

440,000 crack troops, is engaged in blockading the Eighth Route Army in the north and northwest; General Tang En-po with 500,000 crack troops is occupied in blockading the present areas of the New Fourth Army in Central and Eastern China. Thus China continues divided, though civil war no longer rages, and a large part—the most efficient part—of China's armies is not used against the common enemy. And the most decisive reason for this is the "red scare" in Washington.

The Chinese Communists themselves are doing everything possible to dissolve the old barriers of distrust and suspicion upon which the "Antikomintern" Axis Fifth Column builds its work.

I have dealt at length with the position of the Communists in China, because this is particularly the point of vacuum in the understanding of that country by most Americans. So long as this vacuum is occupied by the prejudices and misinformation assiduously spread by the Axis agents, just that long will our understanding of China and her role in this war be incomplete and our attitude and policies toward China be distorted.

China, like the Soviet Union, furnishes an acid test of our ability to survive, to win victory out of this war.

## CHAPTER XVI

### IS INDIA A MEMBER OF THE UNITED NATIONS?

A POPULATION of more than three hundred million persons lives in the territory we know as India. The gov-

ernment of India is a signatory of the Declaration of the United Nations. This would seem to indicate that India is recognized as a nation. Yet India is furnishing the United Nations today with one of its biggest headaches over exactly that question: "Is India a nation?"

It is not the purpose of this chapter to deal with the question of India "in general," but only with the strictly limited problem of how India can be brought to contribute the maximum to victory for the United Nations. With the Japanese armed forces in occupation of Eastern Asia up to the borders of India, and with the Germans driving into the Caucasus on the other side, this question would seem to be sufficiently acute. India is one of the decisive points of the worldwide battle against the Axis.

Our American newspapers have smothered us with dissertations on all, or almost all, aspects of the India problem—except this most vital one of how to rouse India to help us win this war. They have given us the most involved and elaborate explanations of how India is a nation and at the same time is not a nation, and all the multitude of reasons why this is so. All the explanations only add up to more confusion—and nothing is quite so dangerous to our cause in this war as confusion.

The present government of India is the creature of London. It declared India in the war, in 1939, with no pretense of consulting the people of India about the matter. The popular mass organizations in India, which are agreed upon the demand for independence even when disagreeing on other things, resented this and declared their neutrality in the war. After the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, this neutrality began to shift steadily to a pronounced anti-Axis stand and a recognition of the national liberation character of the war on the anti-Axis side. This trend of

popular thinking was led in the first place by the Communist Party of India, but quickly broadened to draw in the peasant organizations, the student movement, the trade unions, and finally the dominant wing of the All-India Congress, headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, against the opposition of Gandhi. The mass movement for Indian independence took on a new and urgent character—the demand for the right of the Indians themselves to organize the defense of their own country threatened by invasion.

American commentators on the India question, even including liberals, have largely fallen victims of a self-imposed blindness, which is the last word of stupidity, when they speak of the Indian demand for an immediate national government as a form of "blackmail" against the British, "taking advantage of British difficulties to gain an independence they could not win under normal circumstances." This is stupid, not only because it calls upon a "moral justification" of British rule over India which finds no possible justification except in power; it is stupid, above all, because it closes its eyes to the fact that the relations of power have changed in the world. Great Britain no longer has the power to hold India as a colony against the will of the Indian people; it has not the power to defend India against a Japanese invasion—unless it brings the Indian people into voluntary and active partnership in that defense.

If the present government of India, creature of London, had the ability and the power to defend the borders of India from the Japanese invasion without the active participation of the people, then it would be possible to ignore or postpone the Indian demand for independence on the grounds of "realism"—even though that would be an immoral and damaging "realism" which would make the final

victory more difficult and costly. But since it is evident that the present government of India does not have such ability or power, to continue to talk and act as if it did has become an invitation to disaster, a disaster that involves the fortunes of the United Nations, not merely India and Britain.

The plain fact is that the people of India have lost their confidence in the ability of British arms to protect their borders, and simultaneously have lost their fear of British arms as an instrument of repression against them. Their opinion finds ample confirmation in hard facts, terrible facts, incontrovertible facts, of the complete debacle of British arms in Malaya, Singapore, and Burma, and the collapse of British government in the province of Bengal in the weeks of Burma's fall to the Japanese.

Purely as a matter of practicality, of hard-boiled politics, it has become harmful nonsense to "talk tough" to the Indian people, as British bureaucrats and their American admirers do so glibly, until after they have successfully "talked tough" to the Japanese in Burma, Singapore, and Malaya, and until they are able to begin to "talk tough" to Hitler in Western Europe.

On the other hand, the example of China, despite its lack of supplies from abroad, its incomplete national unity, and its inner contradictions, has proved the effectiveness of a peoples' war of defense against aggression. China has proved to be far more effective militarily against the Japanese than have the British. This lesson has not been lost upon the Indian masses and their leaders of all groups.

The case for immediate independence for India thus does not derive its pressing immediacy from any idealistic haste on the part of friends of freedom to bestow the blessings of the Atlantic Charter upon that unhappy country.

Far from drawing its inspiration from the Atlantic Charter, it might rather be said that the Atlantic Charter has drawn much of its importance from the Indian independence movement. Faced with a difficult and dangerous problem, we have awakened to the fact that we already have an official program to solve it—provided we take our program seriously as a guide to action and not as a decoration for ceremonial occasions.

But, it is objected by all the echoes of the old-school imperialism: the All-India National Congress must be suppressed because Gandhi, its leader, is prepared to negotiate a surrender of the country to the Japanese, and his pacifism is an objective surrender of the country.

Gandhism, however, is an excrescence upon the Indian national movement, and not its essence. As a matter of fact, the whole movement was rapidly moving away from Gandhi's position, and Nehru had replaced Gandhi as the dominant leader—until Sir Stafford Cripps went on his ill-fated mission and handed back to Gandhi his dominant position for a moment. Nehru had gone so far in demonstrating his commitment to the United Nations' cause and to alliance with Britain that when Sir Stafford brought nothing but an ultimatum from London, which in effect denied now and in the future any shadow of independence, the reaction among the bourgeois leaders of India was so profound that Nehru was shoved aside for an interval, and Gandhi was able to maneuver back into power again in the Congress leadership.

Gandhism, rapidly losing its hold upon the masses of India, has all but disappeared among the Indian working class and student youth. A new militancy for the active defense of their country is sweeping India from the moment the Japanese appeared at its gates. The slightest



encouragement from London to this movement would have won the Indian masses immediately to active partnership in the war, even without any final settlement of the question of independence—if only the British had been prepared to *permit* the Indian people to organize and arm themselves for the defense of the country against the Japanese. For what the Indian masses are demanding now is not the right to withdraw from the war and desert the United Nations, but the right to fight through the war as a part of the United Nations, a right which is denied to them by London.

It is of great interest to follow the development of the program for the peoples' defense of India, through the documents of the Indian mass organizations. Space forbids any lengthy quotations from them, but a few samples are necessary to point out the argument.

The All-India Students' Federation adopted a declaration soon after the fall of Singapore and Rangoon, calling for "a definite decision on the question of the defense of India." Denouncing the fraud of the Japanese slogan of "Asia for the Asiatics," and exposing the horrors of their "New Order," the students find that India's place in the worldwide struggle is by the side of the Soviet Union and China, with "all the progressive forces in the world." But they find "the British bureaucrats . . . do not want the full and effective mobilization of the people for this war. . . . They seek to provoke us away from the war. But we shall not play into their hands. . . . We shall fight this war and campaign to run it the peoples' way." "All the mass organizations in India must unite on the common platform of fight against fascism and the defense of India." "Immediately declaring this war to be our war, striving to achieve unity among ourselves to defend the mother-

land against the fascists, we must do everything we can today. . . . On no account can we stay away from the fight or adopt an attitude of neutrality. . . . This is our war and we must win it."

The position of the All-India Trade Union Congress was set forth by its Secretary, N. M. Joshi, in an interview with the crew of an American army transport, members of the National Maritime Union, and recorded by them. Following are typical expressions:

"No one more than we hate fascism both local and foreign. . . . We favor a definite stand and action against the Axis. . . . The majority of our unions and membership believe that real support of the war can only be secured with the realization of India's independence. . . . I welcome all anti-Nazi and anti-Japanese countermoves both in regard to sending arms here and in sending troops. We feel certain, unlike some other people, that they will never be used against India's independence or its people. . . . Indian independence depends upon full co-operation with the United Nations. We hope the British will recognize this as well. . . . Labor does not follow Mr. Gandhi. . . . We made it clear that we favor a policy of national defense for the motherland, together with the unification of all elements in Indian life around such a program. . . . We would rather pursue the policy of unification and defense, at this stage, to realize later a real national government. . . . Unless the opinions of London change remarkably. . . . we can foresee little good for the United Nations in the immediate future."

The Communist members of the All-India Congress Committee, on April 26, 1942, published a draft resolution and an appeal for presentation to the All-India Congress

Committee meeting at Allahabad. It called for "the Congress to take the initiative for an all-in national unity, and to mobilize the people for an all-out national resistance against the aggressor, unifying and co-ordinating all efforts, which hit the enemy and which defend and protect the people, whether made by the people, the government, or the army." It declared the cause of India "is a part and parcel of the struggle of the peoples of the United Nations...there is no neutrality for any honest man." It called for national unity, especially Hindu-Moslem unity, and for co-operation with the government while pressing for a national government for India.

The All-India Congress Committee position was: "That the people of India would line themselves up with the progressive forces of the world and assume full responsibility to face new problems and shoulder new burdens that had arisen, and asked that the necessary conditions to enable them to do so be created. The essential condition was freedom of India." "Only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defense of the country on a national basis and be able to help in furtherance of larger causes that are emerging from the war." To this, against the votes of the Communists, the Congress added the threat of a non-co-operation movement unless the British immediately negotiated a settlement.

After the beginning of repressions in August, 1942, against the Congress Party, the imposition of martial law and firing upon citizens in the streets by the British government in India, the Indian Communist Party cabled to the United States the following:

"The legalized Indian party greets its American comrades. The lessons of Malaya and Burma are lost upon

the British rulers. Defense of India is impossible without a real national government.

"We are launching a campaign for all-India national unity, for all-out national resistance, for unity of the Congress and the Moslem League, and for a united demand for a national government.

"Urge the American people to launch a nationwide campaign to persuade President Roosevelt to intervene to get the British government to negotiate with Congress, to establish immediately a real national government on the basis of the recognition of India's independence.

"Gandhi's pacifism is the exception here. Nehru and the rest of the leaders are completely anti-fascist, are willing to help world democracy, and to organize armed resistance to the fascist invaders.

"Arouse your people. On India's fate depends their own. We must fight together in the peoples' war to build the brotherhood of free peoples."

These documents give the decisive outlines of the situation in India, in relation to the world crisis, confirmed by all detailed information that comes to hand.

It is not necessary to go over again and again all the maze of arguments raised like a cloud of dust around the India question. It is only necessary to ask whether we need the Indian peoples fighting actively on our side, whether they want to fight on our side, and, if so, what is preventing them.

It is established beyond question that we need India actively on our side. It is established beyond question that the Indian people want to fight on our side. It is established beyond question that the British government has not made up its mind to permit the Indian people to fight



in their own defense, that it is forcibly repressing all movements in that direction, and that it is relying upon imported armed forces and selected Indian forces, mostly minorities, for the double duty of repressing the Indian people and defending Indian frontiers against the Japanese.

This situation, leaving aside the political and moral aspects of the problem and viewing it purely from the military angle, is developing steadily toward another in the long list of debacles of the United Nations. For obviously the British are entirely without the resources to make good on all this "tough talk," and the United States has issued orders to its forces stationed in India that they are not to take part in any repressions of the Indian people. The course of repression is only making more difficult and costly the inevitable settlement, which must include what the Indian people unite in demanding: the right to organize their own defense.

Political and moral considerations do not have the same immediate force that military necessity exerts. And it is military necessity which dictates above all at this moment that the demands of the organizations of the Indian people shall be met to their satisfaction, sufficient to enlist their full participation in the war and enable them to organize that participation themselves. That does not mean that political and moral considerations shall be forgotten. In the long run they are decisive for all military questions. They are the cement that holds the United Nations together despite all military setbacks. They are the basis of *morale*, the greatest ultimate factor in this war, which will decide victory or defeat. And all consideration of policy and of morals confirms the demand for Indian independence, else the Atlantic Charter is only another meaning-

less document. The continued subjugation of India could only have one justification, and that is power, the same justification the Nazis use for all their crimes. Since the rulers of India no longer have the power to suppress the Indian people, and at the same time win this war, they no longer have even that justification.

No, there is no longer even an imperialist justification for the continued subjection of India—unless, indeed, those who propose it are prepared to sacrifice victory in the war, prepared to come to terms with the Axis in order to try to bargain out some remnants of their imperialist loot within an Axis world.

Let us be clear on this question. Without the slightest doubt the suppression of the Indian people at this moment means to prepare the way for the defeatists, for those who put something else above victory over the Axis, for those who are willing to try to adjust themselves to a world in which Hitler rules supreme.

Is the India issue a "private question" between the Indian people and the British government? We are often told so by American newspaper editors and columnists and warned not to try to interfere in the problem. According to this theory, it makes no difference that the issue of victory in the world war is also at stake in India, and if the British rulers and Indian people cannot agree, and if as a consequence the United Nations is so weakened that we lose the war, well that is just too bad, but nothing can be done about it. "India," they say with dogmatic finality, "is a domestic problem of the British Empire."

Which brings us back to the question heading this chapter: "Is India a member of the United Nations?" Her name is signed there, true, by a government which is the creature of London. But the very fact of the signature es-

tablishes the acceptance of India as a nation by all other signatories. The acceptance of the signature of the present government on behalf of India is not a confirmation of that government's right to rule India, but merely a confirmation of India's right to be present in the Council of the United Nations. And the very Declaration of the United Nations to which India's name is thus signed is a declaration of the untenability of the position of the present government of India when it is challenged by the people of India. The Declaration which created the United Nations gave to the United States and all other signatories the right to raise the question of the full mobilization for the war of each country, including India. This right exists, as the lawyers delight in saying, not only *de facto* in the nature of the situation, but also *de jure* by the agreements which have been signed by the United Nations.

The United States has not only the right but the duty to take such steps as will ensure the full mobilization of the manpower and economy of India for the common cause of victory in the war. If the rulers of Britain, from their special interests and ancient prejudices, fall down on this job, it is up to the other members of United Nations to intervene in the common interest of all. We are all in one boat, at least until victory is attained, and we hope that boat will prove useful also after victory. But if the boat is to reach that port of victory, there must be United Nations control of the navigation through such rocks as the India issue, on which the boat may be wrecked.

In the interest of victory for the United Nations, India, now formally a member and recognized as a nation, must be given at once that measure of practical nationhood which will enable her to fight and defeat the common enemy at her borders. As to all else, that may be left to the future

and to the people, when victory is won. That is a sound position for the United States to take, a position dictated by military necessity of a desperate war, a position confirmed by the common declaration of policy of the United Nations, a position buttressed by international morality, a position which will be enthusiastically supported by the overwhelming majority of the population of the United Nations, by oppressed peoples everywhere, and by a majority of the British people themselves. Any other course threatens new and more serious reverses to the United Nations.

Are we big enough for our tasks? Have we the moral and intellectual resources required for survival in this dangerous world? The answer to these questions will be given by the course we take regarding India.

## CHAPTER XVII

### AFRICA AS A FACTOR IN THE WAR

ONE cannot ignore a continent with one hundred and fifty millions population. Certainly the Axis is not ignoring Africa, which it hopes and plans to exploit with scientific thoroughness as a slave continent in its "New Order." And equally certain it is that the United Nations is vitally concerned with the defense of Africa against the Axis; the United States is especially concerned in that Africa is the jumping-off place for Axis invasion of the Western Hemisphere.

No one in official circles has as yet given serious thought to Africa as a potential power on the side of the