

V. THE AUGUST RESOLUTION

WE HAVE ALREADY SAID HOW YOU CAME TO THE AUGUST Resolution. Its first part, positive and ringing, pleased us as well as all those in the Congress who had no illusions about the Japs and wanted settlement with the Allies and struggle against the Axis. Its threatening second part pleased the Japs as was clear from their Radio broadcasts ; it also suited those among your colleagues and followers whose bitter disillusionment with the British Government was making them lose faith in the democratic cause itself and who therefore tended to identify the peoples with the Imperialists in the Allied camp and saw the war as mere power-politics and not as the anti-fascist peoples camp versus that of Fascist-Imperialist aggressors.

We welcomed the clear-cut positive declaration contained in the first part of the resolution, and we alone at that time foresaw clearly the contrary logic of your second part. We understood your own dilemma which was the key question on the lips of every patriotic Indian. Your resolution only re-echoed it. In the name of our common cause, our common immediate demand, we appealed to you then ; we stated where we welcomed your lead and also where we differed, and suggested an alternative solution.

In our issue of *People's War* dated July 26, 1942 we addressed an OPEN LETTER TO THE WORKING COMMITTEE FROM THE INDIAN COMMUNISTS entitled : "YES FIGHT ! BUT WHOM AND HOW ?" We quote here some extracts from it.

We welcomed the first part of the resolution thus :

"We rejoice that the defeatists inside the national leadership have been defeated and you have unanimously come to the conclusion that :

"India must defend herself

India must resist aggression

India must line up with the United Nations

India must have power to organise her defence

India must be free to fight for freedom."

We warned against the disastrous consequences of the threat of struggle. This is crucial, and we shall quote the relevant extract :

“Most of you know from the experience of the Cripps’ negotiations and some of you have said it openly that the British Imperialist rulers don’t want the Indian PEOPLE to fight the Fascist invaders, *for they know that that leads India to freedom and the end of their domination.*

“Is it not plain enough that to start your ‘struggle’ is just to play the game of the Imperialists and the bureaucrats? What will happen if and when you start the struggle ?

“*They will quietly put you and thousands of active Congress workers inside jails and sanctimoniously declare that it is their unfortunate duty to be able to save India from the Fascist invaders.*

“They would have divorced you from contact with the people who need you and every patriot in their own midst more than ever before. It is your historic responsibility to organise our people for national resistance. And here you would leave them leaderless and at the mercy of the mad bureaucrats.

“... We beseech you to see how by your proposed struggle you will not be really hitting the alien bureaucrats but hitting our own cause.”

People’s War, Vol. I, No. 3.

May we not ask you :

Did those who supplied you with quotations from the *People’s War*, give you this quotation? Did you care to see what we said two weeks before the August Resolution was passed? Did not things happen exactly as we had foretold?

Should you not ask yourselves why it was that we were able to see this in advance? We claim that we could do so, because our policy was patriotic, our understanding realistic and we had no illusions about Imperialism.

We appealed to you :

“In our enslaved position the only strength that we

have is our national unity. That is our shield and our sword. You are the leadership of the nation. You can’t afford to take a single false step which will spell disaster for our people and lead to the death and destruction of our nation under Fascism. You have to take the initiative to forge national unity for National Government. This is the course that at once liquidates the British hold over us and enables us to put up an effective resistance to the Fascist invaders.”

We give the whole of this Open Letter as an appendix so that you may know what we said as a whole. This is what we said exactly two weeks before the fateful 8th of August, 1942. We can claim that most of what we said came true, unfortunately for our nation.

The August Resolution

A lot of dirt is thrown at us that we opposed the August Resolution—and in the mouths of some it becomes August Revolution.

We shall quote the August resolution in full and request you to read it over and once again, as we Communist members of the AICC sought to amend it.

TEXT OF AUGUST RESOLUTION WITH COMMUNIST AMENDMENTS

PART OF RESOLUTION COMMON TO BOTH

“The All-India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in

India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

"The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which has led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the Imperialist tradition and method. The possession of empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern Imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

"The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against the aggression of Nazism, Fascism and Imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British Imperial-

ism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

"The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war."

ON TRANSFER OF POWER

OFFICIAL RESOLUTION

COMMUNIST AMENDMENT

"The AICC, therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional Government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite Government representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its

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It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression, with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers, to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future

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relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it."

secession from the Federation. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it."

PART OF RESOLUTION COMMON TO BOTH

"The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power.

"While the AICC must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and people, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable

in all countries, national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

“An independent India would gladly join such a world federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of international problems.

“Such a federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

“The Committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the Governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards world federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign Press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response and the criticisms made in many foreign quarters have shown an ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and racial superiority which cannot be tolerated

by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.”

OPERATIVE CLAUSE

OFFICIAL RESOLUTION

“The AICC would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian Government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity.

“The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent

COMMUNIST AMENDMENT

“The AICC would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels no longer justified in holding to policies of inaction and passivity, and that it must now take initiative in building the United National Front of Parties and sections of the people, who want to secure India's immediate freedom to meet the present peril and who are prepared to participate in or support the formation of a provisional national Government, which will undertake the organisation of armed as well as non-violent people's defence against the Fascist aggressors in closest co-operation with the United Nations and their armies.

“The Committee, therefore, resolves :

“(1) That it is absolutely essential in this hour

violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the Committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

“The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of the movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participat-

of grave emergency to achieve all-in national unity for the purpose of forging mass sanctions to secure the end of British domination and the installation of a Provisional National Government, and with this end in view decides to make an earnest effort to effect agreement and joint front with the Muslim League. That the Congress is pledged to such a Federal Constitution of a free and United India as would guarantee to the federating units based on territories with more or less homogeneous population, with common historical tradition, language, culture, psychological make-up, and common economic life, autonomous statehood with the right to separate, should be a sufficient basis for agreement for a united front and for the installation of a joint provisional National Government.

“(2) That the Congress and the Muslim League having achieved unity should bring all parties in India together, securing the broadest possible sup-

ing in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

“Lastly, whilst the AICC has stated its own view of the future governance under free India, the AICC wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India.”

port for the national demand and demonstrating to the peoples of the United Nations that entire India stands united and agreed in a practical scheme for the immediate installation of a provisional National Government pledged to organise armed resistance to the aggressors in cooperation with the armies of the United Nations.

“(3) That simultaneously the Congress and the League take initiative to launch a joint front campaign of people's mass mobilisation to organise countrywide mass demonstrations, and rallies demanding immediate transfer of power and the installation of a provisional National Government, to inspire and instruct the masses in the spirit of national resistance to the aggressor and to fight pro-Jap sentiments, to organise joint people's effort to defend and protect the people, co-ordinating it with similar effort of the authorities wherever they serve the interests of the people and resisting them where they are coercive.”

Our Aim - Build Unity

What was your own aim as set out in the August Resolution?
To resist the Japs and win National Government from the British.

In our amendments are we not with you in wanting to achieve both these aims ?

Where is it that we are not with you ? Precisely where we thought it would be playing into the hands of the Japs and leaving the British on top of us, however much we may scream against them.

Our amendments not only supported the great progressive aim you had proposed but also the specific national demand you had formulated. Our amendments did one thing more. They suggested a solution out of the dilemma in which the country found itself.

One may or may not agree with our amendments, but after having read both the texts how can any one with open eyes say that it is "going over to the British" ?

In contrast our amendment said : go to *your own* brothers, go to your own brother organisations.

And we considered then and think so even more firmly today that this was the real way out of the dilemma, the way to force the British into a tight corner and agree to the transfer of power, the way to win a National Government of National Defence against the Japanese.

A fellow Congressman may not agree with our amendments but how can he object to them in the name of Congress aims or traditions ?

What fundamental objection can he have to the principle of self-determination being consistently applied within our own country and by our own people ? When he and we, all of us demand freedom from the British, he certainly should not object.

What fundamental objection can be raised to the proposal for a joint front of the Congress with the League and other popular parties ? Had you not yourselves in this very resolution declared that the Congress did not seek power for itself but demanded it for the people ? All that our amendment did was to give reality to this very declaration of yours, achieve a joint

front of our foremost peoples' organisations and face the British with an organised united people.

Even the idea of a united front is not strange to the Congress but has been the basis of its own strength ; has it not endeavoured to become a united national organisation ? It is proper to take pride in and glorify one's own organisation, but that should not lead one to underrate or run down other organisations. One may differ about the reasons but who will deny that the Congress has not yet been able to solve some problems and because of them, popular organisations have grown outside the Congress ? Whatever one may think of the League, any open-minded Congressman will have to admit that a large section, if not the majority, of the Muslim people are behind the League. Thus when Congress sought power for the people we suggested that you make an *immediate* bid for a united front of all our peoples' organisations, i.e. of our people as they are, with all their strength and failings.

We thus wanted you to extend the basis of the Indian freedom movement, extend it on the very basis the Congress had built up its own strength, and thus eliminate the main weakness from which our country suffers in the esteem of our own people and our friendly peoples abroad.

What is it that gave us confidence that such a united front of our popular parties was possible, when acute differences had kept them poles apart in the past and their leaders had been proclaiming that there were fundamental differences which could not be bridged unless the other party came round ?

We thought that what had happened in the past did not matter. We could not afford to remain divided *today* if we wished to preserve the cause every honest Indian, irrespective of parties, held dear, and for the sake of his own life.

All that we bothered about was the peril to our country and the way to push Imperialist obstructions out of our way. If the country belongs to us all, why should not the greatest organisation of our country be able to think anew for the sake of our common country ?

All that we were troubled about was the fate of our people if the Japs came or if the British remained in charge in the

period that was opening out then, with the imminent chaos of the political and economic machine that ran our life. If the people have common interests, then why for the sake of their daily life, the safety of their own person, the honour of their own womenfolk, and for their own daily bread, could they not be made to forget their past feuds, feel the danger ahead and stand together for what was in common danger and was common safety, honour, livelihood?

We thought the peril to the country must rouse the best brotherly sentiments in the hearts of our political parties. We thought the common interests of the people must inspire them to unite and see the dangers of continued disunity.

What is necessary must be done, or men don't make history but history marches over them. This is what our Marxism had taught us.

Freedom - Not For One, But For All

Congress has played the biggest role in making our living history, in awakening our people to a new consciousness. From the highest tribunal of the same Congress, at a grave hour in the life of our country, we put forward proposals that took nothing more for granted than basic patriotism—love of the country, and elementary democracy—love of the people. The Congress rightly demanded justice from the British here and now. We wanted the Congress to declare for justice to the Muslims here and now. We thought that this would make the Congress cause of justice stronger, and inevitably victorious. It is not enough to *claim* justice, it is necessary to *be* just. Only the just can fight successfully for justice. We wanted the Congress to declare *that* freedom for all our homelands, which it was demanding for our common motherland from our common oppressors.

You were demanding freedom from the British; all that we demanded of you was that you guarantee its application within our own country.

You were asking the British to end their domination; all

that we asked of you was that you rid one section of our people of the fear of domination by another.

We were requesting you to proclaim for your brothers what you wanted the British masters to proclaim for our country as a whole—freedom of our desire.

Unlike the League we did not make one dependent upon another but saw their interdependence not only in principle but in practice. Practise what you preach is more often said than done. You had proclaimed your sympathy for the cause of world freedom and demanded Indian freedom; we wanted you to go one step further, guarantee its full unhindered enjoyment by our own peoples.

We wanted you to accept the *principle* of self-determination, in terms to which no serious democrat can object. We thought that if you accepted in clear unequivocal terms the principle on which the League bases its claim, you would lay a *just* basis for unity negotiations. We knew there was a lot that is unjust in the League claim and offensive in its way. We wanted you to concede voluntarily what is just in their claim on the plane of freedom. We thought that if you started by accepting *their* just principle on which *they* base their claim you would be able to get them to agree on what *you* object, on the basis of *your* just principles.

The League demands Pakistan as the right for sovereign freedom of Muslims in their own homeland. Having accepted the principle, you could certainly turn their own principle against them when they claim six provinces instead of a just demarcation of boundaries in which the Hindus in their homelands of the present Punjab (Ambala division) get the right to decide their own future); in which the Sikhs get the chance to speak up for themselves and their traditional homelands; and finally in which Assam is not included, and the Bengali Hindus have their full say.

The League talks of partition as an expression of its fear of Hindu domination. After you accepted the principle of self-determination you could call upon them to define the principles of mutual relations between the Pakistan State and the rest of India. They emphasize their separate interests as long as they feel they are in danger. Having accepted the principle of their

demand you could allay their fears and rouse within them the sense of common interests which plays a lesser role in their consciousness as long as their own specific demand remains unsatisfied.

We do not want you to misunderstand us and think that we wanted you to accept all that the League claims in its entirety just because we were in panic because of the Jap peril and thought that this was "the only way out."

We know that Rajaji saw the need for unity with the League but he did not see the just essence of its demand and only wanted Congress to swallow the 'poison' as a necessary evil.

We wanted you to be just.

We wanted you to be fraternal.

We thought that if the danger to the country inspired within you the urge not only to demand but also to do justice you would rouse within every Indian breast such a flood of generous and fraternal feelings that no party and no leader would dare to be petty or partisan. We looked to you because you were the leaders of our common organisation. We wanted you to take the lead because you were the elder brother, the major organisation.

You were claiming power for the people but the people were, as they are, behind the parties of our people. To us the issue was simple. There could be no transfer of power, in the situation as it was, if there was no united front among our main parties.

Pressure Politics Against League

Our amendments were not considered anti-Congress then. Maulana Azad called Ashraf to the dais and asked him not to press his amendment not because it was against Congress policy but because delicate negotiations were afoot.

On the other hand Pandit Nehru spoke about the League thus :

"Mr. Jinnah's attitude was something which one could see in Nazi Germany, in Fascist Italy and in Sudetenland. Yet the *Bombay Chronicle* was never tired of asking the

Congress to come to a settlement with the League."

Bharat Jyoti, August 9, 1942.

While Pandit Nehru thundered like this, putting pressure from the outside, Gandhiji was to go and persuade Mr. Jinnah. But the Government did not allow him to do it.

After his release Pandit Nehru in a speech delivered at Ghazipur in U.P. on October 14, 1945 said :

"I ask only one question from the leaders of communal organisations: What part have they played during the last 25 years, particularly during the last three years, in the struggle for the freedom of India? . . . I tell you they have taken no part. They put buts and ifs on the way of the freedom of the country. The Muslim League put the condition of Pakistan first to the question of the independence of the country and the result was they stood in the way of the Congress which was the only national organisation fighting for the independence of the country."

Bombay Chronicle, Oct. 16, 1945.

Mr. Jinnah in a speech delivered at Quetta on October 18, 1945, replied to the charge thus :

"The appeal which stirred the Muslims in 1921 and 1930-31, and which the Muslims responded to was for our freedom and independence. They joined these movements and made greatest of sacrifices, as you all know, and Hindus thought they could bamboozle the Muslims the third time. The resolution (of August 1942) for which you demanded our support and sacrifice demanded a unitary Central Government and a Constituent Assembly to frame the constitution of India. How can you expect the Muslims to support you? . . . I ask Pandit Nehru to accept the Pakistan Resolution and then see who makes the greatest sacrifice."

Dawn, October 20, 1945.

Mr. Jinnah declared that he would be ready to take bullets in his chest, but just like Pandit Nehru, he said many sharp and nasty things, ridiculing the struggles launched by the Congress "of people sitting like goats under a lathi" and the rest. But

he also reminded Pandit Nehru of the abuse that he had showered on the League at the time of the Bombay AICC. Mr. Jinnah said:

“When Pandit Nehru and the Congress leaders met at Birla House in Bombay, which is not far from my house on the Malabar Hill, in August 1942, and drafted the resolution, and when it was placed before the All-India Congress Committee, may I remind Pandit Nehru of what he said in supporting the resolution? He said that the League was a reactionary body and Muslims were all with the Congress and the world will see that they follow the lead of the Congress.”

Ibid.

And Mr. Jinnah prided himself on the fact that “It was Muslim India to a man which remained aloof.”

The blunt truth appears to be that the August Resolution was supposed to be pressure not only on the British but also on the League. Maulana Azad wanted Ashraf not to speak up but hold back because negotiations were planned and it was argued that if the League found that a section in the Congress was very insistent on conceding self-determination and was pressing for unity, it might make them more obstinate. The Jagat Narain Lal Resolution was being written off and that was supposed to be sufficient basis—i.e., no basis of positive principles except the mere desire for settlement. This to us was the way of bargaining among rivals but not of settlement among brothers. We wanted the Congress to take its stand on a just positive principle and call upon the League to help to apply it consistently without injustice to the claims of other peoples and their lands.

In your report you are flinging the August Resolution to our face. In the Bombay AICC, however, no one dared to say that ours was an anti-national stand. Gandhiji, in his concluding speech, in fact, paid us a compliment:

“I congratulate the thirteen friends who voted against the resolution. In doing so, they had done nothing to be ashamed of. For the last twenty years we have tried to learn not to lose courage even when we are in a hopeless minority and are laughed at. . . . It behoves us to cultivate

this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was therefore glad to see that these friends have imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.”

Printed copy of speech distributed after August 8, 1942.

Struggle - Only A Threat

Our main objection to the resolution as it stood was that there was no logical connection between the first and second parts of your resolution. Instead of making the operative part conform to the declared aim, it went patently against it.

But there was a logic in your contradiction. You were bitterly disillusioned with the British Government and were panicky at the threat of Jap aggression and quickly wanted National Government to be able to defend the country. Therefore you thought that the use of your last threat of mass struggle (which you had not used even in the earlier phase of the war) was the best way of bringing the British Imperialists to their knees and making the British people act for immediate Indo-British settlement.

It is clear now from the way in which you thought and functioned that you never meant to start a struggle.

Gandhiji himself had declared that he would have sought an interview with the Viceroy and explored avenues of settlement.

Writing to the Viceroy on August 14, 1942, only a few days after his arrest, Gandhiji said:

“The Government of India should have waited at least till the time that I inaugurated mass action. I had publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So would I have dealt with every deficiency if you had given me the opportunity.”

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with
the Government 1942-44, p. 14.*

There were no preparations made whatsoever, though after the Allahabad AICC the Working Committee members who spoke in public had begun threatening a "struggle", and talking of having to do something "drastic", and so on. The only exception was Pandit Nehru while—in contrast—Sardar Patel, himself the great organiser, uttered the biggest and the most belligerent threats. Is it not clear enough that when threats galore were made but there were no preparations for "struggle," then the "struggle" itself was only a threat and not meant to be a practical proposal?

Some of you were opposed to mass struggle on the same grounds as we were opposed to it—that it would become direct aid to the Japs. And it is clear enough from Gandhiji's letter of instructions published on the eve of the Bombay AICC that if the negotiations with the Viceroy had failed, he would have organised some form of symbolic Satyagraha, eschewing all forms of activity that would have been anti-war and therefore pro-Japanese.

On 8th August all of you seemed to have been agreed only on one thing—that the threat of struggle was necessary.

And what did the latest Bombay AICC (September 1945) say?

Even after your release at the AICC meeting in Bombay in September 1945, in the resolution of Greetings to the Nations titled "The Struggle of 1942 and After" you said:

"The earnest appeal made by the AICC at its last meeting held on August 8, 1942 for creating conditions necessary for full co-operation with the United Nations in the cause of world freedom was ignored and the suggested attempts to solve the Indian problem by negotiation were answered by the Government by an all-out attack on the Indian people and by subjecting an unarmed India to many of the horrors of war which accompany an invasion."

*Printed resolution distributed at the
Bombay AICC meeting, September 1945.*

Our Warning Came True

You rejected our proposal to accept the principle of self-determination and make a move towards achieving settlement among ourselves before approaching the British. You were obviously again thinking in the same way as at the time of the Cripps Offer: if the British can be made to settle with you the rest would fall in line. You had contempt for your brothers but yet hopes on the foreign British. Though embittered with the British you were not yet rid of your illusions. Most of you obviously thought that the threat of mass struggle itself would act as the best screw on the British. It was the same old disastrous policy of waiting upon the British.

You made no preparations for struggle because you were certain that the threat would work and settlement must come. A few like Sardar Patel seemed to have thought that if settlement did not come, "a short and swift struggle" must succeed. The events that immediately followed the passing of the August Resolution of the AICC proved how false were the calculations of all of you, how disastrous the lead you gave.

Our Party alone did not share any of the dominant illusions and the analysis that it made and warning it gave came true to the very letter.

In our open letter of July 26, 1942 we had clearly warned:

"What will happen if and when you start the struggle? They will quietly put you and thousands of active Congress workers inside jails and sanctimoniously declare that it is their unfortunate duty to be able to save India from the Fascist invaders."

Must you blame us for our foresight or bless us?