba to Salem cheered him. The municipal council showed freedom from fear by asking the wife of the imprisoned arch-seditionist to open a bridge.

* * *

Congress was now speaking with two voices. To determine the authentic voice some of C.R.'s friends asked at Nagpur for a special session of Congress.

Despite Swarajist opposition the proposal was carried. Abul Kalam Azad was chosen as the special session's president, Bombay

as its venue.

However, Das indicated that he would not accept an adverse verdict. This really ruled out a reaffirmation of the Gaya decisions, for few in Congress were ready to lose Das and Motilal Nehru. Even C.R., despite the strength of his feeling against council-entry, was not.

'Unity' on Swarajist terms was thus the likely outcome of the special session. The probability was strengthened when Sarojini Naidu, in official charge of Congress affairs at the Bombay end, decided that the city could not play host, and Azad, vested with the right to select a new venue, chose Delhi.

Rajendra Prasad openly said that Delhi would suit the Das party. Yet there was, or so it seemed, a ray of hope for the no-changers.

Mahomed Ali was about to emerge from imprisonment. C.R. had proposed that he should be Congress President for 1923-24. The acknowledged leader of Muslim India, Mahomed Ali also carried weight with the non-Muslims as the most prominent of the Mahatma's colleagues in the struggle that was halted in February 1922.

C.R. deemed it possible that Mahomed Ali would sway the Delhi session against council-entry. Expressing a similar view, an unsigned article in *Young India* called 'unthinkable' the notion that Mahomed Ali would become 'an egregious compromisewala.' That a Mahomed Ali-C.R. combination might win the day for them was a hope entertained in some no-changer hearts.

The hope was shattered by two blows. Ironically, it was C.R. himself who supplied the first. In mid-August, the special session a month away, he decided not to go to Delhi at all, and to 'quietly withdraw . . from places and positions of seeming power, one after another.'

He was exhausted. 'I have been . . putting my feeble frame to a great strain,' he wrote. 'I have kept the flag flying only until stronger hands could reach and hold it aloft and firm.'

But a bigger factor was that he had been charged with desire for power. 'My struggle with talented and powerful opponents is given the name . . of low intrigue,' he complained.

He would withdraw, if only to prove to himself that he did not care for power. The charge of shirking would, he knew, be

levelled against him, but he claimed that 'there is no other way out of it.'

Feeling let down, his colleagues protested. One of them wrote that C.R., 'who has dared to fight for . . Bapu's flag against the concentrated onslaughts of erstwhile friends and open foes,' would, by retiring, make Mahomed Ali and the rest 'distinctly weakened in strength.'

However, C.R. insisted on taking (though only for some weeks) what he called his furlough. He had shown undue sensitiveness to a false aspersion — it is not known where or by whom it was cast — and chosen to prove its falsity rather than to see the fight through.

Telling himself and his friends that Mahomed Ali was a braver helmsman, he rationalised his decision. 'The general should be Maulana Mahomed Ali and so no one else,' he wrote.

Yet it was Mahomed Ali who delivered the second blow, deciding, after all, to be a 'compromisewala.' 'Most of the Swarajists [were] his nearest and dearest friends, . . with whom he could never bear to part company,' explained Mahadev Desai. 'Life is all through one second best, my friend,' Ali had told Desai.

On behalf of the no-changers, Bajaj suggested to Ali that a surrender to the Swarajists, made without any reservation, was preferable to a grudging compromise. In his view, which Vallabhbhai and Rajendra Prasad shared, the friendship of Das and Motilal Nehru 'was worth purchasing at any price.'

But Mahomed Ali wanted neither surrender nor a fight. He pressed for a settlement in which Congress would repeat its dislike of councils while permitting council-entry to those desiring it.

Vallabhbhai and Rajendra Prasad felt that they had to fall in line. Wiring C.R. for advice, Mahadev Desai informed him of Ali's stand. C.R. 'threw up the sponge at once.' If Mahomed Ali 'was keen for a compromise, friends should follow his lead,' he counselled. And he added. 'The nation must have the lesson of hard experience.'

'When Maulana Mahomed Ali, who holds stronger views than myself regarding councils, who holds in his broad chest the heart of Islam in India — when even he found out it impossible to persuade and gave up the fight, it was final,' said C.R.

C.R.'s wire reached Vallabhbhai just before he was to commence his speech. Vallabhbhai told the Delhi session: 'We are all soldiers. There is no leader. But there is one man with a clear head and clear thinking who has sent this message which I will read to you.' Then he read C.R.'s telegram and uttered a final sentence, 'I have nothing more to say.'

George Joseph, an ardent no-changer who had left legal practice in Madura and was on the Working Committee, thought that C.R.'s absence had been 'a capital mistake.' In his view C.R. 'would have influenced Maulana Mahomed Ali to the point of "no compromise."' Desai, however, was not so sure.

Abandonment of council-boycott produced a deep grief in believers in non-cooperation. 'Remembering the hope of the dawn and the power of the day,' and 'now fated to watch the last dipping of the sun . . ,' they were mournful. But some of them took the blow on the chin.

Wrote Joseph:

> Since the days of the Calcutta Special Congress Gandhism had won all along the line . . . It is good for everybody to be beaten. If there is truth in us the very castigation of defeat will lead us to examine ourselves anew and find strength.

What saddened C.R. almost as much as the 'compromise' was that Delhi had agreed (rejecting the Gaya verdict) that India should boycott all British goods. They had gone against what Gandhi had taught.

'Not love, but hatred; . . not self-suffering but cleverly organised embarrassment of the enemy': this, according to C.R., was the easy doctrine now being peached. He recalled that a Bengal leader had openly claimed as far back as November 1922 that 'our national work cannot be based on love but must be built upon hatred.'

On the other hand, the features of the road shown by the Mahatma were, in C.R.'s words:

> suffering, maximum; love of the enemy, true and genuine, the love and pity that filled Christ's eyes with tears as he was led to Golotha, not suppressed hatred finding legal and constitutional shape.

Soon after Delhi C.R. was in the fray once more — though he resigned the *Young India* editorship, asking Joseph to take over. He defended Mahomed Ali, who was being reproached, but announced a bid to prevent a further slide, insisting that at the December 1923 session of Congress, to be held in Cocanada in Andhra, the commitment to non-cooperation be reiterated.

However, C.R.'s acceptance of the Delhi compromise resulted in the estrangement from him and the Congress of two of his close southern friends and colleagues, E. V. Ramaswami Naicker and S. Ramanathan, who formed a Boycott Committee to persuade the public not to vote in the November elections.

Their efforts failed, but the breach was not closed. In later years E. V. R., as he came to be called, was to become the chief of a militant anti-Congress and anti-Brahmin movement in the South.

At Bezwada station, on his way to Cocanada, C.R. was joined in his second-class compartment by P. C. Ray, the distinguished Bengal scientist who was to open a *khadi* exhibition at the session. Ray studied C.R. for a few moments and said, 'A frail, fragile frame.' 'Yes,' replied C.R. at once, 'and there is a fourth "f" — a failure.'

Cocanada, presided over by Mahomed Ali, reaffirmed the Delhi compromise. Delegates were told of a 'Das-C.R.' pact. C.R. moved and Das seconded a resolution which declared that non-cooperation was still the Congress policy. Yet it was so only in theory.

The Swarajists (who had obtained a number of seats in the provincial councils and in the Central Assembly in November) were permitted council-entry, though as Swarajists rather than as Congressmen. Embittered figures on both sides needed calming. On one occasion C.R. averted an unpleasant incident by gently leading, by the hand, an angered Motilal Nehru off the dais.

* * *

In the thick of the squabbles C.R. retained a vision of the brotherhood of the races:

> Have you seen a little white child smiling and opening its blue eyes wide with pleasure when the ayah's dark baby

comes to join it in play? . . . I never could tire of looking at the beautiful frontispiece in an edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that was with me — little Eva hanging a wreath of roses round the good Negro's neck and sitting down on his knee, laughing.

And he asked India to respond to the appeal of C. F. Andrews, the British missionary who was serving the cause of India and of Indians in other lands, 'that English people, my own countrymen, may be as dear to you as they are dear to me.'

CHAPTER ELEVEN

To the Wilderness

A JOLT was received in the second week of January 1924, followed by anxiety and then by a joyous unexpected event. The Raj announced that an operation for acute appendicitis had been performed on the Mahatma.

Along with the rest of India, C.R. was shaken. Operations for acute appendicitis were not, at the time, routinely successful. And the chances were poorer when the patient was a prisoner.

C.R. was in Salem, welcoming four Gandhians visiting the south, when he heard the news. The visitors were Bajaj, Banker, Maganlal Gandhi, the Mahatma's 'right hand' at Sabarmati, and Mathuradas Tricumji of Bombay. With them C.R. was to stump the province to promote *khadi*. To the anxiety of the men, as they began their tour, was added the frustrating knowledge that they could not assist or even be with their ailing friend.

Their first call was at the village of Pudupalayam, south-west of Salem, where they were welcomed by Ratnasabhapati Gounder, landlord of the village, whose late father had been a warm friend and client of C.R.'s.

'If you make my sons proficient in English,' the father had once said to C.R., 'I shall present you a village.' The offer was not taken up, but under C.R.'s influence Ratnasabhapati had become a Congress backer, a teetotaller and a *khadi* wearer.

He now said that he could put a four-acre coconut grove at C.R.'s disposal. After looking at its potential as a *khadi* centre, the travellers moved on.

Meanwhile, it became clear that Maddock, the Surgeon-General of Bombay, had performed the operation on the Mahatma with skill — though the electricity had failed and he had

had to work by torchlight. 'Too happy for words,' C.R. wired Devadas. Under Maddock's personal — and surprisingly devoted — care, Gandhi was making a steady even if agonisingly slow recovery in Poona's Sassoon hospital.

C.R. called on Gandhi on January 27, their first meeting in nearly two years. The reunion was touching. Mahadev Desai, who was present, chose not to describe it, saying, 'There are things of the heart too sacred for disclosure.'

Finding the Mahatma reduced to almost half his size, C.R. was struck dumb. Gandhi, lying on his bed, went on the attack, charging C.R. with lack of care for *his* health:

> India will not go to rack and ruin if you took rest for four months.. but if you neglected your health it would go to rack and ruin.

He could learn, C.R. was told, from the British; had not Asquith gone on a Mediterranean cruise soon after the war began? Politics was not discussed, in obedience to Government and Gandhian rules.

Next day, when the two met again, Gandhi bared his heart on the Hindu-Muslim issue: the way to unity was for the Hindu to give his pen to the Muslim and let the latter write out the terms of settlement.

To India's relief, the Mahatma was unconditionally released, on health grounds, on February 5. 'We are now in a changed world of gladness and hope,' said C.R. in a wire to Gandhi who went to Juhu, by the sea near Bombay, to imbibe strength.

Reminding India, in his first statement after release, that there was a difference between Englishmen and English rule, the Mahatma said:

> I know that many of us have failed to understand the distinction and in so far as we have failed we have harmed our cause.

In effect he was underlining the remark C.R. had made eighteen months earlier — that there had been hate and anger and that true non-violence had not prevailed.

* * *

Narasimhan, 14, and Lakshmi, 11, were being coached at

home in Salem Extension by a pair of tutors, with C.R. also helping when he could.

Since 1922 Krishnaswami had been a journalist on *Swarajya,* a Madras daily started by T. Prakasam; Ramaswami had found a place in the non-governmental National Medical College of Bombay, which trained students like him who had withdrawn from governmental colleges.

From Juhu, following a conversation with Ramaswami, the Mahatma wrote C.R. an interesting letter:

> It is now 3.30 a.m. I have hardly slept during the night after 12. You are one of the reasons.
>
> I had a chat with your son last night. Incidentally I asked him whether he wrote to you and you to him in English or Tamil. When he told me it was English, the information cut me to pieces. . .
>
> You are my greatest hope. Why this, as it seems to me, grave defect? If the salt loses its savour, etc. What are the Tamil masses to do if her best sons neglect her? What is the future before poor Ramaswamy as a worker among the masses? Do enlighten me or promise henceforth to write the young man in your best Tamil . . . With deepest love, M. K. Gandhi.

After thus chastising C.R., the Mahatma had Ramaswami write his father in Tamil. With it was attached a note from Gandhi:

> The son has begun before the father. That is as it should be. You can see how the discovery has preyed on my mind . . .

Was the Mahatma foisting a narrow spirit? The truth was that he hoped that C.R. (and his sons) would win the masses, and regarded the common man's language as indispensable for the purpose.

To C.R. the castigation was, as he wrote Devadas, 'hardly distinguishable from supreme happiness.' It was fresh proof of the Mahatma's trust.

> I have written to Bapu . . that he saw but one fault. What shall he or I do for the hundred other[s] . . ? What have I

that I may offer as a gift to my beloved master, except a hundred faults?

As for Tamil, C.R. was to produce, in course of time, works in the language that were both popular and literary.

Gandhi intervened too, in the matter of C.R.'s health, which, as he saw during the hospital interview, was very poor. 'The permanent infliction of asthma and unsleepable nights is there like an occupancy tenant who won't be evicted,' wrote C.R. to Devadas.

Two members of the Sabarmati Ashram, one following the other, were sent by the Mahatma to Salem to nurse C.R. — Shivaji Bhave, brother of the scholarly ascetic, Vinoba Bhave, and Surendra Gupta. Though C.R. was embarrassed at having 'to keep young and good souls for serving me physically', Shivaji and Surendra — massaging, fetching and carrying — restored their patient's health.

* * *

The health of Congress concerned both the Mahatma and C.R. In 1920 Congress had been converted from a talking shop into a fighting body; now it seemed to have reverted to the earlier condition. It needed a rigour if it was to stay battleworthy.

It would seem that C.R. had a part in developing the device with which the Mahatma tried (amidst controversy and with partial success) to create the rigour — the 'spinning franchise.'

The idea — unique for a political party or movement anywhere — was to replace the money fee that made one a Congress member (the 'four-anna' membership) with a fee of self-spun yarn. Assailed as queer and undemocratic, the 'spinning franchise' was proposed by Gandhi in June 1924, adopted (with alterations) in December, and made optional in September 1925.

Under the title 'A Condition of Congress Membership,' C.R. first aired the idea in *Young India* in March, ahead of any mention of it by Gandhi. What drill was to the soldier, and churchgoing to the Christian, C.R. and the Mahatma wanted spinning to be to a member of Congress.

* * *

With the Mahatma's release the focus had shifted to him.

Wanting to know where he stood, Das and Nehru talked with him in Juhu. The no-changers hoped that Gandhi would quell the Swarajist rebellion. Reiterating to Das and Nehru his own objection to council-entry, Gandhi yet surprised the no-changers by adding that the Swarajists' place was in the councils.

A lesson was in store for the Mahatma when the AICC met at the end of June in Ahmedabad. For homogeneity he had suggested that the Swarajists concentrate on the councils and the council-boycotting faithful fill all offices in the Congress organisation.

So fiercely was he opposed by the Swarajists that he chose not to press the point. Next Gandhi put forward the spinning franchise — not, as yet, for all Congressmen but only for members of the elected committees of Congress.

He was again attacked with a sharpness that made him virtually withdraw the scheme. Finally, Das and others assailed and almost defeated a resolution of his condemning an Englishman's murder in Calcutta.

In Gandhi's words, Ahmedabad 'defeated and humbled' him. His proposals, he found, had increased and not diminished the bitterness between Congress factions. In the circumstances he decided to yield what he thought had been fundamental — the boycott — to save something more precious — tolerance and brotherhood among Congressmen.

He would stoop in order to conquer the Swarajists. If this meant letting them gain control of Congress, so be it. Ready now to suspend non-cooperation, he extended a hand, too, to the Liberals. A programme of three positives, he said, could provide a platform of national unity: *khadi*; Hindu-Muslim harmony and the removal of untouchability.

With his mind C.R. saw the rationale. 'The best and only course open,' he had said on March 29, 'is to let the Swarajists work their dear plan to the full .. and then discover the blind alley they are in.'

But he was not able to be as ungrudging in generosity, or as graceful while stooping, as his chief, and he felt a pang of disappointment that the Mahatma had not crushed the Swarajist revolt.

'We must not resist the evil that has crept into our ranks,'

Gandhi told him.

> We must abdicate power altogether . . . There should be no decision by majority of votes. We must continue to surrender up to the very margin of principle.

While he expected the Swarajists 'to retrace their steps when experience has disillusioned them,' the Mahatma recognised that 'they are supplying a felt want. They do represent a large section of people who want petty relief.'

He knew, Gandhi added, that it would be difficult for C.R. and others 'suddenly to accommodate yourselves to these sudden changes,' but he could 'not stifle the monitor within' which asked him to yield to the Swarajists.

* * *

Following pressure from some — including C.R., who wrote, 'The masses still feel that you alone must lead' — the Mahatma agreed to preside at the 1924 Congress. He also announced, at the end of September, that he would fast for 21 days as penance for the Hindu-Muslim trouble.

To him India seemed to present a picture where 'to revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, (and) to desecrate temples or mosques' was the order of the day.

The days of the fast were spent in Mahomed Ali's home in Delhi. Extremely doubtful whether Gandhi's body, only slowly gaining in strength, could survive the self-inflicted ordeal, C.R. went to Delhi to be at his side.

To his astonishment he found that 'the Mahatma smiled and talked as if he had been taking his milk and fruits every meal every day.' He wrote to Devadas:

> Bapu's fast has been a miracle. He has kept so wonderfully fresh and beautiful.

Delhi's disturbed climate improved somewhat as a result of the fast, but C.R. observed a stubbornness in senior Muslim leaders. 'I am afraid I am a changed man now as regards the Mussalman leaders,' he wrote Devadas, adding:

> I do not like them at all. I see no change of heart in them.

> They have not realised the least bit the psychology of the fast — that Bapu is in deepest grief over the ingratitude of the Mussalmans and the sufferings of the Hindus and the indifference and heartlessness of the Mussalman leaders and gropes with untarnished faith still towards God . . .
>
> I shall return, I fear, from Delhi with altered mind in regard to the most essential things . . . One thing is clear, that a long period of suspension of all Swaraj activities is before us.

A unity conference accompanied the fast. A participant, Bishop Foss Westcott, Metropolitan of India, described C.R. and Motilal Nehru as two who were 'rising above all narrow and communal considerations.'

However, a question mark about Mahomed Ali and his colleagues had entered C.R.'s mind; it appeared to him that Muslim interests mattered more to them than Indian interests. Hindu-Muslim trust, a priceless jewel mined in 1919 and 1920, was cracking.

* * *

Despite the Mahatma's efforts to calm it, C.R.'s heart was not yet at peace about the former's retreat *vis-a-vis* the Swarajists. According to C.R., the Swarajists wanted 'all the prestige of the Congress to be theirs, unshared by others.' 'They want Bapu of course,' he observed, 'for without him what prestige is there for the Congress?. . Poor Mrs. Besant, . . why should she be kept out, if all the boycotts have to be turned down?'

Mrs. Besant had welcomed the 'three positives' enunciated by Gandhi and even expressed a wish to learn, at 82, how to spin. C.R. urged Devadas to impart the training.

The Mahatma, however, went a long distance with the Swarajists. When some of their Bengal leaders were arrested, including Subhas Bose, Gandhi strongly protested. Satisfied that the Government was trying to suppress the Swarajists, he resolved to give them what they wanted.

He would suspend non-cooperation and agree that the Swaraj party was in the councils 'on behalf of the Congress.' The surrender was incorporated in a pact he signed with Das and Nehru.

But he got something in exchange. The Swarajist leaders accepted the spinning franchise (for all members, and not just for those on committees). There was, however, a rider: those unwilling to spin could obtain membership by turning in yarn spun by others.

The Gandhi-Das-Nehru pact grated on C.R. In his view the rider to the spinning franchise made the latter 'a mockery.' Moreover, a settlement with the Swarajists 'without notice to Liberals and Mrs. Besant' amounted, he charged, to 'a breach of understanding.'

Recognising that 'a lacerated heart' had sent the 'scathing indictment,' the Mahatma asked C.R. to regard the pact as 'a bold experiment in non-violence.' 'Cheer, boys, cheer,' he admonished, 'No more of idle sorrow.'

It was not in C.R. to remain angry with the Mahatma for any length of time. In December, at Belgaum, Gandhi was presiding over the Congress for the first and the last time. In his presence C.R.'s resentment and hesitation vanished.

Characteristically, Gandhi had him move the spinning franchise resolution, inclusive of the rider. Some days later C.R. wrote:

> I depend on the judgment of the *Guru* whose instinctive sense of Truth is so much greater than mine, and I feel at ease.

* * *

To the Mahatma his surrender to the Swarajists was also useful as a test of the commitment of the no-changers. If the latter genuinely believed in constructive work, they would gladly yield their positions in the Congress organisations to the Swarajists.

Their duty was 'self-effacing, silent and sustained service, without grumbling and without the expectation of reward.' His thinking led Gandhi to drop C.R. and Vallabhbhai from the Working Committee.

An obvious question arose. Where should the Gandhians perform this service, now that they were to withdraw from their Congress posts? For himself, at any rate, C.R. had an answer.

He would tear himself away from his house in Salem Extension and put his roots down in a scarcely-known village: he would move to the patch in Pudupalayam offered by Ratnasabhapati Gounder. There he would raise an ashram in Gandhi's name. There he would attempt to live out, with any willing co-workers, the gospel of constructive work. He would also train workers in *khadi* there, and attack the grip of untouchability and the hold of liquor.

C.R. discussed the thought with the Mahatma in Belgaum and, after the session, in Sabarmati. Gandhi, it would seem, blessed it; and Bajaj, who had initiated and endowed a 'Gandhi Seva Sangh' to assist rural service, indicated that some money might be made available.

A Bangalore meeting on January 10, where C.R. spoke in his 'finest propaganda style and kept the audience laughing,' tempted him to 'tramp the country all over India and address such meetings as of old,' but he had given his word to 'settle down at Pudupalayam.'

On February 6, 1925, the Ashram was 'opened.' C.R. had set his feet on a rough, unfamiliar and almost unmapped path.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Ashram

THE surroundings of the Ashram drew the eye's attention. Granite hills rose here and there from the undulating earth. From Sankaridurg hill, 12 miles north of Pudupalayam, a Tipu-erected fortress looked down, a silent witness of South India's bygone sovereignty.

Tipu's British successors had brought the world to the vicinity by building a railway line through Sankaridurg; but from there to Pudupalayam it was a dusty three-hour bullock-cart journey past *ragi* and cotton fields, palm trees and roadside shrines.

Half-way, at Tiruchengode, stood an imposing rock, two thousand feet high, sheltering in its bosom an ancient and honoured Ganesa temple. From Tiruchengode 'town,' officials of the Raj administered about a tenth of Salem district, including Pudupalayam.

The village of about 150 dwellings did not even boast of a letter-box. The red rocky earth around it was responsive to rain, but the latter by no means made a yearly appearance.

Familiar with famine, superstitious in the mental make-up of its people, the sweltering hamlet of Pudupalayam nevertheless possessed two advantages. Firstly, Gounder, its landlord, was a generous ally.

Giving the promised four-acre spot, he had also seen over the erection of the half-dozen thatch-roofed mud huts that, to begin with, comprised the Ashram. Until the huts were ready, the Ashram's foundation-members had been billeted in his home and the homes of his friends. He was also persuading the populace to tolerate the Ashramites' reformist practices.

Pudupalayam's other merit was the presence around it of potential *khadi* makers — weavers owning their cottage looms and ex-spinners, all women, who could ply spinning-wheels but had been forced, after the advent of manufactured yarn, to abandon them in the attics of their humble dwellings.

When the women knew that the Ashram was willing to supply cotton and pay them for spinning it into yarn, they took their old wheels down, dusted them and generated again the hum in the home. It was, literally, life-saving music.

Apart from the weaving community, the cultivating Gounders (whose women-folk knew how to spin), different 'untouchable' groups, one speaking a broken Telugu, and a sprinkling of Muslims lived in the region.

From its commencement the Ashram frankly preached and openly practised anti-untouchability. Five 'untouchable' boys were enrolled as members at the start; they ate and lived with the rest. This violation of custom provoked an instant reaction — boycott.

It looked as if Ashram members (and their 'accomplices,' the Gounder family) would have to learn to do without milk or vegetables, or only with what one milkman was surreptitiously bringing.

However, the ostracism petered out, though apprehensions about what the offended villagers might do lingered. Following a rumour, which fortunately proved false, that arson would be attempted, C.R. had members trained in fire-fighting, a skill that came useful later in tackling fires in 'untouchable' settlements.

Narasimhan, 15, and Lakshmi, 12, were now part of C.R.'s new multi-caste family of 17 individuals. Using, to begin with, one of the huts, the thatched roof of which also sheltered his children and an iron safe holding the Ashram's cash, C.R. later moved into a cottage with a tiled roof.

The 'big room' in the new dwelling was 12′ by 5′; two tiny rooms next to it, one of them serving as a kitchen, made up the rest of the hut. N. Narayanan, a Madura lawyer who had quit practice, was the Ashram's manager; in charge of *khadi* production was C.R.'s young colleague from 1920, K. Santhanam.

For most members the Ashram meant a new life-style: twice-daily open-air prayers, before dawn and in the evening,

all Ashramites participating; coarse meals shared by all together; encounters with snakes and scorpions; hours spent in trying to relieve the lives of the debt-laden, liquor-hit, rejected poor.

The Ashram's principal device towards achieving the last was *khadi*. The women were enabled to spin. The weavers were persuaded, slowly and not without difficulty, to use handspun yarn, which was thicker, less even and more fragile than the mills' thread and therefore required more time and trouble for conversion into cloth. The end-product, *khadi* cloth, was energetically hawked.

Howsoever coarse to the touch, *khadi* was (as C.R. put it) fine in the warp and woof of mutual help. The charkha was the destitute's old-age pension and her family's insurance against unemployment, accident and sickness.

To begin with, the spinning women earned between a rupee and a rupee-and-a-half a month; this sum, miserable even for the time, was yet often a quarter of what a family made. Within two months a thousand women living in 20 villages around the Ashram were spinning. By August seventy weavers of the area were using handspun yarn.

Next in importance was the battle against liquor. On many a night a decorated cart pulled by a pair of bullocks (probably selected, in a cattle market, by C.R., who 'surprised everyone by his close knowledge of the animals') would carry C.R. and some of his co-workers to neighbourhood hamlets.

On reaching a village a drum-beat from the cart would announce the visit; invariably a throng would surround the cart, peer at petromax-lit drawings depicting the fate of drinking man and listen to Ashramite songs. Then the bullocks would be goaded to heave again for a repeat performance at the next village; five or six villages could be covered nightly.

Congress's national leader of 1922 and 1923 thus became, in 1925, an itinerant preacher in an obscure corner in the south; instead of hurling defiance at the Raj from the centre of the Congress dais, C.R. was now inveighing against the toddy-mug from the back of a cart.

He was not conscious of a loss of dignity or worth — and he was being tangibly effective. It was not long before liquor agents felt that they had to break up his meetings.

Personal work followed propaganda. The instance of the cobbler Veeran, who, drunk, had beaten his wife, showed C.R.'s flair. Importuned by Veeran's wife, C.R. sent for the man, who denied drunkenness. 'But you were drunk last night and hit your wife,' C.R. insisted. 'No, sir, it is not true,' repeated Veeran.

Acting on a brain-wave, C.R. placed in Veeran's hands a pair of chappals the cobbler had made and dared him: 'Swear on these chappals that you are telling the truth.'

His defences broken, Veeran fell at C.R.'s feet, owned up and vowed never again to touch liquor. Nor did he, till he died. Well before his death Veeran was given charge of the Ashram's footwear unit, for which C.R., fair himself at using the awl, often had helpful ideas.

Presently schools emerged, first in Pudupalayam for the children of Ashramites and of adjoining hamlets, with C.R. as a teacher, and then in the quarters of 'untouchables' in different villages; the Ashram strove, not always successfully, for mixed pupils in these.

Old wells were renewed and new ones dug where the 'untouchables' lived; the Ashram was fortunate in having a water-diviner among its later inmates. Some villages were selected for a weekly scrubbing and feeding of 'untouchable' children by Ashramites, and 'untouchables' were helped to clean their surroundings. Modest medical aid was dispensed. Until a doctor was enlisted, C.R. himself diagnosed and prescribed.

Yet appreciation was not easy to come by. And when the rains failed in the summer of 1925, ignorance joined malice in fixing the blame on C.R. and the charkha. C.R. saw only grim want wherever he went. 'The roadside trees are all stumps,' he wrote Devadas, 'because the branches have been cut and sold off for firewood.'

Hostility towards the Ashram receded as the villages found that C.R. and his friends could draft their letters to officials, sort out their internal disputes — and defend them in their troubles with authority.

On one occasion a number of men and women of Molipalli village were accused of abetting a crime, seized, taken to the Tiruchengode lock-up and released on payment of bribes. Levied in accordance with ability to pay, the bribes ranged from Rs. 20

to Rs. 200 per head. The sufferers told C.R. their story; he asked whether they would adhere to their account if the police showed its wrath.

When they promised that they would, C.R. obtained signed or thumb-impressioned statements and sent a warning to the police chief in Tiruchengode: unless all the extorted bribes were returned, with apologies, he would inform higher officials. The sums were promptly returned, forgiveness was begged and the Ashram's prestige among the villagers soared.

Finding her father perched one day on a ladder in their hut, fixing a mesh to the chimney mouth to bar neighbourhood cats, Lakshmi, 13, said, 'Chinnan is around. Can't he do the job? If you fall and injure yourself. . ?'

'If Chinnan falls and injures himself it doesn't matter, is that it?' answered C.R. Lakshmi was reminded of the equality of man; if he learnt of the remark, Chinnan, who had been engaged by C.R. as a cook and help despite his birth in the supposedly low washerman caste, would have been reminded of his master's heart-power, which, it would seem, was felt by all who served the Ashram.

Yet C.R. was no pamperer; in the view of Chagan, a Muslim spinner who was an early Ashramite, every worker 'was very careful in doing his allocated work lest he should incur Periya Ayya's (the Big Master's) disapproval.'

'I won't accept your thumb impression, you will have to learn to write your name,' C.R. told Chinna Gounder, who started as the driver of the Ashram's cart and was enabled by C.R. to pay off debts, redeem his mortgaged land and better his family's life.

In and through the Ashram C.R. was putting into practice principles which he and others had eloquently advocated. And in giving themselves to the needy C.R. and his friends received much: an understanding and appreciation of the humble man's ways, and the respect and love of the humble man. A series of short stories and dialogues written by C.R. and published in *Young India* from January 1926 onwards showed insight into the lives of the downtrodden.

* * *

The Mahatma, accompanied by Mahadev Desai, had visited the Ashram six weeks after its opening. To Desai it was a 'beautiful spot' offering a 'serene atmosphere.'

Gandhi was struck by the women streaming into the Ashram to be served with cotton; and he felt that 'a little touch of kindness, a little touch of humanity and love' had made the 'untouchables' 'one flesh with the whole Ashram.'

'They are,' he said, 'as intelligent, as lovable, as anyone in the Ashram. They are as pure, and as God-fearing, as the highest Brahmin in the Ashram.'

The landlord's stand on *khadi* (each woman in his household wore self-spun cloth), drink and untouchability also impressed the Mahatma. 'Let us copy,' he said to a Tiruchengode audience, 'the noble example of Sabhapati Gounder.'

* * *

There was a part for C.R., at this juncture, in a modest victory that was obtained in Travancore against untouchability.

For nearly a year a satyagraha had been going on at Vaikom, where 'untouchables' not only could not enter the temple but were banned from even walking on the roads leading to it. Counted among the 'untouchables' were the educated Ezhavas.

Volunteers sought arrest by stepping on the forbidden roads. The state supported orthodoxy; barricades were erected and the police drew a cordon round the temple.

In 1924 Gandhi had asked C.R. to go to Vaikom, 'not necessarily [to] court arrest but [to] regulate movement.' C.R. had gone. The perseverance of the volunteers was impressive; so was the obduracy of the authorities.

Shortly after Gandhi's visit to the Ashram, C.R. was able, by a stroke of good fortune, to meet Raghaviah, the Dewan of Travancore. The Dewan wanted to order the opening of the roads, but he was about to leave his post. C.R. persuaded him 'to expedite things and do his best to complete this act of reform during his period of office.'

Full victory was not to come until 1936 — when temple-entry, too, was secured — but in April 1925 roads on three sides of the temple were opened.

Omens for Hindu-Muslim unity were, however, not bright.

Early in the year Gandhi and Shaukat Ali had been to Kohat in the Punjab to investigate a communal riot that had caused the Hindu minority to flee.

The two could not agree on an analysis of the events. On March 26 separate reports written by Gandhi and Shaukat Ali were published in *Young India.* The partnership of the Mahatma and the Ali brothers was beginning to end.

* * *

In June tragedy struck: Das died in Darjeeling. He had been ailing but the end was sudden and unexpected. The Swarajist leader had made an offer to the Raj in the previous month.

'You can have peace today,' he had said to the British, 'on terms that are honourable both to you and to us.' As the price of cooperation, Das asked for a release of all political prisoners, a guarantee that 'swaraj within the Commonwealth' would be established in the near future, and the immediate establishment of a 'sufficient foundation' of such a swaraj.

Just before his death he had told the Mahatma, who was in Bengal on a *khadi* tour, that he was expecting 'big things' from Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State. The Mahatma did not share the hope.

'I realised not only how great Deshbandhu was, but also how good he was,' said Gandhi in his tribute. On July 10 Birkenhead's reply to Das's offer came. It was as unattractive as the Mahatma had anticipated.

But Das, and the Swaraj Party, had been rebuffed, and Gandhi, keen to deliver a riposte, decided to increase the Swaraj Party's authority by giving the Congress a Swarajist mould. Let politics be played up and spinning de-emphasised as far as Congress was concerned, he declared. The spinning franchise — the Mahatma's and C.R.'s pet — was made optional.

Sweating for *khadi* in the baking hinterland — in accordance, as he thought, with the Mahatma's deepest wish —, C.R. felt offended. To him the declaration virtually amounted to the Mahatma joining the Swaraj Party.

He outpoured his embittered feelings to Devadas:

Why should I not make a public statement and join the

> Moderate Party? Shall I do so in memory of Srinivasa Sastri's recovery or shall I wait for his regular demise — which God forbid? What a hopeless muddle we are in! And I am in a greater muddle than anyone else.
>
> I wish I had been a private gentleman, pure and simple — and I should then have been less of a fool than I am now. Why should this poor yarn franchise be made to die this slow and lingering death? I would prefer to kill it at once.

This searing document was crossed by a letter from the Mahatma anticipating C.R.'s reaction:

> My soul is living in a world physically away from me and yet a world by which I am and want to be affected. You are a part of that world and perhaps the nearest to me. My innermost being wants your approbation of what I am doing and thinking. I cannot always succeed in getting it, but it craves for your verdict...

The effect that Gandhi's words had is shown in a letter that C.R. wrote to Devadas, with which was enclosed the Mahatma's letter to him:

> Can I bear the great weight of his love? Return the letter. If I had a little palace and furniture and album or cabinet I would have a place befittingly to treasure such a letter in. However, let me have it.
>
> I have replied that I approve of all that he has done. The truth is my fits of opposition are temporary outbursts of Adam. My soul has been surrendered long ago and I cannot but agree.

Gandhi's *khadi* strings restraining the Congress from turning Swarajist were thus snapped by the Mahatma himself. In September, when the AICC met in Patna, the Swarajists accepted Gandhi's offer and at last obtained control over the whole of the Congress.

Spinning would go on, it was decided, under the aegis of a new body, the All India Spinners' Association. C.R., who did not attend the Patna meet, was to become a member of the AISA

executive, along with Prasad, Bajaj and Vallabhbhai.

* * *

In November Gandhi fasted for seven days to atone for lapses in his Ashram from its code of morals. C.R. was uneasy. 'I wish I could talk some day to Bapu about these fasts,' he wrote Devadas.

Conceding that 'Bapu knows these things so much more than I do,' C.R. nevertheless added:

> Perhaps Bapu thinks that what starves the body feeds the soul. Some kinds of arithmetic formulae are true but not all. However my grief and my love are so great that I can hardly quarrel.

Zealous as he was regarding his rural work, C.R. at times missed the old life. 'I pine to see you all,' he wrote Devadas. He even followed cricket developments:

> Do not think I have not been following the quadrangular match. Today's exciting news at this far corner is up to the close of Europeans' second innings. I do feel that the Hindus will make the 355 runs somehow and win.

As the year reached its end, an occasion arose for C.R. to choose to break the letter of his pledge of boycotting the courts. A *panchama* who had entered the temple of Tiruchannur, at the base of the famed Tirupati shrine, was apprehended by the police, prosecuted for insulting religion and sentenced to a fine of Rs. 75 or a month's rigorous imprisonment.

Despite his boycott vow, C.R. agreed, when requested, to argue the appeal in Chittoor. The conviction had incensed him. However, he could not bring himself to be called the defence lawyer, or to wear the required turban and coat. Covering his head and shoulders with a *khadi* sheet to show respect, but apprehensive that his apparel might disqualify him, he asked the appeal magistrate for permission to argue as the accused's friend. The magistrate, all courtesy, gave it.

The old advocate was alive and kicking inside C.R. He felt, as he argued, that he had 'never stopped practice these seven years.' All that the outcaste had done, said C.R., 'was to steal

the Lord from the temple, keep him in the casket of his heart and walk away.'

Was that, asked C.R., a crime? Was adoration an insult? The *panchama* was entitled, C.R. went on, to claim the right of entering the temple even if the shrine's management objected. Snatching an article on the ground that it was one's was not theft; the *panchama* had merely snatched his right. Moreover, C.R. pointed out, no witness had deposed that his religious feelings had been wounded by the panchama's entry.

While agreeing that the *panchama's* right should be accepted in law, the magistrate ruled that it had not yet been so accepted. Nonetheless, he acquitted him on the ground that insult to religion had not been proved.

The contagion caught on. Another 'untouchable' similarly charged was acquitted. But the non-cooperator conscience had been shocked. Some Ashram co-workers frowned at C.R.'s 'return' to the polluted courts.

At peace himself, indeed glad to have been prised out of the mechanical groove of doctrine, C.R. was defended by the Mahatma. C.R., wrote Gandhi,

> would have been like a Pharisee if he had sat there still, gloating over the sanctimonious satisfaction of non-cooperating, while the accused could have been discharged by his intervention.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The 'Only Possible Successor'

THE Mahatma's efforts to strengthen the Swaraj Party were to prove unavailing. Obstruction was a difficult policy to maintain in the face of the prizes the Raj was offering.

After Motilal Nehru accepted a nomination to the Skeen Committee (which explored the training of Indian cadets) and Vithalbhai Patel assumed the Presidentship of the Central Assembly, a Swarajist leader in the C.P., Tambe, felt free to go a step further: he joined the provincial Executive Council.

Nehru condemned his action and was promptly counter-criticised by Jayakar, Kelkar and Moonje, the followers of Tilak. By the end of 1925 the Swarajists were obstructing one another and not the Raj.

Swarajist cracks widened when Congress gathered for its yearly session at Cawnpore under its second woman President, Sarojini Naidu. The three Maharashtrian leaders resigned their legislature seats won on the Swarajist ticket.

Remaining at his rural post, C.R. was doubtless conscious that his warnings regarding councils had been proved right. Disobedience, on the other hand, seemed improbable in the near future — 'fire and fervour' were lacking, Gandhi had remarked in Cawnpore.

At this stage C.R. proposed that the councils be used to further the constructive programme. Let Swarajist members demand prohibition, he suggested. If the Raj blocked it a lively political issue would arise. 'A poor man's question like drink is the best fireworks even such as they (the Swarajists) want,' he said to the Mahatma.

On behalf of the Swarajists, Satyamurti at first disparaged

the idea. 'Swaraj is the only issue,' he said, adding, 'I would rather be a member of a free nation of drunkards than belong to a slave nation of teetotallers.' C.R. replied that 'a definite struggle will bring matters to a head.'

The Mahatma, a keen prohibitionist himself, was not optimistic. He cautioned C.R. against a public pressure on the Swarajists over drink; it would, he said, embarrass them. However, to the Mahatma's surprise, C.R. succeeded, as he put it, in 'samjhaving' (winning over) Satyamurti and the Madras Swarajist chief, Srinivasa Iyengar.

In return for the Swarajists' adoption of prohibition, C.R. agreed to assist them in the elections due later in the year. Acknowledging C.R.'s success, Gandhi asked the Swaraj Party all over India 'to demand total and immediate prohibition with one voice,' and added:

> If the demand is not granted the Swaraj Party has an additional count in the indictment against the Government.

He and C.R. aspired for more than a ban on drinking; they envisaged, in the Mahatma's words, the conversion of 'every drink shop into a refreshment shop and concert room combined.'

C.R.'s ardour for prohibition had produced a surprising alignment with the Swarajists. The cooperation was probably also influenced by the worsening caste climate in the south. Anti-Brahmin feelings were on the increase. Championing the non-Brahmins, the Justice Party charged that the secret aim of the Congress, which in the south was now led by Brahmin Swarajists, was to prolong Brahmin domination. Discreetly concurring, the Raj carried out a policy of favouring the Justice Party wherever possible.

Differing significantly from the Swarajists, C.R. was nonetheless glad to give the latter a shield against the communal accusation — the prohibition plank, which promised relief to the underdog. And he asked the public to 'sink or swim' with the Congress, urging non-Brahmins to give up ideas of separate groups.

His own progressive attitude towards caste, demonstrated well before he threw in his lot with the Mahatma, had earned for C.R. the respect of the non-Brahmins and the 'untouchables'

and the dislike of orthodox circles. However, he was now attacked by two men who had been his comrades for some years and who enjoyed a following among the non-Brahmins — E.V.R. and Varadarajulu Naidu.

C.R. wrote Desai that he did not mind the slurs, but he must have been hurt and disappointed, indeed greatly so. After his agreement with the Swarajists, C.R. was also assailed by *Justice*, the organ of the non-Brahmin party; until then he had been 'a great favourite with the Justice people.'

* * *

'Your central work,' the Mahatma wrote to C.R. in March, 'is to develop the Ashram you have established. Everything else is subsidiary.' By this time over 2,000 women around the Ashram were adding precious coins to their families' means.

At the end of March C.R. felt that he could afford a quick trip to Bihar and Ahmedabad. Rajendra Prasad had requested him to address the students of Patna National College. Of the national educational units that had suddenly sprung up in 1920-21, those of Ahmedabad, Kashi and Patna were now about the only survivors.

He had been charged, C.R. said at Patna, with wasting his talents, with hiding himself amidst spinners and weavers instead of agitating against the Raj. However, soldiers like himself had not retired. They had lost a battle against the Raj because their cannon had been exhausted — the power of suffering was this cannon.

Now they had withdrawn to make more of this cannon for a future battle. After this explanation C.R. asked the students to absorb something of the character of Prasad, their Vice-Chancellor.

Military terms were again on C.R.'s lips when, on the way back to his Ashram, he addressed a large gathering in Ahmedabad. The spindle, he said, was the Indian masses' pistol.

His exchanges with the Mahatma continued to be lively. The latter sought C.R.'s opinion on an invitation he had received from Finland. Opposed to an overseas trip by Gandhi at this point, C.R. poked fun at the Mahatma:

> The students of Europe can help themselves quite well. At any rate they don't stand in need of an ocular demonstration of insufficient clothing.

When the Bombay Governor asked Gandhi to the hill resort of Mahabaleshwar for a meeting, C.R. called the move 'nothing but an attempt at reconnoitring for the new Viceroy's sake.' Irwin had succeeded Reading. The next note, however, was not breezy. There had been a failure of rains.

'The water famine and the general distress . . are terrible,' reported C.R. 'People are flying to the plantations in Ceylon and Malaya . . the miserable people here now and then say that my Ashram here is the cause of the rains holding off.'

In the second half of 1926 C.R. made an indirect contact with a man with whom he and Gandhi were later to have crucial dealings — Lord Linlithgow. Visiting India as the head of the Royal Agricultural Commission, Linlithgow received notes on *khadi* and rural development written by C.R. As Viceroy from 1936, Linlithgow, keen on agricultural reform, was to start with a rapport with the Mahatma evoked by the latter's rural emphasis; but a clash was destined.

Another British visitor at this time was Pethick-Lawrence of the Labour Party, a future Secretary of State for India. C.R. met him in November and liked him.

By now 30,000 spinners had been given employment in Tamil Nad; South India was turning to *khadi*. Not so the Marathi-speaking area. Claiming to be disciples of Tilak, a number of the region's Swarajist and Congress leaders kept aloof from what they described as a Gandhi fad.

In this bearish territory C.R. achieved a breakthrough. He challenged students of Nagpur's Tilak National College to live in the villages, wear *khadi* and ply the wheel. In this way, he said, 'your own unemployment will end and with it that of the poor people.'

Two students of the Government-run Morris College were in the audience; they pressed C.R. to speak at their place. With the principal, a Mr. Cheshire, in the chair, C.R. talked about destitute villagers:

> Can you move these people from their homes? They are

> fixtures; you must find employment at their very doors... You do not solve the problem of hunger by industrialising India, but by making it industrious.

True, *khadi* was more expensive than mill-made cloth, but it was indecent to wear the latter. Not caring for the poor was indecency.

'You are a hawker, sir, what are your wages, may we know?' a wag asked. 'No wages, my young friend, but the satisfaction of feeling that I have persuaded some of you to wear *khadi,*' answered C.R.

'It is a retrograde measure, sir,' rejoined the smart student. 'Yes,' replied C.R. amidst considerable applause, 'as retrograde as asking a dishonest man to go back to honesty.'

'Never was the effect of a speech more instantaneous,' wrote Mahadev Desai. Mr. Cheshire offered to wear *khadi* himself, as did a number of students. Many yards of cloth were bought on the spot, and a Students' Khadi Union was formed.

* * *

The Swaraj Party was bruised afresh in 1926. First the Maharashtrians initiated the Indian National Party to practise responsive cooperation. Then, in August, Lajpat Rai left the Swaraj Party and helped Malaviya form the pro-Hindu Independent Congress Party. This was a reaction to Muslim assertions; Mahomed Ali had said that he prayed for the day when he would convert Gandhi to Islam.

Said the Mahatma:

> It is educated India which is split up into parties... Their method is not my method. I am trying to work from the bottom upward... They are working from the top downward.

Motilal Nehru and Srinivasa Iyengar, who was chosen Congress President for 1926-27, sought C.R.'s help in the November elections. In a cable to C.R., Nehru said:

> Shall feel grateful if you will visit important centres Maharashtra, C.P. and U.P. supporting Congress candidates.

Iyengar requested C.R. to

bestir yourself and help support Congress prestige and organisation which are being shattered deliberately in Maharashtra, C.P. and U.P. by rebellious persons . . . A word by you at this time will have a very welcome effect.

This was Motilal Nehru's first approach to C.R. after the Gaya split. But C.R. was not enthused by the elections and did not fancy getting embroiled in the Nehru-Lajpat Rai quarrel. However, he made a strong appeal to the Madras electorate to vote for the Congress (i.e. Swarajist) candidates. It was a considerable boost.

The Madras Swarajists, united under Iyengar's vigorous leadership, fared well, but not so their colleagues in the rest of the country. In the U.P. and the Punjab the party was routed. By the time Congress met for its annual in Gauhati the charm of the councils had worn off.

The Madras Swarajists, who won more seats than the Justicites, were pledged to refrain from forming a ministry. To keep the Justice party out of office they gave their support to a ministry of Independents led by C.R.'s friend and neighbour in Tiruchengode, Dr. P. Subbaroyan. C.R. did not oppose this move — and hoped that the new Government would initiate prohibition.

In January he outlined a scheme for total prohibition in two or three districts; in April a draft bill for this purpose, prepared by him, was published in *Young India*. It was not acceptable to the Madras Government.

Dyarchy's unelected but more influential half was opposed to a dry law; and the elected Independents lacked conviction for it even though they spoke occasionally of its desirability.

* * *

In consultation with C.R., the Mahatma had scheduled, for a good part of 1927, a South Indian tour. Spreading *khadi* was the aim. At the end of March, on his way south, an over-strained Gandhi had a lucky escape from apoplexy. Turning up at his bedside in Nipani, in Bombay province, C.R. suggested that the Mahatma recuperate in Mysore state.

In Mysore they could count, C.R. felt, on the friendliness and courtesy of the Maharaja and his Dewan. Taking up the proposal, Gandhi rested for over three months in the state, first

in Nandi Hills, 35 miles from Bangalore, and then in the latter city. In both places he was the Maharaja's guest; accompanied by Narasimhan and Lakshmi, C.R. was with him.

Kasturba, Mahadev Desai and Devadas were also in Gandhi's party, which reached Nandi in the second half of April, C.R. having ensured supplies of goat milk for the Mahatma at transit stops.

At Nandi's 4.800-foot height there were 'wonderful cloud effects at sunset' and the climate was bracing. In two weeks Gandhi turned the corner and showed a spring in his gait. C.R. acted 'jailor,' keeping the Mahatma's visitors at bay and terminating his interviews.

A lawyer doing the cooking, a barber dressed in *khadi,* a chief medical officer and his wife introduced as khadi-ites — such were the sights that fed the Mahatma's spirit. Seeing the *khadi* on the medical couple, he exclaimed, 'Oasis in the desert!'

C.R. ushered in distinguished visitors: the Right Honourable V. S. Sastri, Srinivasa Iyengar, the Congress President, Sir M. Visvesvaraya, ex-Dewan of Mysore, and Sir Mirza Ismail, the new Dewan. From Sir Mirza the Mahatma and C.R. obtained an assurance that the state's officials could wear *khadi* if they wished.

Though there were callers, it was a relaxing, enjoyable time. A group from Chikballapur, at the foot of the hill, offered Gandhi a gift of fruit. 'Distribute it amongst the "untouchables," ' said Gandhi. The leader of the group replied, 'Distribute it amongst your disciples.'

'He means us,' said C.R., to the delight of the Mahatma's entourage. 'Tell them the "untouchables" are my disciples,' said the Mahatma to C.R., who was acting as interpreter.

'The group would not like to take their gift back,' answered C.R. 'I know, I know,' said Gandhi, laughing, 'you have your eye on the mangoes!'

When, on one occasion, the Mahatma protested at the 'jailor's' restrictions on his walks, talks and writing, C.R. replied: 'I am the jailor, but the prisoner can dismiss me at any moment. Yet so long as I am the jailor, I must take the necessary precautions.'

Relishing Gandhi's presence, C.R. also derived pleasure from

the company of Mahadev Desai. It was the sensitive Desai who had alerted the Mahatma to C.R.'s value in 1919. Instantly established, the rapport between him and C.R. had strengthened with time.

Young Devadas's regard for C.R. had been preserved, too, since their first meeting in 1918. Warm and trustful towards Devadas, C.R. had often expressed his anxieties and joys to him.

He was freer with these three — the Mahatma, Desai and Devadas — than with anyone else. Navaratna Rama Rao, now an official in Mysore's development department, was a close friend whom C.R. was meeting off and on, yet it would seem that some personal and political questions were not discussed between the former college companions.

In Nandi C.R. did a bit of writing — a short story and a dialogue, both on *khadi* themes. A pessimist predicting that *khadi* would die because of its expense was trenchantly tackled:

> Don't you abstain from meat as a Brahmin, though beef is cheap and nourishing? Is it economy? You marry your girl at 12. Is it wisdom? Do you not yield to custom, good or bad? You spend money on useless ceremonies and on poor relations . . . Is it economics or only sentiment? Why do you think that we cannot rely on patriotism which all the world over is a very strong sentiment?

Thomas Hood was quoted by C.R. in aid of *khadi*:

> No alms I ask, give me my task;
> Here are the arms, the leg,
> The strength, the sinews of a man
> To work, and not to beg.

Commenting on Tagore's 'Jana Gana Mana,' C.R. said to Devadas in Nandi, 'I find the poem limited. Why victory only to India? Why not to humanity?'

The hill was descended for Bangalore early in June. Gandhi, Kasturba, C.R. and the rest — nearly 50 in all — were cared for in the Maharaja's Kumara Park estate by his employees. 'My brothers and sisters, not servants,' the Mahatma called them.

The daily prayers presided over by the Mahatma became an institution. Within a week more than five hundred were attend-

ing each evening. The Mysoreans' rendering of sacred songs impressed Gandhi.

Exploiting his 'prisoner's' illness, C.R. did a brisk trade in *khadi*. Ladies called, absorbed the *khadi* message and 'came in again, but entirely changed, in the new *khaddar* sarees they had purchased.' The Mahatma's advice to a teacher vowing in his presence to wear only *khadi* was, 'Well, young lady, . . go and convert all the girls in your school to *khadi*.'

* * *

An event that the Mahatma had set his heart on, something he wanted to be 'the auspicious beginning of his work after convalescence,' was the South India Khadi Exhibition at the end of June. Conceived by C.R. and prepared by a devoted team under his supervision and that of a no-changer colleague of 1922, Gangadhar Rao Deshpande, the exhibition sought to remove the public's scepticism regarding *khadi*.

Spinning women from Karnataka, Andhra and Tamil Nad demonstrated the art. Malaviya, Rajendra Prasad and Bajaj gave discourses — listened to by large numbers — on *khadi*. Maps and charts showed *khadi's* relevance at a glance, and spinners competed before the visitors.

There were thousands of the latter, many carefully scanning every chart, making notes, minutely studying the different processes and purchasing literature, *khadi* and the charkha. It was a milestone in the progress of *khadi*.

An interesting visitor in Bangalore was the venerable savant from Bengal, Sir Brajendranath Seal. He said to the Mahatma:

> The South Indian youth has a distinct individuality, has grit, . . is at home in subjects like mathematics and law, and has a certain amount of doggedness and courage . . . Look at the South Indian student expressing his dissent from another opinion. No, no, no. *Ille, ille, ille,* he would say with an extraordinary amount of vehemence.

To another caller, K. Srinivasan, editor of the *Hindu,* Gandhi made a significant remark:

> If I am spared, I shall certainly enter again the political arena. It will then be a fight to the finish.

Keeping the Mahatma's interviews short was one of C.R.'s concerns. Not taking C.R.'s polite hints, a distinguished caller had glued himself one night next to Gandhi. C.R. had the Kumara Park mains switched off, and the visitor had to leave.

July found the Mahatma a lot better. He and C.R. saw, for the first time in years, a dramatic performance — *Kabir*. The story of the weaver-saint was rendered by *khadi*-clad South Indian actors in, as Gandhi put it, 'exquisitely pronounced' Hindi.

There was another outing — to Bangalore's noted Science Institute. In an irreverent aside C.R. described the laboratories as 'Satan's workshops.'

Said the Mahatma to the scientists:

> Unless all the discoveries that you make have the welfare of the poor as the end in view, all your workshops will be really no better than Satan's workshops, as Rajagopalachari said in a joke.

Mysore's ruler, Krishnaraja Wodeyar, who celebrated the silver jubilee of his reign during the Mahatma's stay in his state, 'wished to have the privilege of doing all he [could]' for Gandhi. Yet the latter after all was an opponent of the Raj; and prudence dictated that the Maharaja exercise the privilege behind the scenes. He did not meet the Mahatma.

The paramount power suspected *khadi* as well as Gandhi, and the Madras Government had just declared that its servants could not contribute to the Mahatma's *khadi* fund. Taking a risk, the Maharaja signed his approval to the opening of a khadi centre.

Mysore sent six men for training at C.R.'s Ashram and the state's industries department made 1,500 charkhas. On November 1 a centre was started in the village of Badanval, not far from the town of Mysore.

The area around Badanval was dry and needed a source of income besides farming. Its women could spin. The Pudupalayam story was repeated, and *khadi* received a bright start in Mysore. The state's example was followed, a year later, by Hyderabad.

* * *

By mid-July Gandhi felt fit enough to resume his tour. As a

consequence C.R.'s role altered; he was now the organiser of the Mahatma's campaign, his interpreter at private and public talks and, at times, his herald.

For four months, supported by C.R., the Mahatma stumped an area including much of South India and Ceylon, bringing to every stop the gospel of *khadi.* Crowds, eager and large, were instructed and often uplifted.

On occasion they behaved rowdily. At Gudiatham, in Tamil Nad, a throng invaded the house in which the Mahatma was lodged and blocked out all light and air. Shouting himself hoarse and finally losing his patience, C.R. threatened, 'I shall have to cancel some places on the tour.'

However, gratifying occasions were more frequent. At Arni, a few 'untouchables,' almost naked, gave C.R. a five-rupee note for *khadi.* And cobblers in Madras, who had got scent that Gandhi was wearing tattered sandals, made a new pair for him. The Mahatma and C. R., who served as translator, visited them in their squalid settlement.

Gandhi spoke out against the evils he saw, such as the *devadasi* tradition, 'the hideous immoral custom,' in his words, 'of assigning girls of tender age to a life of shame under the name of religion.' 'There are many temples . . in this country,' he declared, 'which are no better than brothels.'

C.R. would doubtless have felt and expressed himself similarly regarding the *devadasi* practice, but it is unlikely that he would have talked to his Chettinad hosts, had he been their chief guest, the way the Mahatma did.

Chettinad, where the travellers spent five days, was a compact area of about 75 villages inhabited by the influential community of traders and money lenders, the Nattukottai Chettiars.

In his speeches Gandhi said that he was seeing incongruous huge mansions built in confusion and disorder, expensive cars but no roads that could take them, houses choked with ornate furniture and with hardly any room to sit or breathe in, temples built at great cost contrasting with the absence of clean drinking water in the best houses. The hospitable hosts were plainly told by their guest that he could design and furnish their homes better.

The Chettiars did not merely accept the rebukes. They filled

the Mahatma's begging-bowl with gold and silver. The women beamed with joy when Gandhi asked the Chettiars to make real partners of their ladies and to take them on their money-making trips to Malaya and Burma. It was as 'a blood brother' that the outspoken guest was farewelled.

A few of the Mahatma's interviewers in the south were critical of C.R. Their line was that a Brahmin could not be trusted. Gandhi's comment was unequivocal: C.R., he said in Karaikudi, was his 'only possible successor.'

The Brahmin/non-Brahmin issue dogged the Mahatma and C.R. throughout the Tamil Nad tour. It was alleged that Brahmins had monopolised the *khadi* organisation. Pointing out that many a non-Brahmin filled an important place in it, the Mahatma also said that by assisting *khadi* Brahmins were in effect serving the poorest among the non-Brahmins.

On the broad question, Gandhi offered radical advice. He asked the Brahmins, who were 'repositories of . . knowledge' and under a religious obligation to choose a 'life of mendicancy,' to give up all that the non-Brahmins wanted and be satisfied with what may be left.

The non-Brahmins were reminded of their majority and their wealth and advised not to create a new untouchable class of Brahmins. These were, in the Mahatma's own words, counsels of perfection; they were not heeded.

* * *

Meanwhile, a development had taken place for which neither C.R. nor the Mahatma had bargained. Devadas and Lakshmi fell in love and wanted to marry. In Bangalore Devadas gave C.R. a letter requesting his daughter's hand.

C.R. told Gandhi, and the surprised fathers discussed the idea. They were not sure of its rightness. Was this true love, or infatuation?

It was this question, not caste, that troubled them. After all, though most girls in the country married before reaching her age, Lakshmi was very young, not quite fifteen.

Separately C.R. and Gandhi talked with her. Lakshmi said she was clear. Then test your truth, she was told. Wait, and have no contacts. No meetings, no letters.

Devadas, 27, was similarly adjured. He returned to North India. Obeying the injunctions, he and Lakshmi were to wait nearly four years for parental permission and another two years for marriage.

* * *

Ceylon, meanwhile, had to be toured for *khadi*. Taking Lakshmi with him, C.R. arrived there ahead of the Mahatma. It was his first trip to the island. He assured the authorities that the sole purpose of the visit was to collect money for *khadi*; he hoped, said C.R., for a lakh.

On November 14, at Colombo harbour, C.R. accompanied a committee of Ceylonese hosts on a barge that met the 'Chinkoa,' bearing the Mahatma and Kasturba. The fifteen days that followed took Gandhi and his party to all parts of Ceylon except the east coast. C.R. called it 'an unprecedented triumphal march.'

Welcomed with devotion and affection, the Mahatma did not lose his frankness. To Indian businessmen in Colombo he said:

> Let your scales be absolutely correct, your accounts accurate and I hope that you regard every woman in this island as your own sister, daughter, or your mother.

Sophisticated Sinhalese women gathered in a stately drawing-room were addressed thus:

> My hungry eyes rest upon the ornaments of sisters, whenever I see them heavily bedecked . . . Refuse to decorate yourselves . . . Do you know the hideous condition of your sisters on plantations? . . Let your honour lie in their service . . . That service will deck you more than the fineries you are wearing.

The landscape from Kandy to Badulla was, to Gandhi, 'some of the finest bits of scenery I have ever witnessed.' The Tamil plantation workers of this region 'poured in,' wrote C.R., 'to see Mahatmaji in their thousands and made many a hillside alive with men and women.'

Said the Mahatma to them:

> Where nature provides for you such innocent intoxication, and gives invigorating air to breathe, it is criminal . . to seek intoxication from the sparkling but deadly liquor.

Liquor and the absence of family restraints had damaged many Tamil lives. A worker said to C.R.:

> If we had employment at home, giving us no more than *khadi* can give, we would not venture out to these strange lands to earn a few coppers and damnation into the bargain.

Strolling one day (during a rare hour of leisure) in the Peridiniya gardens near Kandy, C.R., Lakshmi and Mahadev Desai saw a Tamil woman — 'a sylvan beauty,' in Desai's words — with a blithe three-year-old boy. Not far stood a man, obviously, thought C.R. and Desai, her husband.

Questioned, she said that she was an 'untouchable' from Salem district and that she earned nine rupees a month. This at any rate, was a contented family, reflected C.R. But the woman, confessing that she had left her wedded husband in South India, indicated that it was not.

A Jaffna, the last halt in Ceylon, the one lakh target was crossed. In addition, C.R.'s books contained a number of Ceylonese orders for *khadi.*

After returning to Indian shores on November 30, the Mahatma went to Andhra and Orissa, C.R. to his Ashram. The Bania and the Brahmin, master and disciple and yet comrades, had been with each other for seven months. It was, and would remain, their longest spell together.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

A Demon Opposed

THE Ashram had now functioned for three years. It was, according to the Mahatma, 'slowly but surely penetrating the masses.'

C.R. had been intensely active throughout this period. 'He wears himself out,' observed Gandhi. But in terms of the struggle against the Raj the three years had passed quietly.

True, lack of action did not mean absence of preparation. He, his chief and his colleagues were, as C.R. had said, making cannon; they were adding to their weapon, which was the capacity to suffer. It was patient, unexciting work, in a tame political setting.

Suddenly, and unwittingly, the Raj breathed life into the latter. The Mahatma and C.R. were in Mangalore in November 1927, the Ceylonese programme ahead of them, when Gandhi received a summons from the Viceroy.

Arriving in Delhi from deep in the south, the Mahatma learnt from Lord Irwin that a statutory commission, led by Sir John Simon, would tour India and make constitutional recommendations. Gandhi told the Viceroy that this piece of news could have been sent to him in a one-anna envelope. Then he went back to C.R. and on to Ceylon.

The all-white Simon Commission was fated to alienate India. There was a suspicion that the Tories, fearing early displacement by Labour, had appointed it in order to settle India's future while they were still in power. 'Go back, Simon' was political India's response to the body. Not only Congress but the Liberals, assailing the fact that not a single Indian was on the Commission, boycotted its survey.

Deserted streets or critical demonstrations confronted it. Gandhi wrote that the boycott had to be 'followed up by sufficient and persistent action.' He had no desire as yet 'to interfere with the present evolution of the national movement except through occasional writings.' But he proposed an action which would create a sanction against the Raj — the boycott of foreign cloth and its substitution by an increased production of *khadi*.

C.R. attended the Congress annual in Madras in December 1927 but took no part in the deliberations of what was still a Swarajist Congress. He was present because the Mahatma was. When Gandhi addressed a *khadi* exhibition at the Congress site C.R. translated him into Tamil.

For two more years he was to remain outside the political stage. But in March 1928 he made a momentary appearance on it.

A cry for 'foreign propaganda' was gaining volume inside Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru, recently returned from a trip to Europe and Russia, was one of its advocates. C.R. urged realism. In *Young India* he wrote:

> The Indian fight against England, if it is to be by non-violent means, depends entirely on its own strength and can never be converted into an international affair. In a non-violent struggle it is not easy, if at all possible, to obtain any material help from abroad.

What was needed was not 'propaganda, foreign or domestic,' but 'solid constructive work and internal strength.' Internal strength was soon demonstrated by the peasants of Bardoli in Gujarat, where the 1921 struggle would have climaxed but for the Mahatma's abrupt cancellation. Refusing to pay an enhanced land tax, they saw their lands and cattle confiscated but did not give in. After five months, in August, the increase was virtually scrapped and the seized property returned. The Raj had yielded before the Gandhian cannon.

The hero of Bardoli was Vallabhbhai, who organised the peasants. Hailing 'a wonderful victory,' C.R. said that 'Vallabhbhai's part in Indian history has been great.' He had offered to join Patel on the battlefield but the latter and the Mahatma wanted the struggle to remain a local one.

★ ★ ★

The Mahatma, meanwhile, had been conducting dietetic experiments on himself and pondering a European invitation. He considered taking C.R. with him. Resenting the experiments C. R. wrote:

> I did get very angry when I read your last letter about almond paste and coconut milk. Knick-knacks like these are totally inadequate substitutes for bread and milk... I am glad you are taking 'silence' between 12 and 3 every day but silence should be deemed observed only if you lie in bed and have not written or heard anyone for more than one minute's duration.

'I wish you will cease to worry about me,' answered Gandhi. 'I shall do nothing wilfully to impair my health... I shall not do anything obstinately.'

The Mahatma asked C.R. to 'say without fear or favour what you will have me do' regarding Europe. Gandhi's departure would, replied C.R., have an unsettling effect on the Bardoli struggle, which had just commenced, and also on the campaign for boycotting foreign cloth.

C.R. was in Bengal in April, espousing *khadi* and collecting for a Das memorial, when he learnt that Maganlal Gandhi, described by the Mahatma (to whom he was related) as his 'best comrade,' had suddenly died. To C.R. Maganlal was a friend who was 'straight as an arrow.' To Gandhi he was virtually a spiritual heir and the rock at Sabarmati Ashram.

Worried over the impact of Maganlal's death on the Mahatma, C.R. reversed his advice about Europe. 'You may resent suggestion,' he wired Gandhi, 'but prayerfully press your going Europe now leaving scene of desolation in Jamnalalji's hands...' However, Gandhi had abandoned the European idea before Maganlal's death.

* * *

Stories from C.R.'s pen continued. The Mahatma found them 'touching' and published them in *Young India.* They generally involved 'untouchables' and Gandhi hoped that they would 'melt some stony "touchable" heart.'

C.R. also did, for the journal, English translations of the

verses of the Tamil poetess-saint, Avvai, and of Bharati, the poet laureate of the Tamil country who had died in 1921. In November 2,000 copies of a volume of Bharati's patriotic songs were confiscated by the Madras Police.

As a retort C.R. produced the English renderings. When a Gujarati version of one of them appeared in *Navajivan,* Gandhi wrote that 'Gujarat has become familiar with the name of the Tamil poet Bharati.' The Madras authorities released the books after keeping them for two months.

The contributor C.R. and the editor Gandhi did not, however, always see eye to eye. A piece by C.R. in praise of the workers of the Abhoy Ashram in Bengal was spiked by the Mahatma on the ground that the workers did not need to be advertised. C.R. protested. Later in the year *Young India* acknowledged, in a modified form, the men's services.

The Mahatma also turned down a note by C.R., now not traceable, on the Hindu-Muslim question, having found the views in it 'entirely unseasonable.' C.R. was advised to 'keep them under lock and key for the time being.' Replied C.R.:

> I fully expected that you would put an embargo on such stuff. That is why I called the article 'Unsold stock'; and unsold it is and you advise that it should not even be exposed for sale . . .
>
> If you think my views are wrong, after reading them again, I should like a criticism, if time and affairs permit. I think it is the only solution for the impasse about the Constitution.

An All Parties' Conference was, at this juncture, preparing a constitutional scheme as a counter to the Simon Commission's effort. The Hindu-Muslim question was a hurdle before it.

In August, at a gathering in Lucknow, it seemed that the hurdle had been cleared. A scheme proposed by a committee headed by Motilal Nehru was adopted. The Mahatma praised the consensus but reminded the public that a 'proper sanction would be necessary if the national demand was to be enforced.'

* * *

That there were phases in 1928 when C.R. was depressed is shown by a letter he wrote the Mahatma in May, the context

of which is not known:

> Your letter has not helped me to attain the peace which you intended it should do. I see your love and your reasonableness. But peace must come from within. As yet it is like a parched throat only causing pain if you try to find moisture and swallow.

Asking C.R. some weeks later why he felt 'dilapidated,' Gandhi added, 'You must regain your health and your humour, natural not forced . . . '

The parched area around the Ashram did not give any cheer; there was a seemingly continuous drought. Nor was C.R. satisfied with the pace of *khadi,* though he noted, objectively, that a lost industry had been revived around the Ashram, and that, as a result, 'a number of half-starved families were getting a few more mouthfuls of food.'

The Mahatma's view had been that C.R. had the 'patience to wait for a century . . . and the desire to succeed tomorrow.' Gandhi was describing an ideal attitude.

In practice C.R. wondered at times whether selfless workers would sustain *khadi* in the future, and whether the Ashram was not 'like a foreign mission among the people.' Without the public's commitment to *khadi,* involving some sacrifice, *khadi's* life would be, he feared, 'as the Lancashire and our own mills people like to think, only as long as Gandhi's frail life.'

There was, however, no leisure to dwell on such assaults on his faith. C.R. was fully stretched. *Khadi* itself, for one thing, was constantly needing his advocacy.

In April a resumé he prepared on the subject was sent to Lord Irwin by Gandhi, with an accompanying note that described C.R. as a 'very well known lawyer.' This was C.R.'s first link with a Viceroy with whom he was to have a brief but valuable acquaintance in the future. In May, in Poona, C.R. pointed out that while the textile industry had given employment, after a long innings and a huge investment, to four lakhs of people, *khadi,* in four years and with a tiny fraction of the investment, had given supplementary work to one lakh in their own homes. It was not, he said modestly, 'a bad record for the Spinners' Association.'

By now a recognised *khadi* expert, C.R. had practical advice to give. *Khadi* workers, he said later in the year in Sabarmati, should (a) master the technical skills (b) shun self-righteousness, recognising that the unlettered village folk may have qualities they lacked, (c) be satisfied with inconspicuous and monotonous work, (d) be businesslike and (e) learn up the case for *khadi.*

The needs around C.R.'s Ashram, always greater than the resources, forced an extension in mid-July. In 19 months until then the Ashram had given impromptu medical relief to 28,095 men and women. Now a dispensary was ready where, as before, treatment would be free. C.R.'s scientist friend, Dr. P. C. Ray, opened it on July 14.

The drought — women tried to scoop up water into coconut shells at the bottom of wells — was fought. Nearly 250 indigent families within a three-mile radius of the Ashram, all 'untouchables,' were registered, and *jowar* bought in Mysore was sold to them at half-cost.

The freight was high, and the railways refused a concession, but donations, sought through *Young India,* sustained relief for 35 weeks.

By June 1929 the register had swollen to include 418 families (seven of them 'caste' Hindus) from 17 villages. A side-effect pleased C.R. 'Of their own accord' those aided 'pledged themselves to give up drink.'

Neither the editor-contributor differences nor distance affected the Mahatma's camaraderie with C.R., who from mid-1928 was a trustee, along with Gandhi and others, of Navajivan Trust, which had taken over *Young India* and *Navajivan.* The two could relax with each other, or share a regret, through letters.

Attacked in some quarters for allowing the destruction of a diseased calf in his Ashram, the Mahatma wrote C.R.:

> If I took seriously all the correspondence that comes to me, I should have to drown myself in the Sabarmati.

When, in November, Lala Lajpat Rai died (a few weeks after receiving a blow from a police lathi), C.R. wrote Gandhi:

> Selfless patriotism personified Lalaji was . . . Even if India could reconcile herself to the loss, how is Punjab to bear it?

* * *

The year-end Congress session, held in Calcutta, heralded a return to Gandhian ways. At the Mahatma's instance Motilal Nehru presided, though Vallabhbhai's chairmanship had been desired by some in recognition of his Bardoli feat.

Muslim criticism of the Nehru scheme had grown since Lucknow; the Pandit insisted that Gandhi help out in Calcutta. Unable to mount a struggle without Gandhi, the politicians were asking the Mahatma to return to the helm. In turn Gandhi summoned C.R.

Before linking up with Gandhi in Wardha, en route to Calcutta, C.R. tried to enlist Annie Besant's cooperation for the struggle of disobedience that now seemed likely. For a moment it seemed as if the Irish lady would overcome her dislike of the Mahatma's technique. C.R. assured her that violence could be prevented by restricting disobedience to trained volunteers. In the end, however, Mrs. Besant decided that she was not willing to join.

In Calcutta, where C.R. and the Mahatma stayed together, a younger set led by Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal launched an attack on the Nehru report's tolerance of dominion status for India.

Gandhi proposed a compromise: Congress would ask for complete independence if London did not commit itself within a year to autonomy for an Indian Dominion. After accepting the compromise in committee, Bose and Jawaharlal opposed it at the open session.

The about-turn elicited blunt remarks from the Mahatma:

> You may take the name of independence on your lips but all your muttering will be an empty formula if there is no honour behind it. If you are not prepared to stand by your words, where will independence be? Independence is a thing made of sterner stuff.

In C.R.'s opinion, dominion status versus complete independence was an 'issue which nobody takes as real.' Something was needed beyond brave talk, which merely reminded Gandhi of 'prisoners in chains spitting frothy oaths only to provide mirth for their gaolers.'

'If . . we are sure of the sanction,' the Mahatma had said in September, 'we need not worry whether Swaraj is otherwise spelt Dominion status or Independence.'

> Dominion status can easily become more than Independence, if we have the sanction to back it. Independence can easily become a farce, if it lacks sanction. What is in a name if we have the reality? A rose smells just as sweet whether you know it by that name or any other.

* * *

Calcutta's key decision was to proclaim that non-violent non-cooperation would be revived at the end of 1929, unless the Raj satisfied India's demand by then. Could a sanction be forged in a year? Congress set out to enroll and train cadres through a burst of constructive activity.

Prohibition was settled upon as a principal form of this activity; it was placed, by a Working Committee resolution, in C.R.'s charge.

Yet prohibition was more than a means to an end. In the eyes of the All Parties' Conference, convened in Calcutta alongside the Congress, it was a worthwhile end in itself. Partly no doubt as a result of the labours of C.R., who attended the All Parties' Conference, a prohibition clause was inserted in the constitution it proposed for India.

Gandhi generated fervour for *khadi* and against foreign cloth. In March 1929 there was a ten-minute shower of foreign cloth before him in Calcutta; the mountain of fabric was then set ablaze. As in 1921, the Mahatma's intention was to transfer the nation's resentment from 'men to things'— to cloth — but a few of his compatriots had other ideas.

Saunders, the Assistant Police Superintendent of Lahore, had been shot dead in December 1928. Two bombs and a heap of pamphlets were thrown in April 1929 at the Central Assembly floor, without injury to anybody, from the visitors' gallery.

Repression, too, was evident. In March a number of union leaders, including some Communists and Congressmen, were arrested and tried in out-of-the-way Meerut; the cases were not allowed to be transferred to Bombay or Calcutta, where trials would have received a wider scrutiny.

The seizure of Ramanand Chatterji, the veteran editor of Calcutta's *Modern Review* followed. Gandhi thought that the motive behind the union men's arrest was to strike terror, not to kill Communism.

Two prisoners of the Raj, Wiziya, a Buddhist monk in Burma, which was still connected with India, and Jatin Das, arrested over Saunders's murder, died following marathon hunger-strikes against prison conditions.

Gandhi's letter on the subject to C.R. showed his desire for the latter's approval of his steps. Wrote the Mahatma:

> I am wholly against hunger-strikes for matters such as Wiziya and Jatin died for. Any expression of such opinion would be distorted and misused by the Government. I therefore feel that my silence is more serviceable than my criticism. Do you not agree with my judgment of the hunger-strikes and with my consequent silence?

The Mahatma's return to the centre of national affairs was a signal for Madras to ask for C.R.'s leadership. He was the figure on whom hopes seemed to rest at Vedaranyam in Tanjore district, where a provincial conference was held in the first week of September.

Wanting Patel at Vedaranyam, C.R. had cabled Gandhi: 'Vallabhbhai's presiding is like your presence. Important for moral effect.' Gandhi advised Patel to go.

There was keenness for battle in Vedaranyam. A land league was formed, and some undoubtedly pondered a tussle over land revenue on Bardoli lines. 'Complete Independence' was demanded by a section, but C.R. and Vallabhbhai, who together toured South India for a fortnight after the conference, counselled patience till the end of the year.

* * *

C.R.'s mood was a brighter in 1929 than it had been in 1928. A letter he wrote the Mahatma in February conveyed 'unrestrained joy.'

While not referring to his spirits, an English participant at a Quaker conference C.R. attended in January at Red Hills,

near Madras, noted 'the soundness and brilliance of his exposition' and 'the courage and simplicity of his life.'

Though he was now fifty, the major portion of his life's work lay ahead. Stored in the near future was a historic round of battle in which he would be vitally engaged. The period of a year before that was spent in opposing the drink demon. He used two platforms.

One was that of the Prohibition League of India, of which he became, in succession to the Reverend Herbert Anderson, honorary general secretary. G. D. Birla, the industrialist, had requested the Mahatma to persuade C.R. to accept this position. Unsure 'whether Rajaji's constitution will stand the strain of this work,' Gandhi promised nonetheless to write to C.R.

C.R. accepted the post, and also — his second platform — the responsibility for prohibition that Congress had given him.

In Calcutta Congress had resolved that 'in the legislatures and outside every attempt will be made to bring about total prohibition,' and that 'picketing of liquor and drug shops shall be organised wherever desirable and possible.'

By April a national scheme for prohibition prepared by C.R. had been adopted by the Congress executive; to implement it a committee consisting of Dr. Ansari, Vallabhbhai, Rajendra Prasad and C.R. was formed.

In his scheme C.R. envisaged a prohibition unit in each province, attached to the P.C.C., and an anti-drink organiser in each taluk. The latter was expected to form anti-drink sabhas in towns and villages. A sabha could picket liquor shops or dissuade bidding at auctions where liquor vendors bought licenses — and sponsor healthy entertainment to draw off the tempted.

What Gandhi called C.R.'s 'ingenuity' was bestowed, too, on *khadi,* a field where Tamil Nad led all the provinces, having made, in 1927-8, more than a third of the national output.

Some textile mills, exploiting the prestige (and the higher price) of *khadi,* were labelling their product *khadi.* To restrain them C.R. prepared a draft bill that sought, under the Merchandise Marks Act of 1869, to reserve the words *khadi* and *khaddar* for genuinely handspun and handwoven cloth.

* * *

The first enemy. however, was drink. Against it C.R. pitted all his skills, literary, artistic, organisational and forensic.

He drafted pledges, composed lyrics, designed a flag and arranged demonstrations. He trained a team and countered objectors. He enlisted moderates (from the non-political platform of the Prohibition League), linked up with Lord Clwyd, the British temperance enthusiast, and welcomed 'Pussyfoot' Johnson, the romantic American crusader against liquor, to Madras.

Landing at the end of February in an ill-cared-for khaki suit, 'Pussyfoot,' so named for his silent nocturnal raids on liquor joints, attracted C.R.'s admiration despite the fact that C.R. had neither the desire not the ability to emulate Johnson's strong-armed and sly techniques.

Writing and speaking formed the balance of C.R.'s services for the cause. He edited two magazines: *Prohibition*, the quarterly of the League, and *Vimochanam*.

A Tamil monthly written at the Ashram, printed in Madras and dispatched from the Ashram, where, with the others, C.R. stuck the stamps, *Vimochanam* came out only ten times. Yet it has left a mark on the story of Tamil journalism.

Presenting the poor man's misery 'vividly and with infinite pathos,' it became, at least for one reader, 'the symbol of how large the human spirit could be, and how good . . when . . men give of their best in the service of the majority of the people . . .' Some of the magazine's columns were filled by an editorial and Ashram colleague, 'Kalki' Krishnamurti, later acknowledged as an outstanding figure of modern Tamil writing.

In his 1929 engagements diary C.R. records the dates, places and serial numbers of his prohibition talks. Enthusiasm overcoming the strain, he toured and spoke without ceasing. There were 62 speeches in all; he delivered the last of them as president of the Temperance Conference held with the Lahore Congress of December 1929, which was chaired by Jawaharlal Nehru. Not without reason was Jawaharlal to call C.R. 'the unquestioned leader of the prohibition movement in India.'

The Raj blew hot and cold over prohibition. A village munsiff in Salem district, accused of exhorting his villagers not to drink, of taking pledges from 'untouchables' and of levying fines on those breaking community decisions against liquor, was

suspended for a year.

To the Mahatma, who took up the incident in *Young India*, the punishment of the village official was evidence of the 'satanic' character of the system in India.

On the other hand, the Madras Government allotted, under pressure of public opinion, Rs. 5 lakhs for anti-alcohol education. Some of the money was spent on hiring temperance propagators.

In C.R.'s view the move was insincere: actions such as the suspension of the munsiff spoke louder than anything the temperance staff might say. If part of the budget was given to him, said C.R., he would use it non-politically. He did not get it.

Late in 1929, however, Madras's Excise Commissioner, E. B. Cotterell, visited the Ashram and recommended to Government the creation of a dry area around it. This had been C.R.'s demand for some time. The Government agreed to close 31 toddy and arrack shops in the Tiruchengode taluk and 22 such shops in the adjoining Rasipuram taluk.

The dry zone experiment lasted three years, unaffected by C.R.'s 1930 defiance which was to bring him his second prison term. The 'untouchables' of the area, liquor's worst-hit victims, were substantially weaned from drink.

But in 1932, when C.R. was again behind bars, the Government decided to go back on the experiment; by April the following year all the closed shops were re-opened.

* * *

Someone had written that the Mahatma's South Indian collections had been made over to C.R. who was maintaining idle Brahmins with them.

Seated on the verandah of his hut, C.R. was working on a suitable reply to the calumny when he was disturbed by a woman in rags. Crying 'Swa-a-mi, my Swa-a-mi,' the woman, clearly an 'untouchable,' fell prostrate before him.

C.R. thought that she would beg. She did not. Her husband, she said, had borrowed five rupees from the moneylender, paid ten as interest and died. Now the moneylender was threatening that if she did not return the five rupees he would break up her daughter's wedding, fixed to take place in a few days.

'Go on with the wedding,' C.R. told the woman. 'If the moneylender interferes in any way, come and tell me at once. Do not fear.' After the woman left C.R. sent a warning that restrained the moneylender.

He also tore up the article he was writing in self-defence. The libel against him, he wrote some days later in *Young India,* was nothing against 'the miseries of these defenceless people.' And he added, 'our mutual quarrels and hates are God's retribution for our wicked indifference to the miseries of these children of His.'

On occasion, however, he felt obliged 'to sing my own heroism' and to tackle those who disbelieved or distorted the reformer in him. He wrote in October:

> I claim to be a greater changer than many that now beat up a great deal of dust. I have been an out-caste among my relations for the last twenty years. I have done and am doing things which my clamorous friends have not, I believe, in their own persons attempted.

The lines occur in a postscript to a short story of his about the hazards of a 'two-anna, two-minute' court marriage. While agreeing that 'to stand still is death; change alone is life,' and 'wanting Hindu marriage reform in many desirable respects,' C.R. held out for 'the continuance of the religious form.' It made for 'strength and durability in the marriage tie.'

'I confess,' he wrote in the same piece, 'that I have discovered in myself a strong element of Conservatism.'

* * *

The deadline set by Congress was drawing near. On October 31 Lord Irwin announced that a round-table conference of British and Indian statesmen on India's future Constitution would take place in London. At the same time he made what appeared to be a commitment on Britain's behalf:

> I am authorised on behalf of his Majesty's Government to state clearly . . that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress . . is the attainment of Dominion Status.

In a manifesto Gandhi, Malaviya, Mrs. Besant, Motilal Nehru

and others welcomed the Irwin declaration. They asked, however, for an assurance that the proposed conference would result in India acquiring Dominion Status.

Even before the Viceroy expressed his inability to give the assurance, British leaders indicated in the House of Commons that India had read more into the Irwin statement than was meant by it, Ramsay MacDonald, the Premier, saying that there had been no change of policy.

On December 23, 1929, a few hours after escaping unhurt from a bomb explosion, the Viceroy informed the Mahatma and four others who were calling on him that Dominion Status could not be promised. The ultimatum had been rejected. The ball was back with Congress, now gathered in Lahore for its annual session.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A Declaration of War

LAHORE authorised a clash with the Raj. Gandhi was to command the nationwide revolt. C.R., who conferred with his chief in Wardha en route to Lahore, would assist and interpret him — and lead the attack in the south.

In the Lahore session C.R.'s was a quiet role. He watched, with approval, the return of the Mahatma as an active general and was no doubt pleased at the council-believers' admission of failure. It was a moment of vindication for him but not one for gloating; a fight was in the air.

Forty-year-old Jawaharlal Nehru presided at Lahore. C.R. had wanted Gandhi to take the chair. Others too urged the Mahatma, and ten provincial Congress committees formally proposed his name. However, resolved to place the mantle on Jawaharlal, Gandhi turned down the idea. He also secured the withdrawal of Vallabhbhai, favoured by five committees.

Subhas Bose and Jawaharlal were restless; there was a growing gulf between them and the old guard. The Mahatma undoubtedly expected the Jawaharlal nomination to help close ranks and to keep Jawaharlal from going too far to the left. He extolled Jawaharlal's qualities, but added that youth had to let its energy 'be imprisoned, controlled and set free in strictly measured' quantities. And he assured the older men that the President of the Congress was 'not an autocrat . . . He can no more impose his views on the people than the English King.'

So the crown was passed from father to son. Moved by Gandhi, the cardinal resolution defined the goal of Congress as complete independence, asked the Swarajists to resign their legislature seats and authorised the AICC to launch civil disobedience

when it thought fit.

This was comfortably passed, and the body acted as one on the major issues. However, when the Mahatma wanted Congress to congratulate Irwin on his escape from the bomb explosion and also to appreciate the Viceroy's efforts, Subhas Bose opposed him. In the divisions the latter lost, but narrowly. Bose and Srinivasa Iyengar were resentful of what they called the majority's tyranny at the session; they walked out and formed the Congress Democratic Party.

C.R. and Patel were lodged next to each other in tents, where it was bitterly cold, especially for those from the south, but 'the heat of passion and excitement, . . the flushing of faces on hearing the beat of the war-drums . . oh, it was all in marked contrast with the weather.'

While in Lahore C.R. took time off to preside at an All India Temperance Conference. In his address he touched on the American scene, noting that Herbert Hoover, who had endorsed prohibition, had been chosen President by an overwhelming vote. Prohibition would build, he thought, 'an inheritance of health and undrugged happiness' for India.

At midnight on New Year's eve, 300,000 men and women, including C.R. and his son Narasimhan, now twenty and a Tiruchengode delegate, gathered on the banks of the Ravi to watch the hoisting of free India's tricolour.

* * *

Congress was to unleash an attack. But how? How would it sponsor nationwide disaffection against a system still extremely powerful? And could it keep the rising non-violent?

A new Working Committee considered these questions on January 2. It included C.R. and Patel; the Gandhi-ites were to the fore again after six years of voluntary exile. Sunday, January 26, was named independence day. The people of India were asked to adopt on that date a pledge which termed submission to alien rule 'a crime against man and God.'

However, the call for revolt was not yet backed by a plan of revolt. Unknown too was the extent of the people's ardour for revolt. Gandhi and the Working Committee looked to January 26 to gauge it.

C.R. was confident. January 26 would be 'the great day when India will pronounce "talak" [divorce] to Britain,' he told a Wardha audience on his way south.

While in Wardha he attacked 'two great sins.' One, 'the government's sin,' was the sale of liquor, which made beasts of men. The other, 'the people's sin,' was untouchability, which treated some as worse than beasts.

On the day of assessment C.R. was in Madura, where in A. Vaidyanatha Iyer he had a reliable follower. 'Great enthusiasm prevailed,' wrote the *Hindu.*

Under Gandhi's instructions no speeches were made anywhere in the country; everywhere the flag was hoisted, the pledge was read out and audiences were asked to raise hands if they agreed with it. Place upon place that Sunday morning was a forest of hands.

Councillors were getting the public's message. Though a few Swarajists were still hesitant, 172 members of legislatures, including 30 at the centre, resigned by February.

C.R. was drawing huge crowds all over the south. He advised:

> Do nothing wrong in the eyes of God, but resist injustice. Resist, not by bringing a heavy stick down on your opponent's skull but by suffering the penalties imposed by him for your resistance.

He ridiculed:

> The British say, 'Swaraj is good for us, not for you, and because you are so wicked as to ask for it, we must cure you by locking you up.' You laugh when I describe the process in its naked simplicity. Let us submit to this in our thousands and just as you here in this assembly laugh, the whole world will laugh too. And suffering and laughter are as potent as electricity.

And he challenged:

> The hour is struck for all of us to cast away our dearest attachments and to make a supreme effort again.

'We must all die, but let us not leave the struggle to our children,' he said in Tiruppur; and in Salem in early February he foresaw freedom 'in our own lifetime.'

* * *

While C.R. was sombre and expectant, some Congressmen were getting restive; there was as yet no programme before them. However, Gandhi had not been wasting his time; he was 'furiously thinking' for a plan of action.

It had to be defiant and sacrifice-demanding; else it would not attract the 'secret, silent, persevering band' of young men lured by violence, It had to be non-violent; he was sworn to the creed. And it had to be uncomplicated so that it might, God willing, be adopted by all freedom-desiring Indians everywhere.

Suddenly it came to him: break the salt law. By taxing the manufacture and sale of salt the government was hurting 'even the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and utterly helpless.' The people, Gandhi saw in a flash, should make their own salt and deprive the government of the 'inhuman' tax.

The Working Committee was meeting in Sabarmati in mid-February. Gandhi gave colleagues a hint about salt. On February 15, at a public meeting in Ahmedabad, C.R. asked the nation to expect the general to 'sound the bugle of.. non-violent war.'

Some like Jawaharlal were mystified by the choice of salt. Others accused Gandhi of diverting attention from the goal of complete independence or ridiculed the proposed campaign because of the relatively small total the tax yielded. But C.R. had no doubts. His heart believed in Gandhi, and his head proceeded to explain him to the non-believers.

He told a big gathering in Sholapur:

> You may say, hello, this is a funny thing. All along he was telling that if we made khaddar we will get swaraj, now he says we must make salt also. Buying salt means accepting this government and owing allegiance to it. Making salt is refusing to owe allegiance to government.

At Tuticorin he said:

> Suppose a people rise in revolt. They cannot attack the abstract constitution or lead an army against proclamations and statutes but have to capture a stronghold here, a stronghold there, seize an arsenal here and destroy a fortification there.
>
> As in armed conflicts, so also in civil resistance, you must give up the general and apply yourself to the particular. Civil disobedience has to be directed against the salt tax or the land tax or some other particular point — not that that is our final end, but for the time being it is our aim, and we must shoot straight.

Moreover, the salt tax was a cess on a necessity, 'one of the greatest inequities' of the Raj, bloating the price of a gift of nature that should not have cost more than 'the cost of removal.'

Predictably, the south's conventional politicians demurred at first. The decision to boycott councils led to the resignation from the provincial Congress executive of the president and the secretary and of Srinivasa Iyengar and Satyamurti. Events were once more thrusting the leadership of Tamil Nad into the hands of C.R., who obtained a mandate from the Working Committee, endorsed by the TNCC, to organise disobedience in the Tamil country.

* * *

The Mahatma now moved. He wrote to the Viceroy, asking not for complete independence, not even for early dominion status, but simply for a repeal of the salt tax, adding that if the law was not reconsidered he, along with his Ashram co-workers, would break it.

At his request, a young English Quaker called Reginald Reynolds, dressed in *khadi,* delivered Gandhi's letter at Viceroy's House. By this gesture the Mahatma wished to tell Britain and remind himself and India that British rule was the target of attack, not Englishmen.

The Viceroy replied promptly — and curtly. His four-line message stated that Gandhi was inviting 'danger to the public peace.'

'On bended knees I asked for bread and I have received stone

instead,' exclaimed the Mahatma. Britain, he observed, heeded force, not entreaty; he would try non-violent force. As for the public peace, it was his 'sacred duty' to break 'the mournful monotony' of the 'prison-house peace' that India enjoyed.

He would perform this duty, Gandhi declared, by breaking the salt law in Dandi, a village on the west coast 241 miles from Sabarmati, and would march all the way to do so. He would take with him some of India's finest cannon: 78 of his Ashram co-workers, all ready for suffering and pledged to non-violence.

The Viceroy and his police, puzzled and perplexed, watched him. Should they arrest, and risk a storm, or not arrest, and allow defiance? The choice was not easy. The Indian people, stirred and tense, watched him. So did an intrigued world audience informed by European and American journalists.

Early on March 12 the Mahatma and his 78 fellow-marchers prayed and set out. 'Staff in hand he goes along the dusty roads of Gujarat, clear-eyed and firm of step," wrote Jawaharlal, by now fully convinced. 'The fire of a great resolve is in him and surpassing love of his miserable countrymen. . . None that passes him can escape the spell.'

So began what has been called 'the weirdest and most brilliant political challenge of modern times.' 'The English laughed, their Indian flatterers echoed them, the intellectuals of Congress were bewildered . . and the great motionless crust of India began trembling.'

Gandhi was 61 but a practised walker; he set a fast pace. For more than three weeks he and his party marched. Villages were festooned and flew flags. Peasants waited for him and walked with him. The ranks of walkers swelled. And nearly 400 officials of villages on the Mahatma's route gave up their posts.

'It is not salt but disobedience that you are manufacturing,' C.R. wrote him.

For a moment C.R. considered varying the form of disobedience for the south, and proposed an attack on the sale of liquor: 'a march from Cape Comorin to a single picketting centre, getting volunteers on the way.' However, he saw the value of 'a unified attack all over India.' After touring the province 'to see how the land lies,' he announced:

I have decided that we should start the campaign in this province on the salt issue.

The crowds at C.R.'s meetings were unusually large and his speeches were going down very well, one in Madura producing a 'great impression on the public mind.'

Before launching the southern campaign he went to Gujarat — for the Working Committee and AICC meetings and to see the walking Mahatma. The main speaker, on the way, at a mammoth Bombay meeting, he claimed that the 'explosive salt of civil disobedience .. would terminate the present system of government.'

There were no waverers left at the Congress meetings in Ahmedabad. The response to Gandhi's march had converted them. The satyagraha was ratified.

Now it had to be spread. A pledge framed by C.R. for Tamil Nad satyagrahis was circulated among the leaders of other provinces. It said:

> I believe in non-violence as an article of faith for the achievement of Swaraj.... I shall patiently and willingly undergo all penalties including imprisonment ... May God help me.

On March 23 C.R. joined the Mahatma in the village of Buwa, north of the town of Broach. By that time Gandhi's feet had taken him almost half-way to Dandi. They had a long talk. An India-wide extension of the revolt was discussed. However, there was more to the meeting than the business of struggle.

C.R. was quite convinced that Dandi would be Gandhi's final battle; he did not feel that the Mahatma, at his age, could survive the physical exertion of the march and of the imprisonment that would follow. Fully expecting to earn a fair prison term himself, C.R. thought that this meeting in a rough hut in the hot hamlet of Buwa would perhaps be his last with someone who was three things combined to him — national leader, master and dear friend. It was not with a light heart that he took leave of Gandhi.

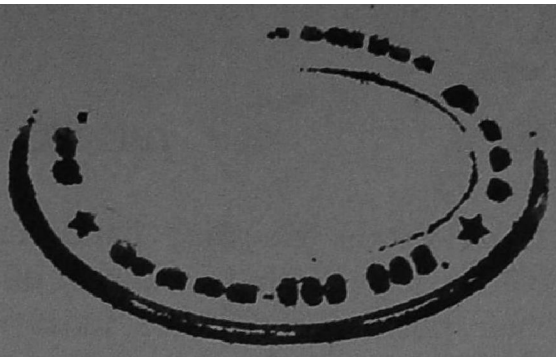
From Buwa C.R. went to Surat to help alert the textile town to the Mahatma's arrival. When Gandhi paused there, on

the banks of the Tapti, 80,000 gathered round him.

The Mahatma reached Dandi, with his followers, on April 5, and camped near the shore. Next morning, early, he bathed in the ocean, and walked to where the salt lay thick. Hundreds were looking. He 'bent quickly over and scooped some of it up with his fingers' and then he 'straightened and held it over for all to see: the treasonable gift of God.'

The deed had been done. Indians now knew what they should do — make or sell salt or buy it illegally. They proceeded to do so in incredible numbers.

The person who did not know what to do — whether or not to arrest Gandhi — was the Viceroy. Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister, had authorised him to 'go ahead with calm assurance.' Yet Irwin hesitated for a month. Meanwhile revolt erupted in the far north and the deep south.



Chapter Sixteen

Vedaranyam

WHILE it recognised that the satyagraha had 'completely overshadowed all other issues,' the Madras Government had not anticipated serious trouble. In February 1930 it had thought that the 'fulminations' of disobedience were proving 'increasingly unpalatable' in the south.

Complacency continued till early April, by when C.R. had chosen a site for his march. 'Very few people . . seem to have definitely committed themselves to take part,' said the southern province to Delhi, thinking, too, that 'the question of funds may prove an additional stumbling block . . .'

The Raj's confidence was not baseless. The Swarajists had been lukewarm about disobedience. A fair section of the public was more responsive to an attack on Congress errors or on Brahmin wrongs than to a call for revolt against the Raj.

On the other hand, C.R. was resolved. He had set about collecting men and resources. Only those ready for long prison terms, even for death, qualified, he said, for his march. For its destination he selected a point on the Tanjore seaboard, Vedaranyam; starting from Trichy, the marchers would walk about 150 miles. Vedaranyam's assets were convenient salt swamps and Vedaratnam Pillai, a merchant willing to host a battle.

Ten days before the march the TNCC unanimously made C.R. president. The Raj's estimate was wrong: C.R.'s problem lay in turning down volunteers, not in finding them. He chose with care, enjoining his pledge on each recruit. His Ashram supplied the first eight.

The eventual regiment — the 'hundred gems,' as they came to be called — included a man from each Tamil district,

seven youths resigning handsome Bombay jobs, an engineering college lecturer and a railway official, the last two also sacrificing their posts. To the free India of the future the group was to contribute an editor, an ambassador, a union minister and more.

Tanjore, the district the marchers were to traverse, was being run by an astute and energetic Collector, J. A. Thorne of the I.C.S. He promised the Government an 'ignominious failure' of the march — on two conditions. One, that he be allowed to arrest C.R. on the latter entering his district. Two, that he be authorised to arrest those feeding or housing the marchers as harbourers of criminals.

'I fear C. Rajagopalachari's presence will enlist much sympathy for the movement,' wrote Thorne to Madras, adding, 'I apprehend no great difficulty dealing with the sheep once their shepherd is gone.'

Referring to his second request, the aim of which was to scatter the marchers by denying them food and shelter, Thorne wrote, 'I shall take pains to see that they meet with increasing difficulties and discomforts.' If they did manage to reach Vedaranyam, continued Thorne, he was confident that in that town he 'should be able to prevent their getting accommodation.'

Though the Chief Secretary, C. W. E. Cotton, thought that the step Thorne proposed against the 'harbourers' was not 'desirable,' the Government permitted Thorne to prosecute them. However, the Collector's first request was turned down.

The Government was aware of the damage C.R. could do, assessing him at this juncture as 'probably the ablest and certainly one of the most intransigent' of the south's leaders. Yet it reasoned that 'to adopt Mr. Thorne's proposal now will be to confer on Rajagopalachari the cheap martyrdom that he and Mr. Gandhi desire.'

Thorne's warnings against 'harbouring'— punishable by a six-month sentence and a fine — were carried on Tamil leaflets, by beat of drum and in the press. Retorted C.R.:

> The satyagrahis are prepared to lie under the sky or starve on Tanjore soil . . . We pursue our advertised plans.

It was yet dark in Trichy cantonment on April 13, the day of the Tamil new year. Most of the city was sound asleep, but

there were stirrings in the spacious house and grounds of Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, newly-elected secretary of the Tamil Nad Congress.

Precisely at five a figure of medium height with a bald oval head, a staff in his right hand and a haversack across his shoulder emerged from the house and took a position on the road. Soon he was joined, in rows of two, by 96 others, most of them in caps and holding staves. As they stood in silent prayer, two girls, daughters of C.R. and Dr. Rajan, pressed *kumkum,* red powder of blessing and luck, on each forehead.

Hundreds had assembled at the unusual hour to witness a going out to war. When the marchers took their first deliberate steps there was a complete hush. Tears trickled down the faces of some onlookers. After a few seconds the notes of a song could be heard. 'Kathiyinri Rathaminri,' the marchers were singing. 'Sans sword sans blood.' The verse had been composed for the occasion by poet Ramalingam Pillai.

C.R. had not walked long when he was shown the morning's paper carrying Thorne's order against 'harbouring.' Without pausing or slowing down, C.R. dictated, to accompanying press reporters, a fresh answer. He knew, he said, his people and their tradition of hospitality better than a British officer did. The order, he predicted, would enlarge the public's welcome. With a twinkle he added, 'Thorns and thistles cannot stem this tide of freedom.'

In the beginning it looked as if Thorne's strategy might work. At Koviladi, on the second day of the march, the party found the 'chhatram' — pilgrims' inn — barred and bolted against them. C.R. was invited to a private home and the rest slept on the bed of the Cauvery.

'Stretching out everywhere, the Cauvery serves us like a great friend and mother,' C.R. wrote his children. 'She assists with our lodging and our washing. On her sands thousands attend our meetings, women-folk coming in great numbers.' 'When I see you 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}$ years hence,' C.R. adjured Narasimhan and Lakshmi, 'you should receive me smiling.'

Koviladi was not a pointer. In the halts that followed the marchers were joyously hailed. They walked under welcome arches, on roads sprinkled with water and to the cheers of crowds that were getting bigger and bigger.

More important, they were fed and housed. Thorne's direc-

tives — which he reinforced by personally visiting, ahead of the marchers, some of their halts — were defied or defeated. Those who openly gave hospitality knew the consequences — jail terms and fines — and received them. Others, too, found ways of helping. A nameless host, in one place, hung bundles of food on trees the marchers could not miss. Eventually C.R. had to appeal against pampering the satyagrahis.

Neither soldiers nor sanyasis, the marchers yet bore a resemblance to both. Walking five miles in the morning and five in the evening — past ricefields or groves of banana or coconut, with the Cauvery, journeying seaward, often by their side — they took with them a way of life.

At stops they fraternised with 'untouchables' in their hutments, refrained from entering temples — because they were closed to the 'untouchables' —, swept village streets and spoke up for Hindu-Muslim unity and against drink. And at two crowded meetings a day they preached the gospel of non-violent revolt.

Reporting to the Government of Madras the 'extraordinarily vigorous propaganda' along the route, Thorne claimed, 'with all respect,' that he had been right in suggesting C.R.'s early arrest and added that 'harm to the prestige of Government has been done by the march.'

Though a toe infection obliged him to walk barefoot for two or three days, C.R. stood the journey well. In the thick of it he remembered to ask about 'the anti-drink work around the Ashram.' 'I am anxious only about that,' he wrote. In response to persistent campaigning by C.R., toddy shops had lately been closed in the Ashram area, which as a result no longer saw 'reeling villagers staggering on the road.'

At Tanjore town. Thorne's post of command, a brother and sister gave, in C.R.'s words, 'shelter and noble hospitality,' but C.R.'s heart sank when he found that nothing had been prepared for the evening meeting; no one, he was told, was ready to take responsibility. A lawyer finally offered C.R. a rickety old table; with the help of the lawyer's gardener, C.R. had it moved to the meeting site.

Not a soul was to be seen there, and C.R. was prepared for 'a miserable failure.' 'After all it is Thorne's headquarters,' C.R.

thought, 'and we may yield to him at least in one battle.'

But when C.R. and his team marched down at the appointed hour they saw a surging mass of humanity. Before C.R. spoke — 'with a heart moved to the depths' — the 20,000 present prayed in complete silence.

In Kumbakonam, Pantulu Iyer, ex-member of the Legislative Council, kept all the marchers for two nights in his house and fed them. He was jailed for six months. Next, in Semmangudi, C.R. learnt that a few government servants were in the welcoming crowd. This kind of courage meant, he told the throng, that freedom had already arrived. As expected, the officials lost their jobs.

While C.R. was addressing a meeting in Tiruthuraipoondi, Ramachandra Naidu was arrested for having fed the satyagrahis. The multitude remained calm. Gandhian teaching had been imbibed.

A mighty crowd was waiting in Vedaranyam, reached on April 28, the sixteenth day of the march. After saying that he was taking the welcome addresses as read and the garlands as worn, a tired but smiling C.R. declared that he would break the salt law on the 30th and expect others to break it thereafter. And he added the prophecy that the police arresting the satyagrahis would one day serve them.

The next day, settled in a camp erected by Vedaratnam Pillai, the marchers fasted and prayed. So did, in fellowship, many others in the province. And C.R. formally wrote to Thorne of his intention to violate the law.

* * *

Informed by C.R. of Thorne's order and of the manly response of the public, the Mahatma had written back: 'It is good that our hands and feet are tied so that we can sing with joy, "God is the help of the helpless."' It was a Tamil proverb, written in the southern script. Gandhi had picked up proverb and script in South Africa.

By now all India was astir and the Raj had reacted. A press ordinance, issued on April 27, was to cause the closure of *Young India* and *Navajivan*. Bajaj had been sentenced for $25\frac{1}{2}$ months. Jawaharlal was in prison. A police bullet had hit Jairamdas

Daulatram, Working Committee member from Sind.

From April 23 to 28 the town of Peshwar, lying on the historic invasion route from Central Asia, was in the control of the 'Khudai Khidmatgars' ('Servants of God') led by Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Scores of the followers of Ghaffar Khan, who was pledged to non-violence, and been killed by machine-guns, but on one occasion two platoons of the Raj's Garhwalis — Hindus — refused to fire on the unarmed Muslims.

* * *

The sun had not yet risen over the Bay of Bengal when, on April 10, C.R. and 16 fellow-marchers set out towards it. Their target was the Edanthevar salt swamp, a couple of miles from the Vedaranyam camp.

Almost immediately after they reached the swamp and, beginning with C.R., bent down and picked up some salt, the Superintendent of Police, Govindan Nair, was on the scene. He was supported by some officers and fifty constables. C.R. and others holding salt were told to surrender it. On their refusal Nair arrested C.R.

Resolved to prevent demonstrations of sympathy, Thorne had arranged for a quick, secluded trial in a salt shed near the sea, and a quiet dispatch of the prisoner — by the 8.35 a.m. train from Agastyampalli station. He had also instructed that all telegrams relating to the arrest be withheld till evening.

Nair fetched a bucket of water for C.R. to wash his salty hands and sandy feet before being tried. Ponnuswamy Pillai, the judge brought to the shed, had been in Salem during C.R.'s lawyer days. The prosecutor was inefficient; never at a loss in a court, C.R. helped him out.

The sentence was six months rigorous plus a Rs. 200 fine or another three months. C.R. said he would prefer the additional term. Pillai had given out his verdict calmly, but when it came to signing the jail warrant he broke down and wept.

The proceedings had been speedy but not brisk enough for the prisoner to be placed on the 8.35 a.m. train. Thorne's officers had let their chief down. By the time the next train left, carrying C.R. to Trichy, word of his arrest had spread.

An enormous throng that included the marchers met the

train at Vedaranyam. Allowed to greet the crowd from a carriage door, C.R. said, 'We will meet in prison,' and joined his palms in a *namaste* as the engine steamed out.

Some halts later a small white man entered the compartment where C.R. was lodged and extended his hand to the prisoner. It was Thorne. The enforcer and the breaker of the Raj's law sat side by side and talked.

'Your plan was bold, but you forgot that we are in our own country,' said C.R. Thorne smiled and replied, 'Yes, we have each tried to do our best and our worst.' Then he ordered coffee and refreshments for C.R.

On the train C.R. wrote 17-year-old Lakshmi:

> My dear child, I am getting nine months leave . . . Pray to God for our battle's success.

Next day, to mark the arrest, shops were closed and business suspended throughout the Tamil country. At Vedaranyam salt continued to be gathered, now under Santhanam's leadership. It was seized by the police, picked up afresh by the volunteers, seized and gathered again, the cycle continuing for weeks despite Santhanam's conviction on May 1, followed by Vedaratnam Pillai's.

Thorne hoped to frighten away the ranks without having to arrest them. Sticks were used on fists, and salt forced out. But the 'sheep' stood their ground and kept violating the law. Only when Thorne ordered wholesale arrests was the cycle broken. Dismantling the marchers' camp, the police arrested the entire group and the others who had joined them; among the latter were their new leader, Mrs. Lakshmipathy, and Dr. Rajan.

Including the marchers, 375 were arrested for revolt in Tanjore district. In his secret reports to Madras, Thorne admitted that C.R. had 'had something of a triumph, even Mohamedans and Adi Dravidas ["untouchables"] taking part in the receptions.' He noted, too, that C.R.

> throughout maintained excellent discipline among his followers . . always adhered to non-violence . . and refrained from the arts of demagogy.

'If there ever existed a fervid sense of devotion to the Government, it is now defunct,' stated Thorne. In turn the Madras secretariat informed Delhi that the movement had 'left in its wake a growing spirit of . . bias against government.'

Thus did the Raj acknowledge the purity and the success of the struggle of Vedaranyam.

* * *

The Mahatma did not remain free for long.

Less than five full days after C.R.'s arrest, at 12.45 a.m. on May 5, the British district magistrate of Surat, two officers with pistols and some thirty rifled policemen surrounded Gandhi's straw-hut in Karadi, three miles from where he had picked up salt. The Briton flashed a torchlight on the Mahatma's face, waking him, and asked, 'Are you Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi?' 'Do you want me?' replied Gandhi.

He was wanted, indeed. The limit of Viceregal patience had been crossed when the Mahatma wrote Irwin that he planned to take possession of the salt works at Dharasana.

Gandhi was arrested under an 1827 regulation. At ten past one, after being allowed to pray, he was put in a lorry and driven more than two hundred miles to Yeravda central jail in Poona. The century-old regulation did not call for a trial.

The Mahatma's arrest set off a fresh wave of revolt. The cotton mills of Bombay went silent. So did the railway work-shops. Sholapur in Maharashtra was taken over and run under the national flag until twelve demonstrators were killed and martial law imposed.

On May 21, 2,500 satyagrahis under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu and Manilal Gandhi, the Mahatma's second son, raided the Dharasana salt works. They were pitilessly beaten, and arrested, by a force of 400 Indian policemen commanded by six British officers. Two died and 320 were injured but not a hand was raised by the peaceful army. Non-violence had worked.

Not only that; through an American reporter, Webb Miller, the world learned that it had worked. Miller, whose eye-witness account was syndicated to over a thousand papers, wrote:

> Although every one knew that within a few minutes he would be beaten down, perhaps killed, I could detect no

> signs of wavering or fear . . the marcher simply walked forward until struck down.

A bigger raid followed, on June 1, in Wadala, 15,000 taking part. The shunning of foreign cloth was now virtually complete. Imports of cotton piece-goods were down to around a quarter. *Khadi* sales were up nearly 60 per cent. Liquor boycott was strengthened by a rising corps of women pickets.

In the new climate Vithalbhai Patel quit the Assembly he was chairing. Malaviya, who had opposed Gandhi in Lahore, now publicly bought contraband salt.

Lord Irwin admitted to the Secretary of State in London that he was 'surprised at the dimensions the movement had assumed.' And in July the director of intelligence acknowledged

> the self-sacrificing attitude of many businessmen towards the boycott movement, the unending supply of volunteers for picketing, the participation of large numbers of women . . the abundance of funds for . . Congress . . [and] . . the addition of large numbers of the labouring classes to the forces of disorder.

The Raj had taken a beating but had no intention of retiring. It fought back with wholesale arrests, lathi charges, press censorship and ordinance rule. Between mid-April and December-end Irwin ruled through ten ordinances, an 'arbitrary rule . . wielded by no previous Viceroy.'

In June the AICC and the Working Committee were declared illegal. Truce was explored by Irwin in the following month, with Liberal leaders Sapru and Jayakar acting as intermediaries, but the message carried to Congress functionaries in prison was not deemed adequate.

India was changing. A parallel establishment, challenging the Raj and rivalling it, was growing. The queues ready for jail seemed endless and were now increasingly formed by women. A city like Bombay had two governments, the majority, including businessmen and workers, obeying the illegal Congress. When Congress proclaimed a hartal, silence fell on the streets.

In Gujarat, the recently released Vallabhbhai led a successful no-tax campaign among the peasants. Rather than pay the land-

tax, 80,000 of them left their villages for temporary camps in the princely state of Baroda.

* * *

To the extent that prison would allow, C.R. followed these events.

He spent three weeks, as convict number 5557, in Trichy Central Jail where at six each evening he was locked inside a small cell in which the only 'means of ingress for air' was 'a small ventilator about 2 ft. by 1 ft., barred and wirenetted.' He felt he had been 'deprived of a reasonable measure of fresh air and sleep.' From Trichy C.R. was moved for two weeks to the Madras Penitentiary and thence to Bellary Central Jail.

The summer is long, hot and exacting in Bellary, but C.R.'s four months there had positive aspects. He was in the company of intelligent young satyagrahis. They were eager to learn. C.R. was glad to teach. The jailor 'knew how to deal with gentlemen as well as to keep within the rules;' he gave C.R. full freedom to hold classes and prayer meetings.

C.R. covered a wide range of subjects, mostly chosen by the young men: the lives of great men, of trees and bees, stars and atoms; also Bolshevism, untouchability and the national debt. One of the 'students' took down the talks in shorthand; they were published in 1931 as *Chats Behind Bars.*

The teacher C.R. could turn a dry fact, e.g. the distance of stars, into a memorable picture:

> When you look at a dim star, you see not what is there now, but what there was before Buddha was born. The light started then and has taken all the time up till today to reach your wondering eyes... All the history of India has taken place in the interval.

He described how trees yield fruit:

> The beautiful little insects, the flies, the bees and the ants carry the essence from one flower to another, and thereby trees fructify. Don't imagine these little insects are enemies to the flowers. They are the priests who perform their marriages.

Satyagraha had to be guarded against misuse:

> Suppose Srinivasa Sastri and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru go on hunger strike so that the Mahatma may withdraw his obdurate demands, what would you say? Can Mahatmaji's heart allow Sastriar to commit suicide, and therefore is he to give up the claim on behalf of India? . . . I warn you, enthusiastic young men who have found a new weapon in satyagraha, against [its] misuse.

Concerned by 'a pressure of concentrated hatred upon a particular people, the brahmins,' he told the men:

> I belong to that hated caste. It does not seem to me the right method at all to hate any particular community . . I say this thing to you here. I would not say it outside . . . People must be left to learn from their own experience. But I want you . . to avoid all hatred and pursue the method of love in social reform.

C.R. gave his view that caste need not govern marriage:

> My confirmed belief is that women as well as men must be free to marry whomsoever they like . . I am not proposing that boys and girls may run away with each other. I only say that in marriages the choice of the young people should prevail . . we can be partners without distinction of caste, friends without distinctions of caste, and . . marriage too need not to bound down by rules of caste.

Inter-dining was not wrong:

> I can eat whatever is cooked or touched by anybody . . alongside of anybody and in the presence of anybody . . . There are these sweepers here. If you allow them to touch and mix with you there is hope of improvement in their manners and habits, but if you always exclude them there is no hope of it.

Not talk but work was needed, including 'dirty' work, All should learn scavenging. He hoped for the day when 'the scavenger [is] able to do the work and have a bath and change of clothes, drive in a carriage and have a nice meal.'

Rejecting violence, C.R. speculated about an ideal socialism or Bolshevism. He thought that in certain situations men might work better for their country than for themselves:

> Would you, if you are a painter, paint a better picture if it is to be inherited by your son or grandson or if it is to be inherited by the nation? . . I have known many friends who even in the present order of things bestow more attention on public duties than on their private affairs.

Nationalism was not enough:

> The satyagraha experiment . . is not a mere nationalist experiment for getting our own liberty. God will help it . . only if India's battle is a step in the progress of the whole world.

Though a battle raged outside and he was part and parcel of it, C.R. showed no bitterness:

> The labour of yours will be spoiled if we . . swerve even an inch from non-violence. If an Englishman or European talks to Mahatmaji, at the end of the talk what does the European or Englishman think? . . 'If all the people of India were like this man, it would be easy to solve the problem.' All people are not like him. Our attempt must be to free all people from hatred.

Touched by the young men's warmth, C.R. asked them to

> infect other people with the same affection towards me as you have. I would then be able to do some service to them. Even if you do not manage to create good feeling in other people towards me at least try to give the message of general good feeling to all people. Let people love each other and not distrust each other. That will do, even if I am altogether out of it.

At a farewell 'class' the day before his release, he said: 'outside . . they cannot see or understand me truly as you, my dear friends, have done.' Humbly he added.

> I am naturally an impatient man. I thank you all for the patience you have shown me in spite of my constant harsh behaviour towards you.

Admonishing the men 'to be considerate' to the jail staff, he asked them — 'I say this the 108th time' — to go into their cells at lock-up time without waiting to be told. Discipline would lead to 'strength in civil disobedience . . when we want it.'

Requesting the 'students' not to show demonstrations of affection — 'I don't want to break down,' he said — , he rose and stepped away.

* * *

Though awarded nine months in all, C.R. in fact served a sentence of five months and eleven days. After he had been consigned to prison the Government discovered that the penalty for not paying the Rs. 200 fine should have been six weeks, not three months; it would seem, moreover, that about ten weeks were remitted.

Released on October 10, C.R. forthwith addressed a Bellary gathering and attacked the new ordinances. They merely made 'clear to the world the reality of Indian revolt.' The movement, he claimed, would feed on the 'fresh vitaminous dishes' which the Viceroy had 'cooked and made ready.'

At meetings in Madras he asked the people to make the spirit of revolt dynamic. The government was to hold a census; C.R. called on the public to withhold their answers.

All this was too much for the Raj. George Stanley, the Governor, rebuked district officials for allowing 'a notorious agitator' like Rajagopalachari to address meetings. This description of C.R. was new, and an indication of the Government's loss of temper caused by the growing lines of resisters.

Two weeks after his release C.R. was asked to enter into a Rs. 500 bond and keep the peace. Before a crowded court in Madras, on October 25, he refused; he was sentenced for a year.

Having to return behind bars did not come as a surprise to C.R., who nominated Satyamurti as acting president of the Tamil Nad Congress. Four days earlier he had said, 'I have come out of prison now, but I must again and very soon go back,'

The Mahatma, serving his term in Poona, sent a message pulling C.R.'s leg and conveying warmth at the same time. 'Write to Rajaji,' said Gandhi, addressing a colleague, 'and tell him

that generally I do not write to eminent leaders and therefore I will not write to him either. But I remember him every day.'

Lodged first in the Madras Penitentiary, C.R. was later removed to the familiar Bellary Central Jail (where a cat he had befriended seemed glad to see him back) and thence to Vellore, his 1921-22 'home.'

In Vellore, now the south's principal 'political' prison, he had the company of leaders and activists from the Telugu, Malayalam and Tamil districts. To a fellow-prisoner who kept a diary, G. Ramachandran, are owed some glimpses of C.R. inside Vellore Jail.

> There were extremists . . and hot disputes and occasionally exercises in violent language and action. But most of such violence became subdued as soon as Rajaji came on the scene.

In appearance 'cautious and even timid,' 'physically . . skin and bone with almost no flesh on the body.' C.R. 'was fearless' in reality.

Also, 'in any crowd in a few minutes he would be the focus of all attention;' and 'as a conversationalist . . Rajaji surpassed everyone else.' Asked whether the Mahatma approved of his fondness for coffee, C.R. is reported to have replied,

> If this is the only thing I do that Bapu disapproves and my only sin, I shall be on my way to heaven.

In spite of his 'probing eyes, cynical humour and cutting logic,' he gathered round himself in Vellore 'people who loved and trusted him completely.' Part of his enforced leisure was used by C.R. for learning Hindi, under the 'energetic guidance' of S. B. Rath, an Oriya Congressman.

His spirit unsullied by imprisonment, he sent on Christmas day a wish, which he said was from his heart, to Anderson, his colleague on the Prohibition League,

> that all bitterness should cease and we may all be united in the bonds of friendship — a free India and a Christian Europe.

* * *

Among the Raj's advisers were those who wanted even firmer measures, but Irwin was reflecting. His thoughts took him to the opposite conclusion.

In December he said in Calcutta:

> We should, I am satisfied, make a profound mistake if we underestimate the . . meaning of nationalism . . and for this no complete or permanent cure had ever been or will be found in strong action by the government.

When on January 17 he said that he recognised 'the spiritual force which impels Gandhi,' officials in Delhi raised their eyebrows.

Something more unexpected was in store for them; it also surprised nationalist India. On January 25, after consultation with Premier MacDonald, the Viceroy announced that Gandhi and the Working Committee would be released. The doors of selected prisons opened next day and Gandhi and his colleagues, including C.R., were let out.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A 'Second Door' to Swaraj

THE leaders were freed on January 26, exactly a year after they had taken the independence pledge in Lahore.

Terming the release 'unconditional,' the Viceroy said that he trusted those 'affected by our decision to act in the same spirit as inspires it.' The Mahatma's comment was, 'I have come out of jail unfettered by enmity and unbiased in argument.'

Yet, unfree as ever, the people of India were tempted, said C.R., either to 'cry at her condition' or to 'laugh at the ridiculousness of being ruled by a foreign power.' Neither, however, would help; a 'way to act' had to be found.

For this a search commenced. The leaders met in Allahabad. They were seeing one another after ten months. However, sadness marked the reunion. Motilal Nehru was dying.

His sacrifice had been exemplary. Used to affluence, he had cheerfully borne the rigours of battle. C.R., 20 years younger, had often differed from him. The life-styles of the two lawyers seemed opposed. Motilal's was rich; C.R.'s bordered on the austere, despite his successful Salem years. Motilal looked, some thought, like a Roman emperor, his shawl draped like a toga; C.R. preferred Socrates as a model.

After Gaya, where they clashed directly, C.R. had moved to an Ashram and the Pandit to the Assembly. But they had met again on the battlefield, and Motilal had finally agreed as to the futility of the councils. 'There was no hope in that line and the legislatures must be given up,' he told C.R. Undeterred by illness, the Pandit had fought gallantly over salt.

C.R. went to the sickbed in Allahabad and spoke a few words. The Pandit could only reply with a 'namaste.' The end

came on February 6. 'The nation has lost one of its grandest figures,' said C.R.

Responding to their release, the Working Committee members authorised the Mahatma to negotiate with the Viceroy. When Gandhi asked for an interview he was summoned right away. The Working Committee accompanied him to Delhi.

Lord Irwin and his lady had just moved to their new mansion, an immense edifice of red sandstone designed to suggest the grandeur of the Raj — and its permanence. Just a year earlier the faith of Lutyens, architect of the palace, might have seemed justified; now a question mark hung beside its dome.

In the afternoon of February 17 Irwin received Gandhi in it, enabling Winston Churchill, M.P., to utter a memorable sentence:

> It is alarming and also nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer now posing as a fakir . . , striding half-naked up the steps of the viceregal palace, while . . still . . conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor.

His term getting over, Irwin was shortly to return home. He wanted to take a settlement with him. Quashing the campaign had been, he felt, his duty; remarkably, he seemed to acknowledge that Gandhi, too, was being driven by a duty.

Hope alternated with despair during the fortnight in which Irwin and Gandhi conferred, a session averaging three hours. From the Dariaganj residence of Dr. Ansari, where he stayed. the Mahatma would walk the five-mile distance to Government House and return walking, and report to the Working Committee.

Keeping hope alive was the passion of Sapru and Jayakar, the Liberal leaders who were just back from a Round Table Conference in London at which, without Congress participation, India's future had been discussed. The two became known as 'the peace-makers' — or 'the deputy Viceroys,' as Gandhi called them. On occasion C.R. joined the Mahatma in the Government House parleys.

At home in conference as well as in combat, the Mahatma obtained a Pact. If the peace-makers were useful, so was C.R.,

who, according to an observer, B. Shiva Rao, 'quietly laboured with skill and persistence.'

He assisted, in particular, over the salt law, the deliberate violation of which had led to the war. Damaged but not defeated by the war, the Raj could not be expected wholly to repeal the salt law. Nor could the Congress agree to a truce without a tangible change in it.

With C.R.'s help a compromise was evolved: residents of regions close to the salt swamps were allowed to collect their own salt and to trade in it in their own areas. C.R. sold the compromise to the Raj's intermediaries — Sapru and Jayakar — and to Indian members of the civil service like B. Rama Rau and Akbar Hydari. In Shiva Rao's opinion C.R. had a part, too, in persuading Gandhi to accept it.

The usefulness of C.R. during the talks is illustrated by a comment of a British official, Ian Stephens, who met C.R. at the time in the home of Akbar Hydari. Observed Stephens:

> Mr. Rajagopalachari I took to; kind, moderate, wise, he much attracted a young Englishman. If Congress people can be like this, I thought, what's all the fuss about; why this Indo-British political squabbling?

The impression he made on Stephens (who later took to journalism and became, in course of time, editor of the *Statesman*) discloses a C.R. strength — fairmindedness. In Delhi in 1931 and often afterwards Englishmen were struck by this quality in C.R. It added to the repertoire of Congress in its dealings with the British.

The Delhi negotiations shed light on C.R.'s talents, but their chief outcome was an increase in the prestige of the principals: the Mahatma and the Viceroy. Their agreement, described officially as the Irwin-Gandhi Pact and by Indians as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, by no means conceded all that the Congress had fought for in the previous year. Independence was not mentioned at all in the Pact; as already stated, even the salt law was merely modified, not withdrawn.

Why, then, did India thrill, as she did, to the Pact? Because it acknowledged parity between the representative of the Raj, the Viceroy, and the representative of Congress, the Mahatma.

What irked Churchill pleased India — a parley on equal terms. For Congress this intangible prize was worth all the preceding exertion.

Moreover, clause five of the Pact gave respectability and, to some eyes, legitimacy to civil disobedience even while announcing its discontinuance: 'Civil disobedience will be effectively discontinued and *reciprocal* action will be taken by government.' (Author's italics.)

There were tangible gains also. Apart from the salt compromise, these included a clarification that 'unaggressive' picketing would be allowed as long as it did not coerce or obstruct the public. All prisoners were to be released, apart from the Garhwalis who had disobeyed their officers in the NWFP and some men in Sholapur who for a brief period had 'taken over' the city. And the bans on committees of Congress were to be lifted.

While acknowledging that 'Swaraj was not won' by the Pact, Gandhi felt that a 'second door to Swaraj was opened' by it. Said the Mahatma:

> Even as the farmer after tilling the land devotes his entire attention to the growing of the crops, so should the Congress workers, after a year of . . civil disobedience, take seriously to the constructive side.

Gandhi was wise and realistic enough to declare that 'if there is any victory, . . it belongs to both sides.' For the moment, however, Congressmen gloried in the fruits of success. Now they could freely collect salt, even if only in well-defined areas and for limited periods; and they could picket, with impunity, liquor shops and shops selling foreign cloth 'under the eye of the very policeman who was till yesterday jumping upon [them] like a wolf on a fold.'

On one score, however, there was acute disappointment. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged for the 1928 murder of Saunders, the Lahore police official. The Mahatma had striven hard for commutation but Irwin was adamant. Accusing the Raj of blundering, Gandhi nonetheless urged an indignant public not to lose its balance.

Attacking the cult of violence, be prophesied:

> You will not stop at using the violent weapon against your rulers; you will use it against your brothers and sisters too, and others in your way of thinking will use it against you.

Congress met in Karachi in April, giving up for the first time its practice of a year-end gathering. C.R. and his Working Committee colleagues elected Vallabhbhai Patel President.

When C.R.'s name was not included in Patel's Working Committee, some southern delegates publicly protested. Addressing one of them, Vallabhbhai said, 'I withdrew it on his behalf. I know Mr. Rajagopalachari more than you do.' Patel correctly implied that C.R. did not need the distinction of membership to be able to assist the Working Committee.

Southern delegates in Karachi were vexed, too, by a sentence in an account of the 1930 struggle that, according to them, underestimated the south's role. After C.R. spoke to Jawaharlal, who as one of the new General Secretaries had drafted the report, the sentence was deleted.

Karachi ratified the truce and authorised Gandhi's participation, as the sole representative of Congress, in the Round Table Conference scheduled in London for later in the year.

* * *

At Vedaranyam, where residents now made their own salt, victory was celebrated. Pointing to an old woman who had brought food for the satyagrahis a year earlier and whose utensil had been seized by the police, C.R. said, 'Today she comes again with joy and pride . . . We have won the battle.'

Elsewhere, too, the public showed its enthusiasm. C.R.'s stock was high. 'He is recognised by one and all to be the foremost of Gandhi's lieutenants,' said Sitaramayya, a future President of Congress, about C.R. before the latter addressed 'a vast gathering' in Masulipatam on the Telugu shore.

For a short while after the truce it almost seemed as if Congress had obtained a share in the Government. C.R., for instance, spoke of a 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact administration.'

Senior officials of the Raj showed a new courtesy. As had often happened in the past, mail addressed to the TNCC office was being censored and delayed. C.R., who had resumed the

presidentship of the TNCC on his release, sent a complaint to the Chief Secretary.

The top civilian of Madras answered the letter the day after receiving it, signing himself, 'I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,' and stating that the complaint 'will be enquired into.'

The polite form was by no means obligatory when it came to addressing one described fairly recently by the Governor as a 'notorious agitator;' and the promptness of the reply was as uncustomary as the fact that it came from the Chief Secretary himself. Two months earlier a subordinate would have acknowledged C.R.'s complaint — some weeks after receiving it.

In July the Madras Government indicated that it would view favourably a plea for reduced taxes from small land-holders affected by a fall in agricultural prices.

Picketers of liquor and foreign-cloth shops in Tanjore were being told to keep a distance of 100 yards to 150 yards from the shops. When C.R. argued that the distance was unreasonable, the Collector of Tanjore agreed not to enforce it.

Over salt, too, C.R. obtained concessions. As long as it was carried as headload and not in carts it could be collected by villagers without a limit on distance being prescribed. It could also be made or collected in coastal waste-lands owned by the Government.

Was a Raj-Congress partnership emerging — perhaps as a prelude to a transfer of power? There were moments when C.R. nursed such a hope. It was soon to be proved illusory.

The truth was that an influential segment of the Raj resented the Pact and regarded it as a blunder. Irwin's successor, Lord Willingdon, seemed to share its view. Encouraged by his outlook, a number of officials sought to rescue the Raj from the spirit of the Pact.

The Collector of Madras, a man called A. R. Cox, assailed picketing. Joining issue, C.R. said:

> If Mr. A. R. Cox had been Viceroy of India, he would never have signed the Gandhi-Irwin settlement and permitted picketing . . however peaceful it might be promised to be. But Mr. Cox is not Viceroy, he is only Collector of Madras,

a responsible subordinate administrator.

The relationship that had been developing between C.R. and Cotton, the Chief Secretary, ended when the latter died at his post. C.R. felt that Cotton's successor seemed 'determined to put him down' and 'push all representations on behalf of the Congress to the district magistrates.'

The Excise Commissioner of Madras claimed that the 'unaggressive' picketing of liquor shops allowed by this Pact could not include the picketing of auctions where the Government sold licences for liquor vendors.

C.R. challenged the interpretation and, before the Government backed down, asked the public to defy it. Picketing at such auctions was 'an inherent common law right,' he asserted. The Delhi Pact, he added, was meant not 'to curtail liberties but only to extend them.'

Gandhi, who, according to H. W. Emerson, the Home Secretary in Delhi, was 'more sincere than ever in his desire to see the settlement through,' conveyed C.R.'s protest to the Government of India. The latter advised Madras to yield.

There was harassments at a lower level. An official warned village headmen against giving 'lodging and food and other conveniences to Congress volunteers who come to picket toddy and arrack shops in the villages,' because 'it has come to our notice that by reason of this . . shop-keepers have no sales.'

In the south, at any rate, liquor became the principal test of the Pact, indeed of the bonafides of the Raj. Congress stood for most freedoms except the one to drink. Hesitant about most rights, the Raj seemed resolved to ensure the right to drink.

When liquor vendors tried to defeat picketing by selling outside the prescribed hours and at places other than their stalls, officials connived at the illegalities. Nor did the Raj stir when 'the tree-marking scandal' was aired: palm-trees on private lands were being branded and numbered for toddy-tapping by Government employees without the permission of those owning them.

But picketing was winning the day. A single volunteer, national flag in hand, could stop sales at a liquor shop merely by standing near it. In June, C.R., with a sense of triumph, wrote to his friend Pussyfoot Johnson of 'desolate public houses,

mere ghosts of their former selves.' 'Tavern after tavern [is] being abandoned,' he informed Mary Campbell, an American missionary and temperance worker.

Despite the Government's auctioneering, about 3,000 out of the 9,000 liquor licences in the presidency were still unsold in September. In all the licences fetched only Rs. 50 lakhs in 1931, against an estimated Rs. 150 lakhs.

Yet C.R. did not merely want shrunken drink revenues and deserted liquor stalls. He wanted these without disorder or violence. Fighting the Raj and simultaneously keeping the peace with it was a challenge; it was like 'dancing on a wire.'

Firm with his own side, C.R. instructed picketers to ask for Swaraj but, in view of the truce, not attack the Government; to boycott foreign cloth, 'German and Italian' as well as British, and not British goods as such; and 'whenever there is a doubt' as to the rules of peaceful picketing, to 'err in favour of the Government.' Struck by the instructions, Emerson asked the Mahatma to congratulate C.R.

In the Congress leadership there was none keener than C.R. to work the Pact, which to him was an example of 'what two God-fearing men could achieve though history places them in opposite camps.' He regarded Irwin, 'both as a man and as a Viceroy,' as 'the most Christian' representative of Britain in India.

Confrontation and trust were both weapons in Gandhi's armoury. A majority of Congressmen were drawn to him by the first; C.R. was attracted by both.

He had been a dedicated non-cooperator, but he was prepared, too, to cooperate, to explore with a whole heart what Gandhi had called 'the second door to Swaraj.'

Hence it was that both he and the Mahatma were greatly disappointed by the unfolding outlook of the Willingdon administration. A liberal — in contrast to Irwin, who was a true-blue Tory —, Willingdon enjoyed the company of the Indian princes; but he disliked Gandhi and the Congress, and seemed determined to stamp out what he probably felt the Pact had condoned: the mentality of disobedience.

By August Congress had lost faith in the regime's sincerity towards the Pact. Its experience in Gujarat contributed to the disillusionment.

There hardship was in store for the peasants who had withheld taxes during the struggle and whose lands had been seized by Government. Acting, in C.R.'s words, 'as tax-gatherer for Government,' the Mahatma asked the peasants to clear their arrears.

His word was law; they paid up, even though confiscation had deprived them of a year's earnings. Not satisfied, the authorities coerced them in regard to current dues — and were slow in returning the confiscated lands.

In many cases seized fields had been sold by Government to third parties. Original owners sought the help of officials in negotiations to buy back their fields. This was denied. C.R. charged: 'Not only is there no assistance from officers, but actually incitement is offered to resist negotiations.'

* * *

With the truce crumbling, was it right for the Mahatma to attend the Round Table Conference in London? Probably not, thought Gandhi, and in August the Working Committee voted against the journey.

The working of the Pact was not the only consideration. Congress and the Mahatma lacked, at this juncture, the clear backing of Muslims. Without it success in London was ruled out.

Jinnah made his stand plain: if 'the British Government gave the Hindus a constitution in accordance with their desire, naturally Muslims would be opposed to it and would resort to every means to destroy and wreck that constitution.' Congress and Gandhi spoke only for Hindus, alleged Jinnah.

To disprove the accusation, Gandhi wanted Dr. Ansari, head of the Nationalist Muslims, at the London conference. Irwin had said that Ansari could be a delegate. Willingdon vetoed the idea.

Anxious from the start that the Mahatma 'goes to the London conference with the Hindu-Muslim problem solved,' C.R. had advised:

> If the Mussalman community wants protection. the Hindus must give all that is demanded . . . Not merely must we concede the substance but also adopt the methods which the Mussalmans feel should be adopted.

What Congress offered (partly at C.R.'s initiative) was rejected by men like Jinnah. Nonetheless, and despite the enfeebled truce, C.R. saw merit in a Gandhi journey to London; it would enable the Mahatma to influence the British public, 'So do go,' he wrote his chief. 'Let us fail there. We cannot be worse off than we are now.'

Unconvinced, the Mahatma replied: 'London has no independent charm. If things are bad here, they would be worse there . . . It is well to treat the two Government as one.' Yet even if the two governments were one, the people of Britain were a separate constituency, and C.R. felt that Gandhi should woo it. He again pressed the Mahatma.

Others were also urging Gandhi. Talks, 'bereft of all grace,' took place between him and Willingdon in Simla. All that the Viceroy offered was a small concession over an inquiry on the treatment of the Gujarat peasants.

Virtually sure that nothing would come of the conference, Gandhi agreed all the same to sail for London. Many assumed that he would take C.R. with him. 'Aren't you going to London?' K. M. Munshi, a Bombay lawyer and author who was to hold senior offices in the future, had asked him.

The answer was no. C.R. would serve from India. The Mahatma sent him a noteworthy letter:

> There are two men whom I would like by my side in London, you and Jawaharlal. But I feel that even if both of you were available I must not have you by me. You will both help me like the others by being here. Only, your presence with me would have lightened my burden.

Young India was once more in C.R.'s care. If absence from the country should disqualify Gandhi as editor, C.R. was formally to replace him. And, instructed the Mahatma, if 'opinion among our own coterie differs, C.R.'s should be the final voice.'

Bearing the Mahatma on one of its decks, the steamship *Rajputana* sailed for London early in September. If London did not give honourable terms to Gandhi, 'the battle would have to start again,' said C.R.

* * *

A letter arrived for C.R. from Patel, Congress President:

> Bapu has gone and I feel so terribly lonely that I don't know what to do. In his absence the burden of carrying on negotiations with Government . . falls on me and I am so ill-equipped for that kind of work that the burden is too much for me.
>
> I suggested [to Bapu] that if you could stay with me for the short period of his absence from India, it would be a great relief. He agreed with me, but was in doubt about your being able to leave your province, but asked me to write to you about it.

Two factors prevented C.R. from saying yes to the appeal. Picketing had spread all over Tamil Nad. Without vigilance it could easily slide into disorder, giving a handle to the Raj's hardliners.

Secondly, Namagiri was acutely ill with lung and nervous difficulties. C.R. had had to fetch her from Rangoon in July. He did not see how he could leave her alone, and asked to be pardoned:

> Just like the province I am in charge of, my family also has no second-in-command. You must not be angry with me but forgive.

Tiruchengode Ashram continued to be his base. From there he looked after *Young India,* published, as before, in Ahmedabad, and pursued a variety of concerns.

As before *khadi* was one of them. A hurdle before *khadi* was the weavers' preference for the even yarn the mills made. It was decided to press factories to stop making thick yarn.

Under the persuasive fear of a Congress boycott, a number of mills agreed — including powerful British-owned mills in Madura and Coimbatore. Weavers were thus obliged to accept handspun yarn.

Some wanted a boycott of all British-owned mills because they were British-owned, even if they ceased making thick yarn. To this C.R. was opposed on principle — it would be a racialist act. There was another argument against it: such mills fed

thousands of handlooms with yarn.

Another concern was salt. The Raj appeared to be having second thoughts regarding the compromise.

The salt concession was suddenly withdrawn from two taluks of Ramnad district on the ground of 'extensive removals of large quantities of salt to distant villages.' In a protest to the Government, C.R. said that an allegation of this nature should have been subjected to challenge and disproof by the public before the facility was withdrawn.

Liquor, of course, was a third preoccupation. C.R. found time to prepare a dramatic sketch on drink and a prohibition manual.

In the manual C.R. quoted a statement supplied to him by Colonel R. McCarrison, director of the semi-official Pasteur Institute of Coonoor, questioning the alleged nutritional value of liquor. Though a scientist, the colonel had nothing to gain and something to lose by lending his name to what was a Congress publication. He wrote to C.R.: 'I am always ready to help you or other sincere workers in the public interest.'

When it came to liquor C.R. was blind to political barriers. Thus he used Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the anti-Congress leader of the Depressed Classes, in aid. An official Bombay Committee of which Ambedkar was a member had reported that 'untouchables' invariably asked, 'Why don't you ask the government to close the drink shops?' C.R. publicised the question in a statement headed, 'Dr. Ambedkar and the Drink Evil.'

His sharpest language was reserved for a temple that had leased its trees for tapping. 'The business,' said C.R., 'was pure and simple partnership in sin, and the wages of sin cannot be agricultural income but only the death of religion.'

He found occasion, too, to express himself on the 'devadasi' custom:

> I detest the practice of attaching woman servants to temples, pledged to celibacy, who have become by accepted practice prostitutes.

And he flung darts at untouchability. In June he joined in a demand that 'at least . . all streets, places of worship and sources

of drinking water' be opened to 'the so-called untouchable castes.' And in December he went to Guruvayur in the Malayalam country to assist a non-violent bid to open for all the doors of its famed temple, closed for centuries to the 'untouchables.'

Some asked for a postponement of the battle against untouchability until freedom was achieved. Countered C.R.:

> I would like to know if any persons quarrelling over the ownership or enjoyment of any piece of land would postpone their suit until the Swaraj fight is finished.

He had a retort, too, for those Englishmen who wanted India to solve her minority questions before claiming freedom:

> When South Africa demanded full freedom, to the accompaniment of gunpowder music, the English did not tell them that they should solve all their minority and untouchability questions before they could justly ask for a free constitution.

Seldom silent, C.R.'s pen did not spare the Raj, the truce and the London conference notwithstanding. Because of the Depression, the King had asked for a cut in his income. Officials in India would react, wrote C.R., by saying:

> East is east and west is west. The good people in England do not know the climate or politics in India. To cut down salaries now would be entirely misunderstood as yielding to popular agitation...
>
> It would be a sign of weakness,.. inciting Congress to truculence and breaches of the peace... We shall stop all adventurous schemes of development. But steady dear old salaries must remain.

From sarcasm C.R. turned to advice: 'Follow the King Emperor, cut down your salaries at once.'

* * *

Tamil Nad responded to C.R.'s leadership with discipline. There were virtually no incidents of which the Raj could complain.

In Madura, in October, picketers were hit by lathis, but the action was unprovoked. To prove that the assaulted volunteers

had kept to the agreed code, C.R. at once proposed an inquiry by Robert Foulkes, an English resident of Madura and head of the district board. The Government, however, was not prepared to let even a responsible Englishman inquire, and C.R.'s challenge was rejected.

In a letter to Vaidyanatha Iyer, president of the Madura District Congress Committee, C.R. had said:

> The men in Madura, I fear, do not know, how to do a thing quietly . . . I fear you must have started with a flare of trumpets. I wonder if you did not have a procession and shouts and demonstration.

The letter was published in full in the newspapers, along with C.R.'s offer to have Foulkes as the sole arbitrator. Iyer and other Congressmen in Madura were hurt that C.R. had gone to the press with his misgivings.

'I realise the error committed by me and it is for you to dictate the punishment,' C.R. wrote Iyer, who had expressed grievance. In explanation C.R. said that he had raised his 'severe' questions in order to obtain 'a conclusive denial' and put the authorities wholly in the wrong.

And though he had asked himself if it was wise to 'let the public know of these fears of mine,' he released his letter to the press, C.R. went on, because 'there can be no harm in sharing what I feel with everybody . . . We must win our battles by frankness and truth . .'

C.R. was proud of his picketing volunteers. They were, in his words, 'mostly poor workmen,' who 'get nothing out of this . . and are not paid salaries.' With 'every kind of corrupt influence and temptation around them, no one,' said C.R., 'dare utter the calumny that they have been bribed or corrupted.' Character was protected not by high salaries but by 'the purpose we are serving, the motives of patriotism and service to the poor.'

The Congress movement was 'stronger in our province now than anywhere else in India,' claimed C.R. in November 1931.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Prison Again

THE Round Table Conference failed as expected. Indian divisions were magnified at it. The press portrayed the Mahatma as a Hindu leader, the Congress as one of several Indian factions. Muslims allowed to participate claimed that the Mahatma did not speak for them. Nor, said Ambedkar, for the Depressed Classes.

Ambedkar demanded separate electorates for the 'untouchables.' Seemingly reasonable, the separation would, however, split Hindu society and solidify prejudice rather than remove it.

The Mahatma remarked that he would be forced to resist such a move with his life. Most people ignored, at the time, his words on what looked a secondary issue, but C.R., several seas away, felt for his friend who was also a friend of the 'untouchables.'

The demand of Ambedkar, wrote C.R., was the 'most unkindest out of all.' 'Well might our Caesar cry, "Et tu, Brute," and his mighty heart burst in grief at this.' And he conveyed his own reaction to Gandhi: 'It is tragic how these leaders are misleading the dumb people. It breaks one's heart . . .'

British elections held while the Conference was on made Laborite Ramsay MacDonald Premier once more — but heading a coalition where Conservatives were powerful. Most Indians thought that Tory ascendency would impede their political progress. C.R., who had speculated whether Irwin would be made Secretary of State for India (he was not), was not so sure, and wrote:

> I do not think it matters to India what British Cabinet is in power. The conflict is British interests against Indian

> interests . . . The British occupation came and developed uniformly under all parties. The retirement must also be [of] the same sort.

Britain, however, was in no hurry to retire. It was not even thinking much about India. British politicians were preoccupied with their country's economic crisis. Before the conference dissolved C.R. had written:

> Whatever might happen, Mahatmaji's visit to England will not have been a waste. Last year we made Britain perceive our strength. This year we have shown our good humour, our sense of realities and our will for peace. It is an organic continuation . . Gandhiji and India will be all the stronger for this brief parley.

The effort was not in fact a waste. Independently of the conference at St. James's Palace, the Mahatma was holding a dialogue with the people of England, meeting them in an unceasing sequence of gatherings and visiting them in their homes. And he was getting through to a large number. The British found him unusual, determined — and likable. Even in Lancashire, hurt by the Indian boycott, there were cheers for him.

As C.R. thought of his friend's triumph, the image that rose in his mind was of an ancient figure. The Mahatma, he wrote, was enjoying a 'conquest of hearts in Britain, the ease and grace and the velocity of which can only be described by the Caesarean phrase, "I came, I saw and I conquered." '

* * *

In November Patel led a move to make C.R. Congress President. 'It is your turn this time,' he wrote C.R., and added, 'You must be prepared to bear the burden.'

C.R. wanted the Mahatma to take the chair, on the ground that there ought to be no difference between the de jure and de facto positions. When C.R. discovered that Gandhi was opposed to the idea, he suggested the name of Rajendra Prasad.

Prasad, however, was diffident. He wrote C.R.:

> I really feel that we have very difficult times ahead and we want a man at the helm of affairs who will not waver or

falter. I do not find that I can do it and am anxious to serve under another like you.

Despite his disapproval, the TNCC unanimously proposed C.R. The session was due to be held in Puri in Orissa, where too the provincial Congress Committee recommended C.R.'s election.

C.R. discouraged the idea fairly firmly. For one thing, he felt that he was disqualified 'on account of my ignorance of Hindi.' In his view, it was not possible 'for a Congress President to function without a good knowledge of Hindi.'

The matter would have been settled by the Mahatma. But Willingdon saved Gandhi the task. There was no session at Puri, and it was not until October 1934 that a Congress session was again allowed. It was chaired by Prasad.

* * *

During Gandhi's absence the Indian scene had worsened.

In Bengal there was a sequence of repression and violence. In the U.P. it looked as if a no rent campaign would start. There were restrictions on Ghaffar Khan and his brother in the Frontier. Finding the Gujarat inquiry one-sided and superficial, Patel dropped it.

The spirit of the Pact was dead. Willingdon and Willingdonites were in control. 'There is no doubt,' C.R. wrote to Patel, 'that all over Government has tightened the reins or rather let go the reins and have asked officials to do whatever they like.'

Many Working Committee members wanted to Mahatma to return immediately, but C.R., consulted by Patel, counselled against the idea. 'We cannot call him off for local reasons,' he said. To Jawaharlal he wrote:

> I think that he [Gandhi] should continue in England until he feels that his work is over. I am equally of opinion that his continental tour should be reduced to the narrowest limits . . I do not feel that the situation in Bengal will in any manner improve by his coming back at once . . .

C.R. disfavoured the 'no rent' campaign. And he was opposed to the terrorist methods used in Bengal. With both these views

the Mahatma agreed.

It is true that not all Congressmen shared their outlook. Undoubtedly many provoked the Raj. But the repression the country was soon to experience was wholly out of proportion to Congress indiscretions or Bengali excesses.

As the first stroke — while Gandhi, returning, was on the high seas —, Ghaffar Khan was charged with violent intentions and arrested in the Frontier. Then Jawaharlal was detained in the U.P. Ordinances virtually ending civil liberties were imposed in both provinces.

News of the arrests reached the *Pilsna,* carrying the Mahatma, but was withheld from him. The manners of the Raj had changed.

The *Pilsna* docked in Bombay on December 28. Kasturba, Vallabhbhai and C.R. went up the ship — and gave Gandhi the news. Immense crowds welcomed him back, but his days of freedom were numbered.

Describing the ordinances as the Viceroy's Christmas gifts, he said that he was still keen for negotiations. He asked Willingdon for an interview, but added that India would not submit meekly to repression. The Viceroy sent word that he was prepared to receive Gandhi but not to discuss the ordinances.

Then the Raj came down. Swift and sharp the blows fell. The Mahatma was arrested before dawn on January 4. After a few hours Patel and the Working Committee, all gathered in Bombay, were taken. C.R. was not a member, but he was not to wait long.

With a series of ordinances the Government sought to silence all opposition. Congress organisations were banned. Meetings were forbidden. Press censorship was imposed.

India hit back. Thousands defied the ordinances; by the end of February 1932 the 1930 figure of political imprisonments had been crossed. The lock had replaced the Pact.

* * *

For all concerned, including the Mahatma and C.R., the six-day interval in Bombay between Gandhi's return and his arrest had been fateful, exacting and void of leisure. But there was time in it for the two friends to reach a decision on the future of Devadas and Lakshmi.

The young persons had now waited for more than four years. During this period they had faithfully observed the conditions of no meetings and no letters. Gandhi and C.R. agreed to permit and bless their marriage.

But wedding day was distant yet. Lakshmi and Devadas would not marry while their fathers were in prison, and in any case Devadas was soon to be arrested himself.

* * *

It was on January 9 that C.R. courted arrest.

Accompanied by Satyamurti, C.R. cruised slowly in a taxi along crowded streets in Madras and distributed a Tamil leaflet, *The Satyagraha Fight*. As the leaflet called for a boycott of foreign cloth, C.R. was violating Ordinance V of 1932, which prohibited picketing and 'molestation.'

When police officers accosted him, he was handing out leaflets to a group of men on Godown Street. An inspector asked C.R. what he was doing. In reply C.R. handed him a leaflet. More leaflets were given by C.R. and Satyamurti to a constable.

Meanwhile four vans filled with police had emerged. One of them blocked the taxi, and C.R. was told that he and Satyamurti were under arrest. After they were removed, police dispersed the crowds that had gathered by opening a water hose on them — a tanker too had been brought to the scene.

Two days later C.R. and Satyamurti were tried. In his statement to the court C.R. said:

> I molested no one and loitered nowhere. I did distribute handbills asking the public not to help economic exploitation by a power that refuses us our national right to rule ourselves. If the act amounts to an offence under any ordinance then I must call that ordinance all wrong. I have acted as a civil resister.

He was sentenced for six months. Over a thousand Tamils followed him and Satyamurti into prison.

'It is becoming increasingly difficult to avoid overcrowding the jails,' said an Indian functionary of the Raj, in a letter to the Madras Chief Secretary. Obviously eager to demonstrate his

loyalty and resourcefulness, the official added, 'I think a certain amount of orderly whipping would not be amiss.' The proposal was not sanctioned.

* * *

Lodged, to begin with, in the Madras Penitentiary, C.R. found a harsher spirit in the jail officials than he had previously encountered, and, when he was unwell, a denial of proper treatment. Soon, however, for his third sojourn there, he was shifted to Vellore.

Here C.R. kept fairly well, explained the verses of the Alwars to fellow-prisoners and read Upton Sinclair and Thomas Hardy and also the *Imitation of Christ,* by Thomas a Kempis. The last he found 'truly beautiful.'

He liked Sinclair's *Wet Parade,* seeing in it 'a fearful indictment of corruption in American politics,' but preferred Hardy's writing. 'The contrast was so great,' he wrote Devadas. 'The delicate touch of real art is so different from the propagandist style.'

The Raj permitted its prisoners to engage in literary argument. When the Mahatma, who was kept once more in Yeravda, heard from Devadas of C.R.'s comment on art and propaganda, he wrote, disagreeing: *'Uncle Tom's Cabin* is propaganda pure and simple but its art is inimitable.' Decades later, after having produced a number of books, C.R. was to describe himself as an author who wrote only for propaganda.

Prisoners around C.R. were 'making good progress' with Hindi and some were 'gurgling away at Urdu too.' C.R. himself learned Sanskrit, helped by a political prisoner from Kerala, Narayana Menon. To Devadas he wrote:

> Sanskrit grammar is too beautiful for mortals like me. but I have all the same done the first book of Hitopadesa and I am doing Panchatantram, starting at the fourth book . . I have coped with some chapters of the Gita by myself.

The Mahatma disclosed that Vallabhbhai, his prison companion in Yeravda, had been 'inspired' to tackle Sanskrit himself, following word of C.R.'s efforts. 'These days [Vallabhbhai] is simply engrossed in that study,' he wrote to a colleague.

From Yeravda Gandhi had written to Narasimhan enquiring

about the latter's health. Struck by this evidence of the Mahatma's detailed concern, C.R. described him as a 'wonderful man — the biggest householder among us all.'

Rules for interviews were hardened in the course of C.R.'s term in Vellore. A thick screen was placed between the prisoner and his visitor. C.R. made a protest on behalf of the prisoners; it went unheeded. The prisoners' response was to forego interviews.

There was distressing news for C.R. on June 28, eleven days before he was to be released. Namagiri's husband Varadachari had suddenly died in Trichy. It was Namagiri (Papa) who had been ailing; some months earlier it had appeared to C.R. that she was 'wasting and wasting.' Now typhoid and pneumonia had claimed Varadachari, who had come away from Rangoon to look after her.

'Papa is his dearest child,' said the Mahatma, correctly. Her being widowed deeply affected C.R., but it was not in his code to apply for release on bail.

The Mahatma cabled C.R.: 'You stand in no need consolation from us. God must be your rock.' To Namagiri Gandhi wired: 'Remember you are daughter of brave father.'

* * *

On July 9 C.R. was released. Early in August he had a fifty-minute talk with the Madras Governor, Sir George Stanley, 'to understand mutual viewpoints.' The political situation was deadlocked. Congress was defiant but stationary. And the Raj's attiude was not altering.

C.R. was ready to explore a way out. Confidence, however, had been broken. 'The hopes of honourable and fruitful negotiations were shattered in January 1932,' said C.R. at the end of August, and referred to 'the torment of these eight months.'

'It is well-known,' he added, 'that the Government forced the war on the Congress. But a war cannot be stopped by a mere expression of regret. The sufferings borne have been too real for that.'

With the arrest on August 22 of Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, C.R. became Acting President of the Congress. This was in accordance with the instructions left by Patel before his arrest in January.

Visiting Gujarat, C.R. met such of the Ashramites as were outside prison and encouraged them. He greeted an India League delegation from Britain, finding it 'pulsating with sympathy.' And he saw in a speech of the Viceroy an admission that the Congress would 'remain uncrushed' despite extensions of ordinance rule.

* * *

Uncrushed Congressmen were, but the deadlock was affecting their spirits. They needed a fresh inspiration. From behind prison walls the Mahatma provided it.

Two months after being arrested Gandhi had learnt that London was proposing separate electorates for the depressed classes. He wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State, that, as he had indicated at the Round Table Conference, he would fast unto death if the plan was implemented.

In August London published the Communal Award — the Raj's demarcation of seats and electorates for the next Legislative Assembly. The Award provided for a separate electorate of the 'untouchables.'

The Award's separate electorates for Muslims and Sikhs also went against Congress wishes. But Gandhi did not feel that he could justly oppose those with his life. The plan to isolate the 'untouchables' stood on a different footing. It would cut up Hindu society and undo the attempts of reformers to heal Hinduism's internal breach. His fast would begin, said the Mahatma, on September 20.

None knew how it would end. India worried. Once more C.R. was the chief worrier.

Determined, as he put it, to 'obstruct the sacrifice,' he sought interviews with Gandhi. The Government refused them. He wired the Mahatma a request to desist. Gandhi replied:

> No cause for distress. On the contrary, I expect you to rejoice that a comrade of yours has had this God-given opportunity for a final act of Satyagraha in the cause of the downtrodden.

Was it right, wondered C.R., 'to threaten to die if ignorant and superstitious men did not decide within a fortnight to be wise and courageous?" Answering a fresh plea from him, the

Mahatma expressed confidence that the former would 'soon see the light out of the darkness. Love and yet more love,' he concluded.

Right or wrong, the threat had been made. The issue now was the fasting man's life. There were two ways of saving it. London could go back on its Award. Or Hindu society, caste Hindus and 'untouchables' together, could agree on an alternative. (London was committed to accepting a united Hindu decision.)

Hurdles across the second avenue were formidable. C.R. felt that satyagraha 'may, in spite of its glory, fail to move age-long ignorance and superstitious power.' In his view 'the only hope now left for us' was that 'the policy of the British Government may be revised.' London, however, made it clear that failing an agreed alternative it would keep to the Award.

Then the unexpected happened. In a bid to earn, if they would give it, the trust of the depressed classes. Hindu society looked afresh at its settled customs.

Despite his initial shortage of faith, C.R. threw himself into the effort: he had a three-fold responsibility — as Acting President of Congress, as one close to the Mahatma and as a Brahmin. At his suggestion September 20 was marked by fasting; in countless homes, including many where 'untouchables' lived, kitchen fires were not lit until late in the evening.

Once the fast started, Hindu leaders were allowed to meet Gandhi to explore a solution. One of the earliest to seize the opportunity was C.R. He obtained the Mahatma's terms. Gandhi was not only prepared but keen to give the 'untouchables' more seats in legislatures than London had given them — provided they and the caste Hindus were kept in one voting bloc.

Because of the fast, Hindu politicians who had hurried to Yeravda — Congress, Liberal and independent — agreed to a larger representation of the 'untouchables.' One of them, Sapru, showed how seats could be reserved without a separate electorate: the depressed classes would elect, for each reserved constituency, a panel of their representatives; only those on such panels would be entitled to contest reserved seats; and voting for such seats would be by a joint bloc of caste Hindus and 'untouchables.'

The Mahatma agreed to this principle, as did the key leader of the depressed classes, Ambedkar. But crucial details had still to be agreed upon — and the Mahatma was weakening.

No longer able to walk between his cell and the jail office, where the negotiations had been taking place, he was moved to a white hospital cot under a mango tree, within the prison campus. The small space under the mango tree became the object of a nation's anxious attention — and held some of the nation's toughest bargainers.

Ambedkar wanted reserved seats to remain for a minimum of 25 years — and for longer if a referendum after 25 years showed that the depressed classes wished to retain them.

A distant referendum would, however, make reservation of seats a permanent feature. Gandhi proposed a poll of the depressed classes after five years; it could then be repeated every ten years. Ambedkar rejected the time-table. Exhausted, Gandhi said to him: 'Five years or my life.'

It was difficult for Ambedkar not to yield, but after a long discussion with his colleagues he announced that he could not agree to anything less than 10 years. By now the Mahatma's condition had turned serious; it looked as if the hopes roused would be bitterly destroyed.

It was C.R. who conceived a way out. He asked Ambedkar to leave the time-table to be decided by mutual agreement in the future. Ambedkar agreed.

Hastening to Gandhi, C.R. said, 'I have done it on my responsibility, taking it that you cannot but agree,' and conveyed his solution. The Mahatma listened with care, asked C.R. to repeat it and expressed himself in one word: 'Excellent.'

C.R. returned to the cluster of leaders. What later became famous as the Yeravda Pact was now rapidly drafted and signed. Both wings of the depressed classes, one led by Ambedkar and another by M. C. Raja, consented to it. Malaviya agreed on behalf of the caste Hindus. The Congressmen on the spot and Liberal leaders like Sapru and Kunzru also signed. C.R. and Ambedkar exchanged pens.

The cabled text reached London on a Sunday. The Prime Minister was at a funeral in Sussex. On his return to 10 Downing Street he conferred with Hoare till midnight.

Yeravda, meanwhile, was waiting for London's word. Ellen Wilkinson of the India League of Britain, visiting Gandhi twelve hours after the agreement was signed, said hard things about the British ruling class to those gathered near the Mahatma. Some asked whether Gandhi would be sacrificed to red tape.

Tackling the pessimism, C.R. said:

> I put the best construction, namely that the Premier wishes to lose no time to take the necessary procedure if Gandhi insists on total acceptance by the Government before he breaks his fast.

He was right. On Monday morning oral word was received that the British Cabinet had accepted the Yeravda agreement. Still it was not until Colonel Doyle, the Inspector-General of Prisons, had shown Gandhi an official piece of paper signifying acceptance that he broke his fast.

From the shade of a mango tree inside a prison a starving man had imposed his will on the Raj. More important, in order to save the life of its loved representative, Hindu society was at last admitting its injustice — and trying to deal with it.

Orthodox priests dined with 'untouchables.' Worshippers at a Bombay temple voted 600 to 1 for opening it to 'untouchables.' By October 2 over a hundred temples in the country had been opened to them. India observed an untouchability abolition week, and on October 1 an Untouchability Abolition League was launched. The south was orthodoxy's citadel. On November 1 the Madras Legislative Council asked the Government to legislate in favour of temple-entry.

The *Economist* of London thought that the fast was 'the most important event that has occurred in the history of Hinduism for centuries.' 'Before our very eyes the wonder has happened,' said Tagore.

If Hindu practices were affected by the fast, so was politics. The nation's spirits rose. 'An India going to pieces under pressure had pulled itself together and again had a moral advantage over its masters.'

* * *

When the fast ended C.R.'s primary feeling was one of

relief. By Hindu reckoning the day that followed was Gandhi's birthday; C.R. termed it a day of 'veritable rebirth.'

Some weeks later he reflected on the anxiety he had entertained:

> As for Socrates's friends it was difficult, so it was difficult for me too to remember that the goose can never be killed. I thought the body was the goose . . .

And he added:

> The inhumanity [of untouchability] is so great and the superstition so obstinate that the death of the most loved . . among us cannot be too great a price . . .

For the moment, however, that drastic remedy had not been applied. Many factors had contributed to saving the valued life. In Ambedkar's view, C.R.'s resourcefulness was one of them. C.R., he said, 'came to our rescue when we were almost at a breaking point and had it not been for his ingenuity probably the agreement would not have come into being.'

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Unyielding Gates

OPTIMISM filled the air. 'The vision of lasting communal understanding is flickering before the country,' said Pyarelal, the Mahatma's secretary. If the gulf within Hinduism was being bridged, why not a bid to unite Hindus and Muslims? The thought entered quite a few minds.

After a five-year separation, Shaukat Ali sent a telegram to the Mahatma, calling him his 'old chief,' and asked for blessings for a Hindu-Muslim pact. Malaviya, whose word counted among the Hindus, joined the effort. So did C.R., the Acting Congress President.

In November 1932 a conference was held in Allahabad. C.R.'s veteran friend Vijiaraghavachariar presided. Barring Jinnah, who was in the U.K. — from where he advised settlement if the terms were good —, all leading Muslims turned up to meet Hindu counterparts. The Sikhs, too, were represented.

C.R. proposed joint electorates, reservation of seats for Muslims and Sikhs and primary polling among Muslims and Sikhs to determine condidates for the reserved seats. The proposal was unanimously approved. Allahabad gave Muslims 32 per cent of the national assembly seats and endorsed the separation of Sind, which had a Muslim majority, from Bombay presidency.

Describing the settlement as 'the beginning of a new epoch of complete harmony,' C.R. thought that it was the fast that had 'changed . . the hearts of the stoutest champions of particular interests.'

He was not the only one to regard Allahabad as a turning point. Rajendra Prasad thought that the settlement was 'laying the foundations of true nationalism and freedom.' Shaukat Ali

expected 'the overwhelming majority of Muslims' to accept the settlement, and Azad saw it as one of the biggest achievements in Indian politics.

Alas, the jubilation was premature. The Hindu Mahasabha as well as prominent Muslim bodies rejected the Allahabad terms. Shaukat Ali and Azad were unable to retain Muslim support. And Malaviya failed to influence the Mahasabha — because, according to C.R., he was not eager himself.

Greatly disappointed, C.R. was later to describe the repudiation of the Allahabad agreement as a major tragedy of Indian politics. Yet unity was not really on the cards. The Allahabad negotiations were not the same thing as the Yeravda talks. They lacked, for one thing, the emotional pressure of a Gandhi fast.

There was another difference. At Yeravda, caste Hindus felt the need to make amends. On the Hindu-Muslim question neither side was conscious of a similar need. Consequently, both Hindus and Muslims offered concessions grudgingly, and withdrew them when opposed by their extremists. To have expected unity was, in retrospect, unduly optimistic.

* * *

Allahabad was a brief diversion from the struggle against untouchability, which had now become the Mahatma's, and hence C.R.'s, main activity.

The battle focussed on the right of the depressed classes to enter temples. During the Yeravda fast a conference of Hindus had resolved that social and religious eequality, including temple entry, would be guaranteed to 'untouchables' by 'one of the earliest acts of the Swaraj Parliament, if it shall not have received such recognition before that time.' And on breaking his fast the Mahatma had said:

> I would hold myself as a hostage for the due fulfilment of the resolution . . and the carrying out of the Yeravda pact by the caste Hindus.

Although in September two temples in Madras had been opened to 'untouchables,' or Harijans (people of God), as they were increasingly called, the south was resisting. Despite efforts,

the gates of the Guruvayur temple near Calicut had not yielded.

Caste Hindus around Guruvayur seemed hesitant. Kelappan, a local reformer, wanted to fast on the issue. The Mahatma asked him to put off the step — and offered to join the fast himself if, after a while, that remedy still seemed necessary.

It looked as if he would fast in January unless the area's caste Hindus expressed themselves clearly. Early in December C.R. was on the scene. The 'interior of a backwater taluk where average locomotion is at two miles per hour' became the latest battlefield of the head of Congress, who found 'kinetic energy' and a 'splendid religious response' in the Malayalam-speaking region.

C.R.'s specific task was to test, as objectively and accurately as possible, the wishes of the nearly 28,000 adult caste Hindus living in the temple's vicinity. In view of 'his having to devote complete attention to the situation arising out of Gandhiji's [contemplated] fast and the untouchability question . . .' he gave up the Congress Presidentship, handing it over to Rajendra Prasad.

By tradition, the temple's trustee was the Zamorin of Calicut. A year earlier, shortly before he died, the then Zamorin had asked the Governor of Madras to prevent the temple from 'falling a prey into the hands of these iconoclasts.'

The Raj sympathised with him, and with his successor. Despite a report from the local Collector that C.R.'s speeches were 'swinging the mass of popular opinion towards temple entry,' it expected the reformers to lose the referendum. However, Russell, the Collector, kept himself scrupulously neutral. He informed Madras that as far as he could see the referendum was being fairly conducted; there had been 'no definite allegation of improper methods.'

When votes were tabulated at midnight on December 24 it was shown that 56 percent of the caste Hindus supported Harijan entry, 9 per cent opposed it, 8 percent were neutral and 27 percent said nothing. This was a clear mandate for reform. In two meetings in Yeravda on December 29 C.R., supported by Kelappan, was able to persuade Gandhi to give up his fast. The temple doors, however, did not open.

The Zamorin claimed that the shrine was private and not

bound to respect public opinion. One of the south's Sankaracharyas publicly supported him; in C.R.'s view the Sankaracharya 'could not release himself from the orthodox prison in which he is interred.'

The Zamorin had also said, with some justice, that the laws of the Raj, purporting to protect ancient religious practices, stood in his way. It seemed possible for two orthodox individuals to obtain an injunction against Harijan entry even if the trustee allowed it.

* * *

New legislation was called for. At C.R.'s urging P. Subbaroyan prepared a bill for the Madras Council empowering devotees to obtain temple entry for Harijans. It sought to transfer the right of regulating entry from the trustees of a temple to a majority of its devotees; and it sought to deny a small minority the power to obstruct entry.

Without the Viceroy's sanction, however, the bill could not be discussed in the Madras Council. After an hour's discussion with C.R., the Governor of Madras agreed to 'support the request for sanction.'

It was a change for one who had been a vehement opponent of councils to turn to them and, in the process, to a Governor. Even so it seemed unavoidable. Informing Devadas that he was having to call on the Governor, C.R. wrote: 'What a shame! But there it is, I have no time to think out conundrums. I go straight at it.'

Yet a dilemma clearly existed. Was it proper to approach councils while Congress stood committed to a programme of disobedience? C. R. solved the dilemma by formally separating himself, for the time being, from disobedience. Discussing the question with the Mahatma at Yeravda prison, he said: 'If the (Harijan) movement would work only if I were out of it (civil disobedience), I would prefer to quit.' Gandhi replied:

> If you independently and dispassionately feel that you alone would be my representative in this [Harijan] movement you should regard this as a clear call and ought to continue this work without caring for public criticism.

> These who have the slightest doubt in their minds ought to give the benefit of the doubt to their initial pledge of civil disobedience. But if you feel you have a clear call, and it seems that you do, you must do Harijan work.

The Viceroy, meanwhile, had withheld sanction for Subbaroyan's bill, ruling that provinces could not deal with religious issues. To C.R. the decision revealed a desire to strengthen orthodoxy and weaken the Congress.

The battle now shifted to the Assembly in New Delhi, where, at C.R.'s instance, Ranga Iyer, an elected member, put forward two bills. One sought to prohibit disparities or discriminations against 'untouchables,' the other to bring to the whole of India the benefits of the abortive Madras Bill. The second bill obtained the Viceroy's sanction at the end of January.

C.R. went to Delhi to enlist the support of legislators for the measure. His task was difficult. Orthodoxy was opposed. Though he had helped over the Pact, Malaviya was against the bill. Nor were all 'untouchables' anxious to enter temples. Ambedkar said that he was unenthusiastic about the bill. The Muslims in the Assembly were unclear whether to support the reform or merely watch the Hindus quarrel.

In spite of the odds, the measure might have got through had the Government given it a chance. Instead the Government tried to block discussion of it and then encouraged opposition to it. The end, to come later in 1934, was pathetic. Faltering in face of orthodox pressure, Ranga Iyer withdrew the bill.

Outside the Assembly, however, the bill had served a social and a political purpose. Discussion round it kept alive the need for Hindu reform. Politically the bill was useful because it signified, through the association of Gandhi and C.R. with it, a Congress presence at a time when bans, detentions and censorship had ruled out an open struggle.

Not all Congressmen welcomed the Harijan movement or C.R.'s preoccupation with the bill. The campaign for reform seemed to wean men away from the political fight. To Jawaharlal Nehru, who was still in prison, C.R.'s Assembly efforts appeared strange and blameworthy.

As for orthodoxy, it was unsparing in its attacks. Letters in

the press assailed C.R. The Mahatma wrote Nehru: 'The abuses they are hurling at me are wonderfully refreshing. I am all that is bad and corrupt on this earth.'

Predictably, Gandhi defended C.R.'s efforts. Writing in the journal *Harijan,* which the Raj permitted him to start though he was still a prisoner (Gandhi had made it clear that *Harijan* would confine itself to social reform), the Mahatma called C.R. his 'duly authorised agent' and 'a better lobbyist than myself' and described the work with the MLAs as 'highly necessary.' 'If some shortsighted persons see a contradiction here, we must live down the criticism,' he said on another occasion.

There is no doubt that C.R. enjoyed the opportunities and experience the bill gave him. The denouncer of councils was in his element amidst the Assembly members. One of the latter, H. P. Mody, commented to a colleague, 'This man has not only driving power but the gift of persuasion.' And the columnist Pothan Joseph, referring to C.R.'s 'talent of adjusting his plea to the humour of his opponents,' wrote:

> If the Viceroy invites him to address a meeting of his executive council on the subject, the government themselves would adopt the bills . . .

C.R. made mistakes, too — such as the one which had its genesis in a remark by the Mahatma in Yeravada. Desai informed C.R. that Gandhi had said: 'So the bills cannot be passed this session! They can be if I were to . . .' C.R. could guess the missing word, and spoke to some in Delhi of the possibility of another fast by Gandhi, thereby earning the Mahatma's disapproval. The use of the private remark amounted to exploitation of fasting, the latter said.

Detecting in C.R. a feeling of impatience regarding two men, K. Natarajan and Kodanda Rao, who disagreed with the bill, Gandhi wrote:

> I do not know that anything can be done beyond writing to these friends. I often do . . . I commend the prescription to you. Try it with Natarajan to commence with. He is slow to perceive flaws in his argument, but he is always open to conviction. I, therefore, never regard him as hopeless.

By now the Raj had announced how India would be governed

in the future. There would be a federation at the centre, to be joined, it was hoped, by the princely states. Provincial legislatures, elected under a fairly wide franchise, would have a number of powers. But in certain fields their decisions could be vetoed by the Governors or the Viceroy. The electorate would be divided according to communities. Sind and Orissa would become provinces, and Burma would formally be separated from India. The scheme was outlined in a White Paper that was to lead to the Government of India Act of 1935.

Still banned, Congress could not discuss the scheme. An attempt had been made to hold a session in Delhi in 1932; another was made in Calcutta in 1933. Both gatherings were broken up by the Raj's police. However, Congressmen could individually react to the White Paper. None liked it, but it was clear that before long they would have to choose between complete boycott and a measure of cooperation, however distasteful.

The promotion of the temple entry bill suggested that the latter course might be chosen. Asked in February if Congress thinking on councils was changing, C.R. replied:

> If it is satisfactorily proved that the boycott of legislatures will do immense harm, the Congress will not boycott the legislatures. It is never to be imagined that the Congress will hold to any policy fanatically.

True, C.R. and the Mahatma were at this juncture speaking for themselves and not for the Congress, which stood pledged to abjuring councils. Yet C. R. had only recently served as Acting Congress President, and the *Statesman* recalled that he 'had been second in command in the camp of the Mahatma for a number of years.' His words were rather more than a straw in the wind; and Congress in fact had taken its first slow steps towards council doors.

* * *

C.R. had not managed to give much time to his Ashram. By something of a miracle it had survived the 1932 onslaught of the Raj.

Seizure of the buildings was being considered by the Government when the latter received a letter from Dr. P. Subbaroyan

expressing the hope that the Ashram, which he said was providing rural relief, would not be harmed. Dr. Subbaroyan informed the Government of C.R.'s instructions that any Ashram members wishing to take part in disobedience had first to resign their membership. The doctor was a non-Congressman of standing; following his request, the Raj stayed its hand.

To show disapproval, however, the Governor, Sir George Stanley, ordered the removal of the small post office that the Ashram had acquired. How bureaucracy can enjoy administering a prick-and-a-half when the man at the top prescribes a prick is shown by a letter from the Postmaster-General to an aide of the Governor:

> I found that the Superintendent of Post Offices had actually moved out the post office from the Ashram to a village in the vicinity but had left a letter-box still in the Ashram. I have now sent instructions to remove the letterbox forthwith and incontinently to close down the adjacent post office. This will mean walking exercise for the inhabitants of the Ashram and any surrounding sympathisers which will be for their physical if not their moral benefit.

At the end of 1932, following the release of arrested members, there was a revival of activity. More schools for boys and girls, and night classes for adults, were started in 'untouchable' settlements. In places caste Hindu and Harijan children studied together.

Kasturba, invited south by C.R. to help over Guruvayur, visited the Ashram in December. She saw *khadi* being dyed and asked, in her broken English, 'Colour go?' 'This is no-go colour,' replied C.R. When those accompanying laughed, Kasturba asked whether her English was wrong. 'No,' said C.R. 'It is Ba's English.' As far as C.R. was concerned, Kasturba shared a sovereign's status.

In the new year an argumment arose between the Ashram and a Christian mission. Many Adi-Dravidas ('untouchables') of the village of Chitlandur, near the Ashram, had been converted to Christianity. Those who remained Hindu asked the Ashram to renovate the Hindu shrine in their quarter. The Ashram agreed.

The Reverend J. C. Whitney of Salem urged C.R. to with-

draw this help from the Ashram on the ground that it would disturb the faith of the new converts. In his reply C.R. admitted that caste Hindus had given 'ignominious treatment' to Harijans but added that this did not give Christian missions the right of 'exclusive spiritual ministration to the untouchables.'

While he welcomed, he observed, 'the play of religions one upon another,' he disliked trying 'to change men from one good religion to another.'

* * *

At the end of April Gandhi told his Yeravda companions that on May 8 he would commence a 21-day fast. He felt, he said, that self-purification was necessary for the effectiveness of the Harijan movement.

The perspective of time clarifies. Yet it can also conceal. To us, who are several decades removed, a chronicle of the Mahatma's fasts cannot convey the nature of their impact on the generation that lived with him.

The knowledge that Gandhi would survive all his fasts and die by a bullet was not available to his contemporaries. Because of his increasing age, their anxiety in relation to his fasts grew with each succeeding one. On the other hand, our feeling of suspense, and perhaps even of interest, is likely to flag with each succeeding fast: we know the story's end.

In May 1933 C.R. did not. He feared that the story might end in the course of the fast. 'One thing is clear to me and that is he could not survive a fast for 21 days,' he said. Patel, the Mahatma's companion in prison, agreed. More than three months earlier, when a fast seemed a possibility, C.R. had told Gandhi, 'You have grown impatient.' Now, hastening to Yeravda, he used stronger words:

> You have been brooding . . and you have lost your sense of proportion. You have a great fondness for conducting experiments. You are now experimenting with death and you are misguided in it . . . Can you show me even one person who approves of your step?

'Andrews,' replied the Mahatma. C.R. shot back:

> Andrews does not even know how to lock a room and he

is talking about locking up one's life . . . I tell you, you should be more cautions.

The devoted Briton's reputation for worldly wisdom was obviously not high. Rejoined Gandhi:

> It is possible that I am mistaken. But you are telling me to accept the possibility as a certainty . . . How can I stand in argument with those who are intellectually much superior to me? But when it comes to what the heart says, I am able to hold my own against them.

C.R. then put it to Gandhi to have a medical examination to see if he could stand a 21-day fast. The Mahatma had said that he wanted to live, not to die, and that he was confident that he would survive. Shankerlal Banker, who was present, backed C.R.'s suggestion. On the ground that a medical test would show lack of faith, Gandhi turned it down.

'You are then conceding nothing and claiming infallibility,' charged C.R. There was heat in the Mahatma's tone as he replied: 'You shall not thus undermine my conviction and my faith . . . I cannot agree to any examination of me by doctors.'

Regretful some hours later that 'even on the eve of a purificatory fast I gave way to anger against my dear friends,' Gandhi wrote an apology: 'My dear C.R.,

> You are dearer to me than life itself. I wounded you and Shankerlal deeply. It is no use my saying, 'Forgive me.' Your forgiveness I have before the asking. But I will do the very thing that I resisted like an ass. I will submit to the examination, . . provided, of course, the Government permit it . . .

Next day C.R. went laughing to Gandhi and said:

> There was no occasion for the apology, the irritation was more on our side than yours, and we have now decided to have no examination.

The struggle had ended. C.R.'s heart was calm as he asked the nation to pray. 'Let prayer melt into sleep and sleep wake up with prayer,' he wrote. 'Let us not waste time in foolish merry-making.'

He made a quick trip to the south and returned to Poona to be at the Mahatma's side. Gandhi survived the self-imposed deprivation. Each night, in his engagements diary, C.R. recorded the end of a fasting day, writing down, 'The first day,' 'The second day,' and so forth. The May 29 entry reads, 'Bapu's fast broken.'

Chapter Twenty

Coimbatore Central Jail

GANDHI was released on May 8, 1933, the day the fast began. The reason given was 'the nature and objects of the fast and the attitude of mind which it discloses.' C.R. noted that 'Government has promptly and gracefully released Gandhiji.'

Patel, the Congress President, was still in Yeravda, along with Desai. C.R. kept him posted about the Mahatma's health. On May 17 he wrote: 'Bapu is in wonderfully good condition. I think all will be well.' When the release of Mahadev Desai was announced, C. R. wrote to Patel: 'Looking forward to Mahadev's coming, though I can realise the tragedy of it as far as you are concerned.'

The Mahatma's response to the release was to suspend civil disobedience for a month and to ask the Government to free its prisoners and withdraw its ordinances. He praised the bravery of the resisters but deplored the secrecy some had employed. Secret methods were often ingenious but not always effective, and they had helped create a climate of fear and excessive caution.

In C.R.'s view, Gandhi's suspension of civil disobedience was 'a supreme act of satyagraha that has come straight from his soul in the exaltation of his penance.' To have used the release to prosecute a fresh campaign of revolt would have been ungracious.

And also unrealistic. The forces of Congress were tired. Breadwinners had gone to jail for long periods in 1930 and 1932; many were still inside. The bans on donations to Congress and seizure of its funds ruled out financial help to resisters. Any new mobilisation of the masses was prevented by the ordinances.

It was time for a fresh look at Congress strategy. Shortly after the fast ended, Gandhi and C.R. had two sessions together. They reached four conclusions.

One, the mass struggle should come to an end. Two, it might be right before long — though not immediately — to 'think of taking power in our hands,' even under 'the Constitution they (the British) are framing.'

Three, a small number should keep up the struggle on a higher level of intensity. And four, a letter asking for an interview should go to Willingdon, even though 'we will get the same reply from the Viceroy.'

Sastri, the Liberal leader, was asked by C.R. if he would carry a letter from the Mahatma to Willingdon. A direct word from Gandhi to the Viceroy would, C.R. felt, receive a 'rebuff that may lead again and immediately to a resumption of hostility.' Sastri, however, was not inclined to act as suggested.

* * *

Even a selective protest would of course lead to imprisonment again. The Mahatma and C.R. decided that while the two of them and Kasturba were out of prison the marriage of Lakshmi and Devadas should take place. C.R. wrote to Kasturba:

> My dear Ba . . . We do not know how long Bapu may be free and available to us, and when a similar chance may, if not utilised now, occur again. So, however hurriedly and quietly it may have to be done, we decided that the wedding may be gone through now . . . I hope you will approve of the idea. I am bringing Lakshmi and Papa when I go to Poona about 12th June and with your concurrence I hope God will enable Lakshmi to become formally and finally your own child on some auspicious day thereafter. With love and regards, I am, ever yours affectionately, Raja.

On June 16th the marriage was solemnised in Poona in the home of Lady Premlila Thackersey. Orthodox elements raised voices against the inter-caste marriage, but these were more than balanced by the good wishes of others. Laxman Shastri Joshi, a reformist scholar-priest from Maharashtra, performed the rites.

Barely recovered from the effects of his fast, the Mahatma

insisted on shortening the list of guests. Even Ramdas, Devadas's brother, was not invited. And Lakshmi was asked by Gandhi to return the silk saris that friends had presented her.

Her father-in-law's discipline was not easy. But it was accompanied by his love and her father's happiness, and by the realisation of a dream that felt so true and yet had seemed so elusive. Her joy, and that of Devadas, knew no bounds.

* * *

M. S. Aney had been Acting Congress President since January, when his predecessor, Rajendra Prasad, was arrested. The Mahatma, C.R. and Aney decided that the Congress leaders who were out of jail should meet in Poona in July.

Over 300 attended the conference and authorised the Mahatma to seek an interview with the Viceroy. At twenty past midnight on July 15, C.R. went to a Poona telegraph office and booked the Mahatma's wire. The reply expressed the Viceroy's inability to grant an interview.

The response of Gandhi, C.R. and Aney to the expected rebuff was a return to protest — in the shape of selective civil disobedience. On August 1, the Mahatma, Kasturba, Mahadev Desai and 30 inmates of the Sabarmati Ashram marched together on foot, from Sabarmati to the village of Ras. This was in violation of existing laws, and the group was arrested.

Gandhi was released three days later but ordered to reside within the limits of Poona city. On his refusal to do so, he was arrested again and sentenced for a year. Acute illness in detention —it looked as if he might not live — led to his release. Recovering slowly, he declared that he would restrict himself to the Harijan movement, abjuring protest or politics until August 1934, when his sentence would have ended.

Selective disobedience was not popular. Madras intelligence claimed that

> A secret Congress meeting is reported to have been held in the house of Dr. T. S. S. Rajan at Trichinopoly on August 1 at which Rajagopalachari tried to ascertain how many Congress workers were willing to come forward [for individual disobedience] but the opinion of the meeting went against it.

Tiruchengode was the scene of C.R.'s action. Early in August he wrote to Sir George Stanley, the Governor, whom he had twice met:

> No one would have been gladder than myself had an honourable settlement been reached, but as His Excellency is aware, I am one of those who have pledged themselves to struggle.

Referring to the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, C.R. continued: 'I am convinced that the settlement was broken by the Government because the officials in India did not like their settlement.' Through the requested interview the Mahatma had sought 'to create peaceful and honourable friendly relationships between the Government and the Congress.' But 'even this was refused, and the struggle had to be resumed.'

'As a loyal Congressman,' C.R. went on, he had to 'offer my quota of suffering.' Along with companions, he would proceed on foot from Tiruchengode towards Salem, explaining to the people on the way the objects of the struggle.

From August 6 to August 7 much attention was bestowed on the humble town of Tiruchengode. M. V. Subramaniam, I.C.S., the district magistrate of Salem, accompanied by the D.S.P., a host of officials and a contingent of police camped there for the night.

It was not yet five in the morning when C.R. and 16 other satyagrahis, including a Muslim, a Harijan and two women from the Ashram, walked to the Hall of Forty Pillars at the foot of the famed Tiruchengode temple. C.R. had remembered before leaving to request Subbaroyan 'to extend once more a protecting hand over the Ashram.'

Even at the early hour a crowd had gathered in the Hall. C.R. spoke advising boycott of foreign cloth. Then the party marched on foot along the town's principal streets, distributing hand-written leaflets; policemen quietly followed them.

When they reached the Taluk office building — the local seat of the Raj —, a voice from the rear told them that they were under arrest. 'Turn right, the voice ordered. They obeyed, and entered the building.

A trial was immediately held. Urging people not to buy

foreign cloth was his right, said C.R. 'I have no taste for breaking the law,' he added, 'but this law which I have broken today is not justified either by morality or by other circumstances.'

All the accused were sentenced, under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, to suffer rigorous imprisonment for six months. Awarded, unlike any of the others, A class, C.R. said that he would disown it. The magistrate replied that he could not revoke his order. A bus under police escort took the party to Salem prison; from there the men were sent to Coimbatore Central Jail and the women to Vellore.

* * *

Disagreeable news reached C.R. the day after his conviction. Arriving in Delhi, with Lakshmi, to join the *Hindustan Times*, Devadas had been arrested at the station. An order prohibiting his entry into the capital had been served on him at the preceding stop, Hazrat Nizamuddin. Devadas clarified that his intention was to take up a journalistic post, not to engage in disobedience. But he would not promise a permanent break with disobedience; a six-month sentence was the outcome.

Married for seven weeks, Lakshmi, 21, was now on her own in a strange city. Though disturbed for a short while, C.R. was calmed, he wrote, by a thought that his daughter 'would have the strength to face the situation and everything was for the best.' Delhi friends took Lakshmi under their wing. C.R. wrote her:

> I send my love and joyful appreciation of the brave manner in which you have accepted what has happened. Man proposed but the Chief Commissioner disposed.
>
> God knows better than we do what is good for us. We should be grateful for the wonderfully devoted and affectionate friends that surround us everywhere.

To Devadas he said:

> God always arranges things better than we can ever hope to do with our limited vision. You will always be near me in spirit until we meet again in body. I am full of joy at Lakshmi's chance to show courage.

Allowed to receive and send a letter every fortnight (or two letters if he was willing to give up the fortnightly interview that was permitted), he addressed his communications to P. Sankaran, a young man from Malabar who had been acting as his secretary for a year. These contained messages to a variety of relatives and friends. In his replies Sankaran included extracts from any important letters arriving at the Ashram for C.R.

The six-month censored correspondence affords light on his days behind bars. The rules had been 'revised and made strict and there [was] very little scope left for the individual superintendents of jails.' But C.R. was 'quite happy.' For two days — before being transferred — a fellow-satyagrahi, C. Raghavachari, 'was cooking for [him] beautifully;' even in October C.R. was 'having excellent diet;' and the jail officials were 'very kind and nice.'

'Time is not hanging heavily on my mind. I have got a full daily routine, which is packed tight,' he wrote. He was translating the verses of the Kural into English and continuing the Sanskrit studies he had begun during his 1932 'vacation'. 'I will not be at any time anything more than a baby in [Sanskrit],' he said to Devadas. 'Yet I do feel satisfied with even the baby's knowledge.'

Only one of those arrested along with him, K. V. Subba Rao of Salem, was kept in Coimbatore; the others were dispersed among different prisons. Subba Rao was unwell. Nursing him, C.R. was able to assure his relatives that Subba Rao was 'now entirely free from any trouble in thigh or hip. He is in excellent health and I am looking after him.'

Newspapers sympathetic to Congress were not allowed inside prison. However, C.R. wrote that he was 'thriving on the bitter tonics' of the Madras *Mail* and the *Times of India* — the British-owned dailies.

The doughty Irishwoman, Annie Besant, died in Madras in September. Also saddening to C.R. was the death of Madhavan Nair of Malabar. 'I am unmanned nearly by this,' he wrote, adding that Madhavan Nair was one of the 'very few people now in Malabar who really know me.'

His active mind was thinking up fresh ideas for promoting Hindi or pushing *khadi* sales — or suggesting how relief might

be given to flood-hit Harijans in Salem. Messages went to MLAs regarding the temple entry bill and the need for legislative action to prevent textile mills from fictitiously selling their product as *khadi*.

Yet it was also, inevitably, a contemplative time, producing some sensitive lines. To a missionary acquaintance he wrote:

> My dear Rev. Popley,..I have had plenty of time and opportunity for reflection since we met last. How absurd it was for me to spoil your nice and kind visit to the Ashram with that controversy over conversions. I am really ashamed.

A person who seemed to nurse a grievance was addressed thus:

> I give you my word of honour that I have not..done anything to injure you...On the contrary I ever tried..to be helpful to you. I do not ask for gratitude for this, for I am more beholden to you than you to me if all accounts are cast.

And to Khasa Subba Rau, the journalist, C.R. said:

> Do not bother to express your gratitude to me, I derive more pleasure by the unexpressed affection of which I am sure, than by your attempting to express the inexpressible. I had not been here before and I [find] this a change. There is no company or hardly any. This is a variety by itself.

His temperance friends, Herbert Anderson and Mary Campbell, had sent good wishes. C.R. replied that their word had 'softened these walls and these bars and these locks.'

When Mrs. Margaret Cousins, a theosophist assisting the freedom cause, was released after a year's imprisonment, C.R. sent her 'greetings on your return to fresh air and light' and assured her that her 'brave, patient and loyal service' would be ever remembered.

To his Ashram flock he wrote:

> Behave like brothers. Remember God. Remember the high purpose why you are all gathered there...See one another's good points and do not emphasise bad points.

Solitude was drawing out the warmth of his heart. He told

the Ashram members:

> Be kind and considerate to the poor and illiterate folk... They toil for the country in a truer sense than we do. Time is their most valuable asset; therefore they should not be kept unnecessarily waiting...
>
> We should speak and act in such a manner towards them that they may more and more realise their dignity... I hope the hospital and the store are worked so as to be more and more useful to them. Little children however dirty and ill-clad should be treated as you want your own children to be treated by others.

He proposed a sanitary 'gang' to keep the Ashram free from 'weeds and rotting filth, torn paper and sweepings.' 'I am filled with admiration,' he wrote, 'when I see such excellent order and cleanliness preserved in the jail in spite of many defects.'

The weavers were not forgotten by him. He 'begged' them 'to do their work carefully and well' and 'to save a little money every week, and not spend anything on drink.'

The repeal of prohibition in America, of which he heard in jail, came as a blow. To Anderson he sent a message:

> America is gone!.. It is a great calamity to those who are struggling to outlaw Alcohol through State action.

The Mahatma, meanwhile, was launched on a tour in the Harijan cause. C.R. sent out word bidding him south, where orthodoxy continued strong. He wanted 'the appeal of [Gandhi's] personality' to reach 'the common folk so that the opposition of the sophisticated hypocrites may be undermined.'

When the invitation was accepted C.R. asked Dr. T. S. S. Rajan 'to take up the whole responsibility,' adding, 'Bapu appears to expect me to be able to give instructions and guide. I am not so free as all that...' But the practical C.R. did underline 'the need for fruits and goat's milk in good quantity' and asked Rajan to look to 'the closet arrangements,' which, he added with some despair, 'our people will never understand or remember.'

Gandhi's southern visit was to continue beyond C.R.'s release. A reunion with him, part of it to be spent in the Ashram,

was a cheering prospect for C.R. However, there was a little worry.

The Mahatma had predicted that certain pumps that C.R. was installing in his Ashram would not work for long; C.R. offered a bet that they would. 'Have the pumps been looked at?' he now asked Srinivasaraghavan, in charge of the Ashram. 'I lose my bet with Bapuji if the pumps go to disuse . . .'

Three weeks before his term was to end, Lakshmi and a recently released Devadas were allowed to call on him. C.R. suggested that they attempt to see him again — 'to say goodbye.' Permission was refused, however.

'I was very sorry to have relied too much on things and asked you to call again,' wrote C.R. later. 'You had only a disappointment. It was my stupidity.' The disappointment was plainly not restricted to the daughter and son-in-law.

A calamitous earthquake occurred in Bihar on January 15. The Indian peninsula had pressed against the Himalayas — and North Bihar was crushed. Whole towns were reduced to ruins; floods, chasms and twisted rails and bridges distorted the landscape. Thousands perished. The Raj had the good sense to release Rajendra Prasad, enabling him to organise relief in his state. From jail C.R. wired Prasad his sympathy.

At seven on the morning of February 6 C.R. was discharged. He motored at once to Tiruppur, fifty miles away, where, his southern tour commenced, his friend the Mahatma was.

CHAPTER TWENTYONE

A Switch in Strategy

FROM across the seas his comrade in the battle against the bottle, 'Pussyfoot' Johnson, wrote a characteristic letter:

> You are getting to be quite a regular customer of the various jails in India. Somehow I rejoice in having among my intimate friends a man who could go to jail for a supremely good cause and really enjoy it.
> A year ago I had a severe attack of Flue which resulted in the practical destruction of my hearing in both ears. But my mouth is still working quite well.

It was certainly with cheerfulness that C.R. and indeed most others engaged in the restricted disobedience of the previous months had done their duty. But their acts had failed to disconcert the Raj. And by now Congressmen all over the country were tiring. Morale was evaporating.

To some extent the Mahatma's southern tour arrested the trend. Its primary aim, to erode the rocks of orthodoxy on the Harijan question, was not political. But the tour drew such crowds that Congressmen found their confidence returning.

Having urged the tour from behind bars, C.R. was delighted. He called it 'an unprecedented success . . a royal triumphal march . . a crushing reply to those who thought that Bapu was becoming unpopular with the people,' and felt sure of its impact 'in regard to politics also.'

To his friend Herbert Anderson C.R. wrote:

> Far from Mahatmaji's attitude in regard to the untouchables reducing his hold over the masses, what I have seen in every

> place with my own eyes indicates that at no time was his hold over the people greater than now . . . It is a wonder how, where no newspapers or other literature could pierce, the news had got abroad.

There had been violent incidents in Bengal. The Raj retaliated with wholesale punishment. It was autocracy, said C.R., seeking to 'meet the crime of A, B and C with punishment inflicted on X, Y and Z' and hoping 'by humiliating a whole race to sober down the folly of some of its young men.'

Yet it was Bengal's neighbour, Bihar, that now attracted Gandhi: shortening the southern tour, he went there to assist earthquake victims. The fund for relief that Rajendra Prasad raised on behalf of Congress was a good deal larger than the sum the Government was able to gather. But, for a change, the Raj and its opponents were working together, both jolted by the calamity.

Shortly after the Mahatma's departure, C.R. had a bad attack of asthma. Writing to Devadas on the eighth day of the illness, he said, 'Bathing is an exertion, sitting is tiresome, talking is a trouble and on the whole living is a punishment.' He was still recovering when suddenly, from Bihar, the Mahatma announced a major decision.

Disobedience would be suspended, he said. He would reserve the right to disobey himself, but he wanted Congress to discontinue the programme for the time being. Simultaneously he suggested that Congress should allow those of its members inclined to enter councils to do so.

Councils rather than (or in addition to) prisons was the old Swarajist programme. The Mahatma had had no faith in it in the twenties. And C.R. had led the opposition to it. Now Gandhi was ready to give his support to it as a natural corollary of the suspension of disobedience.

Why the suspension? In a cable to his friend Charlie Andrews the Mahatma gave his reasons:

> After continuous prayer and heart-searching for fortnight I reached conclusion on Easter Monday that civil resistance for Swaraj . . should be confined solely to me. Civil resistance is an appeal not to fear but to heart. It should evoke

not resentment but sympathy. That it has evoked repression was gnawing into me. On top of this came discovery with that one of best fellow workers had not observed prison regulations with meticulous care. This settled me.

Though he made the decision from an idealistic point of view, Gandhi was also convinced of its practical utility. It would, he felt, give 'much needed respite to civil resisters who are today tired' and enable them to emerge 'stronger and more equipped for the next battle whenever it comes.'

As for council-entry, ignoring those who believed in councils (not an insignificant minority in Congress) was to the Mahatma both 'impossible and improper." He felt it but 'right that those who daily attend legislatures in their thought should do so physically as well.'

Before announcing the change of policy the Mahatma had sent a message to C.R. asking for the latter's approval and expressing confidence that he would get it. The confidence was entirely justified. Almost a year earlier, in their discussions in Yeravda prison, the two had envisaged the possibility of a switch from disobedience to councils.

Wiring agreement, C.R. proposed that Congress go a step further. It was insufficient and hazardous, in his view, for Congress merely to back adherents of the Swarajist school in their bid to enter councils; he wanted the Congress as such to accept the parliamentary programme.

Conscious that elections could lead to 'terrible corruption,' C.R. thought that it was only if Congress, and Gandhi, directly controlled the parliamentary programme that the corruption could be avoided. On the other hand, 'a loosely affiliated Swaraj Party will lead to the formation of independent groups.'

Congress control of legislatures would give 'prestige and confidence among the masses,' even though the powers of the elected bodies were still meagre. 'My dream is,' C.R. wrote the Mahatma, 'that if this parliamentary party is organised properly and guided by you it can work out a state of things in the provinces equivalent to that we brought about under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, of which the Civil Service have such a wholesome fear.'

It was up to the AICC to accept or reject the council programme, now advocated by one who had been, in different circumstances, its principal opponent. C.R. proposed that the AICC should meet (even though Patel, the Congress President, was still in prison) and formulate its future plan in the light of the Mahatma's announcement. Gandhi agreed, and the general secretaries sent notices out.

But could the AICC, yet a banned body, meet? Treating Gandhi's announcement as a truce offer (which is doubtless how the Mahatma wanted it treated), the Raj let it be known through Haig, the Home Member in Delhi, that an AICC meeting called to ratify Gandhi's decision would not be disallowed.

The AICC met in Patna in the Mahatma's presence, confirmed the suspension of disobedience and gave its approval to the programme of entering legislatures. It was agreed that Congress, and not Swarajists on behalf of Congress, would enter them.

Had Congress lost face? Still in prison, Jawaharlal Nehru certainly thought so. An entry in his diary states that Gandhi's announcement suspending disobedience 'bowled him over.' Feeling that an epoch in the freedom struggle had ended, he feared that he would have to break with the Mahatma.

This was not how Patel reacted. He fell in with the decision. As for C.R., the following lines express his mood:

> I do not think we look small at all. Withdrawing a movement of sacrifice is often necessary and should not be deemed a matter for shame . . . Our record is good. The world has much to learn and copy of it. It is the Government that ought to be ashamed and will be ashamed when history is written.
>
> The situation now is different from what it was in 1922. I think we should now go into the elections on behalf of the Congress . . . Nobody can prevent the adoption of civil resistance by the Congress of any future time.

Was C.R. going to enter the Assembly himself? There was no dearth of requests that he do so. Wrote a Congressman from the Punjab:

> If you can see your way to go to the Legislative Assembly,

> you will make a great contribution. You will enhance the prestige of India even in the eyes of foreigners . . . I can approach Mahatmaji with folded hands and pray him to spare you for the Assembly work even though for a short time.

Also keen on C.R.'s presence in the Assembly was K. M. Munshi of Bombay. To him the Mahatma wrote:

> Rajagopalachari, Rajen Babu, etc., will probably stay out. [However] as a result of my decisions regarding civil obedience they are free for the time being to do as they like.

And in a letter to another correspondent Gandhi said:

> We may assume that Rajaji and Rajen Babu, when they consider it desirable to enter the Assembly, will do so.

A clear statement by C.R. set speculation at rest:

> There was no chance of his being persuaded to stand for the Assembly and there was no occasion therefore to seek Mr. Gandhi's advice on the subject.

He was ready, however, to guide the parliamentary board of Congress, set up to prosecute the new policy. Dr. Ansari, the board's chairman, was keeping poorly, and C.R., in Ansari's words, 'steer[ed] the ship through shoals and hidden rocks.'

The Communal Award of the Raj, granting a separate electorate to Muslims and allotting them a third of the Assembly seats, was one of the trickiest issues. In general Muslims, now increasingly accepting Jinnah's leadership, wanted Congress to endorse it. On the other hand, a section of Hindu Congressmen led by Malaviya and M. S. Aney wanted an explicit rejection of the Award.

Because of the division of opinion, Congress neither accepted nor rejected the Award, urging instead the exploration of 'ways and means of arriving at an agreed solution.' This was not good enough for the Malaviya group, which broke away to form the Nationalist party. There was, however, an understanding that Congressmen and Nationalists would avoid contests.

Wisdom was also needed on the stand of Congress towards its Socialist group, constituted around this time at the initiative of

Jayaprakash Narayan and others. On its behalf M. R. Masani had written C. R., asking for the latter's cooperation. 'I am sorry I am not in a position to agree with and join your group,' replied C.R.

Without commenting directly on the socialists' proposals, he argued for unity:

> The strongest machine of capitalism in India today is the Government and it is wise for those who want a different order to conserve and combine all forces to break that machine and to do nothing to lose the support of any important section.

In June, following the new decisions of Congress, the Government withdrew its bans on various constituents of Congress. The Red Shirts of the NWFP, led by the Khan brothers, were, however, not covered by the withdrawal.

Pointing out that each Red Shirt volunteer was 'sworn, Quran in hand, to non-violence,' C.R. alleged that the Raj sought 'a cleavage between Muslim supporters of the Congress and the rest, and [to] impress on [the former] that non-violence or not, they must suffer for joining Congress.'

Its members emerging from disobedience and prisons (Patel too was now released), Congress needed to be reorganised for its new role. The Mahatma asked C.R. to oversee the reorganisation nationally, but the latter only accepted responsibility for the south, where he wanted to produce a clear electoral victory later in the year. It was with enthusiasm that he looked forward to the test.

But there was an anxiety. The term for which the Mahatma had been sentenced the previous year was to end early in August. Though freed on medical grounds, Gandhi deemed himself a prisoner until then — and a possible satyagrahi thereafter, for he had excepted himself from the suspension of disobedience.

Convinced that a re-entry into prison by the Mahatma at this juncture would break his health and hurt the nation's politics, C.R. strove hard to avoid its possibility. He argued against it in Wardha with the Mahatma, and asked Ansari to 'prepare tasks of great importance that enlist Gandhijis presence outside prison.'

To Patel he wrote:

> I had long talks with Bapu. His proposals appear to me very difficult, but one thing is clear, he cannot go away to prison . . . otherwise the situation will be dreadful.

While agreeing not to court arrest ('it is fairly certain that he will NOT go to prison,' a relieved C.R. informed Devadas), the unpredictable Mahatma said that he was 'thinking of retiring from Congress.' Predictably, C.R. fought the idea. So did Patel, though not for long. Chief among Gandhi's reasons for his proposed step was the 'stifling effect' of his personality on expression of opinion in Congress. He wanted to free the body and give it a shock.

Their Wardha talks failing to persuade the Mahatma against leaving Congress, C.R. continued expostulating from afar. Andrews had brought word that in October South Africa's General Smuts would try for an honourable settlement between Gandhi and the Secretary of State. Wiring the Mahatma that in the light of this message his retirement would be inopportune, C.R. added: 'Step will produce irrecoverable defeatism throughout.'

His thinking was that Congress's election programme 'will crumble to pieces' if Gandhi were to retire from it. To the Mahatma he wrote:

> If you think you can retire from the Congress now and keep it and yourself both or either politically important, . . you will surely be disappointed.

Gandhi had said to him:

> It is terrible we cannot agree nowadays on some very important matters. All the others are in practical agreement. I want to get out for the honourable settlement. I do not retire to a cave. I hold myself at everybody's disposal. Where is the difficulty? Can you not see the unnaturalness of the present position? Everybody feels the suffocation . . . I wish you will not worry . . . Love. Bapu.

As so often before, C.R. acquiesced in the end. 'Mahatmaji's proposed withdrawal from the Congress,' he explained to an English friend, 'is rather in the nature of a judicial separation

than a divorce, perhaps not even so bad as a judicial separation. . .'

* * *

The Harijan cause had continued to engage C.R. So had the controversy over it. Towards the end of June an embittered opponent of reform had set off a bomb with the evident intention of killing Gandhi: fortunately his timing was poor.

C.R. commented on the hazardous implications of the cult of the bomb. The bomb, he claimed, was saying:

> I shall not fly only at the throat of the British magistrate but also at Gandhiji's. If you give me room I shall fly at my brother's and sister's also.

He tried to start, under his Ashram's auspices, a hostel for Harijan boys studying in Tiruchengode's high school. But nobody in town would rent out rooms for such a hostel. Prepared to construct a house, the Ashram requested the district board, which controlled the school, to lease a portion of the school's open grounds; but the board refused to oblige, and the Madras Government would not intervene.

Some of his Ashram colleagues were tempted to rent a place in the 'untouchable' quarters, but C.R. rejected the idea. 'It would be a bad policy,' he said, 'to start our hostel in the Harijan quarters. We must try our best to get a house somewhere else. If it is impossible, we may even wait rather than start in the Harijan quarters.'

He thought of keeping the boys in the Ashram, but transporting them four miles to school and back was a problem. In the end C.R.'s friend P. Subbaroyan gave a piece of land, and the hostel built on it by the Ashram was opened by Prasad, Congress President, in 1935.

Temple entry for Harijans was not made a straight issue by Congress in the 1934 election. On this ground C.R. and the Mahatma were accused of surrendering their reformist convictions.

C.R. called the charge 'absurd' and explained that 'all the matters in which a political party is interested cannot be put forward at every election.' He and Gandhi had certainly not gone back on their beliefs. However, by not placing temple-entry

on the Congress manifesto, they accommodated a section of Congressmen chary of a legislated reform on the question.

The temple-entry bill in the Assembly stood in the name of C.S. Ranga Iyer, a non-Congressman, there being no Congressmen in the house. His sponsorship of the measure had earned Ranga Iyer the displeasure of the orthodox. At the end of August he withdrew the bill, justifying his action by pointing out that Congress had not pledged the reform in its manifesto; and he wrote C.R. accusing him of wanting 'a non-Congressman to snatch the chestnuts for you.'

The remark was not quite fair. Had they been members, a host of Congressmen, including C.R., would have offered to carry the bill. And the future in any case would prove C.R.'s fidelity to it. For the moment, however, the slow, struggling, stream of reform had been muddied by election politics.

* * *

Congress needed a President. The choice lay between C.R. and Prasad, both proposed by provincial committees late in 1931, just before Willingdon had come down on the body. Each had requested the other to accept the post. Now shouldering the parliamentary programme, C.R. was not in a position to take on the presidential burden as well.

C.R. 'cannot now be chosen,' said the Mahatma in a letter to Prasad, offering the latter the crown. His efforts in aid of the earthquake's victims had confirmed Prasad's worthiness to wear it.

When in October Congress met under Prasad's chairmanship in Bombay, Gandhi formally withdrew. The vast gathering rose to signify loyalty to him. It was clear that in substance, if not in form, the link between Congress and the Mahatma was to continue. Gandhi announced that to intensify rural service he was forming an All India Village Industries Association, which would be a Congress affiliate.

Twice during the session C.R. and the Mahatma found themselves on opposite sides. From prison Jawaharlal had suggested that U.P. be named Hind in the vocabulary of Congress, and Gandhi endorsed the proposal. But to many Hind was India, and C.R. pointed out that 'if Hind was adopted as the name

for U.P. many changes would have to be made in songs and national cries.' The suggestion was defeated.

Jayaprakash Narayan and Minoo Masani asked for proportional representation in committees of Congress of groups such as the one the Socialists had formed. C.R. opposed them. So did Patel. But the Mahatma surprised his close colleagues by voting for the J.P.-Masani proposal, which was carried.

The Gandhi-C.R. differences were minor. A letter that Gandhi wrote during the session to B. C. Roy of Bengal, who was unhappy at not being included in the new Working Committee, confirms that his relationship with C.R. at this juncture was as close as ever. Said the Mahatma:

> You know how I have three times suppressed Rajagopalachari, or rather how Rajagopalachari has allowed himself to be suppressed. Rajagopalachari has certainly gained, and if today he is most useful in the parliamentary struggle in the south, I have no doubt that it is due to this self-denial.

* * *

Rapidly returning south (he had grudged the days that had to be given to the Bombay session), C.R. resumed electioneering, into which he had thrown himself body and soul. He had had a part in writing the national manifesto of Congress and had composed the individual manifestos of some of his party's candidates; he was raising money, organising publicity and teaching candidates to fill out forms; and he was attacking and counter-attacking the opponents of Congress.

The presidency had 16 seats in the Assembly, but in effect only 11 general seats were available for Congress to contest. (Three were reserved for Muslims and one each for the Depressed Classes and Landholders; Congress was either unwilling or unable to oppose the candidates put up for these seats by community organisations.) There was influential opposition from the Justice party, in power in the province and preferred by the Raj. Justice-ites assailed Congress as a party advocating Brahmin interests.

Simultaneously, there were fierce attacks from orthodoxy, offended by the temple-entry legislation that C.R. had promoted. A leaflet issued by a committee of the orthodox said:

> Do not yield to the siren voice of Mr. Rajagopalachari . . . In the name of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva . . we exhort you to teach those who wish to interfere with our religion a lesson they will never forget . . . Will you vote for God or for Mr. Rajagopalachari and his Congress nominees?

Whatever God may have thought of it, the public voted for C.R. and his Congress candidates, who won all eleven general seats. It was not a small feat. 'You have reason to be proud of your marvellous achievement.' Patel wired C.R. And a Congress-supported candidate who had won a Muslim seat, Syed Murtuza Saheb, wrote:

> Had you had time to go to the Punjab, I feel sure the same would have been the result even there, though it is a hotbed of communalism.

The fear of C.R. that the Mahatma's withdrawal would hurt Congress fortunes at the hustings had been falsified; and a rejoicing Gandhi referred to 'the wonders [Congress] has worked during the elections with the least amount of expenses.'

CHAPTER TWENTYTWO

A Strange Desire

CR's response to his success was business-like. He asked the winning candidates to send him the names, with addresses, of all those who had usefully given their services during the campaign.

And he counselled his partymen on how to take victory. 'This is an hour of restraint,' he wrote Satyamurti, who had won the Madras seat. 'Our success is no disgrace for our opponents. You must enforce this in all your talks, private or public.'

Including a dozen or so Nationalists of the Malaviya school, Congress had 61 members in the 146-strong Assembly. What C.R. described as the ENO group (Europeans plus Nominated plus Officials) had 47; these were backed by 16 or so loyalists, representing landholding or other privileged interests.

Pro-Government and Congress votes were thus more or less evenly balanced. The result of a division generally turned on the attitude of a bloc of 16 Muslim legislators led by M. A. Jinnah.

Neither Congress nor the Government could count on the Jinnah group's support. C.R. spent several weeks in Delhi, along with Rajendra Prasad, in a bid to enlist Jinnah in a united front, their task made somewhat difficult by the Nationalists' habit of denouncing the Communal Award at every opportunity. The fear was expressed by C.R. that Malaviya's 'obstruction' of the efforts he and Prasad were making 'will go down in history as a tragedy of the first order.'

The Raj naturally disfavoured the efforts. As C.R. wrote Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the Congress bloc, 'I am sure Government people must be busy working up a complex among the Mussulmans that they are being used by the Congress as tools,'

and added: 'I am glad Jinnah is still voting with you.'

However, Jinnah's terms for continuing cooperation were precise and, in C.R.'s view, 'impossible.' In a letter to C.R. he stated:

> The Congress should accept the Communal Award by an express declaration till a substitute is agreed upon by the communities concerned. On this basis I think a solid united front can be secured.

This Congress could not do, though it was prepared, despite the objections of Malaviya and his friends, to withhold 'rejection' of the Award. The result was that at times the Jinnah group either abstained or voted with the Government against Congress. Still, there were many occasions when a defeat was inflicted on the Government, to the joy of the public.

Visiting Wardha, C.R. found that the Mahatma was absorbed, along with collaborators, in experiments aimed at promoting village industries — and with the nutritional needs of his collaborators. Reported C.R. to Devadas, who was now Delhi-based:

> Four oz. of wheat, two oz. of rice, so many oz. of vegetables, these and other problems fully occupy the time of India's famous leader. He enjoys it all thoroughly.

Three by-elections to the Madras legislature were now to occupy C.R.'s time. The Raj and Justice-ites expected the Justice party to win them, believing that voting for the legislature would be swayed by local issues, on which they thought Congress to be vulnerable, rather than by the question of national freedom.

Yet C.R., on his part, was confident — and realistic. Rejecting a proposal for putting up a Brahmin as the Congress candidate for Trichy, he said that the Assembly success of Congress had 'defeated [but] not killed communalism,' and that the ticket should go to the non-Brahmin aspirant.

Provoked by the criticism that the Justice party had shied away from the fire of repression, one of its leaders at the time, the industrialist A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, threw out a challenge to C.R.:

> If 20 prominent people of the Justice part walked into jail by making seditious speeches and proved their ability to

> stand the fire of repression, would [C.R.] wind up the Congress party in the province?

Yes, said C.R., adding that

> He was quite prepared to entrust Congress work to the Justice party if he (Mudaliar) along with 20 of his chief colleagues courted imprisonment in pursuance of Congress policy.

Ramaswami Mudaliar and friends did not walk into jail. All three seats went to the Congress. Three years was a legislature's normal life, but extensions granted by the Governor had enabled the Madras house and its Justice ministry to enter their sixth year. On the strength of the Assembly and by-election results C.R. asked for a dissolution, but the Governor was not listening.

* * *

Assaults on the demons did not abate. Early in 1935 C.R. drafted a Removal of Untouchability bill, designed to assure civic rights and access to wells, tanks and schools to Harijans. The gap left in the Prohibition League of India by his imprisonments during the early 1930s had never been filled. He now tried, without success, to revive the League.

In January money had evidently been used to ease the conversion into Christianity of 55 Harijan families living in the *cheri* of the village of Kumaramangalam near the Ashram. Each family was given Rs. 25; most families spent it on drink.

What is more, the converts were induced to sell the Hindu shrine in their lane, inclusive of the idol and its adornments, to a Christian mission for Rs. 450; and the mission proposed transforming the temple into a church.

On C.R.'s protest the plan for altering the shrine into a church was given up, but the episode left an unfortunate taste. One of the Birla brothers wanted to give Rs. 100 to Periyan, the only Harijan of the *cheri* not to have changed his faith, but C.R. discouraged the idea. He reasoned:

> I do not think the missionary will outbid us, but [the proposed gift] will demoralise the Harijans themselves and make

them demand money. More people will then threaten to become Christians.

* * *

A strange desire, strange to his friends and perhaps even to himself, had meanwhile stolen over C.R.: he felt like relinquishing all his public responsibilities. The records throw insufficient light on the origin and growth of the desire. What is known is as follows.

A difference of opinion regarding his Ashram and its financial health had arisen between him and the president of the Gandhi Seva Sangh, to which the Ashram was affiliated. Kishorilal Mashruwala, the Sangh's president, had suggested that C.R.'s Ashram might face a Rs. 28,000 loss; C.R. had also been asked about a loan the Sangh had given to the Ashram.

In a letter to Mashruwala, C.R. described the Rs. 28,000 figure as an 'unfounded' estimate, and added:

> If it is not possible to let the Ashram function autonomously and if it becomes necessary to withdraw the loan given for *khadi* work, I am quite prepared to let the institution be wound up.

Alternatively, continued C.R., 'You could run the Ashram directly as a Central Seva Sangh concern, so that there may be no question of loan accounts. The time has come when I should be relieved of the charge.' Fairly strong words, but hardly indicative of a wish on C.R.'s part to leave public affairs altogether.

The by-elections had obliged him to miss a Wardha meeting of the Seva Sangh trustees, of whom he was one. Gandhi's consequent letter to C.R. was not without edge: 'You must attend these meetings regularly or not be in these bodies at all. I feel sore about it.'

The letter seems to have burst a dam. C.R. sent in his resignation as a trustee — and asked for the Mahatma's leave to quit the AICC, the Working Committee, the All-India Parliamentary Board, the presidentship of the TNCC and the charge of the Ashram, the lot. He was weary and longed for rest, he explained.

'Not so fast, nor so cheap,' replied the Mahatma, adding, 'There can be no weariness, no rest for you or me. Our rest has to come in the life hereafter, if at all.' C.R. repeated his yearning. Wrote back Gandhi:

> You may give up posts of responsibility, but you dare not give up responsibility so long as there is breath in you.

Saying that they first had to talk face-to-face before he could agree, the Mahatma proposed a get-together in Wardha following an AICC meeting in Jubbulpore in the last week of April. Meanwhile, Congressmen all over India were protesting

Govind Ballabh Pant wired C.R. from the U.P.: 'Shocked your retirement. Inconceivable. Pray reconsider.' Asaf Ali, chief whip of the Congress party in the Assembly, said that C.R. was 'utterly indispensable.' And Prasad wrote: 'Do not imagine that it is a matter of form with us when we insist on your continuing. We cannot do without you.'

The strongest reaction was that of Vallabhbhai Patel. He said to the Mahatma that he too would retire, but Gandhi calmed him. To C.R. Patel wrote:

> You have done us a great injustice. We all have frail bodies, but none of us has the right to leave others in the lurch. What right have we to . . seek solitude . . after having made several young men in the country to sacrifice their all? I do not understand you, but I know you are very obstinate.

'How can you think of retiring after giving such historic defeats to the Justice party?' Patel asked. At Jubbulpore C.R. played his part, proposing a resolution appreciating the efforts of Congress members in the Assembly, which was passed despite opposition from the Socialist group. The Socialists wanted a declaration that Congressmen in the Assembly had failed to revolutionise politics. The Assembly, C.R. replied, 'is the wrong shop to go to if it is revolution that you want.'

The press noted that C.R. 'appeared pulled down' on arrival in Wardha for his talks with the Mahatma. Patel and Prasad joined in. Having satisfied himself that after a period of rest C.R.'s help 'would be available whenever needed,' Gandhi yielded to his friend's request.

What had C.R. been going through? Had he perchance been

hurt when Gandhi asked Prasad and not him to head Congress? K. M. Munshi seems to have speculated in this vein in a letter to the Mahatma. The latter directly questioned C.R. and then wrote Munshi:

> [C.R.] has assured me that there is no such reason as you suspect. We have no reason to disbelieve him. If he has been offended, he wouldn't hide it from me.

C.R.'s own description of what he was experiencing is available in some letters he wrote during this period. It was 'a chronic mood of disappointment,' he told Patel. A 'weariness of flesh and spirit' and a desire to be relieved 'for a good long time if not once and for all,' he said to Prasad. And to Agatha Harrison, a friend of India in England, he wrote of 'an irresistible mental craving for a holiday.'

'I am looking forward to peace even as eagerly as a schoolboy looks forward to his vacation.' C.R. wrote Devadas after obtaining his release, adding, 'Bapu is still striving with Vallabhbhai to make him agree.'

His colleagues permitted C.R. to shed, for a period, all his positions, but Patel extracted his consent to inclusion on the Parliamentary Board — after assuring exemption from meetings until he felt restored. It had been the Mahatma's and Patel's wish that C.R. should head the Board, Dr. Ansari having resigned owing to ill-health; the burden now went to Patel.

Meanwhile, Agatha Harrison had been pressing Gandhi to depute C.R. to the U.K., to improve Indo-British understanding. Unsure of the fruitfulness of such a visit, the Mahatma nonetheless encouraged C.R. to go, if only for his health.

C.R. declined. He believed that a visit by him at this juncture would blunt the edge of India's opposition to the new constitution. Moreover, London's attitude had engendered bitterness in India; he would not be able truthfully to tell Britain 'that politically conscious India has no hatred for Englishmen, that it has nothing but goodwill for them, if not active love.'

Describing C.R. as 'the leader of the Congress fight for freedom,' the TNCC accepted, on May 11, C.R.'s resignation as its president. A *Hindu* editorial regretted the withdrawal of one who 'in the public estimation stands second only to Gandhiji among the nation's leaders.'

CHAPTER TWENTYTHREE

'Free as a Bird'

FINALLY 'as free as a bird.' C.R. sought his strength back, resting with his son Krishnaswami, who was on the staff of the *Hindu* in Madras, or in his Ashram, where he tried his hand at bee-keeping. Part of the 'vacation' was devoted to writing a commentary on the Gita, something that A. A. Paul, secretary of the Federation of International Fellowships, had suggested.

However, in about three months he was obliged to make a journey to Delhi; Lakshmi had just given birth and Devadas had had an attack of typhoid. Accompanied by Lakshmi and her two children, the younger a month old, C.R. stopped in Wardha on his way back.

By this time Patel had thought up a plan: C.R. should succeed Prasad as Congress President. The Mahatma put the plan to C.R., who turned it down as impossible. Gandhi agreed that C.R. was 'in no condition just now to accept the crown,' being still 'extremely tired both physically and mentally.'

With C.R.'s consent the Mahatma made the offer of the Presidentship to Jawaharlal. Recently released, Jawaharlal was in Europe, where his wife Kamala lay ill. By September 30 Gandhi had heard back. 'Jawaharlal is willing,' he wrote C.R.

In his fatigue and ill-health C.R. was doubtless helped by the Mahatma's letters of encouragement and assurance:

> I know that your sense of humour even when faced by Satan will pull you through the present crisis: only make me this promise that if you need any assistance you have but to send a telegram.

> The postcard written in your own hand comes as a perfect blessing.

By the second week of October C.R. felt able to involve himself in political issues. He wrote Gandhi an important letter:

> I was and I am still doubtful about Jawaharlal's fitting in with the parliamentary programme and policy. While I readily agreed, and had in fact anticipated you in my own mind, that on personal and general grounds we could not pitch on a better choice for the Congress president's place this year, and the offer must be made to him, I could not but feel very doubtful about his dealing with the parliamentary policy in the right way . . .
>
> Something should be done by you to see that Vallabhbhai's and Bhulabhai's decisions as regards parliamentary policy are not challenged but given full cooperation from the Working Committee and by the Congress President.

Congress, C.R. added, should be ready to take office. He repeated an earlier view of his that acceptance of office would be a substitute for the Gandhi-Irwin Pact: it would give prestige and prevent 'reactionaries and anti-nationalists' from obtaining a fresh lease of power. Continued C.R.:

> All this I write though I think you hold the same views. You should see that the Congress Working Committee is not misled into a gallery attitude in this respect. I see that Sardul Singh and Dr. Khan Sahib and may be some others have not realised the situation as I see it.

The AICC met in Madras in October; C.R. did not attend. But a Divali appeal issued by him later in the month suggested that the political stage was beginning to reattract him.

The appeal was innocuous enough. C.R. merely asked the Tamil people to buy *khadi* to show their respect for Prasad, the Congress President, 'the great, good and gentle guest' who was now in their midst. But it was noted that C.R. had sent his appeal to the press.

On his part Prasad had paid C.R. a warm tribute. It was difficult, he said, to find 'a truer, kinder and a nobler person.'

C.R.'s judgement was 'faultless' and his courage 'singular.' In 1922 he had courageously opposed the councils. Now, C.R. was equally courageously advocating office-acceptance. 'I am an usurper of the place which is rightly his,' concluded President Prasad.

On December 27, after a gap of nearly nine months, C.R. appeared before a Madras audience. The occasion was dignified rather than exciting — C.R.'s senior friend C. Vijiaraghavachariar was completing 50 years of public life. But some people were excited. At last C.R. had been seen again on a public platform.

* * *

George the Fifth died on January 20, 1936, Edward the Eighth succeeding as the Raj's sovereign. Tamil Nad delegates for the Lucknow Congress met at Karaikudi at the end of the month. Attending, C.R. proposed that the southern province recommend Nehru as Congress President. This was agreed to. Other provinces suggesting similarly, Jawaharlal was formally elected.

A deep blow accompanied the honour. His wife Kamala died in Europe. Impressed by her qualities, as had been Jawaharlal's other friends, C.R. clearly drew upon personal experience while trying to visualise the effect on Nehru of the loss. 'I have no doubt,' he said in a statement, 'that domestic grief will redouble Jawaharlal's passion for public service.'

He had himself been close to domestic unhappiness. Catching pneumonia, Lakshmi nearly died early in February in Bombay. C.R. rushed to his daughter's side and found her turning the corner.

Though back in action, he was reluctant to take charge of the TNCC and supported the re-election, as provincial president, of Satyamurti, who had filled the post on C.R.'s retirement. The re-election was not entirely smooth. It was noted on behalf of the Raj that 'Satyamurti's leadership is causing some dissatisfaction. It now seems possible that there may be a breach between the Brahman and non-Brahman elements of Congress.'

Division was feared at the Lucknow Congress. Jawaharlal wanted socialism and opposed the idea of acceptance of office in provinces. The reverse was the inclination of Patel, C.R. and Prasad. But unity prevailed, aided by the presence of Gandhi.

Though formally out of Congress, the Mahatma was willing to guide its affairs.

A decision on the issue of office was postponed. The President spoke of socialism but named a Working Committee in which the non-socialists — or the Gandhi-ites, the conservatives or the right wing, as they were variously called — predominated; as expected, it included Patel, C.R. and Prasad.

'The British perhaps hope for a quarrel among Congressmen over this (socialism),' said C.R. about two months after Lucknow. 'But we hope to disappoint them.' 'Independence first' was C.R.'s simple formula for unity, and, in fact, Jawaharlal's as well. To C.R. a debate on socialism at this juncture was only of academic interest. Not so to Nehru, but the latter could agree with C.R.'s view that 'political independence is a condition precedent to any reconstruction of society.'

Still, harmony was not easy. The Mahatma's intervention proved necessary more than once in the months following Lucknow. 'Gandhi entered the house smiling, cracked a joke, and the tension was released,' said a *Hindu* report on a Working Committee session that could have ended in a quarrel.

At the end of June, seven Working Committee members led by Patel, C.R. and Prasad, their patience strained by what they felt were discussions on non-urgent issues, went to the extent of submitting their resignations. At the Mahatma's instance the resignations were withdrawn.

When Jawaharlal complained to Gandhi about them, the Mahatma replied:

> Consider the situation calmly . . . if they are guilty of intolerance, you have more than your share of it. The country should not be made to suffer for your mutual intolerance.

'The Mahatma's spirit guides us in our work, even though we rarely consult him.' said C.R. Once Gandhi was physically stronger, added C.R., 'we shall lose no time to make him a member of the Working Committee.'

This hope of C.R.'s was not really on the cards. The Mahatma was eager to help the Working Committee's efforts but not prepared to join it. He had reserved himself as an independent string for the national bow, though it would take some years

for this string to be used in attack.

* * *

In the meantime Dr. Ansari, doyen of the Congress-minded Muslims, had died. To C.R. he had been 'an affectionate friend besides being a comrade in battle.' Subhas Bose had been arrested for returning to India against the wishes of the Raj. There was much sympathy for him, and he was represented by a proxy on the Parliamentary Board headed by Patel.

Harilal Gandhi, the Mahatma's eldest son, announced that he was embracing Islam. The conversion, which was to prove temporary, hurt his mother Kasturba, who thought that the prospect of publicity, not conscience, had motivated her son. She wrote him an open letter, his whereabouts being imprecise, the text of which much moved C.R., whose regard for Kasturba, born during her struggle in South Africa at her husband's side, had only increased with time and growing acquaintance.

'It is liquid Mother-lava,' he wrote Mahadev Desai, commenting on Kasturba's letter, 'ancient pathos pouring out from the volcano of maternal anguish.'

There was encouraging news from Travancore. The ruler had opened to the Harijan the roads, schools and wells to which the Christian and the Muslim had access but from which, hitherto, he had been barred.

*

The proposed federation at the centre was not to materialise. By now the Indian princes had conveyed their unwillingness to join it. The miscarriage of the unfree federation did not grieve C.R., but he was alienated by the political attitude of the princes, whose territories were drawn in yellow on Indian maps of the period. 'The only solution is to wipe out the yellow patches,' he is reported to have said.

Provincial elections, in which Congress was to take part, were due late in the year or early in 1937. With C.R.'s approval the TNCC executive urged the AICC to declare that office would be accepted by Congress.

Was C.R. now set on an even course? No. An event in Trichy caused him to take an extreme step once more.

A new municipal council had been elected in Trichy. The

Congress nominee for the chairmanship was Ratnavelu Tevar. A former Justice Party member, he had the support of many in town but not, unfortunately, of Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, Trichy's member in the Central Assembly. Rajan opposed Tevar's nomination. Local and provincial committees upheld it. C.R. requested Rajan, an old friend who two years earlier had said, 'To me Mr. C. Rajagopalachari is the guru,' to accept the party's verdict.

Rajan did not. Instead he proposed one Ponniah Pillai to the chairmanship. Pillai defeated Tevar, 18 to 15.

C.R.'s response to the indiscipline was nothing less than to resign — from the national Working Committee, from the Parliamentary Board and from the TNCC. He even wanted to resign his primary membership of Congress, but Patel persuaded him against severing that remaining link.

Announcing his decision two days after the Trichy episode, C.R. said:

> I pray and trust that attempts will be made to restore the spirit of discipline and loyal cooperation so that the Congress organisation may live.

If C.R.'s response had been unpredictable (though not quite uncharacteristic), the reaction to it was predictable. 'Impossible,' said Satyamurti, while urging the Mahatma and Patel to 'persuade [C.R.] to reconsider.' 'A serious blow to the whole nation,' said Patel.

J. B. Kripalani thought that C.R.'s action was 'in excess of what the situation required' and left 'not only the public but also [his] colleagues agape.' 'All-India leaders cannot act,' added Kripalani, 'as if they were local leaders charged with local responsibilities — they have duties beyond their province.' A lone voice, that of Lala Dunichand of Punjab, welcomed C.R.'s step as 'shock treatment.'

A referendum of Congressmen would show C.R., observed a correspondent in the *Hindu*, 'that he has their unanimous confidence without a single dissentient voice.' 'It it not right for a general to flee from his post on account of slight defections in the camp.' he added. 'C.R. has been too long taking upon himself the sins of others,' commented the writer T. V. K. Mudaliar. 'He has allowed his personal disappointment to blur his high sense

of public duty,' said C. R. Srinivasan, editor of *Swadesamitran.*

Some in the south felt that while Rajan may have erred, the TNCC, on its part, lacked the prestige that could command obedience. They asked for a change in leadership. The return from seclusion of S. Srinivasa Iyengar, the Swarajist President of Congress in 1926, was advocated by a few. More wanted C.R. to be given — or to take — complete charge of Congress affairs in the province. He showed no interest.

Rajan of course was censured by the Working Committee, meeting in Bombay. By then he had resigned his Assembly seat, but he did not regret his conduct. In a statement he said:

> The climax of this episode is the retirement of the greatest Congress leader of South India whose integrity of purpose and honesty of motives have always been the admiration even of his worst enemies. That his unmerited affection to me should have been the cause of his retirement is my profound regret. I have never disobeyed him in my long association with him for over 20 years.

At the Working Committee, which C.R. attended, Patel, Prasad and Nehru remonstrated with him. Their efforts were unavailing, as had been the attempts of men like Prakasam and Satyamurti in Madras. The Mahatma, whom C.R. met at Wardha on his way to Bombay, agreed, it would seem, with the latter's decision; at any rate he did not attempt to alter it.

The Working Committee admitting its failure to retain him, C.R. announced that he would 'remain a Congressman but shall cease to participate in Congress politics.'

* * *

C.R.'s decisions were quick, the Mahatma's deliberate. Events often decided C.R.; Gandhi sought the inner voice. Having taken a step the Mahatma was normally at peace; doubts frequently nagged C.R. after he had made up his mind.

Following his latest decision he was, by turns, both troubled and calm. The fact that his Working Committee colleagues had not agreed with him had disturbed him. To Bhulabhai Desai he said that an 'ugly crisis' had affected him; though believing that he was doing his duty he could not keep feeling that he was also

letting down his colleagues. He asked Desai to 'make up' for his 'naughtiness.'

However, on his return to Madras he advised the Tamil public to 'carry on without thought of me' and expressed the hope that his step would lead to 'greater self-reliance and mutual trust.'

'What will you do?' he was asked.

'I have some interests in life other than politics,' he replied with assurance. 'I have immediately some sick people to attend to (one of them was his second son Ramaswami), and in any case I shall not die of ennui. In fact politics left me no time for many things for which my soul craved. I shall now find the time I wanted.'

So it was not only that he wanted to administer a shock. The desire for reflection and for a change, of which he had become acutely conscious in the previous year, had not quite left him.

Released from politics, C.R. gave finishing touches to the book on the Gita that he had written a year earlier. He made the point that Sri Krishna's words were not 'a recruiting sergeant's declamation.'

He wrote short stories. And he turned to the Upanishads, finding their ancient authors 'as much inspired by constructive doubt as the most modern men of science,' and worked on a commentary. To him the heart of the Upanishads' teaching was that

> the good is one thing, the pleasant another. The wise are not deceived by the attractions of the pleasant. They choose the good. Fools are snared into the merely pleasant and perish.

To Mahadev Desai C.R. wrote:

> I believe with Bapu that most of our mythological stories are allegories, including the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Only I don't believe in the attempts sometimes made to weave a systematic allegory running throughout a book. I think it is a wild collection of isolated and valuable allegories . . .

Congress, meanwhile, had issued its manifesto. Would it accept office? It would decide later, said the manifesto. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan had been released. And the time had come to find a President for the coming year. Jawaharlal said that he might not be unwilling to be chosen again.

By retiring, C.R., it seemed, had ruled himself out. But had he? It was pointed out that one did not need to be a member of any provincial or national committee to be chosen President; primary membership was enough, and C.R. still had it.

Two men were extremely keen for C.R. to wear the crown: Patel, because he felt that the honour had been C.R.'s due for some time and because a C.R. nomination would lead to the withdrawal of Jawaharlal's; and Satyamurti, who thought that with C.R. as President Congress was bound to accept office, a policy Satyamurti had been advocating for a long time.

Satyamurti wrote the Mahatma and Patel spoke to him. Gandhi said the following to C.R., enclosing Satyamurti's letter:

> My dear C.R. . . . Read Satyamurti's letter and give me your decision. Needless to tell you that Sardar is desperately anxious for you to wear the thorny crown.
>
> I shall be pleased if you will, but I have no heart to *press* it on you. If you have directly or indirectly led Sardar to think that you could be persuaded into shouldering the burden, you should unhesitatingly say yes and end the agony of those like the Sardar who are anxious that you should come forward. Love, Bapu.

C.R. did not reply in the affirmative. He could not even if he wished to, not within three months of saying that he had retired.

Supporters had urged Patel to stand. He declined (in order, he said, to save Congressmen from 'divided counsel'), asked for the re-election of Nehru, but added:

> The Congress does not part with its ample power by electing any individual no matter who he is . . . I can visualise that office-acceptance may be desirable. There may then be a sharp division of opinion between Pandit Jawaharlal and myself . . .

So Nehru, who clarified that his re-election would not necessarily be a vote for socialism, was given the crown for the third time. It had not happened earlier.

History was being made elsewhere, too. The young Maharaja of Travancore, guided by his Dewan, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, had by a proclamation thrown open all the temples in the state's charge to the Harijans.

The Trivandrum meeting which thanked the Maharaja for his proclamation was presided over by C.R., described on the occasion as 'the author of the temple entry movement.'

The proclamation had stirred him. 'Hinduism has been purified,' he said. Next morning, he distributed sacred ash to 40 young Harijan boys and took them to the famed Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple. The shrine had not seen 'untouchables' for a thousand years.

'God be thanked,' C.R. said, 'and may your Maharaja live long. This is the happiest moment of my life.'

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

The Return

THE Congress annual at the end of the year was to be held in Faizpur, a Maharashtra village, in keeping with the Mahatma's resolve to strengthen Congress's rural links. C.R. would stay out. All the same, events and friends were pursuing him.

The house of Congress in Tamil Nad was not united. There was a contest for the presidentship of the TNCC. 'Come back, C.R.' was a cry that more and more were taking up, some in public, others in private.

If Congress won the elections in Madras, which looked more than likely, and if it accepted office, which now seemed possible even if it was not quite certain, who would head the Government? Satyamurti was a candidate, but his leadership had been receiving criticism and in the party election Mudaliar had defeated him. Moreover, would Prakasam, who led Congressmen in the Telugu half of the presidency, serve under Satyamurti? The answer seemed no. A sharp and possibly bitter contest, with potential for division, was on the cards.

The prospect plainly perturbed Patel, who saw C.R. as the answer. But would C.R. shed his retirement and go so far as to stand for the legislature? 'I know you are obstinate,' Patel had said to C.R. a year back. Still, due to visit the south for a week in the middle of December, Patel decided he would try.

He was not endeavouring alone. Several responsible men in the south felt that only C.R. could assure unity and integrity and launched efforts to enlist him — among them Kasturi Srinivasan, editor of the *Hindu*, T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, the Liberal leader, P. Subbaroyan, the former First Minister who had recently

joined Congress, and Kala Venkata Rao of Andhra.

Patel must have sent word ahead to C.R. that he wanted to talk, for C. R. motored to Renigunta station to join him on the last leg of his train journey to Madras. Patel said his piece. It had a little effect, for C. R. turned up the following day at a Madras meeting where Patel was speaking. Although C.R. declared that he had retired with full confidence that others would carry on the work, he significantly added:

> My retirement does not mean that I will continue to sit at home if I find that I should resume active work.

At Trichy Patel told local Congressmen:

> If you had not forced him to resign, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari would have been unanimously elected President of the Congress long since.

After the rebuke Patel proceeded to Faizpur for the Congress session. C.R. returned to the Gita. He lectured on it to a Madras audience on December 24. The year ended but what Patel and friends in the city had said was still needing an answer.

En route to Travancore, where Harijans pleased with the proclamation had invited him, the Mahatma stopped in Madras on January 11 to change trains. C.R. met him on arrival. 'I am under pressure,' he told Gandhi. The Mahatma said nothing. It had to be C.R.'s decision.

He made it on January 15. 'We understand that Mr. C. Rajagopalachari will contest . . .' said the *Hindu* the next day. 'Leading Congressmen both in this province and elsewhere have long been pressing him to come out of his retirement.'

From Bombay Patel announced that Satyamurti had persuaded C.R. to stand from the University constituency, yielding the seat himself. Patel added that he hoped that 'under the guidance of an outstanding personality all Congress forces will gather.'

A secretary of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly, where his had been an effective role, Satyamurti had been looking forward to major responsibility in the Madras legislature and Government. He had made a sacrifice, and not an easy one.

C.R.'s decision had not been easy either. The situation might

justify it, might even be said to have demanded it, but he had after all only recently — and categorically — talked about retirement. He was, for a few days, a shade embarrassed.

'I am glad I have not got any communication from you making fun of my sudden fall,' he wrote Devadas. 'I have been rushed into it and I have hardly four weeks to win all the elections . . .'

The 'fall' was welcomed all over Madras, and beyond. 'Arjuna resumes the bow,' said a headline in the *Mahratta* of Poona.

He filed his nomination on the 19th. Two came forward to oppose him, P. Narayana Kurup and S. Rajagopalan, the latter promising to prevent the kind of Harijan reform that C.R. had sponsored. The seat had 8,109 voters. Saying that 'even a single letter to everyone would mean nearly a thousand rupees,' C.R. asked the voters, in a press statement, to forgive him for not sending a personal appeal and to 'bless an experiment in poor man's electioneering.'

The Mahatma and C.R. met again in Madras on the 22nd, on the former's way back north. 'Ah,' said Gandhi, 'Now I know what you meant by pressure.' 'What do you think of my decision?' asked C.R. 'You are free to do as you like,' replied the Mahatma.

Ably backed by Satyamurti and Prakasam, C.R. conducted the Congress campaign from the bare floor of his son Krishnaswami's modest new house in T. Nagar. The Justice party, in power for years, was the main opposition. The franchise was wider than it had ever been. Justice had red boxes, Congress yellow.

Now 58, C.R. travelled, spoke and organised with vigour and with one aim, victory. Votes against Congress, he said everywhere, were votes for national dishonour.

While India was moving towards possible representative government in the provinces, though not at the centre, democracy was being subverted in Europe. 'Peace Our Dearest Wish — Hitler,' said a *Hindu* headline on January 31, 1937.

Election results were known in Madras in the last weak of February. Congress got 159 seats, Justice 16, the Muslim League 10. C.R. had 5,326 votes, Kurup 372, Rajagopalan 270. The Raja of Bobbili, Chief Minister in the previous Government, lost to V. V. Giri of Congress by a margin of over 5,000.

It was an immense victory. 'The magnitude of the Congress

victory was greater than I or anyone else had expected,' reported Erkshine, Governor of Madras, to the King. 'The irresistibility of a just cause,' said C.R. At once thinking of the future, he added:

> How Congress should now justify all this tremendous faith is our present anxious thought. Let us pray to God that He may bless us with wisdom, so that we may not throw away a great opportunity by disunion or the conflict of private ambitions.

The new Congress legislators, including those chosen to the upper house, met on March 10 to elect their leader. C.R. proposed that Prakasam chair the meeting. From the chair Prakasam proposed C.R.'s name as leader. Loud and prolonged applause broke out.

'I take it that you are for electing Mr. Rajagopalachari unanimously,' said Prakasam. 'Yes,' said voices from everywhere. Prakasam formally put the proposal to vote. Cries of 'all' rent the air.

'Are there any against the proposal? Prakasam enquired. 'None' came the reply from all sides. To be absolutely sure about the house's choice Prakasam requested the 'Ayes' to raise their hands. All hands went up. When he asked the 'Noes' to raise their hands, there were none.

Now C.R. addressed the legislators. He said that if he tried to look back to the adventurous days when Mr. Prakasam and he first conversed together about the great and wonderful programme laid down by Mahatma Gandhi, he should break down.

> I will speak, therefore, as a man of business. I want business done today. Our party organisation must be completed today. Anybody who is anxious for any office proves that he is unfit for that office. It is easy to fast on an Ekadasi day sitting on a plank; it is difficult to fast sitting in the Modern Cafe.

Office-bearers of the legislature party were then elected. After Subbaroyan had claimed credit for being one of those responsible for C.R. returning from the Gita and the Upanishads to action according to the Gita, Satyamurti, specially invited to the meeting, spoke.

He had been pleading with C.R., he said,

> to be the uncrowned king of India, the president of the Indian National Congress, but C. R. simply put me off. But a miracle has happened. He who was unwilling to accept the highest honour within the reach of a Congress worker has been persuaded to accept the onerous and thankless task of leading a party in the legislature.

Congress had won in most parts of India, not just in Madras. Would it, however, accept office under the limitations of the new constitution? 'The chances are fifty-fifty,' C.R. told the legislators, adding that they should obey the AICC's decision, whatever it was.

The legislature party, the TNCC and the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee took votes on the question: in each case taking office was favoured. The vast majority of the taluk and district committees of Congress in the south had already made the same recommendation.

However, Nehru, President of Congress, was opposed. At the Faizpur session he had said that 'the only logical consequence of the Congress policy . . is to have nothing to do with office or ministry.'

Thinking differently, the Mahatma was ready to counsel acceptance provided the Raj gave an assurance that Governors would not use their special powers against the advice of ministers. Meeting in Delhi in the third week of March, the AICC disagreed with its President and authorised office-acceptance if Gandhi's condition was met.

Shortly after it became clear that Congress had won, C.R. had started talks with the Governor of Madras to see how far the Raj would move to enable Congress to take office. Of aristocratic Scots lineage, independent, hopeful of a rising career in British politics and head of the presidency since 1935, Lord Erskine was not happy to find Congress leaders acting 'as the peers of Government' or talking with the Raj 'on terms of equality.'

He had heard of C.R. as 'a wholehearted disciple of Gandhi' and a 'respected' man but with 'a visionary and impractical turn of mind.' However, after their third meeting, which Erskine

found 'very amicable,' he wrote the Viceroy that he 'liked the old boy.'

Early in the negotiations, C.R. asked the Governor if he could give a written assurance that his special powers would not be used unless orders were issued by the Viceroy or the Secretary of State. Erskine sought the Viceroy's advice. Ruling out an assurance of this kind, Linlithgow asked Erskine to find out from C.R. if Congress would instead by satisfied by 'a statement on some public occasion reiterating the spirit of sympathy in which you as Governor are ready to work with any party taking up office.'

C.R.'s answer, given after consulting the Mahatma, who was in Madras to promote Hindi, was that this would not be enough. Yet could the Raj give the assurance that Gandhi and C.R. were demanding without amending the constitution that had just come into force?

Legal experts in the U.K. and India were divided on this question, but Gandhi appeared insistent. While stating that 'boycott of legislatures is not an eternal principle,' he made it clear that he had supported entry into them 'not to offer co-operation but to demand cooperation.'

It looked as if a deadlock had been reached. In seven provinces Governors formally asked the leader of the Congress legislature party to form a government. C.R. and his counterparts elsewhere formally sought the assurance. When it was not forthcoming they said that they would have to decline.

Erskine asked Srinivasa Sastri, the Liberal leader, if he would form a caretaker government. Saying that he was old and ill and that accepting the offer would make him unpopular, Sastri said no. Sir K. V. Reddi, next asked by the Governor, agreed. Predictably, his acting ministry was scoffed at.

Ready to settle for somewhat less than Gandhi's minimum, C.R. went to confer with him in the village of Tithal on the Gujarat coast. The Mahatma said that he wanted a sign from Britain that it would cooperate; the form in which the sign came was less important.

Fortunately, the Raj showed movement. Zetland, Secretary of State, made a statement in the House of Commons that Gandhi found encouraging. Then the Viceroy gave Britain's formal reply

to Congress:

> There is no foundation for any suggestion that the Governor is free, or is entitled, or would have the power to interfere with the day-to-day administration of a province outside the limited range of the responsibilities specially confided to him.

Expecting a larger commitment than this, C.R. was disappointed, and told Erskine that he was. Somewhat surprisingly the Mahatma was not; he was willing to accept what was offered. As for Nehru, he arrived in Wardha three days before the Working Committee was due to meet there, and talked with Gandhi.

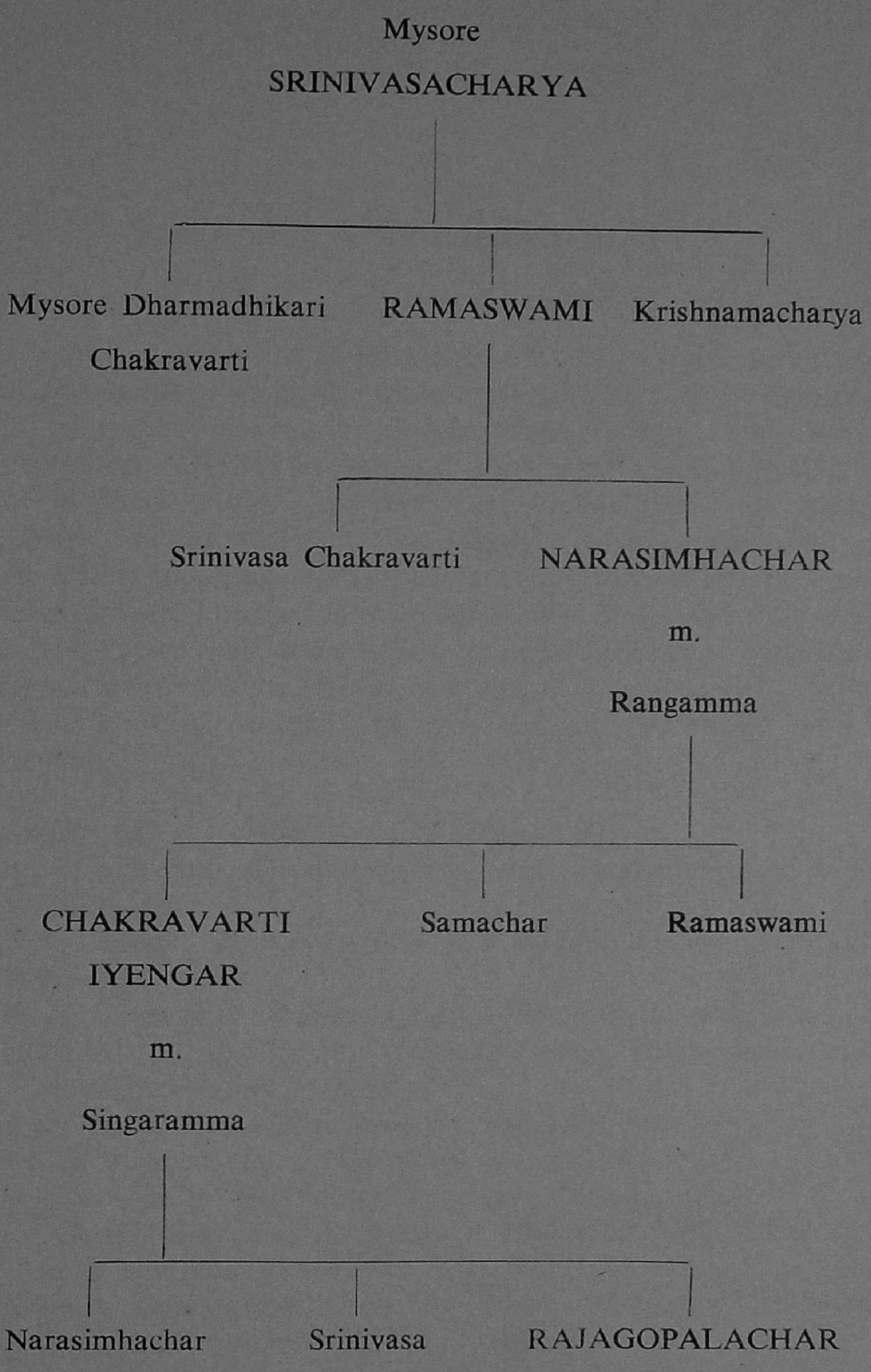
When the Working Committee conferred, C.R. argued for taking office, the Raj's inadequate response notwithstanding. He was not opposed, not even by Nehru. Formation of ministries was sanctioned by the Working Committee on July 5, 1937.

Two days later C.R., five times a prisoner of the Raj, was sent for by Erskine, who asked him to be the presidency's Prime Minister — that was the designation used — and to form a cabinet.

C.R. agreed. His life had entered a new phase — of governmental responsibility. Interrupted during the War and enriched, in 1947, by freedom, the phase was to last until 1954. For the present he was launched into an unusual experiment of a dual relationship with the Raj, in which trust and struggle, participation and opposition, would be combined.

'You know how my hope is centred in you,' said the Mahatma in a telegram. 'May God bless your effort.'

APPENDIX : *The ancestors of C.R.*



SOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

The principal sources of information for this volume were: the Rajagopalachari Papers; the Devadas Gandhi Papers; the Gandhi-C.R. correspondence in the Rajghat Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; letters from C.R. kindly supplied by a number of individuals; files in the National Archives, New Delhi, the Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras, and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi; the Erskine Papers and other material in the India Office Library, London; files of the *Hindu*, *Kalki* and *Swarajya*, Madras, *Young India* and *Harijan*, Ahmedabad, and the *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi; interviews; and books, pamphlets and articles written by C.R. included in the list that follows of works consulted.

Geoffrey Ashe, *Gandhi*, Asia, Bombay, 1968.

Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, Orient Longmans, New Delhi, 1959.

B. S. Baliga, *Tanjore District Handbook*, Government of Madras, 1957.

Earl of Birkenhead, *Halifax*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1965.

G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, Vakils, Feller and Simons, Bombay, 1968.

Subhas Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, Asia, Bombay, 1964.

Michael Brecher, *Nehru*, Oxford, London, 1959.

The Calendar of 1898-99, University of Madras, 1898.

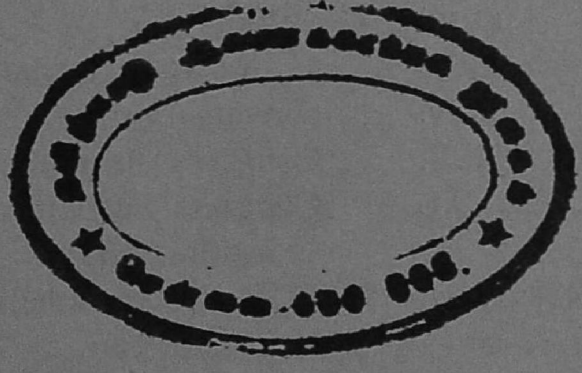
Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement*, Vol. 3, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1972.

Bimanesh Chatterji, *A Thousand Days with Rajaji*, Affiliated East-West Press, New Delhi, 1973.

Report of College Day Celebrations, Central College Old Boys'

Association, Bangalore, 1937.
Mahadev Desai, *The Story of Bardoli*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1929.
Mahadev Desai's Diary, Vols. 1 to 8, Sarva Seva Sangh, Varanasi.
Le Fanu, *A Manual of Salem District*, Government Press, Madras, 1883.
Monica Felton, *I Meet Rajaji*, Macmillan, London, 1962.
P. C. Ghosh, *From Nagpur to Lahore*, Abhoy Ashram, Comilla, 1930.
Lord Glendevon, *The Viceroy at Bay*, Collins, London, 1971.
Governor's Speeches, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1948.
Irschick, *Political and Social Conflict in South India*, University of California Press, 1969.
A. S. Iyengar, *All Though the Gandhian Era*, Hind Kitabs, Bombay, 1950.
Krishnadas, *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, Ganesan, Madras, 1928.
Sir Verney Lovett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, John Murray, London, 1921.
V. P. Menon, *An Outline of Indian Constitutional History*, Bharatiya Vidya, Bhavan, Bombay, 1965.
The 1921 Movement, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1971.
V. K. Narasimhan, *Kasturiranga Iyengar*, Publications Division, New Delhi, 1963.
Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works*, Orient Longman, New Delhi.
Sardar Patel's Correspondence, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1973.
Pyarelal, *The Epic Fast*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1932.
C. Rajagopalachari, Articles in *Hindustan Review*, Patna, June and July 1907.
C. Rajagopalachari, *Ambedkar Refuted*, Hind Kitabs, Bombay, 1946.
C. Rajagopalachari, *Chats Behind Bars*, S. Ganesan, Madras, 1931.
C. Rajagopalachari, *Indian Prohibition Manual*, AICC, Madras, 1931.
C. Rajagopalachari, *A Jail Diary*, Rochouse, Madras, 1941.
C. Rajagopalachari, 'M. K. Gandhi: His Message to India', *Indian Review*, Madras, May 1916.
C. Rajagopalachari, *Plighted Word*, Servants of Untouchables Society, Delhi, 1933.

C. Rajagopalachari, *Satyam Eva Jayate*, Bharathan, Madras.
C. Rajagopalachari, *Upanishads*, Hindustan Times, Delhi, 1937.
C. Rajagopalachari and Navaratna Rama Rao, *Our College: Reminiscences*, undated article supplied by Central College, Bangalore.
Rajaji 93, Bharathan, Madras, 1971.
Rajaji, Hindustan Publications, Madras, 1949.
F. J. Richards, *Salem*, Government Press, Madras, 1918.
Salem District Urban Bank, *Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, 1934.
B. Shiva Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, Longman, New Delhi, 1972.
Chandrashanker Shukla, *Conversations of Gandhi*, Vora, Bombay, 1949.
Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, A.I.C.C., Allahabad, 1935.
Ian Stephens, *Monsoon Morning*, Ernest Benn, London, 1966.
Tahmankar, *Lokamanya Tilak*, John Murray, London, 1956.
D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vols. 1 to 8, Bombay, 1951.
Reminiscences of Lokamanya Tilak, edited by S. V. Bapat.
Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, *Rajaji*.



NOTES AND REFERENCES

This section tells where the individual pieces of information and quotations used in the book were found. I have not numbered the pieces for which references are supplied below; the numerals would have cluttered the text. Instead I have given (in this section) their location, specifying the page(s), paragraph(s) and, in some cases, the lines where they occur in the text.

Para 1 means the passage that starts a page, whether a new para or the concluding portion of a para begun on the preceding page.

For quicker identification I have, in some instances, given a passage a short description or quoted a word or two from it. Against the location and/or description of a piece can be found its source.

To save space abbreviations, explained below, have been used. Those wanting a fuller description of a work cited can find it in the preceding section, 'Sources and Bibliography.'

ABBREVIATIONS

A:*G*	Ashe, *Gandhi*.
AF	Ashram File
auth.	author
CBB	C. Rajagopalachari, *Chats Behind Bars*.
conv.	conversation
C.P.B.	Congress Parliamentary Board,
C.P.B.-S.I.	Congress Parliamentary Board. South India.
CR & NRR: *Rem.*	C. Rajagopalachari and Navaratna Rama Rao, *Our College*: *Reminiscences*.

C.R.I.	Chellamma Ramaswami Iyengar
C.R.K.	C.R. Krishnaswami
C.R.N.	C.R. Narasimhan
C.S.	Chief Secretary
CWMG	*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*
D.G.	Devadas Gandhi
DGP	Devadas Gandhi Papers
F: *IMR*	Felton, *I Meet Rajaji.*
G.	Gandhi
GOI	Government of India
GOM	Government of Madras
Govt.	Government
H	*Hindu*
H.S.	Home Secretary
HT	*Hindustan Times*
IOL	India Office Library, London.
K.S.R	Khasa Subba Rau
K.S.V	K. S. Venkataraman
K.V.	K. Vedamurthy
L.	Lakshmi Devadas Gandhi
l.b.o.	last but one
M.D.	Mahadev Desai
MDD	*Mahadev Desai's Diary*
Mun.	Municipality
NA	National Archives, New Delhi.
Nam.	Namagiri Ammal
NMML	Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.
N.R.R.	Navaratna Rama Rao
P: *EF*	Pyarelal, *The Epic Fast.*
Pub. Div.	Publications Division
q.	quotation(s)
R93	*Rajaji 93*
RCD	*Report of College Day Celebrations,* Central College Old Boys' Association, Bangalore, 1937.

RHP	*Rajaji*, Hindustan Publications.
RP	Rajagopalachari Papers
RS	Rajghat Sangrahalaya (Gandhi Museum), New Delhi.
R.V.K.I.	R. V. Krishna Iyer
S	*Swarajya*
S: *Hist.*	Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress.*
Sec.	Secretary
SOS	Secretary of State
SP	Sankaran Papers
sp.	speech
T: *M*	Tendulkar, *Mahatma.*
T: *Tilak*	Tahmankar, *Tilak.*
TC: *Hist*	Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement.*
TNA	Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras.
V	Viceroy
YI	*Young India*

1. Rajan

Page(s)	
1 & 2	Q. from Sir Verney Lovett, *A History of the Indian Nationalist Movement*, John Murray, London, 1921, Ch. 1.
4	*para 3* Figure of famine deaths from F. J. Richards, *Salem*, Vol. 1, Govt. Press, Madras, 1918, p. 305.
4	*para 3* Q. from Le Fanu, *A Manual of Salem District*, Govt. Press, Madras, 1883, pp. 128-9.
4	*para 4* C.R., *S*, 17.6.61.
4	*para 5* C.R., *S*, 9.11.63.
6	*paras 5-6* Sp. by C.R. quoted in *HT*, 10.10.48.
6-7	C.R., *S*, 24.2.68.
7	*para 5 lines 3-4* C.R. in conv. with S. Krishnamurti.

7 *para 5 lines 4-8* F: *IMR*, p. 24.
7 *para 6* C.R., *S*, 17.12.60.
7-8 ibid.
8 *para 2 onwards* CR & NRR: *Rem.*
9 *para 1* ibid.
9 *para 3* C.R. in conv. with Gopalkrishna Gandhi.
9 *para 4* Address by C.R., *RCD.*
9 *para 5 line 4* F: *IMR*, p. 23.
9 *para 5 line 6* CR & NRR: *Rem.*
9-10 ibid.
10 *para 3 RCD*, p. 14.
10-11 *The Calendar of 1898-99*, University of Madras, 1898, p. 130.
11 *para 4* C.R. to Angri, Feb. 1966.
11 *l.b.o. para* Kumar, *R93*, p. 252.
12 *para 1 H*, 22.6.1897.
12 *para 2* 6.2.1896, Wenlock Papers, IOL.
13 *para 2* In conv. with auth.

2. The Extremist

15 *last line* F: *IMR*, p. 24.
17 *para 2 lines 1-3* In conv. with auth.
17-18 *Hindustan Review*, Patna, July 1907.
18 *para 4* T: *Tilak*, p. 146.
18 *para 6* ibid., p. 183.
19 *para 7 line 1* C. Samachar to auth.
19 *para 7 lines 4-5* L., *R93*, p. 69.
19 *last para* R.V.K.I. to auth.
21 *para 1* C.R. in conv. with Gopalkrishna Gandhi.
21 *para 2* R.V.K.I. to auth.
21 *para 3* R.V.K.I., *Kalki*, 8.12.57.
21 *para 4* ibid.
21 *para 5* R.V.K.I. to auth.
21 *last para* Sp. by T. Vijiaraghavachar, *Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, Salem Dist. Urban Bank Ltd, 15.7.34, p. 38.
22 *paras 3-5 Hindustan Review*, Patna, June 1907.
22 *para 7* C. Samachar to auth.
24 *para 1* F: *IMR*, p. 116.

24 *C.R. and Muslims* R.V.K.I. to auth.

3. Manga

25 *para 1* C.R.I. to C.R.N. and K.V.
26 *para* 2 ibid.
26 *para 4* Diary extract dated 11.6.10, published in *RHP.*
26 *para 6* C.R.I. to C.R.N. and K.V.
26 *para 8* C. Samachar to auth.
26 *l.b.o. para* Nam. to auth.
27 *para 4* C.R.N. to auth.
27 *para 5* C.R.K. to auth.
27 *para 7* R.V.K.I. to auth.
28 *para 1* C.R.I. to C.R.N. and K.V.
28 *para 4* Nam. to auth.
28 *para 6* ibid.
28 *last para* C.R.K. to auth.
29 *para 2 lines 1-3* C.R.I. to C.R.N. and K.V.
29 *para 2 line 5* R.V.K.I., *Kalki,* 8.12.57.
29 *para 4 CBB,* p. 46.
29 *para 5* ibid., p. 48.
29 *l.b.o. para* R.V.K.I., *Kalki,* 8.12.57.
29 *last para CBB,* p. 46
30 *para 2* ibid., p. 48.
30 *para 4* Sentence from review supplied by Pyarelal Nayar.
30 *para 5 CBB,* p. 48.
30 *para 6 ibid.,* p. 48.
30 *para 7* R.V.K.I. to auth.
30-1 Conv. recorded in Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, *R93,* pp. 113-4.
31 *para 4 CBB,* p. 49.
31 *paras 7-8 Mr. Gandhi's Jail Experiences,* Reprinted at T.A.C. Press, Salem, 1913, TNA.
31 *last para* C.R. to Gokhale, 26.11.13, Gokhale Papers, NA.
32 para 2 *CBB,* p. 49.
32-3 N.R.R., *Kalki,* 8.12.57.
33 *l.b.o. para lines 5-6* C.R.K. to auth.
33 *l.b.o. para lines 6-8* C.S. Bhasker, Bar-at-law, to auth.

34 *para 4* S. Vijiaraghavachariar, Salem advocate, to C.R.N.
34 *para 5* R. Sundaram, *Bhavan's Journal,* Bombay, 21.12.75, p. 48.
34 *para 6 'Even Nugent Grant'* S. Vijiaraghavachariar to C.R.N. and K.V.
34 *l.b.o. para line 3* T.V. Lakshminarayana Rao, Salem advocate, to C.R.N. and K.V.
34 *l.b.o. para lines 3-4* C.S. Bhasker to C.R.N., 19.5.73.
34-5 K.S. Ramaswami Sastri, *R93,* p. 266.
35 *para 3* R.V.K.I. to auth.
35 *para 4 line 1 'sleepy' and 'irate'* C.R., *YI,* 5.7.23.
35 *para 4 lines 2-3* P.T. Venkatachar, advocate, to auth.
35 *para 5* C.S. Bhasker to C.R.N., 19.5.73.
35 *para 6* C.S. Bhasker to auth.
35 *l.b.o. para* C.R.'s remark recalled by R.V.K.I. in interview with auth.
35-6 K. N. Sundararajan, son of K. Narasimha Iyengar, to C.R.N. and K.V.
36 *paras 3-4* V. P. Raman, *R93,* p. 220A.
36 *para 6* TC: *Hist.,* Vol. 3, p. 437.
37 *para 5* Diary extracts in *RHP.*
37 *para 6* Nam. to auth.
39 *last para* Nam. to auth.
40 *para 3* C.R. to auth.
40 *paras 4-8* Based on accounts provided to auth. by C.R.K., C. Samachar and Nam. and article by K.S.R. in *S,* 5.11.60.

4. A Glimmer On The Horizon

41 *para 3* C.R.K. to auth.
41 *para 4* C.R. to D.G., 4.2.20, DGP.
41 *para 5* Quoted by K.S.R., *S,* 5.11.60.
41 *l.b.o. para* R.V.K.I., *Kalki,* 8.12.57.
42 *para 4 'The dog'* C.R.K. to auth.
43 *para 1* Nam. to auth.
43 *para 4* T: *M,* Vol. 1, p. 188.
44-5 Paper by C.R. read before Salem Literary Society and reproduced in *Indian Review,* Madras, May 1916.

45 *para 1* Brecher, *Nehru*, p. 60.
45 *para 2 Patel's reaction* A: *G*, p. 146.
45 *para 4* Nehru's letter dated 8.12.49, published in *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1973, Vol. 8, pp. 220-2.
45 *last para* Nam. to auth.
46 *para 2* Quoted in Irschick, *Political and Social Conflict in South India*, Univ. of Calif Press, 1969, Ch. 8.
46 *para 6* B. Shiva Rao, *R93*, p. 72.
46 *last para* T: *M*, Vol. 1, p. 233.
47 *para 2* ibid., p. 235.
47 *para 3* ibid., p. 234.
47 *para 4* C.R., *'M. K. Gandhi: His message to India,'* 1916.
47 *para 5 Spread of Home Rule slogan* S: *Hist.*, p. 220.
47 *para 5 'revolutionary and subversive'* ibid., p. 224.
47 *para 6 Pentland's address H*, 25.5.17.
47-8 *C.R.'s letter H*, 28.5.17.
48 *para 2* H. 1.6.17.
48 *paras 3 and 4* Issue of *H*, June 1917.
48 *para 6* T: *M*, Vol. 1, p. 264.
49 *Salem station incident* Described to auth. by C. Samachar.
49 *Salem meeting H*, 27.11.17.
51 *paras 2-4 H*, 12.5.18.
31 *para 7* ibid.
51 *l.b.o. para H*, 13.5.18.
52 *para 1 H*, 16.5.18.
52 *para 3* K.S.V. in *RHP*.
52-3 *H*, 2.8.18.
53 *para 5 'protecting hand'* C.R.'s description in *Governor's Speeches*, Govt. of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1948, p. 252.
53 *para 6 line 4* T: *M*, Vol. 1, p. 288.
53 *para 7 Das about C.R.* K.S.V. in *RHP*.
53 *l.b.o. para* ibid.
54 *para 2 Salem conference H*, 14.8.18.
55 *para 1* Figures from Files 1301M of 1918 and 2000M of 1919, TNA.
55 *para 4 lines 3-5* In *Local Self-Govt. Gazette*, July 1918,

quoted in *H*, 2.8.18.

55 *para 6 lines 2-3* Report of Davis, Collector of Salem, to GOM, 17.7.19, File 2000M of 1919, TNA.

55 *para 6 lines 6-7* C.R.'s remark recalled by E. S. Balasubramania Iyer, who had been the clerk in question, to C.R.N. and K.V.

55 *l.b.o. para* File 1301M of 1918, TNA.

55 *last para* ibid.

56 *para 1* ibid.

56 *para 7 H*, 15.11.17.

56 *last para* File 1301M of 1918, TNA.

57 *l.b.o. para H*, July 1918.

57-8 *CBB*, p. 72.

58 *para 2 Mail*, 30.7.18; *C.R.'s reply H*, 1.8.18

58 *para 5* Kamaraj's phrase in *R93*, p. 105.

58 *para 6* C.R.N. to auth.

59 *para 2 line 2* Legh to GOM, 17.6.18, File 1301M of 1918, TNA.

59 *para 2 lines 3-4* Davis to GOM, 17.7.19, File 2000M of 1919, TNA.

59 *para 4 lines 1-2* Note by R.A. Graham, Sec., GOM, 2.8.18, File 1301M of 1918, TNA.

59 *para 5 C.R. about Legh H*, 6.2.19.

60 *Davis about C.R.* File 2000M of 1919, TNA.

5. The Enlistment

61 *Salem Lodge records* Extracts in Lodge's *Diamond Jubilee Souvenir*, 1971.

62 *para 1 H*, 1.10.18.

62 *para 5 'Report inaccurate'* Editorial, *H*, 17.1.19.

62 *l.b.o. para H*, 13.12.18.

62-3 *Judge-C.R. exchanges H*, 10.11.18, 12.11.18 and 13.12.18.

63 *l.b.o. para H*, 11.10.18

64 *para 2 H*, 17.1.19.

65 All q. from *H*, 16.1.19.

66 *para 2* ibid.

66 *para 6 'friction'* Davis to GOM, 17.7.19, File 2000M of

1919, TNA.
66 *last para* K.S.V. in *RHP*.
67 *para 1* Resolution of Salem Mun., 7.2.19, Salem Mun. records.
67 *paras 3-4 H*, 20.2.19.
67 *l.b.o. para* T:*M*, Vol. 1, p. 294.
68 *para 2 G.'s love for S. India* A:*G*, p. 187.
68 *para 3* Nam. to auth.
69 *last para C.R.'s 'shyness'* G., *YI*, 8.11.28.
70 *paras 2-3 G.'s talk with Papa* Nam. (Papa) to auth.
70 *paras 5-7 The 'hartal'* G., *YI*, 8.11.28.
70 *l.b.o. para* Police Commissioner's Report to GOM, 25.3.19, Secret File 222 of 1919, TNA.
70-1 ibid.
71 *paras 3-4 C.R.'s sp. H*, 31.3.19.
71 *para 5 'The whole of India'* G., *YI*, 8.11.28.
71 *paras 7-8 C.R.'s description of hartal H*, 7.4.19.
71-2 *Moore's report* Secret File 271 of 1919, TNA.
72 *paras 2-3 H*, 7.4.19.
72 *para 7 'Let it be clearly . . .'* Leaflet by C.R. in Secret File 271 of 1919, TNA.
72 *para 8 H*, 7.4.19.

6. India Astir

76 *para 2 H*, 11.4.19.
76 *para 4 'Himalayan blunder'* T:*M*, Vol. 1, p. 316.
76 *para 5 'the spiritual cause'* G. to C.R., 25.6.19, RS.
76 *para 6 'I have written so much'* G. to C.R., 3.7.19, RS.
76 *l.b.o. para 'ardent spirits'* Leaflet by C.R., 5.5.19, Secret File 271 of 1919, TNA.
76 *last para 'shameless'* C.R. to G., 29.6.19, RS.
77 *para 1* G. to C.R., 3.7.19, RS.
77 *para 2* Cleveland to Marris, H.S., GOI, 23.5.19, NA.
77 *para 3* Willingdon to Montagu, SOS, 9.6.19, Will. Papers, IOL.
77 *para 5* Montagu, SOS, to Chelmsford, V, 19.9.19, Home (Pol.) B Series, NA.

77 *paras 6-7 A later British view* Geoffrey Ashe, *Gandhi*, p. 189.
78 *para 5 Lloyd George statement* S: *Hist.*, pp. 319-20.
78 *last para* C.R.-G. conv. recalled by C.R., *YI*, 5.4.23.
79 *para 1 H*, 22.8.19.
79 *para 3 'A Salem Vakil'* File 14 of Nov. 1919, Home Dept. (Pol.) Deposit, NA.
79 *para 5 'Non-cooperation'* T: *M*, Vol. 1, p. 333.
79 *l.b.o. para H*, 8.11.19.
80 *paras 6-7 'went mad'* S: *Hist.*, p. 307.
81 *para 2* C.R. to D.G., 12.1.20, DGP.
81 *para 3* C.R. to D.G., 14.1.20, DGP.
81 *para 6 'looking on hopelessly'* C.R. to D.G., 4.2.20, DGP.
81 *l.b.o. 'law of satyagraha'* ibid.
81-2 *H*, 23.5.20.
82 *para 3 Offer to draft a bill* C.R. to D.G., 28.2.20, DGP
82 *para 7 'calculated' and 'unparalleled'* TC: *Hist.*, Vol. 3, p. 484.
82 *para 7 'no fact disproved'* T: *M*, Vol. 1, p. 329.
83 *para 4 'a big agitation'* C.R. to D.G., 28.2.20, DGP.
83 *para 5 Lloyd George's question and India's reply YI*, 31.3.20.
83 *para 7 The Mahatma's warning* T: *M*, Vol. 1, pp. 346-7.
84 *para 2 'progressive abstention'* Resolution quoted in V. K. Narasimhan, *Kasturiranga Iyengar*, Pub. Div., 1963.
84 *l.b.o.* para G., *YI*, 7.7.20.
85 *para 2* C.R. to G., 12.6.20, SN 7202, RS.
85 *para 3 Hindi in the south H*, 3.7.20.
85 *para 4 C.R. 'conspicuous'* File 106 of July 1920, Home (Pol.) Deposit, NA.
85 *para 4 C.R.'s 'exertions'* File 97 of July 1920, Home (Pol.) Deposit, NA.
86 *para 3 line 2* C.R. to D.G., 12.1.20, DGP.
86 *para 3 'fear of logical results'* File 97 of July 1920, Home (Pol.) Deposit, NA.
86 *para 5 'Fight the caste spirit' H*, 1.4.20.
86 *para 6 H*, 8.4.20.
87 Tait-C.R. discussion recalled by C.R., *RCD*, p. 9.

7. The Fight

88 *para 1 Tilak's advice* T: *Tilak,* pp. 302-4.
88 *para 2 G. on Tilak* T:*M,* Vol. 1, pp. 370-1.
88 *para 3 Tilak towards C.R. Speeches of C. Rajagopalachari* Governor-General's Press, New Delhi, 1950, p. 192.
88-9 C.R.'s commments on G. and Tilak from *Reminiscences of Lokamanya Tilak,* edited by S. V. Bapat, Vol. 2, pp. 81-2.
89 *para 2 'neither respect . . .'* T:*M,* Vol. 2, p. 1.
89 *para 3 'the most foolish'* A:*G,* p. 204.
89 *paras 5-7 G.'s call on C.R.'s father* C.R.N., *R93,* p. 243, and Nam. to auth.
90 *para 2 On arresting C.R.* GOI's communication dated 4.9.20. Public and Judicial Records, 1920, IOL.
91 *para 2 Madrasis 'recruited in Calcutta'* K. Santhanam in *The 1921 Movement,* Pub. Div., 1971, p. 175.
91 *para 3 The Govt.'s hope* A:*G,* p. 208.
91 *para 4 Chirol's observation* T:*M,* Vol. 2, p. 38.
92 *para 1 The Congress creed* Brecher, *Nehru,* p. 71.
92 *para 5 C.R.'s proposal* C.R. to D.G., 19.1.20, DGP.
93 *para 1* T:*M,* Vol. 2, p. 7.
93 *para 5 GOM's letter to GOI* 21.1.21, File 41 of 1921, Home (Pol.) Deposit, NA.
93 *l.b.o. para H,* 8.3.21.
94 *para 1* 1.3.21, File 43 of 1921, Home (Pol.) Deposit, NA.
94 *last para* C.R. to D.G., November 1920, DGP.
95 *para 2* Knapp, C.S., GOM, to O'Donnell, Officiating H.S., GOI, 1.2.21, File 43 of 1921, Home (Pol.) Deposit, NA.
95 *para 3* Marjoribanks, C.S., GOM, to Officiating H.S., GOI, 28.8.21, File 18 of 1921, Home (Pol.) Deposit, NA.
95 *last para H,* 21.7.21.
96 *para* 1 ibid.
96 *l.b.o. para* Hardinge to Butler, 23.7.26, Butler Papers, IOL.
97 *para 2 'Don't fall into trap' H,* 23.2.21.
97 *para 3 'an old world faith' H,* 14.6.21.

97 *para 6* Govt.'s comment in RS, SN 7620.
98 *para 1 Readings's remark* A:*G*, p. 218.
98-9 *C.R.'s defence of non-cooperation* YI, 6.4.21.
99 *last para* Krishnadas, *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, Ganesan, Madras, 1928.
100 *para 2* Willingdon to Reading, V, Sept. 1921, Will. Papers, IOL.
100 *para 5 G. on untouchability in the south YI*, 29.9.21.
100 *para 7 'Sedition and overthrow'* G. in *YI*, 29.9.21.
100 *l.b.o. para* Manifesto published in *YI*, 6.10.21.
101 *para 1* Krishnadas, *Seven Months*, p. 254.
102 *para 1 G. on the Swaraj flag* T:*M*, Vol. 2, p. 89.
102 *para 3* Conv. with G. recalled by C.R. in *CBB*, p. 50.
102 *last para* C.R. to G., Dec. 1921, SN 7700, RS.
103 *para 2 H*, 15.12.21.
103 *para 3* C.R. to D.G., 15.12.21, SN 23629, RS.
103 *para 5* Wire from G. to C.R., Dec. 1921, RS.
103 *para 7 'The magistrate will oblige . . .'* G., *YI*, 22.12.21.
103 *para 8 'boldly stand up' H*, 17.12.21.
103-4 C.R. to D.G., 18.12.21, SN 23619, RS.
104 *paras 3-4* C.R. to G., 21.12.21, quoted in *YI*, 12.1.22.

8. Prison

All unattributed quotations in this chapter, pp. 105-21, are from C. Rajagopalachari, *A Jail Diary*, Rochouse, Madras, 1941 (Revised edition).

105 *paras 5-6* G. in *YI*, 15.12.21.
108 *para 1 YI*, 12.1.22.
108 *para 6 'Only after Gujarat'* C.R. to G., 20.12.21 quoted in *YI*, 12.1.22.
108 *last para YI*, 12.1.22.
109 *para 2 'to face imprisonment. . .'* T:*M*, Vol. 2, p. 106.
109 C.R.'s letter to G. in *YI*, 9.2.22.
110 *paras 2-3 G.'s comments* ibid.
111 *paras 2-3* G. in *YI*, 16.2.22.
111 *para 4* Lloyd quoted in C.F. Andrews, 'Heart Beats in India,' *Asia*, March 1930, p. 198.
112 *para 4* C.R. in *YI*, 15.6.22.

9. Hero of Gaya

122 *para 1* C.R. in *YI*, 6.4.22.
122 *l.b.o. para* ibid.
122 *last para* ibid.
122-3 Govt. of Bombay to H.S., GOI, 17.4.22, File 18 of 1922, Home (Pol.), NA.
123 *para 2* ibid.
123 *paras 4-5 YI*, 30.3.22
123 *para 8* G. in *YI*, 2.3.22.
124 *para 3 C.R. ordered H*, 24.3.22.
124 *para 4 'motive power' H*, 19.5.22.
124 *para 4 'disobedience should be considered' H*, 10.4.22.
124 *para 5 C.R.'s* view in Report by Tasadduq Hussain, Intelligence Officer, File 900/III of 1922, Home (Pol.), NA.
124 *para 6* ibid.
125 *para 2 YI*, 8.6.22.
125 *para 3 YI*, 15.6.22, and *YI*, 29.6.22.
125 *para 4* Mrs. Das's suggestion *YI*, 4.5.22.
125 *l.b.o. para YI*, 25.5.22.
125 *last para YI*, 22.6.22.
126 *para 1* ibid.
126 *paras 4-5 YI*, 17.8.22.
126 *para 7 YI*, 22.6.22.
126 *l.b.o. para YI*, 27.7.22.
127 *para 1 YI*, 29.6.22.
127 *para 2 YI*, 18.5.22.
127 *paras 3-5 YI*, 24.8.22.
127 *para 7 YI*, 2.11.22
127 *l.b.o. para YI*, 15.6.22.
127 *last para YI*, 7.9.22.
128 *para 2 YI*, 15.6.22.
128 *paras 3-4 YI*, 6.7.22.
128 *para 5 YI*, 17.8.22.
128 *paras 6-7 YI*, 23.11.22.
129 *para 1 YI*, 21.9.22.
129 *para 5 YI*, 28.9.22, and *YI*, 5.10.22.
129 *para 6 YI*, 21.9.22.

129 *l.b.o. para YI*, 23.11.22.
130 *para 2 YI*, 16.11.22.
130 *para 4 Motilal Nehru 'weaned away'* S: *Hist.*, p. 416.
130 *para 6 YI*, 23.11.22.
130 *last para YI*, 16.11.22.
131 *para 1 YI*, 23.11.22.
131 *para 5 line 2 YI*, 9.11.22.
131 *para 5 lines 4-7 YI*, 25.5.22.
131 *para 6 YI*, 30.11.22.
131 *l.b.o. para* ibid.
131-2 ibid.
132 *para 2 YI*, 16.11.22.
132 *para 3 YI*, 30.11.22.
132 *para 6* M. Nehru to S. Satyamurti, 27.11.22, NMML.
132 *l.b.o. para YI*, 11.1.23.
133 *para 4 lines 2-4* ibid.
133 *para 4 last line* Rainy to GOI, 7.1.23, File 18 of 1922, Home (Pol.), NA.
133 *paras 5-6 YI*, 7.12.22, and *YI*, 21.12.22.
134 *para 3* Subhas Bose, *The Indian Struggle*, Asia, Bombay, 1964, p. 82.
134 *para 3 lines 4-5* P. C. Ghosh, *From Nagpur to Lahore*, Abhoy Ashram, Comilla.

10. Setback

135 *para 1 YI*, 18.1.23.
135 *para 3* ibid.
135 *para 4 YI*, 31.5.23.
136 *para 2* Prasad in *S*, 8.12.62.
136 *paras 5-6 C.R. on the flag YI*, 22.3,23.
137 *para 1 YI*, 21.6.23.
137 *para 4* Reading, V, to Peel, SOS, 6.12.23. File 280 of 1923, Home (Pol.), NA.
137 *para 7 YI*, 5.4.23.
137-8 *YI*, 3.5.23.
138 *para 2* ibid.

138 *para 5 YI*, 19.4.23.
138 *paras 7-8 YI*, 5.4.23.
139 *para 2 YI*, 12.7.23.
139 *para 5 YI*, 31.5.23.
139 *paras 6-8 YI*, 7.6.23.
140 *para 2 YI*, 5.7.23.
140 *para 3 YI*, 12.7.23.
140 *para 6 YI*, 19.7.23.
141 *para 4 Prasad's remark YI*, 23.8.23.
141 *para 6 YI*, 6.9.23.
141 *paras 7-9 YI*, 16.8.23.
142 *para 1* ibid.
142 *para 2 YI*, 6.9.23.
142 *para 4 YI*, 4.10.23.
142 *para 5* ibid.
142 *para 6 Bajaj's view YI*, 27.9.23.
142 *l.b.o. para YI*, 20.9.23.
142 *last para* ibid.
143 *para 1 YI*, 4.10.23.
143 *para 2 YI*, 27.9.23.
143 *para 3 YI*, 20.9.23.
143 *para 5 YI*, 27.9.23.
143 *para 7 YI*, 22.11.23.
143 *last para* ibid.
144 *para 4* Ray-C.R. conv. described by P. C. Ghosh, *R93*, p. 96.
144-5 *YI*, 22.11.23.

11. To The Wilderness

147 *para 1* Wire from C.R. to D.G., SN 8155, RS.
147 *para 2 MDD*, Vol. 4, pp. 19-20.
147 *para 4* ibid.
147 *para 7* Wire from C.R. to G., SN 8241, RS.
147 *para 6 G.'s Statement* T:*M*, Vol. 2, p. 166.
148 *paras 4-6* G. to C.R., SN 8566A, RS.
148 *para 8* G. to C.R., SN 8571, RS.
148-9 C.R. to D.G., 29.3.24, SN 8629, RS.
149 *para 3* ibid.

149 *para 4* C.R. to D.G., 12.5.24, DGP.
150 *para 5 'defeated and humbled'* T:*M*, Vol. 2, p. 190.
150 *para 7* C.R. to D.G., 29.3.24, SN 8629, RS.
150 *last para* G. to C.R., 6.9.24, *MDD*, Vol. 4, p. 175.
151 *para 2* ibid
151 *para 3 lines 1-2* T:*M*, Vol. 2, p. 172.
151 *para 3 lines 3-4* G. to C.R., 15.9.24, *MDD*, Vol. 4, p. 183.
151 *para 2* ibid.
151 *para 5 'You must lead'* C.R. to G., 24.7.24, SN 8999, RS.
151 *para 6* T:*M*, Vol. 2, p. 198.
151 *para 8* C.R. to D.G., 26.9.24, DGP.
151 *para 9 'A miracle'* C.R. to D.G., 6.10.24, DGP.
151-2 C.R. to D.G., 26.9.24, DGP.
152 *para 3* Westcott quoted by G. Ramachandran, *R93*, p. 147.
152 *para 5* C.R. to D.G., 6.10.24, DGP.
153 *para 2 'a mockery'* Wire from C.R. to G., Nov. 1924, SN 15941, RS.
153 *para 2 'a breach of understanding'* Wire from C.R. to G., Nov. 1924, SN 11725, RS.
153 *para 3* G. to C.R., 14.11.24, *MDD*, Vol. 5, p. 22.
153 *para 6 'The judgment of the Guru' YI*, 15.1.25.
153 *para 8 'self-effacing service'* G., *YI*, 27.11.24.
154 *para 3* C.R. to D.G., 15.1.25, DGP.

12. The Ashram

157 *para 5 'Knowledge of animals'* A. K. Venkatesan, *R93*, p. 236A.
158 *paras 1-3* ibid.
158 *para 6 'trees are stumps'* C.R. to D.G., 14.8.25, DGP.
159 *paras 3-4* Venkatesan, *R93*.
159 *para 5* ibid.
159 *para 6* Chinna Gounder to auth.
160 *paras 1-4 MDD*, Vol. 6, pp. 134-41.
160 *para 8* Wire, G. to C.R., 12.4.24, SN 10279, RS.
160 *para 9* C.R. to M.D., 26.3.25, DGP.
161 *para 4 Das's offer* T:*M*, Vol. 2, p. 241.

161 *para 6 G.'s tribute to Das* ibid., p. 253.
161-2 C.R. to D.G., 19.7.25, DGP.
162 *para 4* G. to C.R., *MDD*, Vol. 7, p. 125.
162 *paras 6-7* C.R. to D.G., July 1925, DGP.
163 *paras 2-4 C.R. on G.'s fasts,* letter to D.G., 2.12.25. DGP.
163 *para 6 C.R. on cricket,* letter to D.G., 14.8.25, DGP.
163-4 C.R. to D.G., 24.12.25, DGP, and *MDD*, Vol. 8, p. 28.
164 *last para YI*, 14.1.26.

13. The 'Only Possible Successor'

165 *l.b.o. para 'fireworks'* C.R. to G., Jan. 1926, SN 10684, RS.
166 *para 1 H*, 1.1.26.
166 *para 2* C.R. to M.D., 20.1.26, SN 10687, RS.
166 *paras 3-4 MDD,* Vol. 8, p. 83.
166 *para 5 'every drink shop into . . .' YI*, 8.9.27.
166 *l.b.o. para H*, 27.1.26.
167 *para 2* C.R. to M.D., 6.2.26, SN 10691, RS.
167 *para 3* G. to C.R., 18.3.26, SN 19366, RS.
168 *para 1* C.R. to G., 30.4.26, SN 11140, RS.
168 *para 2* C.R. to G., 20.5.26, SN 11147, RS.
168 *para 3* C.R. to G., 7.6.26, SN 10920, RS.
168-9 *Morris College meeting* Account based on *MDD*, Vol. 8, p. 356.
169 *para 8 'From bottom upward'* T:*M*, Vol. 2, p. 309.
169 *l.b.o. para* Wire from M. Nehru to C.R., 3.10.26, SN 11333, RS.
170 *para 1* S. S. Iyengar to C.R., 4.10.26, SN 11334, RS.
171 *para 3 'cloud effects' YI*, 5.5.27.
171 *para 4 'Oasis' YI*, 19.5.27.
171 *paras 6-8 'Mangoes' YI*, 9.6.27.
171 *l.b.o. para 'I am the jailor' YI*, 12.5.27.
172 *para 5 A pessimist tackled YI*, 26.5.27.
172 *para 8* Comment on 'Jana Gana Mana' related to auth. by Nittoor Srinivasa Rau, who was present at the conv.
173 *para 2 YI*, 30.6.27.
173 *para 3 YI*, 14.7.27.

173 *para 7 Seal's remarks YI,* 7.7.27.
173 *last para YI,* 16.6.27.
174 *para 5 G, to scientists and C.R.'s aside, YI,* 21.7.27.
174 *para 6 Mysore ruler's wish* C.R. to M.D., 10.4.27, SN 13274, RS.
175 *para 3 C.R.'s threat YI,* 8.9.27.
175 *para 5 G. on devadasi practice, YI,* 6.10.27.
176 *para 2 'only possible successor' CWMG,* Vol. 35, p. 32.
176 *paras 4-5 YI,* 22.9.27.
177 *para 3 'triumphal march' H,* 28.11.27.
177 *para 5 'Let your scales . . .'* T:*M,* Vol. 2, p. 385.
177 *para 7 'My hungry eyes'* ibid., pp. 396-7.
177 *l.b.o. para* ibid., p. 395, and *H,* 28.11.27.
178 *para 1* T:*M,* Vol. 2, p. 395.
178 *para 3 YI,* 29.3.28.
178 *paras 4-5* ibid.

14. A Demon Opposed

179 *para 1 YI,* 19.7.28.
179 *para 2 'Wears himself out'* G. to Miraben, 12.9.27, *CWMG,* Vol. 34, p. 522.
180 *para 1 YI,* 9.2.28.
180 *para 5 YI,* 1.3.28.
180 *last para* M. Desai, *The Story of Bardoli,* Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1929, p. 266.
181 *para 2* C.R. to G., 13.1.28, SN 13050, RS.
181 *para 3* G. to C.R., 28.1.28, SN 13050, RS.
181 *para 4 'say without fear'* G. to CR., early 1928, *CWMG,* Vol. 36, p. 118.
181 *para 5 'straight as an arrow' YI,* 3.5.28.
181 *para 6* C.R. to G., 23.4.28, *CWMG,* Vol. 36, p. 260.
181 *l.b.o. para YI,* 12.1.28.
182 *para 2 Navajivan,* 17.3.29.
182 *para 4* G. to C.R., 27.5.28, SN 13232, RS.
182 *paras 5-6* C.R. to G., 31.5.28, SN 13398, RS.
182 *l.b.o. para* T:*M,* Vol. 2, p. 436.
183 *para 2* C.R. to G., 26.5.28, SN 13391, RS.
183 *para 3* G. to C.R., 3.7.28, RP.

183 *para 4 YI,* 23.8.28.
183 *para 5 'patience to wait' MDD,* Vol. 7, p. 39.
183 *para 6 YI,* 23.8.28.
183 *last para line 3 CWMG,* Vol. 36, p. 272.
183 *last para lines 5-11 YI,* 24.5.28.
184 *para 1 YI,* 15.11.28.
184 *para 5 YI,* 13.6.29.
184 *para 8* G. to C.R. 21.10.28, SN 13567, RS.
184 *last para* C.R. to G., 17.11.28, SN 13725, RS.
185 *l.b.o. para* T:*M,* Vol. 2, p. 441.
185 *last para line 2* C.R. to G., 18.8.28, SN 15479, RS.
185 *last para last 2 lines YI,* 12.1.28.
186 *paras 1-2 YI,* 6.9.28.
187 *para 4* G. to C.R., 18.10.29, SN 15683, RS.
187 *para 6* Wire from C.R. to G., 18.8.29, SN 15479, RS.
187 *l.b.o. para 'unrestrained joy'* G. to C.R. 23.2.29, RP.
188 *para 1* Marjorie Sykes, *R93,* p. 75.
188 *para 3* G. to Birla, 11.12.28, *CWMG,* Vol. 38, p. 202.
188 *para 5* Resolution dated 3.1.29 written out in C.R.'s hand in his 1929 engagements diary, RP.
188 *para 8 YI,* 28.3.29.
189 *para 6* V. Balasubramanian, *R93,* p. 219.
189 *para 7* J. Nehru's foreword to *Indian Prohibition Manual,* A.I.C.C., 1931.
190-1 Story of woman based on article by C.R., *YI,* 11.7.29.
191 *paras 3-6* Postscript to 'Simplified Marriage,' short story by C.R. in AF 'Press: 1929-31,' RP.
191 *l.b.o. para* T:*M,* Vol. 2 p. 500.

15. A Declaration of War

193 *para 4 lines 6-7* T:*M,* Vol. 2, p. 490.
193 *para 4 lines 8-9 YI,* 1.8.29.
194 *para 3* S: *Hist.,* p. 600.
194 *para 5 C.R. on prohibition,* AF 'Press 1929-31,' RP.
195 *para 1 H,* 11.1.30.
195 *para 2 H,* 15.1.30.
195 *para 3 H,* 28.1.30.
195 *para 7* Sp., Dindigul, Jan. 27, AF 'Press: 1929-31,' RP.

195 *paras 8-10* ibid.
196 *para 1* ibid.
196 *para 2* T:*M*, Vol. 3, p. 6.
196 *para* 3 ibid. p. 7.
196 *para 4* ibid. p. 16.
196 *para 5 H*, 17.2.30.
196 *l.b.o. para* 22.2.30, AF 'Press: 1929-31,' RP.
197 *paras 1-3* 5.4.30, ibid.
197-8 T:*M*, Vol. 3, pp. 23-4.
198 *para 4* ibid., p. 31.
198 *para 5* A:G. p. 284.
198 *l.b.o. para* C.R. to G., 8.3.30, SN 16659, RS.
198 *last para* ibid.
199 *para 1 H*, 18.3.30.
199 *para 2 H*, 15.3.30.
199 *para 3 H*, 20.2.30.
199 *para 6 H*, 27.3.30.
200 *para 2* A:*G*, p. 287.

16. Vedaranyam

201 *para 1 lines 1-2* Cotton, Addl. C.S., GOM, to Haig, H.S., GOI, 18.3.30, File 18 of 1930, NA.
201 *para 1 lines 4-5* Cotton, Addl. C.S., GOM, to Haig, H.S., GOI, 18.2.30, File 18 of 1930, NA.
201 *para 2* Cotton, C.S., GOM, to H.S., GOI, 4.3.30, ibid.
202 *paras 2-4* Thorne to Cotton, C.S., GOM, 3.4.30 in U.S.S. File 687 of 1930, TNA.
202 *para 5* Cotton's note, ibid.
202 *para 6* ibid.
202 *l.b.o. para H*, 11.4.30.
203 *para 6* C.R. to C.R.N. and L., 16.4.30 and 14.4.30, C.R.N. Papers.
204 *para 4* U.S.S. File 687 of 1930, TNA.
204 *para 5 lines 3-4* C.R. to C.R.N. and L., 18.4.30, C.R.N. Papers.
204 *para 5 last line* AF 'Press: 1929-31,' RP.
204-5 Account of Tanjore based on article by C.R., 'The Congress Fight,' File 'AICC: 1935,' RP.

206-7 Account of train meeting based on C.R.'s article, ibid.
207 *para 5* C.R. to L., 30.4.30, C.R.N. Papers.
207 *last two paras* Confidential Report on the Civil Disobedience Movement (Madras), 1930-1, quoted in Baliga, *Tanjore District Handbook*, GOM, 1957.
208 *para 1 lines 1-2* ibid.
208 *para 1 lines 3-4* Cotton, C.S., GOM, to Emerson, H.S., GOI, 19.5.30, File 18 of 1930, NA.
208-9 Miller's account in T:*M*, Vol. 3, p. 50.
209 *paras 4-5* Quoted in Brecher, *Nehru*, p. 153.
209 *para 6* Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Viscount Halifax*, p. 268.
210 *para 3* Letter from C.R. dated 24.6.30 in File GO 2617 of 1930, TNA.
210 *para 4* Preface by C.R., *CBB*.
210-13 All q. from *CBB*.
213 *para 4 lines 3-4 H*, 11.10.30.
213 *para 4 lines 4-6* Statement by C.R. in AF 'Press: 1929-31,' RP.
213 *para 6 'Notorious agitator'* Note signed 'G.F.S.,' dated 28.10.30, in U.S.S. File 699 G of 1930, TNA.
213 *l.b.o. para 'I must very soon go back'* Note by C.R., dated 21.10.30, in *Prohibition*, No. 16, 1930.
213-14 G. to Narandas Gandhi, Oct. 16-21, 1930, *CWMG*, *Vol.* 44, p. 240.
214 *paras 4-8* G. Ramachandran, quoting his diary, in *R93*, pp. 148-9.
214 *para 8 line 4* C.R. to Rath, 10.11.31, AF 21, RP.
214 *last para* C.R. to Anderson, 25.12.30, AF 'Prohibition'. RP.
215 *para 3* T:*M*, Vol. 3, p. 60.
215 *para 4* ibid., p. 62.

17. A 'Second Door' To Swaraj

216 *para 2* T:*M*, Vol. 3, p. 62.
216 *para 3 H*, 28.1.31.
216 *para 6* Quoted by C.R. in *S*, 1.6.57.
217 *para 1 H*, 6.2.31.

217 *para 5* Churchill's sentence in A:*G.*, p. 296.
218 *para 1* Shiva Rao, *India's Freedom Movement*, Longman, 1972, p. 238.
218 *para 5* Ian Stephens, *Monsoon Morning*, Ernest Benn, London, 1966, p. 75.
219 *paras 4-5* T:*M*, Vol. 3, pp. 81-2.
219 *para 6 lines 1-2* ibid., p. 74.
219 *para 6 lines 6-8* S: *Hist.*, p. 786.
220 *para 1* T:*M*, Vol. 3, p. 80.
220 *para 3 CWMG*, Vol. 45, pp. 379-80.
220 *para 6 H*, 3.6.31.
220 *para 7* Sitaramayya's remark in *H*, 28.6.31.
220 *l.b.o. para 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact administration'* C.R. to G., 24.9.31, SN 17838, RS.
221 *para* 2 Cotton, C.S., to C.R., 9.5.31, RP.
221-2 *C.R. on Cox H*. 21.7.31
222 *para 2* C.R. to G., 24.9.31, SN 17838, RS.
222 *para 4 H*, 1.8.31.
222 *para 5* Emerson to C.S., GOM, 18.5.31, SF733 of 1931, TNA.
222 *para 6* Circular from Tahsildar in Coimbatore district, reproduced in *Swarajya* (daily), 15.9.31.
222-3 C.R. to Johnson, 21.6.31, AF 40, RP.
223 *para 1* C.R. to Mary Campbell, 28.6.31, ibid.
223 *para 3 last line* C.R. to G., 21.10.31, SN 18150, RS.
223 *para 4* C.R.'s rules dated 22.4.31 in SF 733 of 1931, TNA; G. to Emerson, 14.6.31, ibid.
223 *para 5* Earl of Birkenhead, *Halifax*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1965, p. 307.
224 *para 1 Bombay Chronicle*, 18.8.31.
224 *para 3 H*, 17.4.31.
224 *para 6 Jinnah's remark H*, 5.9.31.
224 *last two paras H*, 20.4.31.
225 *para 1* Intercepted letter from C.R. to G., 2.7.31, Secret File 748 of 1931, TNA.
225 *para 2* G. to C.R., 4.7.31, AF 29, RP.
225 *para 3 line 1* T:*M*, Vol. 3, p. 138.
225 *para 4* Munshi to C.R., 5.5.31, AF 21, RP.
225 *para 6* G. to C.R., 28.8.31, SN 17609, RS.

225 *l.b.o. para* G. to J.C. Kumarappa, 28.8.31, File 123, RS.
225 *last para H,* 6.9.31.
226 *para 1-3* Patel to C.R., 30.8.31, AF 20, RP.
227 *para 6* C.R. to Patel, 14.9.31, ibid.
227 *para 3* Boulton, Collector of Salt Revenue, to C.R., 21.10.31, AF 'Press: 1929-31,' RP.
227 *para 5* McCarrison to C.R., 11.11.31, AF 42, RP.
227 *para 6* AF 51, RP.
227 *para 7 Swarajya* (daily), 18.8.31.
227 *l.b.o. para* C.R. to Mrs. Reddi, 10.10.31, AF 21, RP.
227-8 Resolution of T.N. Provincial Conference, Madura, June 6-7, 1931, AF 63, RP.
228 *para 3* Sp. dated 20.12.31, AF 63, RP.
228 *para 5* Sp. dated 20.12.31, ibid.
228 *paras 7-9 Swarajya* (daily), 21.9.31.
229 *para 3 H,* 7.10.31.
229 *paras 5-6* 14.10.31, AF 61, RP.
229 *l.b.o. para H,* 29.8.31.
229 *last para* Circular letter to editors, 12.11.31, AF 51, RP.

18. Prison Again

230 *para 4 H,* 17.10.31; C.R. to G., 21.10.31, SN 18150, RS.
230-1 *H,* 25.8.31.
231 *para 3* H, 17.10.31.
231 *para 5 'I came . . .'* ibid.
231 *para 6* Patel to C.R., 19.11.30, AF 20, RP.
231-2 Prasad to C.R., 23.11.31, AF 20, RP.
232 *para 3* C.R. to S.B. Rath, 10.11.31, AF 21, RP.
232 *para 7* C.R. to Patel, 22.11.31, AF 20, RP.
232 *l.b.o. para* C.R. to Nehru, 3.11.31, ibid.
234 *C.R.'s statement H,* 11.1.32.
234-5 Official's letter in Tamil Nadu Archives.
235 *para 3* C.R. to D.G., 2.6.32, DGP.
235 *para* 4 ibid.
235 *para 5 G. on 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'* Letter to D.G., 29.6.32, *CWMG,* Vol. 50, p. 110.

235 *paras 6-7* C.R. to D.G., 2.6.32, DGP.
235 *l.b.o. para* G. to Narandas Gandhi, 14.8.32, *CWMG*, Vol. 50, p. 374.
236 *para 1* C.R. to D.G., 2.6.32, DGP.
236 *para 3* C.R. to G., 21.10.31, SN 18150, RS.
236 *para 4* G. to Chhaganlal Joshi, 9.7.32, *CWMG*, Vol. 50, p. 178.
236 *para 5 lines 1-2* G. to Nam., 5.7.32, *CWMG*, Vol. 50, p. 152.
236 *para 6* H, 3.8.32.
236 *paras 8-9 Free Press*, August 1932.
237 *para 1 H*, 3.9.32, *H*, 8.9.32.
237 *para 7* P: *EF*, p. viii.
237 *l.b.o. para* Wire from G. to C.R., 15.9.32, *CWMG*, Vol. 51, p. 55.
237 *last para* Foreword by C.R., P: *EF*.
238 *para 1* G. to C.R., 18.9.32, *CWMG*, Vol. 51, p. 77.
238 *para 3* P: *EF*, p. 227.
240 *para 3* P: *EF*, p. 76.
240 *para 7 Economist*, 1.10.32.
240 *para 7* Tagore quoted in P: *EF*, p. 93.
240 *l.b.o. para* A:*G*, p. 319.
241 *para 1* P: *EF*, p. 205.
241 *paras 3-5* ibid., pp. vii-viii.
241 *last para* P: *EF*, p. 190.

19. The Unyielding Gates

242 *para 1* P: *EF*, p. 87.
242 *para 5 H*, 18.11.32.
242 *last para Free Press*, 20.11.32.
243 *para 1 Free Press*, 22.11.32.
243 *l.b.o. para* Quoted in C.R., *Plighted Word*, Servants of Untouchable Society, Delhi, 1937, pp. 1-2.
244 *para 3 H*, 10.12.32; *H*, 12.12.32,
244 *para 4 H*, 5.12.32.
244 *para 5* Letter to Sir George Stanley, Governor of Madras, from the Zamorin of Calicut, 3.12.31, in U.S.S. 813 of 1933, TNA.

244 *para 6* Letters from Russell to C.S., 17.12.32 and 23.12.32, ibid.
245 *para 1 H,* 12.12.32.
245 *para 4* C.R. to D.G., 1.12.32, DGP.
245 *para 5* C.R. to D.G., 30.12.32, DGP.
245 *para 6* G.-C.R. talk, 31.1.33, *CWMG,* Vol. 53, p. 494.
245-6 ibid.
247 *para 1* G. to Nehru, 13.2.33, *CWMG,* Vol. 53, p. 309.
247 *para 2 Harijan,* 18.2.33; *lines 6-8* C. S. Shukla, *Conversations of Gandhi,* Vora, Bombay, 1949, p. 21.
247 *paras 3-4* Mody's and Joseph's comments in *HT,* 23.2.33.
247 *para 5* M.D. to C.R., 2.2.33, DGP.
247 *l.bo.. para* G. to C.R., 18.4.33, *CWMG,* Vol. 54, p. 483.
248 *para 4 Tribune,* 19.2.33.
248 *para 5 Statesman,* 24.2.33.
249 *para 3* P.M.G. to C.F.V. Williams, 4.2.32, U.S.S. 769 of 1932, TNA.
249 *para 5* C.R.N. in *R93,* p. 244.
250 *paras 1-2* C.R. to Whitney, 25.2.33, RP.
250 *para 6 lines 2-3 H,* 4.5.33.
250 *para 6 line 6* On 31.1.33, as quoted in *CWMG,* Vol. 53, p. 495.
250 *para 7* On 4.5.33, as quoted in *CWMG,* Vol. 55, p. 441.
250-1 ibid., pp. 441-2.
251 *paras 4-9 Harijan,* 13.5.33.
251-2 *Harijan,* 20.5.33.

20. Coimbatore Central Jail

253 *para 1 lines 2-3* T:*M,* Vol. 3, p. 250.
253 *para 1 lines 3-4 H,* 9.5.33.
253 *para 2* C.R. to Patel, 17.5.33 and 18.5.33, DGP.
253 *para 4 H,* 9.5.33.
254 *paras 1-3* G.-C.R. talks, JJune 1-2, 1933, *CWMG,* Vol. 55, pp. 445-8.
254 *para 4* C.R. to V.S.S. Sastri, 5.6.33 in T. R. V. Sastri Papers, NMML.

254 *para 6* C.R. to Kasturba, 3.6.33, DGP.
255 *last para* C .F. Brackenbury, Acting C.S., GOM, to Hallett, H.S. GOI, 22.8.33, Fortnightly Reports of 1933, NA.
256 C.R. to Stanley, *H,* 7.8.33.
256 *para 6* C.R. to Subbaroyan, 5.8.33, AF '1933 to 1936,' RP.
256-7 *Arrest and trial H,* 8.8.33.
257 *para 4* C.R. to Sankaran, 12.8.33, SP.
257 *paras 5-6* C.R. to L., 12.8.33, SP.
257 *last para* C.R. to D.G., 12.8.33, SP.
258 Various letters from C.R., SP.
259 *para 3* C.R. to Popley, 24.9.33; *para 5,* C.R. to Tirunarayana Iyengar, 1.11.33; C.R. to Rau, 23.11.33; and other letters from C.R., SP.
260 Various letters from C.R., SP.
261 *para 2* 14.10.33, SP.
261 *paras 3-4* C.R. to D.G., 18.1.34, DGP.

21. A Switch in Strategy

262 Johnson to C.R., 6.2.34, AF 'Prohibition: 1934-5,' RP.
262 *para 6* C.R. to D.G., 27.2.34, DGP.
262-3 C.R. to Anderson, 28.2.34, AF 'Prohibition: 1934-5,' RP.
263 *para 2* ibid.
263 *para 4* C.R. to D.G. 15.3.34, DGP.
263-4 Wire from G. to Andrews, 6.4.34, AF 'A.I.C.C. 1934,' RP.
264 *para 2* G.'s view described by a secretary, Chandrashanker Shukla, in letter, 6.4.34, to C.R., ibid.
264 *para 3* G. to K. M. Munshi, 16.4.34, *CWMG,* Vol. 57, pp. 396-7; G. to Patel, 18.4.34, ibid., p. 404.
264 *last two paras* C.R. to G., 21.4.34, AF 'A.I.C.C 1934,' RP.
265 *para 4* J. Nehru's diary entry quoted in *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru,* Vol. 6, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1974, p. 248.

265 *para 6* C.R. to M. Tricumji, 24.4.34, AF 'A.I.C.C. 1934. RP.
265 *para 7 lines 1-3* C.R. to Tricumji, 21.4.34, ibid.
265 *para 7 lines 3-4* C.R. to G., 21.4.34, ibid.
265-6 Dunichand to C.R., 4.5.34, AF 'C.P.B. 1934,' RP.
266 *para 3* G. to Munshi, *CWMG*, Vol. 57, p. 396.
266 *para 5* G. to Tricumji, *CWMG*, Vol. 58, p. 162.
266 *para 7 C.R.'s statement H*, 18.5.34
266 *para 8 'steered the ship'* Ansari to C.R., 24.7.34, AF 'C.P.B. 1934,' RP.
267 *para 1-3* C.R. to Masani, 24.4.34, AF 'A.I.C.C. 1934,' RP.
267 *para 5* 'The Red Shirts' by C.R., ibid.
267 *last para* C.R. to Ansari, 23.6.34, AF 'C.P.B. 1934,' RP.
268 *para 2* C.R. to Patel, 30.8.34, ibid.
268 *para 3* C.R. to D.G., 30.8.34, DGP.
268 *para 4* Wire from C.R. to G., undated, AF 'A.I.C.C. 1934,' RP.
268 *para 5 'crumble to pieces'* C.R. to B. Desai, 24.8.34, AF 'C.P.B. 1934.' RP.
268 *para 6* C.R. to G., 28.9.34, AF 'A.I.C.C. 1934,' RP.
268 *l.b.o. para* G. to C.R., 13.9.34, DGP.
268-9 C.R. to Monica Whately, 8.10.34, AF 'Indian Conciliation Group.' RP.
269 *para 4 H*, 29.6.34.
269 *para 6* C.R. to N. K. Srinivasaraghavan, Ashram manager, 17.6.34, AF 'Harijan Sevak Sangh 1934,' RP.
269 *last para* C.R., *Ambedkar Refuted*, Hind Kitabs, Bombay, 1946, p. 23.
270 *para 2* Iyer to C.R., 1.9.34, AF 'Harijan Sevak Sangh 1934,' RP.
270 *para 5* G. to Prasad, 18.9.34, *CWMG*, Vol. 59, p. 23.
270-1 *Bombay Chronicle*, 29.10.34.
271 *para 4* G. to Roy, 30.10.34, *CWMG*, Vol. 59, p. 268.
272 *para 1* Leaflet by Madras Sanatana Dharma Pracharaka Sabha, 23.10.34, AF 'C.P.B.-S.I. 1934,' RP.
272 *para 2* Patel to C.R., 17.11.34, ibid.
272 *para 3* 27.11.34, ibid.

272 *last para* 'Letter to an Englishman,' 23.11.34, *CWMG*, Vol. 59, p. 396.

22. A Strange Desire

273 *para 2* C.R. to Satyamurti, 12.11.34, AF 'C.P.B. S.I. 1934,' RP.
273 *para 5* C.R. to D.G., 27.2.35, DGP.
273-4 C.R. to B. Desai, 25.2.35, AF 'C.P.B. 1935,' RP.
274 *para 2 line 2* C.R. to T.R.V. Sastri, 25.1.35, ibid.
274 *para 3* Jinnah to C.R., 19.3.35, ibid.
274 *para 6* C.R. to D.G., 15.2.35, DGP.
274 *para 8* 16.11.34, AF 'C.P.B.-S.I. 1934,' RP.
274-5 *H*, 4.4.35.
275 *para 3 H*, 8.4.35.
275-6 C.R. to Srinivasaraghavan, 20.4.35, RP.
276 *paras 4-6* C.R. to Mashruwala, 19.1.35, AF 'Gandhi Seva Sangh,' RP.
276 *l.b.o. para* G. to C.R., 2.3.35, AF 'Retirement 1935,' RP.
277 *paras 1-2* G. to C.R., 9.3.35 and 24.3.35, ibid.
277 *paras 4-7* Messages from Pant and Prasad, ibid; letters from Patel, 15.3.35 and 18.3.35, ibid; Ali's remark in his letter to B. Desai, AF 'C.P.B. 1935,' RP.
277 *paras 7-8 H*, 26.4.35.
277 *l.b.o. para line 4* G. to Munshi, *CWMG*, Vol. 60, p. 421.
278 *para 2* G. to Munshi, 2.5.35, *CWMG*, Vol. 61, p. 28.
278 *paras 3-4* Q. from C.R. from AF 'Retirement' and 'A.I.C.C. 1935,' RP, and DGP.
278 *l.b.o. para* See letter from G. to Andrews, 30.6.35, *CWMG*, Vol. 61, p. 216.
278 *last para H*, 13.5.35.

23. 'Free As a Bird'

279 *para 1 H*, 13.5.35.
279 *para 3* G. to V.P., 13.9.35, *CWMG*, Vol. 61, p. 411.
279 *para 4* G. to C.R. 30.9.35, RP.

279-80 G. to C.R., 26.9.35, RP, and 28.9.35, DGP.
280 *para 1* C.R. to G., 8.10.35, AF 'A.I.C.C. 1935,' RP.
280 *l.b.o. para H*, 25.10.35.
280-1 *H*, 18.10.35.
281 *para 4 H*, 29.2.36.
281 *l.b.o. para* Brackenbury, C. S., to H.S., GOI, 3.3.36, Fortnightly Reports of 1936, NA.
282 *paras 3-4 H*, 19.6.36 and 30.4.36.
282 *para 7* G. to Nehru, 7.7.36, *CWMG*, Vol. 63, pp. 127-8.
282 *l.b.o. para H*, 7.7.36.
283 *para 2 H*, 10.5.36.
283 *para 4* C.R. to M.D., quoted in M.D. to D.G., 6.10.36, DGP.
283 *para 6* Nittoor Srinivasa Rau, who saw a postcard from C.R. with the remark quoted, in interview with auth.
284 *para 1* Dr. Rajan's sp. in Salem, reported in *Silver Jubilee Souvenir*. Salem Dist. Urb. Bank, 1934, p. 115.
284 *para 5 H*, 12.8.36.
284-5 Statements of Satyamurti, Kripalani, Dunichand, Mudaliar and C.R. Srinivasan in *H*, Aug. 1936.
285 *para 4 H*, 14.8.36.
285-6 C.R. to B. Desai, 22.8.36, Desai Papers, NMML.
286 *paras 2-4 H*, 24.8.36.
286 *para 6* C.R. to M.D., Oct. 1936, DGP.
286 *paras 7-8* C.R., *Upanishads, HT*, Delhi, 1937, p. (i) and p. 8.
286 *last para* C.R. to M.D., Oct. 1936, DGP.
287 *paras 5-6* G. to C.R., 21.11.36, RP.
287 *last para H*, 27.11.36.
288 *paras 2-5 H*, 30.11.36.

24. The Return

290 *para 3 H*, 15.12.36.
290 *para 5 H*, 16.12.36.
290 *para 7 lines 3-4* Related to auth. by P. Ramamurti, who was in the car in which the conv. took place.
290 *para 9 H*, 17.1.37.
291 *para 2* C.R. to D.G., 21.1.37, DGP.

291 *para 4 H*, 25.1.37.
291 *para 5 lines 2-3* Related to auth. by P. Ramamurthi, who was present at conv.
291 *para 5 lines 3-4* T:*M*, Vol. 4, p. 192.
291 *last para* Erskine to George V, 14.4.37, Erskine Papers, IOL.
292 *paras 1-2 H*, 2.3.37.
292-3 Account of legislature party meeting based on *H*. 11.3.37.
293 *para 5* Nehru's statement, 27.12.36, in TC: *Hist.* p. 217.
293 *last two paras* Erskine to Linlithgow, V, 1.5.37 and 3.2.37, Erskine Papers, IOL.
294 *para 1* Erskine to Linlithgow, V, 9.3.37, ibid.
294 *para 2* Linlithgow to Erskine, 7.3.37, ibid.
294 *para 4* T:*M*, Vol. 4, p. 189.
295 Viceroy's statement in TC: *Hist.*, p. 228.
295 *last para* Quoted in letter from M.D. to Birla, 16.7.37, in G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, Vakils, Feller and Simons, Bombay, 1968, p. 213.

V211.2197 M78
N74

INDEX

Ajmal Khan, Hakim, 83, 107, 124, 130
Alarmelu Mangammal, see Manga
Ali, Asaf, 277, 329
Ali, Mahomed, 79, 80, 83, 94, 99, 100-1, 141-4, 151-2, 169
Ali, Shaukat, 79, 80, 84, 88, 94, 99-101, 161, 242-3
Allahabad accord, 242-3
Ambedkar. B. R., 227, 230, 239, 241, 246
Anderson, Major, 114-5, 121
Anderson, Rev. Herbert, 188, 214, 259, 260, 262, 322, 327
Andrews, C. F., 145, 250-1, 263, 313, 327, 329
Aney, M. S., 255, 266
Angri, 305
Ansari, Dr. M. A., 92, 124, 130, 139-40, 188, 217, 224, 266-7, 278, 283, 328
Appadurai, 117-8
Arunachalam, 8
Arundale, 48
Asari, 29
Ashe, Geoffrey, 308-13, 321, 323, 325
Asquith, 147
Ataturk, Kemal, 99. 129
Avvaiyar, 28, 182
Ayling, Mr. Justice, 64
Azad, Abul Kalam, 45, 94, 135, 140-1. 243

Babu Rao, 8
Bajaj, Jamnalal, 136-7, 142, 146, 154, 163, 173, 181, 205
Balasubramania Iyer, E.S., 309
Balasubramanian, V., 320
Baliga, B. S., 322
Banker, Shankerlal, 138, 146, 251
Bapat, S. V., 312
Bardoli movements. 101-2, 108-11, 180, 208-9, 223-4
Bengal partition, 16-17, 31
Besant, Annie, 43-4, 47-51, 54, 90, 128, 152-3, 185, 191, 258; death, 258
Bharati, Subramania, 24, 69, 182
Bhasker, C. S., 306-7 ,
Bhave, Shivaji, 149
Bhave, Vinoba, 140, 149
Biligiri Iyengar, 11
Birkenhead, Earl of, 323
Birkenhead, Lord, Secretary of State, 161
Birla, G. D., 188, 320, 331
Bobbili, Raja of, 291
Bombay Chronicle, 323, 328
Bose, Khudiram, 19
Bose, Subhas, 59, 93, 128, 134, 152, 185, 193-4, 283, 315
Boulton, 324
Brackenbury, C. F., 327, 330
Brahmin/Non-Brahmin question, 86, 131, 140, 166, 176, 271, 274, 280
Brecher, Michael, 308, 312, 322
Buckley, L. F., 27
Butler, Sir Harcourt, 96, 312

Calicut, Zamorin of, 244-5, 325
Campbell, Mary, 223, 259, 323
Campbell-Johnson, Alan, 322
Chagan, 159
Chakravarti Iyengar, or Venkatarya, father of C.R., 2-7, 11, 14-16, 20, 24, 28, 38, 42, 58, 81, 89, 100; death, 101
Chamberlain, Austen, Secretary of State, 48
Chand, Tara, 307, 311, 331
Chats Behind Bars, 210-2
Chatterji, Ramanand, 187
Chauri Chaura, 110, 112
Chellamma, 26, 29, 306
Chelmsford, Lord, Viceroy, 50, 67, 70, 77, 89, 98, 310
Cheshire, 168-9
Chettiar, Krishna, 20
Chettiars, Nattukottai, 175-6
Chetty, Adinarayana, 20, 54
Chetty, Sir Thyagaraja, 108
Chinnan, 159
Chirol, Sir Valentine, 50, 91
Christian missions and untouchability, 249-50, 259, 275-6
Churchill, Winston, 217, 219, 323
Civil Disobedience by Henry Thoreau, 29
Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee, 124-6, 130
Cleveland, 77, 310
Clwyd, Lord, 189
Communal Award, 237, 266, 273-4
Complete Independence and Dominion Status, 128, 185-7
Congress sessions: Calcutta (1906), 17; Surat (1907), 18; Madras (1908), 18; Lucknow (1916), 46; Calcutta (1917), 49; Bombay (1918), 53; Delhi (1918), 64; Amritsar (1919), 79-80; Calcutta (1920), 90-1; Nagpur (1920), 91-2; Ahmedabad (1921), 107-8; Gaya (1922), 132-4; Delhi (1923), 142-3; Cocanada (1923), 144; Belgaum (1924), 153; Cawnpore (1925), 165; Madras (1927), 180; Calcutta (1928), 185-6; Lahore (1929), 193-4; Karachi (1931), 220; Bombay (1934), 270-1; Lucknow (1936), 281-2; Faizpur (1936), 289-90, 293
Congress split, 18-19, 36
Connaught, Duke of, 93
Cook, John, 8-10
Cotterell, E. B., 190
Cotton, C. W. E., 202, 221-2, 321, 322, 323
Cousins, Margaret, 259
Cox, A. R., 221
Curzon, Lord, Viceroy, 16-17, 52

Das, Chitta Ranjan, 53, 78, 81, 90, 94, 102-7, 124, 130-5, 140-50, 152-3; death, 161; 308
Das, Mrs. C. R., 125, 314
Das, Jatin, 187
Dass, Govardhan, 75-6
Daulatram, Jairamdas, 205-6
Davis, 60, 309
Desai, Bhulabhai, 273, 280, 285-6, 328-9
Desai, Mahadev, 68-9, 133, 142-3, 147, 160, 167, 169, 171-2, 178, 247, 253, 255, 283, 286, 317-9, 326, 330-1
Deshpande, Ganghadhar Rao, 173
Dharasana, 208-9
Doke, Rev. J. J., 31
Dominion Status, see Complete Independence
Doraiswami, 22
Doyle, Colonel, 240
Dunichand, Lala, 284, 328
Dunnett, 321
Dyer, General Reginald, 75, 80, 83-4

Economist, 240, 325
Edward VIII, 102, 108, 281, 292
Elections: *1920*, 91, 95, *1923*, 144; *1926*, 169-70; *1934*, 272; *1935*, 274-5; *1937*, 290
Emerson, H. W., 222-3, 322, 323
Erskine, Lord, Governor of Madras, 292-5, 331

Fanu, Le, 304
Felton, Monica, 305
Flag satyagraha, 136-7
Foulkes, Robert, 229
Free Press, 325

Gandhi, Devadas, 52, 69, 81, 103, 108, 110, 122, 135, 147-8, 151-2, 158, 161-3, 171-2, 176-7, 233-5, 254-5, 257-8, 261, 263, 268, 274, 279, 291, 307, 311-8, 324-31
Gandhi, Gopalkrishna, 305
Gandhi, Harilal, 104, 283
Gandhi-Irwin Pact, 217-20, 232-3, 264
Gandhi, Maganlal, 146, 181
Gandhi, Manilal, 208
Gandhi, M. K. or Mahatma, *passim*. Campaigns for Indians in South Africa, 31; returns to India, 43; tries to recruit soldiers for the Raj, 50; announces defiance of Rowlatt bills, 66; arrives in Madras as C.R.'s guest, 69; gets inspiration for *hartal*, 70; externed from Punjab, 75; conceives non-cooperation, 79; launches non-cooperation, 84; meets Chakravarti Iyengar, 84; wins over Congress, 90-2; takes to reduced garment, 99; announces Bardoli offensive, 101-2; hails arrests of followers, 105; calls off campaign, 110; arrested, 120; released, 147; fasts, 151-2, suspends non-cooperation, 152; presides at Belgaum Congress session, 153; calls C.R. 'only possible successor,' 176; thinks of salt march, 196-8; breaks salt law, 200; arrested, 208; released, 215; confers with Viceroy, 217-8; signs Gandhi-Irwin Pact, 217-8; proceeds to London for Round Table Conference, 225; influences British public, 231; arrested, 233; opposes separation of 'untouchables' from caste Hindus with fast, 237; succeeds in altering Communal Award and affecting Hindu society, breaks fast, 240; fasts again, 250-2; released, 253; suspends mass disobedience, 253; courts arrest, 255; falls ill, released, 255; tours South India, 262; suspends disobedience, 263; retires from Congress, 270; helps Congress unity, 281; counsels office-acceptance, 293-5; 306-31
Gandhi, Narandas, 322, 325
Gandhi, Ramdas, 255
Garhwalis, 206, 219
George V, 31, 64, 228, 281, 331
Ghose, Arabindo, 17, 19
Ghosh, P. C., 134, 315-6
Ghouse, 27, 38-9, 68, 91, 95
Ghouse, Mahomed, 106
Giri, V. V., 291
Godavari, 'Salem', 20
Gokhale, Gopal Krishna, 31, 43, 306
Gounder, Chinna, 159, 317
Gounder, Ratnasabhapati, 146, 154-6, 160
Government of India Act of 1919, 85
Government of India Act of 1935, 248
Graham, R. A., 309
Grant, Nugent, 34
Gupta, Surendra, 149
Guru-ka-Bagh, 129
Guruvayur, 228, 244-5

Haider, 3, 6
Haig, 265, 321
Hallett, 327
Hamilton. Lord, Secretary of State, 12
Hanumanthiah, 8
Hardinge, Lord, Viceroy, 31, 96, 312
Hardy, Thomas, 235
Harijan. 247, 326
Harrison, Agatha, 278
Hassan, Yakub, 97
Hind Swaraj, 72

Hindu, 12, 47, 51-2, 57, 76, 85, 95, 140, 173, 195, 278-9, 282, 284, 289-91, 305-31
Hindu-Muslim question and riots, 96-7, 129, 137-8, 160-1
Hindustan Review, 17, 305
Hindustan Times, 257, 304
Hitler, Adolf, 291
Home Rule, 43, 46-8
Hood, Thomas, 172
Hume, A. O., 16
Hunter, Lord, 77, 82
Hunter, Commission, 77, 80, 82-3
Hussain, Tasadduq, 314
Hydari, Akbar, 218

Independent, 108
Indian Home Rule by M. K. Gandhi, 30
Irschick, E. F., 308
Irwin, Lord, Viceroy, 168, 179, 183, 191-2, 194, 197-8, 200, 208-9, 214-8, 223-4, 230
Irwin-Gandhi Pact, see Gandhi
Ismail, Sir Mirza, 170

Jail Diary, 113 onwards
Jail Experiences by M. K. Gandhi, 31
Jallianwala, see Punjab
Janakiammal, 42, 68, 91
Japan-Russia war, see Russia
Jayakar, M. R., 165, 209, 217-8
Jinnah, M. A., 47, 92, 108, 224-5, 242, 266, 273-4, 329
Johnson, W. E. or 'Pussyfoot', 189, 222, 262, 323, 327
Joseph, George, 50, 143
Joseph, Pothan, 247, 326
Joshi, Chhaganlal, 325
Joshi, Laxman Shastri, 254
Journal of Tamil Scientific Terms, 46
Justice, 167
Justice Party, 86, 108, 166-7, 271, 274-5, 277, 291

Kaiser, 122
Kalki, 305-7
Kamaraj, K., 58, 309
Kasturba, 31, 39, 45, 140, 171-7, 233 249, 254-5, 283, 326
Kasturiranga Iyengar, S., 52-4, 66-9, 79, 85-6, 95-6, 124, 130
Kelappan, 244
Kelkar, N. C., 100, 165
Kempis Thomas à, 235
Kesari, 18
Khadi, 69, 70, 73, 95, 98-101, 155-7 160-1, 168-74, 177-8, 180-1, 183, 186, 226-7
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 206, 232-3, 267, 287
Khan Sahib, Dr., 267, 280
Khilafat movement, 78, 80, 83-5, 87, 98-9, 129-30
Kitchlew, Dr. Saifuddin, 74-5. 236
Knapp, 94, 312
Kodanda Rao, P., 247
Kripalani, J. B., 284
Krishnadas, 313
Krishna Iyer, R. V., 18, 20-1, 29, 41, 305-7
Krishnamachari, V. T., 20
Krishnamurti, Kalki, 189
Krishnamurti, S., 304
Krishnaswami, son of C.R., 16, 27-8, 33, 40-2, 54, 68, 81, 89, 93, 101, 108, 148, 279, 306-7
Kumar, 305
Kumarappa, J. C., 324
Kurup, P. Narayana, 291

Lajpat Rai, Lala, 90-1, 94, 101-2, 109, 112, 169-70; death, 184
Lakshmi, daughter of C.R., 19 ,28, 41-2, 68, 73, 81, 103, 147, 156, 159, 171, 176-8, 203, 207, 233-4, 254-5, 257, 261, 279, 281, 305, 321-2, 327
Lakshminarayana Rao, T. V., 307
Lakshmipathy, Rukmini, 207
Legh, E. W., 54, 56, 59, 309
Linlithgow, Lord, Viceroy, 168, 294-5, 331

Liquor, 95, 165-6, 186, 222
Lloyd, Lord, Governor of Bombay, 111, 313
Lloyd George, David, 48, 78, 83, 311
Lovett, Sir Verney, 304
Lucknow Scheme, 46-7, 49, 53
Lytton, Lord, Viceroy, 1, 4

MacDonald, Ramsay, 192, 200, 215, 230, 239, 240
Mackintosh, A. B., 10
Maddock, Colonel, 146-7
Mahratta, 291
Mail, 58, 95, 258, 309
Malaviya, Madan Mohan, 53, 108, 169, 173, 191, 209, 239, 242-3, 246, 266, 273-4
Manchester Guardian, 140
Manga, or Alarmelu Mangammal, wife of C.R., 13-44, 19, 22, 25-9, 37-42, 54, 66, 112-3
Marjoribanks, 312
Marris, 310
Masani, M. R., 267, 271, 328
Mashruwala, Kishorilal, 276, 329
Mathias, Dr., 37, 59
McCarrison, Colonel R., 227, 324
Mehta, Pherozeshah, 17-18, 43
Menon, Narayana, 235
Miller, Webb, 208, 322
Minto, Lord, Viceroy, 17
Minto-Morley Reforms, 17-19
Miraben, 319
Modern Review, 31, 187
Mody, H. P., 247, 326
Mohammed Sahib, Jamal, 84
Montagu, Edwin, Secretary of State, 48-50, 52, 77, 310
Montford Report, 52-3, 64, 86
Moonje, 165
Moore, 71-2
Moplahs, 96-7, 116
Morley, Lord, Secretary of State, 17, 19
Mudaliar, Dr. Annasami, 39
Mudaliar, Kalyanasundara, 86, 96, 284
Mudaliar, Muthuranga, 289
Mudaliar, Ramaswami, 274-5
Mudaliar, Sadagopa, 20
Munro, Sir Thomas, 1-2
Munshi, K. M., 225, 266, 278, 323, 327-9
Murtuza Sahib, Syed, 272
Mysore, Maharaja of, 174

Nagiah, 117
Naicker, E. V. Ramaswami, 96, 103, 110, 144, 167
Naidu, Ramachandra, 205
Naidu, Sarojini, 50, 67, 69, 141, 165, 208
Naidu, Varadarajulu, 61-2, 64, 96, 167
Nair, Govindan, 206
Nair, Krishnan, 62
Nair, Madhavan, 258
Namagiri, daughter of C.R., 19, 26, 28, 39-40, 43, 45, 64, 68, 70, 81, 94, 103, 226, 236,, 306-10, 312, 325
Namagiri, B. V., 24
Nanjappa, Dr., 39
Naoroji, Dadabhoy, 16-17
Napoleon, 88, 122
Narasimha Iyengar, K., 35, 307
Narasimha Iyer, B. V., 20, 29, 35-6, 38, 48, 50, 56
Narasimhachar, father of Venkatarya, 3
Narasimhachar, brother of C.R., 4; death, 101; 103
Narasimhan, son of C.R., 19, 27, 42, 58, 68, 81, 89, 147, 156, 171, 194, 203, 235, 306-7, 309, 312, 321, 326
Narasimhan, V. K., 311
Narayan, Jayaprakash, 267, 271
Narayana Iyer, Dr., 37
Narayana Iyer, R., 23
Narayanan, N., 156
Nargunam, S. V., 62-4
Natesan, G. A., 12
Navajivan, 182, 184, 205, 319
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 45, 59, 80, 94,

102, 128, 135, 140, 180, 185, 189, 193. 196, 198, 205, 220, 225, 232-3, 246-7, 265, 270, 279-82, 285, 287-8, 293, 295, 308, 320, 324, 326, 327, 330-1
Nehru, Kamala, 279, 281
Nehru, Motilal, 78, 80, 90-4, 102, 105, 112, 124, 130-5, 141-2, 150-3, 165, 169-70, 185, 191, 216; death, 217; 315, 318
No-changers and Pro-changers, 126-34, 141, 143, 150-3
Non-cooperation, 79-100, 128

O'Donnell, 312
O'Dwyer, Sir Michael, Governor of Punjab, 47, 74-6, 80, 83
Office-acceptance, 279-95

Pant, Govind Ballabh, 277, 329
Pantulu Iyer, 205
Patel, Vallabhbhai, 45, 59, 67, 94, 131-43, 153, 163, 180-8, 193-4, 209, 220, 226, 231-6, 253, 265-8, 277-90, 324, 326-8
Patel, Vithalbhai, 100, 124, 130-3, 137, 165, 209
Paul, A. A., 229
Paul, K. T., 27, 58
Peel, Secretary of State, 137, 315
Pentland, Lord, Governor of Madras, 36, 47-8, 54, 308
Periyan, 275
Pethick-Lawrence, 168
Pillai, Chidambaram, 21
Pillai, Ponnuswamy, 206
Pillai, Ramalingam, 203
Pillai, Vedaratnam, 201, 207
Ponniah, 284
Popley, Rev., 259, 327
Prasad, Braj Kishore, 132
Prasad, Rajendra, 45, 59, 81, 94, 131-42, 163, 167, 173, 188, 231-2, 242-4, 255, 261-70, 273, 277-85, 324, 328-9
Pro-changers, see No-changers
Prohibition, 189
Punjab happenings, 74-8, 82-3
Pyarelal, 242, 306, 325

Raghavachari, C., 258
Raghaviah, 160
Rainy, 133, 315
Raja, M. C., 239
Rajagopalachari, Chakravarti, Rajaji or C.R., *passim*.
(1)*Personal history and career*: birth, 4; education, 6-14; marriage, 13-14; starts legal practice, 15-16; joins Salem municipal council, 27; hears of Gandhi, 29-30; moved by G., 31; prepares paper on G., 44-5; becomes a widower, 40; chairman of municipality, 54-60, 67; opposes Rowlatt bills, 65; leaves Salem for Madras, 66-8; invites G. to the south, 67; hosts G., 69-70; enlists with G., 72-3; changes to *khadi*, 73; supports Hindustani, 82, 85; leads non-cooperation in the south, 85-6, 91, 95-6; named Gen. Sec. of Congress, 92; re-elected, 108; offers arrest, 102-4; released, 121; calls on G. in prison, 122; discloses G.'s prison conditions, 123; edits *Young India*, 123; defends G.'s programme, 125; tours the country, 126; leads Gandhian forces, 131; wins at Gaya, 132-4; calls for struggle around flag, 136; expelled from masonic lodge, 139; withdraws, 141-2; calls on the prisoner G. in hospital, 147; proposes link between spinning and Congress membership, 149; asks G. to assume Congress presidentship, 151; decides to move to a village, 153-4; opens Ashram, 154; breaks letter of pledge and goes to court, 163-4; spends seven months with G. in the south and Ceylon, 170-8; is depressed, 182-3; in brighter

mood, 187; takes on the Prohibition League of India, 188; advocates disobedience, 195-6; interprets G.'s salt proposal, 196-7; draws up disobedience pledge, 199; meets the marching G., 199; decides on southern salt march, 198-9; commences march, 203; breaks law, 206; arrested, 206; released, 206; rearrested, 213; learns Hindi, 214; released, 215; assists G. in talks with Irwin, 217-8; courts arrest, 234; learns Sanskrit, 235; becomes acting Congress Recorder, 236; relinquishes post, 244; opposes fast by G., 237-8; has a part in saving G.'s life, 238-41; assists temple-entry effort at Guruvayur, 244; persuades G. to give up plan of fasting, 244; suggests legislation against obstacles facing 'untouchables', 245-8; opposes fast by G., 250-1; welcomes G.'s suspension of disobedience, 253; discusses switch in strategy with G., 254; courts arrest, 255-7; released, 261; backs suspension of disobedience, 264; proposes entry of legislatures by Congress, 264; guides Congress parliamentary board, 266; opposes G.'s withdrawal from Congress, 268; acquiesces, 269 conducts elections, 271-2; attacked by orthodoxy, 272; promotes united Assembly front against the Raj, 273-4; withdraws, 276-8 returns, 280; proposes office-acceptance, 279; retires once more, 283; returns, 290; leads Congress to victory in the south, 291; opens talks with Governor, 293; sent for by Erskine, 295

(2) *Some subjects concerning C.R.*: C.R. and the Congress presidentship, 231-2, 270, 279, 286; differences with G., 182, 214, 268, 271-2; as editor, 46, 123, 125-31, 189, 225; C.R. and elections, 272, 274-5, 291; C.R. and freemasonry, 27, 61, 139; C.R. and *khadi*, 168-70, 173-8, 181, 226-7, 258, 279; as lawyer, 15-16, 19-20, 33-6, 61-9; C.R. and the liquor problem, 56, 67, 157-8, 165-6, 188-90, 194-5, 204, 221-3, 227-9, 260, 275; personality traits, 21-3, 32-3, 218, 284; prison terms, 105-21, 210-3, 213-5, 235-6, 257-61; C.R. and untouchability, 23-4, 56-8, 156, 163-7, 195, 227-8, 243, 260-3, 269-70, 275, 287; withdrawals from politics, 141-2, 276-8, 283-4; as writer, 46, 113-4, 181-4, 188, 258, 279, 285

Rajgopalan, K., 50, 96
Rajagopalan, S., 291
Rajah, D. M. Durai, 61
Rajan, Dr. T. S. S., 30, 108, 203, 207, 255, 260, 284-5
Rajguru, 219
Ramachandran, G., 214, 317
Ramamurti, P., 330-1
Raman, A. V., 57, 59, 68
Raman, V. P., 307
Ramanathan, S., 90, 96, 144
Rama Rao, Navaratna, 7-9, 16, 30, 32, 172, 305-6
Rama Rau, B., 218
Ramaswami Iyer, C.R. 288
Ramaswami, Manga's brother, 22, 26
Ramaswami, son of C.R., 16, 41-2, 68, 89, 93, 148, 286
Ranga Iyer, 246, 270, 328
Rangamma, wife of Narasimhachar, 3
Ranganatha Rao, 8
Rangaswami Iyengar, A., 85-6, 91, 95, 132
Rath, S. B., 214, 322, 324
Ray, Dr. P. C., 144, 184, 316
Reading, Lord, Viceroy, 97, 109,

137, 168, 313, 315
Reddi, Sir K. V., 294
Reddi, Muthulakshmi, 324
Richards, F. J., 304
Round Table Conference, 220, 224-5, 230-1
Rowlatt, Sir Sydney, 64
Rowlatt legislation, 64-7, 69-71, 74
Roy, Dr. B. C., 271, 328
Ramanuja, 2
Russell, 244, 326
Russia-Japan war, 16-17

Sadasiva Iyer, Mr. Justice, 64
Sadasivam, T., 94
Sahajananda, Swami, 57
Salt satyagraha, 198-200, 208-10
Samachar, 22, 40, 305-8
Sampangi Iyengar, Tirumalai, 13, 57
Sankara, 2
Sankaran, P., 258, 327
Santhanam, K., 90, 96, 156, 207, 312
Sapru, Sir T. B., 209, 211, 217-8, 238-9
Sastri, K. S. Ramaswami, 307
Sastri, Krishna, 23
Sastri, Subramania, 104
Sastri, T. R. Venkatarama, 289, 326, 329
Sastri, V. S. Srinivasa, 19, 162, 171, 211, 254, 294, 326
Saunders, 186-7, 219
Satyamurti, S., 51, 85-6, 91, 95, 132-3, 165-6, 197, 234, 273, 281, 284-92, 315, 329
Satyapal, Dr., 74-5
Savarkar, Vinayak D., 32
Seal, Sir Brajendranath, 173
Seshu Iyer, K., 20, 23
Shafiuk-ur-Rahman, 116
Sherwood, Miss, 75
Shiva Rao, B., 218, 308, 323
Sholapur, 208, 219
Shraddhananda, Swami, 74
Shukla, C. S., 326-7
Simon, Sir John, 179
Simon Commission, 179-80, 182
Sinclair, Upton, 235
Singaramma, mother of C.R., 4, 13, 112-3
Singh, Bhagat, 219
Singh, Hira, 116
Singh, Nidhan, 114, 116
Singh, Ram, 116
Singh, Sardul, 280
Sitaramayya, Pattabhi, 220, 308, 311, 315, 320, 323
Sivaswami Iyer, P. S., 56
Skeen Committee, 165
Smuts, Jan, 268
Socialist Group, 266-7, 277, 280-1
Sobhani, Umar, 90
Spinning franchise, 149-50, 153, 161
Srinivasa, father of Rangamma, 3
Srinivasa, brother of C.R. 4, 68, 103
Srinivasa Iyengar, K., 64
Srinivasa Iyengar, S., 85-6, 95, 132-3, 166, 169-71, 194, 197, 285, 318
Srinivasa Iyengar, Tantoni, 20
Srinivasan, C.R., 285
Srinivasan, K., 173, 289
Srinivasaraghavan, N. K., 261, 328-9
Srinivasa Rau, Nittoor, 318
Stanley, Sir George, 213, 236, 245, 249, 256, 322, 325, 327
Statesman, 218, 248, 326
Subba Rao, 115
Stephens, Ian, 218, 323
Subba Rao, K. V., 258
Subbha Rau, Khasa, 259, 307, 327
Subbalakshmi, Sister, 11
Subbaroya Iyer, M. D. 20
Subbaroyan, Dr. P., 170, 245-6, 249, 256, 269, 289, 292, 327
Subramaniam, M. V., 256
Sukhdev, 219
Sundaram, R., 307
Sundaram, V. A., 72
Sundararajan, K. N., 307
Swadesamitran, 85, 95-6., 285
Swaminadhan, Dr. S., 33

Swaraj Party, 135, 139-44, 150-3, 161-2, 165-6. 169-70
Swarajya, 148, 315, 322
Swarajya (daily), 323-4
Sweeting. P. P., 56
Sykes, Marjorie, 320

Tagore, Rabindranath, 72, 77, 172, 325
Tahmankar, 305, 312
Tait, John Guthrie, 8-9, 11-12, 47, 87, 311
Tambe, 165
Temple Entry, 243-8, 269-70, 287
Tendulkar, D. G., 307-31
Thorean, Henry, 29
Thorne, J. A., 202-8, 321
Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, the Lokamanya, 12, 17-19, 36, 43-4, 46-8, 50-4, 65, 74, 80; death, 88-9; 93, 168, 312
Times of India, 258
Tipu, 1, 6, 155
Tirunarayana Iyengar, 327
Travancore, Maharaja of, 283, 288
Trial and Death of Socrates, 10
Tribune, 326
Tricumji, Mathuradas, 146, 328
Turkey, Sultan of, or the Khalifa, 78, 99, 129

Uncle Tom's Cabin, 145
Unto This Last by John Ruskin, 72
Untouchability, 100, 282

Vaidyanatha Iyer, A., 195, 229
Vaikom, 160
Va. Ra., 72
Varadachari, 94, 103, 236
Varadachari, N. S., 90, 96
Varadarajulu Naidu Sedition Case, 61-4
Vasudevayya, M. G., 55
Vedamurthy, K., 306-7, 309
Vedantachar, 34-5
Vedaranyam march, 201-8
Veeran, 158
Venkatachar, P. T., 307
Venkataraman, K. S., 52-3, 66, 308, 310
Venkata Rao, Kala, 289
Venkatasubba Iyer, K. G., 20, 24-6, 37-8, 46
Venkatarya, see Chakravarti
Venkatesa Iyengar, Masti, 306
Venkatesan, A. K., 317
Victoria, Queen, 1, 10, 12
Vijiaraghavachar, T., 20-1, 39, 41, 305
Vijiaraghavachariar, C., 16, 18, 20, 23, 33-5, 69, 91, 242, 281
Vijiaraghavachariar, S., 306-7
Vimochanam, 189
Visvesvaraya, Sir M., 11, 171
Vivekananda, Swami, 11

Wadala, 209
Wadia, B. P., 48
War, First World, 36, 43, 49-51, 64
War of Independence 1857, 32
Wedderburn, 16
Wenlock, Governor of Madras, 12, 305
Westcott, Bishop Foss, 152, 317
Whately, Monica, 328
Whitney, Rev. J. C., 250, 326
Wilkinson, Ellen, 240
Williams, C. F. V., 326
Willingdon, Lord, Governor of Madras and Viceroy, 77, 100 168, 221, 223-5, 232-3, 246, 254, 310, 313
Wilson, President Woodrow, 49
Wiziya, 187
Wodeyar, Krishnaraja, see Mysore

Yagyanarayana Iyer, 57
Yarn franchise, see Spinning franchise
Yeravda Pact, 237-41
Young India, 82, 98, 108, 110, 123, 125-6, 131, 136, 139-41, 144, 149, 159, 161, 180-2, 184, 190-1, 205, 225-6, 310-20
Zamorin, see Calicut
Zetland, Lord, Secretary of State, 294

