

Ahmadnagar Fort Again

The Chain of Happening

Ahmadnagar Fort. August Thirteenth, Nineteen Forty-Four. It is just over two years since we came here, two years of a dream life rooted in one spot, with the same few individuals to see, the same limited environment, the same routine from day to day. Sometime in the future we shall wake up from this dream and go out into the wider world of life and activity, finding it a changed world. There will be an air of unfamiliarity about the persons and things we see; we shall remember them again and past memories will crowd into our minds, and yet they will not be the same, nor will we be the same, and we may find it difficult to fit in with them. Sometimes we may wonder whether this renewed experience of everyday living is not itself a sleep and a dream from which we may suddenly wake up. Which is the dream and which is the waking? Are they both real, for we experience and feel them in all their intensity, or are they both unsubstantial and of the nature of fleeting dreams which pass, leaving vague memories behind?

Prison and its attendant solitude and passivity lead to thought and an attempt to fill the vacuum of life with memories of past living, of one's own life, and of the long chain of history of human activity. So during the past four months, in the course of this writing, I have occupied my mind with India's past records and experiences, and out of the multitude of ideas that came to me I have selected some and made a book out of them. Looking back at what I have written, it seems inadequate, disjointed and lacking in unity, a mixture of many things, with the personal element dominant and giving its colour even to what was intended to be an objective record and analysis. That personal element has pushed itself forward almost against my will; often I checked it and held it back

but sometimes I loosened the reins and allowed it to flow out of my pen, and mirror, to some extent, my mind.

By writing of the past I have tried to rid myself of the burden of the past. But the present remains with all its complexity and irrationality and the dark future that lies beyond, and the burden of these is no less than that of the past. The vagrant mind, finding no haven, still wanders about restlessly, bringing discomfort to its possessor as well as to others. There is some envy for those virgin minds which have not been soiled or violated by thought's assault, and on which doubt has cast no shadow nor written a line. How easy is life for them in spite of its occasional shock and pain.

Events take place one after the other and the uninterrupted and unending stream of happenings goes on. We seek to understand a particular event by isolating it and looking at it by itself, as if it were the beginning and the end, the resultant of some cause immediately preceding it. Yet it has no beginning and is but a link in an unending chain, caused by all that has preceded it, and resulting from the wills, urges, and desires of innumerable human beings coalescing and conflicting with each other, and producing something different from that which any single individual intended to happen. Those wills, urges, and desires are themselves largely conditioned by previous events and experiences, and the new event in its turn becomes another conditioning factor for the future. The man of destiny, the leader who influences the multitude, undoubtedly plays an important part in this process, and yet he himself is the product of past events and forces and his influence is conditioned by them.

The Two Backgrounds: Indian and British

What happened in India in August, 1942, was no sudden development but a culmination of all that had gone before. Much has been written about it, in attack, criticism or defence, and many explanations given. And yet most of this writing misses the real meaning, for it applies purely political considerations to something that was deeper than politics. Behind it all lay an intense feeling that it was no longer possible to endure and live under foreign autocratic rule. All other questions became secondary—whether under that rule it was possible to

make improvements or progress in some directions, or whether the consequences of a challenge might be more harmful still. Only the overwhelming desire to be rid of it and to pay any price for the riddance remained, only the feeling that whatever happened this could not be endured.

That feeling was no new sensation; it had been there for many years. But previously it had been restrained in many ways and disciplined to keep pace with events. The war itself was both a restraining and releasing factor. It opened out our minds to vast developments and revolutionary changes, to the possibility of the realization of our hopes in the near future; and it put a brake on much that we might otherwise have done because of our desire to help, and certainly not to hinder in any way, the struggle against the Axis powers.

But, as the war developed, it became ever clearer that the Western democracies were fighting not for a change but for a perpetuation of the old order. Before the war they had appeased fascism, not only because of the fear of its consequences but also because of a certain ideological sympathy with it and an extreme dislike of some of the probable alternatives to it. Nazism and fascism were no sudden growths or accidents of history. They were the natural developments of the past course of events, of empire and racial discrimination, of national struggles, of the growing concentration of power, of technological growth which found no scope for its fulfilment within the existing framework of society, of the inherent conflict between the democratic ideal and a social structure opposed to it. Political democracy in western Europe and North America, opening the door to national and individual progress, had also released new forces and ideas, aiming inevitably at economic equality. Conflict was inherent in the situation; there would either be an enlargement of that political democracy or attempts to curb it and end it. Democracy grew in content and area, in spite of constant opposition, and became the accepted ideal of political organization. But a time came when a further expansion endangered the basis of the social structure, and then the upholders of that structure became clamant and aggressive and organized themselves to oppose change. In countries so circumstanced that the crisis developed more rapidly, democracy was openly and deliberately crushed and fascism and nazism appeared. In the democracies of western Europe and North America the same processes were at play though many other factors delayed the crisis and probably the much longer tradition of

peaceful and democratic government also helped. Behind some of these democracies lay empires where there was no democracy at all and where the same kind of authoritarianism which is associated with fascism prevailed. There also, as in fascist countries, the governing class allied itself to reactionary and opportunist groups and feudal survivals in order to suppress the demand for freedom. And there also they began to assert that democracy, though good as an ideal and desirable in their own homelands, was not suited to the peculiar conditions prevailing in their colonial domains. So it was a natural consequence for these Western democracies to feel some kind of an ideological bond with fascism, even when they disliked many of its more brutal and vulgar manifestations.

When they were forced to fight in self-defence, they looked forward to a restoration of that very structure which had failed so dismally. The war was looked upon and presented as a defensive war, and this was true enough in a way. But there was another aspect of the war, a moral aspect which went beyond military objectives and attacked aggressively the fascist creed and outlook. For it was a war, as has been said, for the soul of the peoples of the world. In it lay the seeds of change not only for the fascist countries but also for the United Nations. This moral aspect of the war was obscured by powerful propaganda, and emphasis was laid on defence and perpetuation of the past and not on creating a new future. There were many people in the West who ardently believed in this moral aspect and wanted to create a new world which would afford some guarantees against that utter failure of human society which the World War represented. There were vast numbers of people everywhere, including especially the men who fought and died on the field of battle, who vaguely but firmly hoped for this change. And there were those hundreds of millions of the dispossessed and exploited and racially discriminated against in Europe and America, and much more so in Asia and Africa, who could not isolate the war from their memories of the past and their present misery, and passionately hoped, even when hope was unreasonable, that the war would somehow lift the burdens that crushed them.

But the eyes of the leaders of the United Nations were turned elsewhere; they looked back to the past and not forward to the future. Sometimes they spoke eloquently of the future to appease the hunger of their people, but their policy

had little to do with these fine phrases. For Mr Winston Churchill it was a war of restoration and nothing more, a continuation, with minor changes, of both the social structure of England and the imperial structure of her empire. President Roosevelt spoke in terms of greater promise, but his policy had not been radically different. Still many people all over the world looked to him with hope as a man of vision and high statesmanship.

So the future for India and the rest of the world, in so far as the British ruling class could help it, would be in line with the past, and the present had necessarily to conform to it. In that very present the seeds of this future were being sown. The Cripps proposals, for all their seeming advance, created new and dangerous problems for us, which threatened to become insuperable barriers to freedom. To some extent they have already had this result. The all-pervading autocracy and authoritarianism of the British Government in India, and the widespread suppression of the most ordinary civil rights and liberties, had reached their further limits during, and under cover of, the war. No one in the present generation had experienced the like of these. They were constant reminders of our enslaved condition and continuing humiliation. They were also a presage of the future, of the shape of things to come, for out of this present, the future would grow. Anything seemed to be better than to submit to this degradation.

How many people out of India's millions felt this way is impossible to say. For most of those millions all conscious feeling has been deadened by poverty and misery. Among the others were those who had been corrupted by office or privilege or vested interest, or whose minds had been diverted by special claims. Yet the feeling was very widespread, varying in intensity and sometimes overlaid by other feelings. There were many gradations in it, from an intensity of belief and a desire to brave all hazards, which led inevitably to action, to a vague sympathy from a safe distance. Some, tragically inclined, felt suffocated and strangled at the lack of air to breathe in the oppressive atmosphere that surrounded them; others, living on the ordinary trivial plane, had more capacity to adapt themselves to conditions they disliked.

The background of the British governing personnel in India was entirely different. Indeed nothing is more striking than the vast gulf that separates the mind of the British and the Indians and, whoever may be right or wrong, this very fact demonstrates the utter incapacity of the British to function as a riding

class in India. For there must be some harmony, some common outlook, between the rulers and the ruled if there is to be any advance; otherwise there can only be conflict, actual or potential. The British in India have always represented the most conservative elements of Britain; between them and the liberal tradition in England there is little in common. The more years they spend in India, the more rigid they grow in outlook, and when they retire and go back to England, they become the experts who advise on Indian problems. They are convinced of their own rectitude, of the benefits and necessity of British rule in India, of their own high mission in being the representatives of the imperial tradition. Because the national Congress has challenged the whole basis of this rule and sought to rid India of it, it has become, in their eyes, Public Enemy No. 1. Sir Reginald Maxwell, the then Home Member of the Government of India, speaking in the Central Assembly in 1941, gave a revealing glimpse of his mind. He was defending himself against the charge that Congressmen and socialists and communists, detained without trial in prison, were subjected to inhuman treatment, far worse than that given to German and Italian prisoners of war. He said that Germans and Italians were, at any rate, fighting for their countries, but these others were enemies of society who wanted to subvert the existing order. Evidently, it seemed to him preposterous that an Indian should want freedom for his country or should want to change the economic structure of India. As between the two his sympathies were obviously for the Germans and Italians, though his own country was engaged in a bitter war against them. This was before Russia entered the war and it was safe then to condemn every attempt to change the social order. Before World War II began, admiration for the fascist regimes was frequently expressed. Had not Hitler himself said, in his *Mein Kampf* and subsequently, that he wanted the British Empire to continue?

The Government of India certainly was anxious to help in every way in the war against the Axis powers. But in its mind that victory would be incomplete if it was not accompanied by another victory—the crushing of the nationalist movements in India as represented mainly by the Congress. The Cripps negotiations had perturbed it and it rejoiced at their failure. The way was now open to deal the final blow at the Congress and all those who sided with it. The moment was favourable, for at no previous time had there been such concentration of unlimited power, both at the centre and in the provinces, in the

hands of the Viceroy and his principal subordinates. The war situation was a difficult one and it was a feasible argument that no opposition or trouble could be tolerated. Liberal elements in England and America, interested in India, had been quietened by the Cripps affair and the propaganda that followed. In England the ever-present feeling of self-righteousness in relation to India had grown. Indians, or many of them, it was felt there, were intransigent, troublesome persons, narrow in outlook, unable to appreciate the dangers of the situation, and probably in sympathy with the Japanese. Mr Gandhi's articles and statements, it was said, had proved how impossible he was and the only way left open was to put an end to all this by crushing Gandhi and the Congress once for all.

Mass Upheavals and their Suppression

In the early morning of August 9th, 1942, numerous arrests were made all over India. What happened then? Only scraps of news trickled through to us after many weeks, and even now we can form only an incomplete picture of what took place. All the prominent leaders had been suddenly removed and no one seemed to know what should be done. Protests, of course, there had to be, and there were spontaneous demonstrations. These were broken up and fired upon, and tear-gas bombs were used; all the usual channels of giving expression to public feeling were stopped. And then all these suppressed emotions broke out and crowds gathered in cities and rural areas and came in conflict with the police and the military. They attacked especially what seemed to them the symbols of British authority and power, the police stations, post offices, and railway stations; they cut the telegraph and telephone wires. These unarmed and leaderless mobs faced police and military firing, according to official statements, on 538 occasions, and they were also machine-gunned from low-flying aircraft. For a month or two or more these disturbances continued in various parts of the country and then they dwindled away and gave place to sporadic occurrences. 'The disturbances,' said Mr Churchill in the House of Commons, 'were crushed with all the weight of the Government,' and he praised 'the loyalty and steadfastness of the brave Indian police as well as the Indian official class

generally whose behaviour has been deserving of the highest praise.' He added that 'larger reinforcements have reached India and the number of white troops in that country is larger than at any time in the British connection.' These foreign troops and the Indian police had won many a battle against the unarmed peasantry of India and crushed their rebellion; and that other main prop of the British Raj in India, the official class, had helped, actively or passively, in the process.

This reaction in the country was extraordinarily widespread, both in towns and villages. In almost all the provinces and in a large number of the Indian states there were innumerable demonstrations, in spite of official prohibition. There were *hartals*, closure of shops and markets and a stoppage of business everywhere, varying in duration from a number of days to some weeks and, in a few cases, to over a month. So also labour strikes. More organized and used to disciplined group action, industrial workers in many important centres spontaneously declared strikes in protest against Government action in arresting national leaders. A notable instance of this was at the vital steel city of Jamshedpur where the skilled workers, drawn from all over India, kept away from work for a fortnight and only agreed to return on the management promising that they would try their best to get the Congress leaders released and a national government formed. In the great textile centre of Ahmedabad also there was a sudden and complete stoppage of work in all the numerous factories without any special call from the trade union.¹ This general strike in Ahmedabad continued peacefully for over three months in spite of all attempts to break it. It was a purely political and spontaneous reaction of the workers, and they suffered greatly, for it was a time of relatively high wages. They received no financial help whatever from outside during this long period. At other centres the strikes were of briefer duration, lasting sometimes only for a few days. Cawnpore, another big textile centre, had, so far as I know, no major strike, chiefly because the communist leadership there succeeded in averting it. In the railways also, which are Government-owned, there was no marked or general stoppage of work, except such as was caused by the disturbances, and this latter was considerable.

Among the provinces, the Punjab was probably the least affected, but there were many *hartals* and strikes even there. The Northwest Frontier Province,

almost exclusively Muslim in population, occupied a peculiar position. To begin with, there were no mass arrests or other provocative action there on the part of the Government, as in the other provinces. This may have been partly due to the fact that the frontier people were considered inflammable material, but also partly to the policy of Government to show that Muslims were keeping apart from the nationalist upheaval. But when news of happenings in the rest of India reached the Frontier Province there were numerous demonstrations and even aggressive challenges to British authority. There was firing on the demonstrators and the usual methods of suppressing popular activities were adopted. Several thousands of people were arrested, and even the great Pathan leader Badshah Khan (as Abdul Ghaffar Khan is popularly known) was seriously injured by police blows. This was extreme provocation and yet, surprisingly enough, the excellent discipline, which Abdul Ghaffar Khan had established among his people, held, and there were no violent disturbances there of the kind that occurred in many parts of the country.

The sudden, unorganized demonstrations and outbreaks on the part of the people, culminating in violent conflicts and destruction, and continued against overwhelming and powerful armed forces, were a measure of the intensity of their feelings. Those feelings had been there even before the arrest of their leaders, but the arrests, and the frequent firings that followed them, roused the people to anger and to the only course that an enraged mob can follow. For a time there seems to have been a sense of uncertainty as to what should be done. There was no direction, no programme. There was no well-known person to lead them or tell them what to do, and yet they were too excited and angry to remain quiescent. As often happens in these circumstances, local leaders sprang up and were followed for the moment. But even the guidance they gave was little; it was essentially a spontaneous mass upheaval. All over India, the younger generation, especially university students, played an important part in both the violent and peaceful activities of 1942. Many universities were closed. Some of the local leaders attempted even then to pursue peaceful methods of action and civil disobedience, but this was difficult in the prevailing atmosphere. The people forgot the lesson of non-violence which had been dinned into their ears for more than twenty years, and yet they were wholly unprepared, mentally or otherwise, for any effective violence. That very teaching of non-violent methods produced

doubt and hesitation and came in the way of violent action. If the Congress, forgetful of its creed, had previously given even a hint of violent action, there is no doubt that the violence that actually took place would have increased a hundred-fold.

But no such hint had been given, and, indeed, the last message of the Congress had again emphasized the importance of non-violence in action. Yet perhaps one fact had some effect on the public mind. If, as we had said, armed defence was legitimate and desirable against an enemy aggressor, why should that not apply to other forms of existing aggression? The prohibition of violent methods of attack and defence once removed had unintended results, and it was not easy for most people to draw fine distinctions. All over the world extreme forms of violence were prevailing and incessant propaganda encouraged them. It became then a question of expediency and of intensity of feeling. Then there were also people, outside or in the Congress, who never had any belief in non-violence and who were troubled with no scruples in regard to violent action.

But in the excitement of the moment few people think; they act in accordance with their long-suppressed urges which drive them forward. And so, for the first time since the great revolt of 1857, vast numbers of people again rose to challenge by force (but a force without arms!) the fabric of British rule in India. It was a foolish and inopportune challenge, for all the organized and armed force was on the other side, and in greater measure indeed than at any previous time in history. However great the numbers of the crowd, it cannot prevail in a contest of force against armed forces. It had to fail unless those armed forces themselves changed their allegiance. But those crowds had not prepared for the contest or chosen the time for it. It came upon them unawares and in their immediate reaction to it, however unthinking and misdirected it was, they showed their love of India's freedom and their hatred of foreign domination.

Though the policy of non-violence went under, for the time being at least, the long training that the people had received under it had one important and desirable result. In spite of the passions aroused there was very little, if any, racial feeling, and, on the whole, there was a deliberate attempt on the part of the people to avoid causing bodily injury to their opponents. There was a great deal of destruction of communications and governmental property, but even in the midst of this destruction care was taken to avoid loss of life. This was not always

possible or always attempted, especially in actual conflicts with the police or other armed forces. According to official reports, so far as I have been able to find them, about 100 persons were kided by mobs in the course of the disturbances all over India. This figure is very small considering the extent and area of the disturbances and the conflicts with the police. One particularly brutal and distressing case was the murder of two Canadian airmen by a mob somewhere in Bihar. But, generally speaking, the absence of racial feeling was very remarkable.²

Official estimates of the number of people kided and wounded by police or military firing in the 1942 disturbances are: 1,028 killed and 3,200 wounded. These figures are certainly gross under-estimates for it has been officially stated that such firing took place on at least 538 occasions, and besides this people were frequently shot at by the police or the military from moving lorries. It is very difficult to arrive at even an approximately correct figure. Popular estimates place the number of deaths at 25,000, but probably this is an exaggeration. Perhaps 10,000 may be nearer the mark.

It was extraordinary how British authority ceased to function over many areas, both rural and urban, and it took many days, and sometimes weeks, for a 'reconquest', as it was often termed. This happened particularly in Bihar, in the Midnapur district of Bengal and in the south-eastern districts of the United Provinces. It is note-worthy that in the district of Badia in the United Provinces (which had to be 'reconquered') there have been no serious allegations of physical violence and injury to human beings caused by the crowds, so far as one can judge from the numerous subsequent trials by special tribunals. The ordinary police proved incapable of meeting the situation. Early in 1942, however, a new force called the Special Armed Constabulary (S.A.C.) had been created and this had been especially trained to deal with popular demonstrations and disturbances. This played an important part in curbing and suppressing the people and often functioned after the manner of the 'Black and Tans' in Ireland. The Indian army was not often used in this connection, except for certain groups and classes in it. British soldiers were more often employed, and also the Gurkhas. Sometimes Indian soldiers as well as the special police were sent to distant parts of the country where they functioned more or less as strangers, being unacquainted with the language.

If the reaction of the crowd was natural, so also, in the circumstances, was the reaction of the government. It had to crush both the impromptu frenzy of the mob and the peaceful demonstrations of other people and, in the interests of its own self-preservation, attempt to destroy those whom it considered its enemies. If it had the capacity or desire to understand and appreciate what moved the people so powerfully, the crisis would not have risen at all and India's problem would have been nearer solution. The government had prepared carefully to crush once for all, as it thought, any challenge to its authority; it had taken the initiative and chosen the time for its first blow; it had removed to its prisons thousands of men and women who had played a prominent part in the nationalist, the labour, and the peasant movements. Yet it was surprised and taken aback by the upheaval that suddenly convulsed the country and, momentarily, its widespread apparatus of repression was disjoined. But it had enormous resources at its command and it utilized them to crush both the violent and non-violent manifestations of the rebellion. Many of the upper and richer classes, timidly nationalist, and sometimes even critical of government, were frightened by this exhibition of mass action on an all-India scale, which cared little for vested interests and smelt not only of political revolution but also of social change. As the success of the government in crushing the rebellion became apparent, the waverers and the opportunists lined up with it and began to curse all those who had dared to challenge authority.

The external evidences of rebellion having been crushed, its very roots had to be pulled out, and so the whole apparatus of government was turned in this direction in order to enforce complete submission to British domination. Laws could be produced overnight by the Viceroy's decree or ordinance, but even the formalities of these laws were reduced to a minimum. The decisions of the Federal Court and the High Courts, which were creations and emblems of British authority, were flouted and ignored by the executive, or a new ordinance was issued to override those decisions. Special tribunals (which were subsequently held by the courts to be illegal) were established, functioning without the trammels of the ordinary rules of procedure and evidence, and these sentenced thousands to long terms of imprisonment and many even to death. The police (and especially the Special Armed Constabulary) and the secret service were ad-powerful and became the chief organs of the state, and could indulge in any

illegalities or brutalities without criticism or hindrance. Corruption grew to giant proportions. Vast numbers of students in schools and colleges were punished in various ways and thousands of young men were flogged. Public activity of all kinds was prohibited unless it was in favour of the government.

But the greatest sufferers were the simple-hearted, poverty-stricken villagers of the rural areas. Suffering, for many generations, had been the badge of their tribe; they had ventured to look up and hope, to dream of better times; they had even roused themselves to action; whether they had been foolish or mistaken or not, they had proved their loyalty to the cause of Indian freedom. Their effort had failed, and the burden had fallen on their bent shoulders and broken bodies. Cases were reported of whole villages being sentenced from flogging to death. It was stated on behalf of the Bengal Government that 'Government forces burnt 193 Congress camps and houses in the sub-divisions of Tamluk and Contai before and after the cyclone of 1942'. The cyclone had worked havoc in that area and created a wilderness but that made no difference to the official policy.

Huge sums were imposed on villages as a whole as punitive fines. According to Mr Amery's statement in the House of Commons, the total collective fines amounted to Rs 90 lakhs, and out of this Rs 78,50,000 were realized. How these vast sums were realized from starving wretches is another matter, and nothing that took place in 1942 or after, not the shooting and the burning by the police, caused such an intensity of suffering as this forcible realization. Not merely were the fines imposed realized, but often much more, the excess vanishing in the process of realization.

All the conventions and subterfuges that usually veil the activities of governments were torn aside and only naked force remained as the symbol of power and authority. There was no further need for subterfuge for the British power had succeeded, at least for the time being, in crushing both the non-violent and violent attempts made to replace it by a national authority, and stood supreme in India. India had failed in that final test when strength and power only count and all else is mere quibbling and irrelevance. She had failed not only because of British armed might and the confusion produced by the war situation in people's minds, but also because many of her own people were not prepared for that last sacrifice which freedom requires. So the British felt they had firmly

re-established their rule in India and they saw no reason to loosen their hold again.

Reactions Abroad

A strict censorship cast a heavy veil over the happenings in India. Even newspapers in India were not permitted to give publicity to much that was daily taking place, and messages to foreign countries were subject to an ever stricter surveillance. At the same time official propaganda was let loose abroad and false and tendentious accounts were circulated. The United States of America were especially flooded with this propaganda, for opinion there was held to count, and hundreds of lecturers and others, both English and Indian, were sent there to tour the country.

Even apart from this propaganda, it was natural in England, suffering the strain and anxiety of war, for resentment to be felt against Indians and especially those who were adding to their troubles in time of crisis. One-sided propaganda added to this and, even more so, the conviction of the British in their own righteousness. Their very lack of awareness of others' feelings had been their strength and it continued to justify actions taken on their behalf, and to cast the blame for any mishap on the iniquity of others who were so blind to the obvious virtues of the British. Those virtues had now been justified afresh by the success of British forces and the Indian police in crushing those in India who had ventured to doubt them. Empire had been justified and Mr Winston Churchill declared, with special reference to India: 'I have not become the King's first minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.' In saying so, Mr Churchill undoubtedly represented the viewpoint of the vast majority of his people, and even of many who had previously criticized the theory and practice of imperialism. The leaders of the British Labour Party, anxious to demonstrate that they were behind no other group in their attachment to the imperial tradition, supported Mr Churchill's statement and 'stressed the resolve of the British people to keep the empire together after the war.'

In America, opinion, in so far as it was interested in the far away problem of India, was divided, for people there were not equally convinced of the virtues of

the British ruling class and looked with some disapproval on other peoples' empires. They were also anxious to gain India's goodwill and utilize her resources fully in the war against Japan. Yet one-sided and tendentious propaganda inevitably produced results, and there was a feeling that the Indian problem was far too complicated for them to tackle, and anyway it was difficult for them to interfere in the affairs of their British ally.

In Russia, what those in authority, or people generally, thought about India it was impossible to say. They were far too busy with their stupendous war effort, and with driving the invader from their country, to think of matters of no immediate concern to them. Yet they were used to thinking far ahead and they were not likely to ignore India which touched their frontiers in Asia. What their future policy would be no one could say, except that it would be realistic and principally concerned with adding to the political and economic strength of the U.S.S.R. They had carefully avoided all reference to India, but Stalin had declared in November, 1942, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Soviet Revolution, that their general policy was:

Abolition of racial exclusiveness, equality of nations and integrity of their territories, liberation of the enslaved nations and restoration of their sovereign rights, the right of every nation to arrange its affairs as it wishes, economic aid to nations that have suffered and assistance to them in attaining their material welfare, restoration of democratic liberties, the destruction of the Hitlerite regime.

In China, it was evident that, whatever the reaction of the people to any particular action of ours, their sympathies were entirely on the side of Indian freedom. That sympathy had historical roots, but, even more so, it was based on the realization that unless India was free, China's freedom might be endangered. It was not in China only but throughout Asia, Egypt, and the Middle East, Indian freedom had become a symbol of a larger freedom for other subject and dependent countries, a test in the present and a measuring rod for the future. Mr Wendell Wilkie in his book—*One World*—says:

Many men and women I have talked with from Africa to Alaska asked me the question which has become almost a symbol all through Asia: What about India?... From Cairo on, it confronted me at every turn. The wisest man in China said to me: 'When the aspiration of India for freedom was put aside to some future date, it was not Great Britain that suffered in public esteem in the Far East. It was the United States.'

What had happened in India had compelled the world to look at India for a while, even in the midst of the war crisis, and to think of the basic problems of the East; it had stirred the mind and heart of every country of Asia. Even though, for the moment, the Indian people appeared helpless in the powerful grip of British imperialism, they had demonstrated that there would be no peace in India or Asia unless India was free.

Reactions in India

Foreign rule over a civilized community suffers from many disadvantages and many ills follow in its train. One of these disadvantages is that it has to rely on the less desirable elements in the population. The idealists, the proud, the sensitive, the self-respecting, those who care sufficiently for freedom and are not prepared to degrade themselves by an enforced submission to an alien authority, keep aloof or come into conflict with it. The proportion of careerists and opportunists in its ranks is much higher than it would normally be in a free country. Even in an independent country with an autocratic form of government many sensitive people are unable to co-operate in governmental activities, and there are very few opportunities for the release of new talent.

An alien government, which must necessarily be authoritarian suffers from all these disadvantages and adds to them, for it has always to function in an atmosphere of hostility and suppression. Fear becomes the dominant motive of both the government and the people, and the most important services are the police and the secret service.

When there is an actual conflict between the Government and the people, this tendency to rely on and encourage the undesirable elements in the population, becomes even more strongly marked. Many conscientious people, of course, through force of circumstances, have to continue functioning in the governmental structure, whether they like it or not. But those who come to the top and play the most important roles are chosen for their anti-nationalism, their subservience, their capacity to crush and humiliate their own countrymen. The highest merit is opposition, often the result of personal rivalries and

disappointments, to the sentiments and feelings of the great majority of the people.

In this turgid and unwholesome atmosphere no idealism or noble sentiment has any place, and the prizes held out are high positions and big salaries. The incompetence or worse failings of the supporters of government have to be tolerated, for the measure of everything is the active support given to that government in crushing its opponents. This leads to government cohabiting with strange groups and very odd persons. Corruption, cruelty, callousness, and a complete disregard of the public welfare flourish and poison the air.³

While much that the Government does is bitterly resented, far greater resentment is caused by those Indian supporters of it who become more royalist than the king. The average Indian has a feeling of disgust and nausea at this behaviour, and to him such people are comparable to the men of Vichy or the puppet regimes set up by the German and Japanese governments. This feeling is not confined to Congressmen but extends to members of the Muslim League and other organizations, and is expressed even by the most moderate of our politicians.⁴

The war afforded a sufficient excuse and was a cover for intense antinational activities of the Government and novel forms of propaganda. Mushroom labour groups were financed to build up 'labour morale', and newspapers containing scurrilous attacks on Gandhi and the Congress were started and subsidized, in spite of the paper shortage which came in the way of other newspapers functioning. Official advertisements, supposed to be connected with the war effort, were also utilized for this purpose. Information centres were opened in foreign countries to carry on continuous propaganda on behalf of the Government of India. Crowds of undistinguished and often unknown individuals were sent on officially organized deputations, especially to the U.S.A., despite the protest of the central assembly, to act as propaganda agents and stooges of the British Government. Persons holding independent views or critical of Government policy had no chance of going abroad; they could neither get a passport nor transport facilities.

All these and many other devices have been employed by the Government during the last two years to create a semblance of what it considers 'public tranquility'. Political and public life becomes dormant, as, indeed, it must in a

country more or less under military occupation and rule. But this forcible suppression of symptoms can only cause an aggravation of the disease, and India is very sick. Prominent Indian conservatives, who have always tried to co-operate with the Government, have been filled with anxiety at this volcano which has been temporarily sealed at its mouth, and they have stated that they have never known such bitterness against the British Government.

I do not know and cannot tell till I come into contact with my people how they have changed during these two years and what feelings stir in their hearts, but I have little doubt that these recent experiences have changed them in many ways. I have looked into my own mind from time to time and examined its almost involuntary reaction to events. I had always looked forward in the past to a visit to England, because I have many friends there and old memories draw me. But now I found that there was no such desire and the idea was distasteful. I wanted to keep as far away from England as possible, and I had no wish even to discuss India's problems with Englishmen. And then I remembered some friends and softened a little, and I told myself how wrong it was to judge a whole people in this way I thought also of the terrible experiences that the English people had gone through in this war, of the continuous strain in which they had lived, of the loss of so many of their loved ones. All this helped to tone down my feelings, but that basic reaction remained. Probably time and the future will lessen it and give another perspective. But if I, with all my associations with England and the English, could feel that way, what of others who had lacked those contacts?

India's Sickness: Famine

India was very sick, both in mind and body. While some people had prospered during the war, the burden on others had reached breaking point, and as an awful reminder of this came famine, a famine of vast dimensions affecting Bengal and east and south India. It was the biggest and most devastating famine in India during the past 170 years of British dominion, comparable to those terrible famines which occurred from 1766 to 1770 in Bengal and Bihar as an early result of the establishment of British rule. Epidemics followed, especially cholera and malaria, and spread to other provinces, and even today they are

taking their toll of scores of thousands of lives. Millions have died of famine and disease and yet that spectre hovers over India and claims its victims.⁵

This famine unveiled the picture of India as it was below the thin veneer of the prosperity of a small number of people at the top—a picture of poverty and ugliness of British rule. That was the culmination and fulfilment of British rule in India. It was no calamity of nature or play of the elements that brought this famine, nor was it caused by actual war operations and enemy blockade. Every competent observer is agreed that it was a man-made famine which could have been foreseen and avoided. Everyone is agreed that there was amazing indifference, incompetence, and complacency shown by all the authorities concerned. Right up to the last moment, when thousands were dying daily in the public streets, famine was denied and references to it in the Press were suppressed by the censors. When the *Statesman* newspaper of Calcutta published gruesome and ghastly pictures of starving and dying women and children in the streets of Calcutta, a spokesman of the Government of India, speaking officially in the central assembly, protested against the ‘dramatization’ of the situation; to him apparently it was a normal occurrence for thousands to die daily from starvation in India. Mr Amery, of the Indian Office in London, distinguished himself especially by his denials and statements. And then, when it became impossible to deny or cloak the existence of widespread famine, each group in authority blamed some other group for it. The Government of India said it was the fault of the provincial government, which itself was merely a puppet government functioning under the Governor and through the civil service. They were all to blame, but most of all inevitably that authoritarian government which the Viceroy represented in his person and which could do what it chose anywhere in India. In any democratic or semi-democratic country such a calamity would have swept away all the governments concerned with it. Not so in India where everything continued as before.

Considered even from the point of view of the war, this famine took place in the very region which stood nearest to the theatre of war and possible invasion. A widespread famine and collapse of the economic structure would inevitably injure the capacity for defence and even more so for offence. Thus did the Government of India discharge its responsibility for India’s defence and the prosecution of the war against the Japanese aggressors. Not scorched earth but

scorched and starved and dead human beings by the million in this vital war area were the emblems of the policy that Government had pursued.

Indian non-official organizations from all over the country did good work in bringing relief, and so did those efficient humanitarians, the Quakers of England. The central and provincial governments also at last woke up and realized the immensity of the crisis and the army was utilized in the relief operations. For the moment, something was done to check the spread of famine and mitigate its after-effects. But the relief was temporary and those after-affects continue, and no one knows when famine may not descend again on an even worse scale. Bengal is broken up, her social and economic life shattered, and an enfeebled generation left as survivors.

While all this was happening and the streets of Calcutta were strewn with corpses, the social life of the upper ten thousand of Calcutta underwent no change. There was dancing and feasting and a flaunting of luxury, and life was gay. There was no rationing even till a much later period. The horse races in Calcutta continued and attracted their usual fashionable throngs. Transport was lacking for food, but racehorses came in special boxes by rail from other parts of the country. In this gay life both Englishmen and Indians took part for both had prospered in the business of war and money was plentiful. Sometimes that money had been gained by profiteering in the very foodstuffs, the lack of which was killing tens of thousands daily.

India, it is often said, is a land of contrasts, of some very rich and many very poor, of modernism and medievalism, of rulers and ruled, of the British and Indians. Never before had these contrasts been so much in evidence as in the city of Calcutta during those terrible months of famine in the latter half of 1943. The two worlds, normally living apart, almost ignorant of each other, were suddenly brought physically together and existed side by side. The contrast was startling, but even more startling was the fact that many people did not realize the horror and astonishing incongruity of it and continued to function in their old grooves. What they felt one cannot say; one can only judge them by their actions. For most Englishmen this was perhaps easier for they had lived their life apart and, caste-bound as they were, they could not vary their old routine, even if some individuals felt the urge to do so. But those Indians who functioned in this way

showed the wide gulf that separated them from their own people, which no considerations even of decency and humanity could bridge.

The famine, like every great crisis, brought out both the good qualities and the failings of the Indian people. Large numbers of them, including the most vital elements, were in prison and unable to help in any way. Still the relief works, organized unofficially, drew men and women from every class who laboured hard under discouraging circumstances, displaying ability, the spirit of mutual help and co-operation and self-sacrifice. The failings were also evident in those who were too full of their petty rivalries and jealousies to co-operate together, those who remained passive and did nothing to help others, and those few who were so denationalized and dehumanized as to care little for what was happening.

The famine was a direct result of war conditions and the carelessness and complete lack of foresight of those in authority. The indifference of the authorities to the problem of the country's food passes comprehension when every intelligent man who gave thought to the matter knew that some such crisis was approaching. The famine could have been avoided, given proper handling of the food situation in the earlier years of the war. In every other country affected by the war full attention was paid to this vital aspect of war economy even before the war started.

In India, the Government of India started a food department three and a quarter years after the war began in Europe and over a year after the Japanese war started. And yet it was common knowledge that the Japanese occupation of Burma vitally affected Bengal's food supply. The Government of India had no policy at all in regard to food till the middle of 1943 when famine was already beginning its disastrous career. It is most extraordinary how inefficient the Government always is in every matter other than the suppression of those who challenge its administration. Or perhaps it is more correct to say that, constituted as it is, its mind is completely occupied in its primary task of ensuring its own continuance. Only an actual crisis forces it to think of other matters. That crisis again is accentuated by the ever-present crisis of want of confidence in the Government's ability and bona fides.⁶

Though the famine was undoubtedly due to war conditions and could have been prevented, it is equally true that its deeper causes lay in the basic policy

which was impoverishing India and under which millions lived on the verge of starvation. In 1933 Major General Sir John Megaw, the Director-General of the Indian Medical Service, wrote in the course of a report on public health in India: ‘Taking India as a whole the dispensary doctors regard 39 per cent of the people as being well nourished, 41 per cent as poorly nourished, and 20 per cent as very badly nourished. The most depressing picture is painted by the doctors of Bengal who regard only 22 per cent of the people of the province as being well nourished while 31 per cent are considered to be very badly nourished.’

The tragedy of Bengal and the famines of Orissa, Malabar, and other places are the final judgment on British rule in India. The British will certainly leave India, and their Indian Empire will become a memory, but what will they leave when they have to go, what human degradation and accumulated sorrow? Tagore saw this picture as he lay dying three years ago: ‘But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their centuries’ administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind them!’

India’s Dynamic Capacity

The stream of life goes on in spite of famine and war, full of its inherent contradictions, and finding sustenance even in those contradictions and the disasters that follow in their train. Nature renews itself and covers yesterday’s battlefield with flowers and green grass, and the blood that was shed feeds the soil and gives strength and colour to new life. Human beings with their unique quality of possessing memory live in their storied and remembered pasts and seldom catch up to the present in ‘The worlde that neweth every daie’. And that present slips into the past before we are hardly aware of it; today, child of yesterday, yields place to its own offspring, tomorrow. Winged victory ends in a welter of blood and mud; and out of the heavy trials of seeming defeat the spirit emerges with new strength and wider vision. The weak in spirit yield and are eliminated, but others carry the torch forward and hand it to the standard-bearers of tomorrow.

The famine in India brought some realization of the terrible urgency of India's problems, of the overwhelming disaster that hung over the country. What people in England felt about it I do not know, but some of them, as is their way, cast the blame on India and her people. There was lack of food, lack of doctors, lack of sanitation and medical supplies, lack of transport, lack of everything except human beings, for the population had grown and seemed to be growing. This excessive population of an improvident race, growing without notice or warning and upsetting the plans or planlessness of a benevolent Government, must be to blame. And so, economic problems suddenly assumed a new importance and we were told that politics and political problems had to be put aside, as if politics has any meaning at all unless it can solve the major problems of the day. The Government of India, one of the few representatives of the *laissez-faire* tradition in the world, began to talk of planning, but of organized planning it had no notion. It could only think in terms of preserving the existing structure and its own and allied vested interests.

The reaction on the people of India was deeper and more powerful, though it found little public expression owing to the widespread tentacles of the Defence of India Act and its rides. There had been a complete collapse of the economic structure of Bengal and tens of millions of people had been literally broken up. Bengal was an extreme example of what was happening in many parts of India and it seemed that there could be no going back to the old economy. Even the industrialists who had prospered so much during the war were shaken up and compelled to look beyond their narrow sphere. They were realists in their own way, rather afraid of the idealism of some of the politicians, but that realism itself led them to far-reaching conclusions. A number of Bombay industrialists, chiefly connected with the Tata enterprises, produced a fifteen-year plan for India's development. That plan is still not complete and there are many lacunae in it. Inevitably it is conditioned by the ways of thinking of big industry and tries to avoid revolutionary changes as far as possible. Yet the very pressure of events in India has forced them to think in a big way and to go out of many of their accustomed grooves of thought. Revolutionary changes are inherent in the plan, though the authors may themselves not like some of them. Some of these authors of the plan were members of the national planning committee and they have taken advantage of a part of its work. This plan will undoubtedly have to be

varied, added to and worked out in many ways, but, coming from conservative quarters, it is a welcome and encouraging sign of the way India must go. It is based on a free India and on the political and economic unity of India. The conservative banker's view of money is not allowed to dominate the scene, and it is emphasized that the real capital of the country consists of its resources in material and manpower. The success of this or any other plan must inevitably depend not merely on production but on a proper and equitable distribution of the national wealth created. Also, agrarian reform is a fundamental prerequisite.

The idea of planning and a planned society is accepted now in varying degrees by almost everyone. But planning by itself has little meaning and need not necessarily lead to good results. Everything depends on the objectives of the plan and on the controlling authority, as well as, of course, the government behind it. Does the plan aim definitely at the wed-being and advancement of the people as a whole, at the opening out of opportunity to all and the growth of freedom and methods of co-operative organization and action? Increase of production is essential, but obviously by itself it does not take us far and may even add to the complexity of our problems. An attempt to preserve old-established privileges and vested interests cuts at the very root of planning. Real planning must recognize that no such special interests can be allowed to come in the way of any scheme designed to further the well-being of the community as a whole. The Congress governments in the provinces were hampered and restricted in all directions by the basic assumption of the Parliamentary statute that most of these vested interests must not be touched. Even their partial attempts to change the land tenure system and to impose an income-tax on incomes from land were challenged in the law courts.

If planning is largely controlled by big industrialists, it will naturally be envisaged within the framework of the system they are used to, and will be essentially based on the profit motive of an acquisitive society. However well-intentioned they might be, and some of them certainly are full of good intentions, it is difficult for them to think on new lines. Even when they talk of state control of industry they think of the state more or less as it is today.

We are sometimes told that the present Government of India, with its ownership and control of railways, and a growing control of and interference in industry, finance, and, indeed, life in general, is moving in a socialist direction.

But this is something utterly different from democratic state control, apart from being essentially foreign control. Though there is a limitation of certain capitalist functions, the system is based on the protection of privilege. The old authoritarian colonial systems ignored economic problems except in so far as certain special interests were concerned. Finding itself unable to meet the necessities of the new situation by its old *laissez-faire* methods, and yet bent on preserving its authoritarian character, it goes inevitably in a fascist direction. It tries to control economic operations by fascist methods, suppresses such civil liberties as exist, and adapts its own autocratic government as well as the capitalist system, with some variations, to the new conditions. Thus the endeavour is, as in fascist countries, to build up a monolithic state, with considerable control of industry and national life, and with many limitations on free enterprise, but based on the old foundations. This is very far from socialism; indeed, it is absurd to talk of socialism in a country dominated by an alien power. Whether such an attempt can succeed, even in a temporary sense, is very doubtful, for it only aggravates the existing problems; but war conditions certainly give it a favourable environment to work in. Even a complete nationalization (so-called) of industry unaccompanied by political democracy will lead only to a different kind of exploitation, for while industry will then belong to the state, the state itself will not belong to the people.

Our major difficulties in India are due to the fact that we consider our problems—economic, social, industrial, agricultural, communal, Indian states—with within the framework of existing conditions. Within that framework, and retaining the privileges and special status that are part of it, they become impossible of solution. Even if some patchwork solution is arrived at under stress of circumstances, it does not and cannot last. The old problems continue and new problems, or new aspects of old problems, are added to them. This approach of ours is partly due to tradition and old habit, but essentially it is caused by the steel-frame of the British Government which holds together the ramshackle structure.

The war has accentuated the many contradictions existing in India—political, economic, and social. Politically, there is a great deal of talk of Indian freedom and independence, and yet her people have probably at no time in their long history been subjected to such authoritarian rule and intensive and widespread

repression as exist today, and out of this today tomorrow will necessarily grow. Economically, British domination is also paramount, and yet the expansive tendency of the Indian economy is continually straining at the leash. There is famine and widespread misery and, on the other hand, there is an accumulation of capital. Poverty and riches go side by side, decay and building up, disruption and unity, dead thought and new. Behind all the distressing features there is an inner vitality which cannot be suppressed.

Outwardly the war has encouraged India's industrial growth and production, and yet it is doubtful how far this has led to the establishment of new industries, or is merely an extension and diversion of old industries. The apparent stability of the index of India's industrial activity during war-time indicates that no fundamental advance has been made. Indeed, some competent observers are of the opinion that the war and British policy during it have actually had a hampering effect on India's industrial growth. Dr John Mathai, an eminent economist and a director of Tata's, said recently:

The general belief ... that the war has tremendously accelerated India's industrial progress is a proposition which, to say the least, would need a lot of proving. While it is true that certain established industries have increased their production in response to the war demand, several new industries of fundamental importance to the country, which had been projected before the war have, under stress of war conditions, been either abandoned or been unable to reach completion. My personal view is that, on a careful balance of the various factors in the situation, it will be found that, unlike countries such as Canada and Australia, the war has been more a hampering than an accelerating influence in India. I agree, however ... that India has sufficient potential capacity to supply her basic manufactured needs.

Such statistical evidence of industrial activity as is available supports this view, and indicates that if pre-war progress could have been maintained at the old rate it would have led not only to the establishment of new industries, but also to far greater production as a whole.⁷

What the war has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt is India's capacity to convert this potential into actuality with remarkable speed, given the opportunity to do so. Functioning as an economic unit, she has accumulated large capital assets within five war years, in spite of all the obstructions placed in her way. These assets are in the form of sterling securities which are not available to her and which, it is stated, will be blocked in the future. These sterling securities represent the expenditure incurred by the Government of India on behalf of the British Government as well as the U.S.A. They also represent

the hunger, famine, epidemics, emasculation, weakened resistance, stunted growth, and death by starvation and disease of vast numbers of human beings in India.

Because of the accumulation of capital assets, India has paid off her big debt to England and has become a creditor country. Owing to gross negligence and mismanagement, tremendous suffering has been caused to the people of India, but the fact remains that India can accumulate these huge sums in a short period of time. The actual expenditure on the war incurred by India in five years greatly exceeds the total British investments in India during more than 100 years. This fact brings into proper perspective how little the progress made in India has been during the past century of British administration—railways, irrigation works and the like of which we hear so much. It also demonstrates the enormous capacity of India to advance with rapidity on all fronts. If this striking effort can be made under discouraging conditions and under a foreign Government which disapproves of industrial growth in India, it is obvious that planned development under a free national Government would completely change the face of India within a few years.

There is a curious habit of the British of appraising their economic and social achievement in present-day India by criteria derived from social achievement here or elsewhere in the distant past. They compare, with evident satisfaction to themselves, what they have done in India during their regime with changes made some hundreds of years ago. The fact that the industrial revolution, and more especially the vast technological improvements of the past fifty years or so, have entirely changed the pace and tempo of life somehow escapes them when they think of India. They forget also that India was not a barren, sterile, and barbarous country when they came here, but a highly evolved and cultured nation which had temporarily become static and backward in technical achievements.

What values and standards are we to apply in making such comparisons? The Japanese made Manchukuo within eight years highly industrialized for their own purposes; more coal was being produced there than in India after many generations of British effort. Their material record in Korea compares well with other colonial empires⁸ And yet behind these records there is slavery, cruelty, humiliation, exploitation, and the attempt to destroy the soul of a people. The nazis and the Japanese have created new records in the inhuman suppression of

subject peoples and races. We are often reminded of this and told that the British have not treated us quite so badly. Is that to be the new measure and standard of comparison and judgment?

There is a great deal of pessimism in India today and a sense of frustration, and both can be understood, for events have dealt harshly with our people and the future is not promising. But there is also below the surface a stirring and a pushing, signs of a new life and vitality, and unknown forces are at work. Leaders function at the top but they are driven in particular directions by the anonymous and unthinking will of an awakening people, who seem to be outgrowing their past.

India's Growth Arrested

A nation, like an individual, has many personalities, many approaches to life. If there is a sufficiently strong organic bond between these different personalities, it is wed; otherwise those personalities split up and lead to disintegration and trouble. Normally, there is a continuous process of adjustment going on and some kind of an equilibrium is established. If normal development is arrested, or sometimes if there is some rapid change which is not easily assimilated, then conflict arises between those different personalities. In the mind and spirit of India, below the surface of our superficial conflicts and divisions, there has been this fundamental conflict due to a long period of arrested growth. A society, if it is to be both stable and progressive, must have a certain more or less fixed foundation of principles as well as a dynamic outlook. Both appear to be necessary. Without the dynamic outlook there is stagnation and decay, without some fixed basis of principle there is likely to be disintegration and destruction.

In India from the earliest days there was a search for those basic principles, for the unchanging, the universal, the absolute. Yet the dynamic outlook was also present and an appreciation of life and the changing world. On these two foundations a stable and progressive society was built up, though the stress was always more on stability and security and the survival of the race. In later years the dynamic aspect began to fade away, and in the name of eternal principles the social structure was made rigid and unchanging. It was, as a matter of fact, not

wholly rigid and it did change gradually and continuously. But the ideology behind it and the general framework continued unchanged. The group idea as represented by more or less autonomous castes, the joint family and the communal self-governing life of the village were the main pillars of this system, and all these survived for so long because, in spite of their failings, they fulfilled some essential needs of human nature and society. They gave security, stability to each group and a sense of group freedom. Caste survived because it continued to represent the general power-relationships of society, and class privileges were maintained, not only because of the prevailing ideology, but also because they were supported by vigour, intelligence, and ability, as well as a capacity for self-sacrifice. That ideology was not based on a conflict of rights but on the individuals obligations to others and a satisfactory performance of his duties, on cooperation within the group and between different groups, and essentially on the idea of promoting peace rather than war. While the social system was rigid, no limit was placed on the freedom of the mind.

Indian civilization achieved much that it was aiming at, but, in that very achievement, life began to fade away, for it is too dynamic to exist for long in a rigid, unchanging environment. Even those basic principles, which are said to be unchanging, lose their freshness and reality when they are taken for granted and the search for them ceases. Ideas of truth, beauty, and freedom decay, and we become prisoners following a deadening routine.

The very thing India lacked, the modern West possessed, and possessed to excess. It had the dynamic outlook. It was engrossed in the changing world, caring little for ultimate principles, the unchanging, the universal. It paid little attention to duties and obligations and emphasized rights. It was active, aggressive, acquisitive, seeking power and domination, living in the present and ignoring the future consequences of its actions. Because it was dynamic, it was progressive and full of life, but that life was a fevered one and the temperature kept on rising progressively.

If Indian civilization went to seed because it became static, self-absorbed and inclined to narcissism, the civilization of the modern West, with all its great and manifold achievements, does not appear to have been a conspicuous success or to have thus far solved the basic problems of life. Conflict is inherent in it and periodically it indulges in self-destruction on a colossal scale. It seems to lack

something to give it stability, some basic principles to give meaning to life though what these are I cannot say. Yet because it is dynamic and full of life and curiosity, there is hope for it.

India, as well as China, must learn from the West, for the modern West has much to teach, and the spirit of the age is represented by the West. But the West is also obviously in need of learning much and its advances in technology will bring it little comfort if it does not learn some of the deeper lessons of life, which have absorbed the minds of thinkers in all ages and in all countries.

India has become static and yet it would be utterly wrong to imagine that she was unchanging. No change at all means death. Her very survival as a highly evolved nation shows that there was some process of continuous adaptation going on. When the British came to India, though technologically somewhat backward, she was still among the advanced commercial nations of the world. Technical changes would undoubtedly have come and changed India as they have changed some Western countries. But her normal development was arrested by the British power. Industrial growth was checked and as a consequence social growth was also arrested. The normal power-relationships of society could not adjust themselves and find an equilibrium, as all power was concentrated in the alien authority, which based itself on force and encouraged groups and classes which had ceased to have any real significance. Indian life thus progressively became more artificial, for many of the individuals and groups who seemed to play an important role in it had no vital functions left and were there only because of the importance given to them by the alien power. They had long ago finished their role in history and would have been pushed aside by new forces if they had not been given foreign protection. They became straw-stuffed symbols of protégés of foreign authority, thereby cutting themselves still further away from the living currents of the nation. Normally, they would have been weeded out or diverted to some more appropriate function by revolution or democratic process. But so long as foreign authoritarian rule continued, no such development could take place. And so India was cluttered up with these emblems of the past and the real changes that were taking place were hidden behind an artificial facade. No true social balances or power-relationships within society could develop or become evident, and unreal problems assumed an undue importance.

Most of our problems today are due to this arrested growth and the prevention by British authority of normal adjustments taking place. The problem of the Indian princes is easily capable of solution if the external factor is removed. The minorities problem is utterly unlike any minority problem elsewhere; indeed it is not a minority problem at all. There are many aspects of it and no doubt we are to blame for it in the past and in the present. And yet, at the back of these and other problems is the desire of the British Government to preserve, as far as possible, the existing economy and political organization of the Indian people, and, for this purpose, to encourage and preserve the socially backward groups in their present condition. Political and economic progress has not only been directly prevented, but also made dependent on the agreement of reactionary groups and vested interests, and this may be purchased only by confirming them in their privileged positions or giving them a dominating voice in future arrangement, and thus putting formidable obstacles in the way of real change and progress. A new constitution, in order to have strength and effectiveness behind it, should not only represent the wishes of the vast majority of the people but should also reflect the inter-relation of social forces and their power relationships at the time. The main difficulty in India has been that constitutional arrangements for the future suggested by the British, or even by many Indians, ignore present social forces, and much more so potential ones which have long been arrested and are now breaking out, and try to impose and make rigid an order based on a past and vanishing relationship which has no real relevance today.

The fundamental reality in India is British military occupation and the policy which it supports. That policy has been expressed in many ways and has often been cloaked in dubious phrases, but latterly, under a soldier Viceroy, it has been expressed with clarity. That military occupation is to continue so long as the British can help it. But there are certain limits to the application of force. It leads not only to the growth of opposing forces but to many other consequences unthought of by those who rely upon it too much.

We see the consequences of this enforced stunting of India's growth and this arresting of her progress. The most obvious fact is the sterility of British rule in India and the thwarting of Indian life by it. Alien rule is inevitably cut off from the creative energies of the people it dominates. When this alien rule has its own

economic and cultural centre far from the subject country and is further backed by racialism, this divorce is complete, and leads to spiritual and cultural starvation of the subject peoples. The only real scope that the nation's creative energy finds is in some kind of opposition to that rule, and yet that scope itself is limited and the outlook becomes narrow and one-sided. That opposition represents the conscious or unconscious effort of the living and growing forces to break through the shell that confines them and is thus a progressive and inevitable tendency. But it is too single-track and negative to have full touch with many aspects of reality in our lives. Complexes and prejudices and phobias grow and darken the mind, mental idols of the group and the community take shape, and slogans and set phrases take the place of inquiry into real problems. Within the framework of a sterile alien rule no effective solutions are possible, and national problems, unable to find solution, become even more acute. We have arrived in India at a stage when no half measures can solve our problems, no advance on one sector is enough. There has to be a big jump and advance all along the line, or the alternative may be overwhelming catastrophe.

As in the world as a whole, so in India, it is a race between the forces of peaceful progress and construction and those of disruption and disaster, with each succeeding disaster on a bigger scale than the previous one.

We can view this prospect as optimists or as pessimists, according to our predilections and mental make-up. Those who have faith in a moral ordering of the universe and of the ultimate triumph of virtue can, fortunately for them, function as lookers on or as helpers, and cast the burden on God; others will have to carry that burden on their own weak shoulders, hoping for the best and preparing for the worst.

Religion, Philosophy, and Science

India must break with much of her past and not allow it to dominate the present. Our lives are encumbered with the dead wood of this past; all that is dead and has served its purpose has to go. But that does not mean a break with, or a forgetting of, the vital and life-giving in that past. We can never forget the ideals that have moved our race, the dreams of the Indian people through the ages, the

wisdom of the ancients, the buoyant energy and love of life and nature of our forefathers, their spirit of curiosity and mental adventure, the daring of their thought, their splendid achievements in literature, art and culture, their love of truth and beauty and freedom, the basic values that they set up, their understanding of life's mysterious ways, their toleration of other ways than theirs, their capacity to absorb other peoples and their cultural accomplishments, to synthesize them and develop a varied and mixed culture; nor can we forget the myriad experiences which have built up our ancient race and lie embedded in our subconscious minds. We will never forget them or cease to take pride in that noble heritage of ours. If India forgets them she will no longer remain India and much that has made her our joy and pride will cease to be.

It is not this that we have to break with, but all the dust and dirt of ages that have covered her up and hidden her inner beauty and significance, the excrescences and abortions that have twisted and petrified her spirit, set it in rigid frames, and stunted her growth. We have to cut away these excrescences and remember afresh the core of that ancient wisdom and adapt it to our present circumstances. We have to get out of traditional ways of thought and living which, for all the good they may have done in a past age, and there was much good in them, have ceased to have significance today. We have to make our own all the achievements of the human race and join up with others in the exciting adventure of man, more exciting today perhaps than in earlier ages, realizing that this has ceased to be governed by national boundaries or old divisions and is common to the race of man everywhere. We have to revive the passion for truth and beauty and freedom which gives meaning to life, and develop afresh that dynamic outlook and spirit of adventure which distinguished those of our race who, in ages past, built our house on these strong and enduring foundations. Old as we are, with memories stretching back to the early dawns of human history and endeavour, we have to grow young again, in tune with our present time, with the irrepressible spirit and joy of youth in the present and its faith in the future.

Truth as ultimate reality, if such there is, must be eternal, imperishable, unchanging. But that infinite, eternal and unchanging truth cannot be apprehended in its fullness by the finite mind of man which can only grasp, at most, some small aspect of it limited by time and space, and by the state of development of that mind and the prevailing ideology of the period. As the mind

develops and enlarges its scope, as ideologies change and new symbols are used to express that truth, new aspects of it come to light, though the core of it may yet be the same. And so, truth has ever to be sought and renewed, reshaped, and developed, so that, as understood by man, it might keep in line with the growth of his thought and the development of human life. Only then does it become a living truth for humanity, supplying the essential need for which it craves, and offering guidance in the present and for the future.

But if some one aspect of the truth has been petrified by dogma in a past age, it ceases to grow and develop and adapt itself to the changing needs of humanity; other aspects of it remain hidden and it fails to answer the urgent questions of a succeeding age. It is no longer dynamic but static, no longer a life-giving impulse but dead thought and ceremonial and a hindrance to the growth of the mind and of humanity. Indeed, it is probably not even understood to the extent it was understood in that past age when it grew up and was clothed in the language and symbols of that age. For its context is different in a later age, the mental climate has changed, new social habits and customs have grown up, and it is often difficult to understand the sense, much less the spirit, of that ancient writing. Moreover, as Aurobindo Ghose has pointed out, every truth, however true in itself, yet taken apart from others which at once limit and complete it, becomes a snare to bind the intellect and a misleading dogma; for in reality each is one thread of a complex weft and no thread must be taken apart from the weft.

Religions have helped greatly in the development of humanity. They have laid down values and standards and have pointed out principles for the guidance of human life. But with all the good they have done, they have also tried to imprison truth in set forms and dogmas, and encouraged ceremonials and practices which soon lose all their original meaning and become mere routine. While impressing upon man the awe and mystery of the unknown that surrounds him on all sides, they have discouraged him from trying to understand not only the unknown but what might come in the way of social effort. Instead of encouraging curiosity and thought, they have preached a philosophy of submission to nature, to established churches, to the prevailing social order, and to everything that is. The belief in a supernatural agency which ordains everything has led to a certain irresponsibility on the social plane, and emotion and sentimentality have taken the place of reasoned thought and inquiry.

Religion, though it has undoubtedly brought comfort to innumerable human beings and stabilized society by its values, has checked the tendency to change and progress inherent in human society.

Philosophy has avoided many of these pitfalls and encouraged thought and inquiry. But it has usually lived in its ivory tower, cut off from life and its day-to-day problems, concentrating on ultimate purposes and failing to link them with the life of man. Logic and reason were its guides and they took it far in many directions, but that logic was too much the product of the mind and unconcerned with fact.

Science ignored the ultimate purposes and looked at fact alone. It made the world jump forward with a leap, built up a glittering civilization, opened up innumerable avenues for the growth of knowledge, and added to the power of man to such an extent that for the first time it was possible to conceive that man could triumph over and shape his physical environment. Man became almost a geological force, changing the face of the planet earth chemically, physically, and in many other ways. Yet when this sorry scheme of things entirely seemed to be in his grasp, to mould it nearer to the heart's desire, there was some essential lack and some vital element was missing. There was no knowledge of ultimate purpose and not even an understanding of the immediate purpose, for science had told us nothing about any purpose in life. Nor did man, so powerful in his control of nature, have the power to control himself, and the monster he had created ran amok. Perhaps new developments in biology, psychology, and similar sciences, and the interpretation of biology and physics, may help man to understand and control himself more than he has done in the past. Or, before any such advances influence human life sufficiently, man may destroy the civilization he has built and have to start anew.

There is no visible limit to the advance of science, if it is given the chance to advance. Yet it may be that the scientific method of observation is not always applicable to all the varieties of human experience and cannot cross the uncharted ocean that surrounds us. With the help of philosophy it may go a little further and venture even on these high seas. And when both science and philosophy fail us, we shall have to rely on such other powers of apprehension as we may possess. For there appears to be a definite stopping place beyond which reason, as the mind is at present constituted, cannot go. 'La dernière démarche

de la raison,' says Pascal, 'c'est de connaitre qu'il y a une infinite de choses qui la surpassent. Elle est bien faible si elle ne va jusque-la.'

Realizing these limitations of reason and scientific method, we have still to hold on to them with all our strength, for without that firm basis and background we can have no grip on any kind of truth or reality. It is better to understand a part of truth and apply it to our lives, than to understand nothing at all and flounder helplessly in a vain attempt to pierce the mystery of existence. The applications of science are inevitable and unavoidable for all countries and peoples today. But something more than its application is necessary. It is the scientific approach, the adventurous and yet critical temper of science, the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not on pre-conceived theory, the hard discipline of the mind—all this is necessary, not merely for the application of science but for life itself and the solution of its many problems. Too many scientists today, who swear by science, forget all about it outside their particular spheres. The scientific approach and temper are, or should be, a way of life, a process of thinking, a method of acting and associating with our fellow men. That is a large order and undoubtedly very few of us, if any at all, can function in this way with even partial success. But this criticism applies in equal or even greater measure to all the injunctions which philosophy and religion have laid upon us. The scientific temper points out the way along which man should travel. It is the temper of a free man. We live in a scientific age, so we are told, but there is little evidence of this temper in the people anywhere or even in their leaders.

Science deals with the domain of positive knowledge but the temper which it should produce goes beyond that domain. The ultimate purposes of man may be said to be to gain knowledge, to realize truth, to appreciate goodness and beauty. The scientific method of objective inquiry is not applicable to all these, and much that is vital in life seems to lie beyond its scope—the sensitiveness to art and poetry, the emotion that beauty produces, the inner recognition of goodness. The botanist and zoologist may never experience the charm and beauty of nature; the sociologist may be wholly lacking in love for humanity. But even when we go to the regions beyond the reach of the scientific method and visit the

mountain tops where philosophy dwells and high emotions fid us, or gaze at the immensity beyond, that approach and temper are still necessary.

Very different is the method of religion. Concerned as it is principally with the regions beyond the reach of objective inquiry, it relies on emotion and intuition. And then it applies this method to everything in life, even to those things which are capable of intellectual inquiry and observation: Organized religion, allying itself to theology and often more concerned with its vested interests than with things of the spirit, encourages a temper which is the very opposite to that of science. It produces narrowness and intolerance, credulity and superstition, emotionalism and irrationalism. It tends to close and limit the mind of man, and to produce a temper of a dependent, unfree person.

Even if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him, so Voltaire said—‘si Dieu n’existait pas, d faudrait l’inventer.’ Perhaps that is true, and indeed the mind of man has always been trying to fashion some such mental image or conception which grew with the mind’s growth. But there is something also in the reverse proposition: even if God exists, it may be desirable not to look up to Him or to rely upon Him. Too much dependence on supernatural factors may lead, and has often led, to a loss of self-reliance in man and to a blunting of his capacity and creative ability. And yet some faith seems necessary in things of the spirit which are beyond the scope of our physical world, some reliance on moral, spiritual, and idealistic conceptions, or else we have no anchorage, no objectives or purpose in life. Whether we believe in God or not, it is impossible not to believe in something, whether we call it a creative life-giving force or vital energy inherent in matter which gives it its capacity for self-movement and change and growth, or by some other name, something that is as real, though elusive, as life is real when contrasted with death. Whether we are conscious of it or not most of us worship at the invisible altar of some unknown god and offer sacrifices to it—some ideal, personal, national or international; some distant objective that draws us on, though reason itself may find little substance in it; some vague conception of a perfect man and a better world. Perfection may be impossible of attainment, but the demon in us, some vital force, urges us on and we tread that path from generation to generation.

As knowledge advances, the domain of religion, in the narrow sense of the word, shrinks. The more we understand life and nature, the less we look for

supernatural causes. Whatever we can understand and control ceases to be a mystery. The processes of agriculture, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, our social relations, were all at one time under the domain of religion and its high priests. Gradually they have passed out of its control and become subjects for scientific study. Yet much of this is still powerfully affected by religious beliefs and the superstitions that accompany them. The final mysteries still remain far beyond the reach of the human mind and are likely to continue to remain so. But so many of life's mysteries are capable of and await solution, that an obsession with the final mystery seems hardly necessary or justified. Life still offers not only the loveliness of the world but also the exciting adventure of fresh and never ceasing discoveries, of new panoramas opening out and new ways of living, adding to its fullness and ever making it richer and more complete.

It is therefore with the temper and approach of science, allied to philosophy, and with reverence for all that lies beyond, that we must face life. Thus we may develop an integral vision of life which embraces in its wide scope the past and the present, with all their heights and depths, and look with serenity towards the future. The depths are there and cannot be ignored, and always by the side of the loveliness that surrounds us is the misery of the world. Man's journey through life is an odd mixture of joy and sorrow; thus only can he learn and advance. The travel of the soul is a tragic and lonely business. External events and their consequences affect us powerfully, and yet the greatest shocks come to our minds through inner fears and conflicts. While we advance on the external plane, as we must if we are to survive, we have also to win peace with ourselves and between ourselves and our environment, a peace which brings satisfaction not only to our physical and material needs but also to those inner imaginative urges and adventurous spirits that have distinguished man ever since he started on his troubled journey in the realms of thought and action. Whether that journey has any ultimate purpose or not we do not know, but it has its compensations, and it points to many a nearer objective which appears attainable and which may again become the starting point for a fresh advance.

Science has dominated the Western world and everyone there pays tribute to it, and yet the West is still far from having developed the real temper of science. It has still to bring the spirit and the flesh into creative harmony. In India in many obvious ways we have a greater distance to travel. And yet there may be

fewer major obstructions on our way, for the essential basis of Indian thought for ages past, though not its later manifestations, fits in with the scientific temper and approach, as well as with internationalism. It is based on a fearless search for truth, on the solidarity of man, even on the divinity of everything living, and on the free and co-operative development of the individual and the species, ever to greater freedom and higher stages of human growth.

The Importance of the National Idea. Changes Necessary in India

A blind reverence for the past is bad and so also is a contempt for it, for no future can be founded on either of these. The present and the future inevitably grow out of the past and bear its stamp, and to forget this is to build without foundations and to cut off the roots of national growth. It is to ignore one of the most powerful forces that influence people. Nationalism is essentially a group memory of past achievements, traditions, and experiences, and nationalism is stronger today than it has ever been. Many people thought that nationalism had had its day and must inevitably give place to the ever-growing international tendencies of the modern world. Socialism with its proletarian background derided national culture as something tied up with a decaying middle class. Capitalism itself became progressively international with its cartels and combines and overflowed national boundaries. Trade and commerce, easy communications and rapid transport, the radio and cinema, all helped to create an international atmosphere and to produce the delusion that nationalism was doomed.

Yet whenever a crisis has arisen nationalism has emerged again and dominated the scene, and people have sought comfort and strength in their old traditions. One of the remarkable developments of the present age has been the rediscovery of the past and of the nation. This going back to national traditions has been most marked in the ranks of labour and the proletarian elements, who were supposed to be the foremost champions of international action. War or similar crisis dissolves their internationalism and they become subject to

nationalist hates and fears even more than other groups. The most striking example of this is the recent development of the Soviet Union. Without giving up in any way its essential social and economic structure, it has become more nationalist-minded and the appeal of the fatherland is now much greater than the appeal of the international proletariat. Famous figures in national history have again been revived and have become heroes of the Soviet people. The inspiring record of the Soviet people in this war, the strength and unity they have shown, are no doubt due to a social and economic structure which has resulted in social advances on a wide front, on planned production and consumption, on the development of science and its functions, and on the release of a vast quantity of new talent and capacity for leadership, as also on brilliant leadership. But it may also be partly due to a revival of national memories and traditions and a new awareness of the past, of which the present was felt to be a continuation. It would be wrong to imagine that this nationalist outlook of Russia is just a reversion to old-style nationalism. It is certainly not that. The tremendous experiences of the revolution and all that followed it cannot be forgotten, and the changes that resulted from it in social structure and mental adjustment must remain. That social structure leads inevitably to a certain international outlook. Nevertheless nationalism has reappeared in such a way as to fit in with the new environment and add to the strength of the people.

It is instructive to compare the development of the Soviet state with the varying fortunes of the Communist Parties in other countries. There was the first flush of enthusiasm among many people in all countries, and especially in proletarian ranks, soon after the Soviet Revolution. Out of this grew communist groups and parties. Then conflicts arose between these groups and national labour parties. During the Soviet five-year plans there was another wave of interest and enthusiasm, and this probably affected middle-class intellectuals even more than Labour. Again there was a reaction at the time of the purges in the Soviet Union. In some countries Communist parties were suppressed, in others they made progress. But almost everywhere they came into conflict with organized national Labour. Partly this was due to the conservatism of Labour, but more so to a feeling that the Communist Party represented a foreign group and that they took their policies from Russia. The inherent nationalism of Labour came in the way of its accepting the co-operation of the Communist Party even

when many were favourably inclined towards communism. The many changes in Soviet policy, which could be understood in relation to Russia, became totally incomprehensible as policies favoured by Communist parties elsewhere. They could only be understood on the basis that what may be good for Russia must necessarily be good for the rest of the world. These Communist parties, though they consisted of some able and very earnest men and women, lost contact with the nationalist sentiments of the people and weakened accordingly. While the Soviet Union was forging new links with national tradition, the Communist parties of other countries were drifting further away from it.

I cannot speak with much knowledge of what happened elsewhere, but I know that in India the Communist Party is completely divorced from, and is ignorant of, the national traditions that fill the minds of the people. It believes that communism necessarily implies a contempt for the past. So far as it is concerned, the history of the world began in November, 1917, and everything that preceded this was preparatory and leading up to it. Normally speaking, in a country like India with large numbers of people on the verge of starvation and the economic structure cracking up, communism should have a wide appeal. In a sense there is that vague appeal, but the Communist Party cannot take advantage of it because it has cut itself off from the springs of national sentiment and speaks in a language which finds no echo in the hearts of the people. It remains an energetic but small group, with no real roots.

It is not only the Communist Party in India that has failed in this respect. There are others who talk glibly of modernism and modern spirit and the essence of Western culture, and are at the same time ignorant of their own culture. Unlike the communists, they have no ideal that moves them and no driving force that carries them forward. They take the external forms and outer trappings of the West (and often some of the less desirable features), and imagine that they are in the vanguard of an advancing civilization. Naïve and shallow and yet full of their own conceits, they live, chiefly in a few large cities, an artificial life which has no living contacts with the culture of the East or of the West.

National progress can, therefore, neither be in a repetition of the past nor in its denial. New patterns must inevitably be adopted but they must be integrated with the old. Sometimes the new, though very different, appears in terms of pre-existing patterns, and thus create a feeling of a continuous development from the

past, a link in the long chain of the history of the race. Indian history is a striking record of changes introduced in this way, a continuous adaptation of old ideas to a changing environment, of old patterns to new. Because of this there is no sense of cultural break in it and there is that continuity, in spite of repeated change, from the far distinct days of Mohenjo Daro to our own age. There was a reverence for the past and for traditional forms, but there was also a freedom and flexibility of the mind and a tolerance of the spirit. So while forms often remained, the inner content continued to change. In no other way could that society have survived for thousands of years. Only a living and growing mind could overcome the rigidity of traditional forms, only those forms could give it continuity and stability.

Yet this balance may become precarious and one aspect may overshadow, and to some extent, suppress this other. In India there was an extraordinary freedom of the mind allied to certain rigid social forms. These forms ultimately influenced the freedom of the mind and made it in practice, if not in theory, more rigid and limited. In western Europe there was no such freedom of the mind and there was also much less rigidity in social forms. Europe had a long struggle for the freedom of the mind and, as a consequence, social forms also changed.

In China the flexibility of the mind was even greater than in India and for all her love of, and attachment to, tradition, that mind never lost its flexibility and essential tolerance. Tradition sometimes delayed changed but that mind was not afraid of change, though it retained the old patterns. Even more than in India, Chinese society built up a balance and an equilibrium which survived through many changes for thousands of years. Perhaps one of the great advantages that China has had over other countries is her entire freedom from dogma, from the narrow and limited religious outlook, and her reliance on reason and common sense. No other country has based its culture less on religion and more on morality and ethics and a deep understanding of the variety of human life.

In India, because of the recognized freedom of the mind, howsoever limited in practice, new ideas are not shut out. They are considered and can be accepted far more than in countries which have a more rigid and dogmatic outlook on life. The essential ideals of Indian culture are broad-based and can be adapted to almost any environment. The bitter conflict between science and religion which

shook up Europe in the nineteenth century would have no reality in India, nor would change based on the applications of science bring any conflict with those ideals. Undoubtedly such changes would stir up, as they are stirring up, the mind of India, but instead of combating them or rejecting them it would rationalize them from its own ideological point of view and fit them into its mental framework. It is probable that in this process many vital changes may be introduced in the old outlook, but they will not be super-imposed from outside and will seem rather to grow naturally from the cultural background of the people. This is more difficult today than it might have been, because of the long period of arrested growth and the urgent necessity for big and qualitative changes.

Conflict, however, there will be, with much of the superstructure that has grown up round those basic ideals and which exist and stifles us today. That superstructure will inevitably have to go, because much of it is bad in itself and is contrary to the spirit of the age. Those who seek to retain it do an id service to the basic ideals of Indian culture, for they mix up the good and the bad and thus endanger the former. It is no easy matter to separate the two or draw a hard and fast line between them, and here opinions will differ widely. But it is not necessary to draw any such theoretical and logical line; the logic of changing life and the march of events will gradually draw that line for us. Every kind of development—technological or philosophical—necessitates contact with life itself, with social needs, with the living movements of the world. Lack of this contact leads to stagnation and loss of vitality and creativeness. But if we maintain these contacts and are receptive to them, we shall adapt ourselves to the curve of life without losing the essential characteristic which we have valued.

Our approach to knowledge in the past was a synthetic one, but limited to India. That limitation continued and the synthetic approach gave place gradually to a more analytical one. We have now to lay greater stress on the synthetic aspect and make the whole world our field of study. This emphasis on synthesis is indeed necessary for every nation and individual if they are to grow out of the narrow grooves of thought and action in which most people have lived for so long. The development of science and its applications have made this possible for us, and yet the very excess of new knowledge has added to its difficulty. Specialization has led to a narrowing of individual life in a particular groove,

and man's labour in industry is often confined to some infinitesimal part of the whole product. Specialization in knowledge and work will have to continue, but it seems more essential than ever that a synthetic view of human life and man's adventure through the ages should be encouraged. This view will have to take into consideration the past and the present, and include in its scope all countries and peoples. In this way perhaps we might develop, in addition to our own national backgrounds and cultures, an appreciation of others and a capacity to understand and cooperate with the peoples of other countries. Thus also we might succeed to some extent in building up integrated personalities instead of the lop-sided individuals of today. We might become, in Plato's words, 'spectators of all time and all being,' drawing sustenance from the rich treasures that humanity has accumulated, adding to them, and applying them in building for the future.

It is a curious and significant act that, in spite of all modern scientific progress and talk of internationalism, racialism and other separating factors are at least as much in evidence today, if not more so, than at any previous time in history. There is something lacking in all this progress, which can neither produce harmony between nations nor within the spirit of man. Perhaps more synthesis and a little humility towards the wisdom of the past, which, after all, is the accumulated experience of the human race, would help us to gain a new perspective and greater harmony. That is especially needed by those peoples who live a fevered life in the present only and have almost forgotten the past. But for countries like India a different emphasis is necessary, for we have too much of the past about us and have ignored the present. We have to get rid of that narrowing religious outlook, that obsession with the supernatural and metaphysical speculations, that loosening of the mind's discipline in religious ceremonial and mystical emotionalism, which come in the way of our understanding ourselves and the world. We have to come to grips with the present, this life, this world, this nature which surrounds us in its infinite variety. Some Hindus talk of going back to the Vedas; some Muslims dream of an Islamic theocracy. Idle fancies, for there is no going back to the past; there is no turning back even if this was thought desirable. There is only one-way traffic in Time.

India must therefore lessen her religiosity and turn to science. She must get rid of the exclusiveness in thought and social habit which has become like a prison to her, stunting her spirit and preventing growth. The idea of ceremonial purity has erected barriers against social intercourse and narrowed the sphere of social action. The day-to-day religion of the orthodox Hindu is more concerned with what to eat and what not to eat, who to eat with and from whom to keep away, than with spiritual values. The rules and regulations of the kitchen dominate his social life. The Muslim is fortunately free from these inhibitions, but he has his own narrow codes and ceremonials, a routine which he rigorously follows, forgetting the lesson of brotherhood which his religion taught him. His view of life is, perhaps, even more limited and sterile than the Hindu view, though the average Hindu today is a poor representative of the latter view, for he has lost that traditional freedom of thought and the background that enriches life in many ways.

Caste is the symbol and embodiment of this exclusiveness among the Hindus. It is sometimes said that the basic idea of caste might remain, but its subsequent harmful development and ramifications should go; that it should not depend on birth but on merit. This approach is irrelevant and merely confuses the issue. In a historical context a study of the growth of caste has some value, but we cannot obviously go back to the period when caste began; in the social organization of today it has no place left. If merit is the only criterion and opportunity is thrown open to everybody, then caste loses all its present-day distinguishing features and, in fact, ends. Caste has in the past not only led to the suppression of certain groups, but to a separation of theoretical and scholastic learning from craftsmanship, and a divorce of philosophy from actual life and its problems. It was an aristocratic approach based on traditionalism. This outlook has to change completely, for it is wholly opposed to modern conditions and the democratic ideal. The functional organization of social groups in India may continue, but even that will undergo a vast change as the nature of modern industry creates new functions and puts an end to many old ones. The tendency today everywhere is towards a functional organization of society, and the concept of abstract rights is giving place to that of functions. This is in harmony with the old Indian ideal.

The spirit of the age is in favour of equality, though practice denies it almost everywhere. We have got rid of slavery in the narrow sense of the word, that a man can be the property of another. But a new slavery, in some ways worse than the old, has taken its place all over the world. In the name of individual freedom, political and economic systems exploit human beings and treat them as commodities. And again, though an individual cannot be the property of another, a country and a nation can still be the property of another nation, and thus group slavery is tolerated. Racialism also is a distinguishing feature of our times, and we have not only master nations but also master races.

Yet the spirit of the age will triumph. In India, at any rate, we must aim at equality. That does not and cannot mean that everybody is physically or intellectually or spiritually equal or can be made so. But it does mean equal opportunities for all and no political, economic, or social barrier in the way of any individual or group. It means a faith in humanity and a belief that there is no race or group that cannot advance and make good in its own way, given the chance to do so. It means a realization of the fact that the backwardness or degradation of any group is not due to inherent failings in it, but principally to lack of opportunities and long suppression by other groups. It should mean an understanding of the modern world wherein real progress and advance, whether national or international, have become very much a joint affair and a backward group pulls back others. Therefore, not only must equal opportunities be given to all, but special opportunities for educational, economic and cultural growth must be given to backward groups so as to enable them to catch up to those who are ahead of them. Any such attempt to open the doors of opportunity to all in India will release enormous energy and ability and transform the country with amazing speed.

If the spirit of the age demands equality, it must necessarily also demand an economic system which fits in with it and encourages it. The present colonial system in India is the very antithesis of it. Absolutism is not only based on inequality but must perpetuate it in every sphere of life. It suppresses the creative and regenerative forces of a nation, bottles up talent and capacity, and discourages the spirit of responsibility. Those who have to suffer under it lose their sense of dignity and self-reliance. The problems of India, complicated as they seem, are essentially due to an attempt to advance while preserving the

political and economic structure more or less intact. Political advance is made subject to the preservation of this structure and existing vested interests. The two are incompatible.

Political change there must be, but economic change is equally necessary. That change will have to be in the direction of a democratically planned collectivism. ‘The choice,’ says R.H. Tawney, ‘is not between competition and monopoly, but between monopoly which is irresponsible and private and a monopoly which is responsible and public.’ Public monopolies are growing even in capitalist states and they will continue to grow. The conflict between the idea underlying them and private monopoly will continue till the latter is liquidated. A democratic collectivism need not mean an abolition of private property, but it will mean the public ownership of the basic and major industries. It will mean the co-operative or collective control of the land. In India especially it will be necessary to have, in addition to the big industries, co-operatively controlled small and village industries. Such a system of democratic collectivism will need careful and continuous planning and adaptation to the changing needs of the people. The aim should be the expansion of the productive capacity of the nation in every possible way, at the same time absorbing all the labour power of the nation in some activity or other and preventing unemployment. As far as possible there should be freedom to choose one’s occupation. An equalization of income will not result from all this, but there will be far more equitable sharing and a progressive tendency towards equalization. In any event, the vast differences that exist today will disappear completely, and class distinctions, which are essentially based on differences in income, will begin to fade out.

Such a change would mean an upsetting of the present-day acquisitive society based primarily on the profit motive. The profit motive may still continue to some extent but it will not be the dominating urge, nor will it have the same scope as it has today. It would be absurd to say that the profit motive does not appeal to the average Indian, but it is nevertheless true that there is no such admiration for it in India as there is in the West. The possessor of money may be envied but he is not particularly respected or admired. Respect and admiration still go to the man or woman who is considered good and wise, and especially to those who sacrifice themselves or what they possess for the public good. The

Indian outlook, even of the masses, has never approved of the spirit of acquisitiveness.

Collectivism involves communal undertakings and co-operative effort. This again is fully in harmony with old Indian social conceptions which were all based on the idea of the group. The decay of the group system under British rule, and especially of the self-governing village, has caused deep injury to the Indian masses, even more psychological than economic. Nothing positive came in its place, and they lost their spirit of independence, their sense of responsibility, and their capacity to co-operate together for common purposes. The village, which used to be an organic and vital unit, became progressively a derelict area, just a collection of mud huts and odd individuals. But still the village holds together by some invisible link and old memories revive. It should be easily possible to take advantage of these age-long traditions and to build up communal and co-operative concerns in the land and in small industry. The village can no longer be a self-contained economic unit (though it may often be intimately connected with a collective or cooperative farm), but it can very well be a governmental and electoral unit, each such unit functioning as a self governing community within the larger political framework, and looking after the essential needs of the village. If it is treated to some extent as an electoral unit, this will simplify provincial and all-India elections considerably by reducing the number of direct electors. The village council, itself chosen by all the adult men and women of the village, could form these electors for the bigger elections. Indirect elections may have some disadvantages but, having regard to the background in India, I feel sure that the village should be treated as a unit. This will give a truer and more responsible representation.

In addition to this territorial representation, there should also be direct representation of the collectives and co-operatives on the land and in industry. Thus the democratic organization of the state will consist of both functional and territorial representatives, and will be based on local autonomy. Some such arrangement will be completely in harmony with India's past as well as with her present requirements. There will be no sense of break (except with the conditions created by British rule) and the mass mind will accept it as a continuation of the past which it still remembers and cherishes.

Such a development in India would be in tune with political and economic internationalism. It would breed no conflicts with other nations and would be a powerful factor for peace in Asia and the world. It would help in the realization of that one world towards which we are inevitably being driven, even though our passions delude us and our minds fail to understand it. The Indian people, freed from the terrible sense of oppression and frustration, will grow in stature again and lose their narrow nationalism and exclusiveness. Proud of their Indian heritage, they will open their minds and hearts to other peoples and other nations, and become citizens of this wide and fascinating world, marching onwards with others in that ancient quest in which their forefathers were the pioneers.

India: Partition or Strong National State or Centre of Supra-national State?

It is difficult to discover a just balance between one's hopes and fears or to prevent one's wishes colouring the thinking of one's mind. Our desires seek out supporting reasons and tend to ignore facts and arguments that do not fit in with them. I try to reach that balance so that I may be able to judge correctly and find out the true basis for action, and yet I know how far I am from success and how I cannot get rid of the multitude of thoughts and feelings which have gone to build me up and to fence me in with their invisible bars. So also others may err in different directions. An Indian's and an Englishman's view of India and her place in the world will inevitably diverge and differ, conditional as each is on a different individual and national past. The individual and the national group fashion their own destiny by their actions; these past actions lead to the present and what they do today forms the basis of their tomorrows. *Karma*, they have called this in India, the law of cause and effect, the destiny which our past activities create for us. It is not an invariable destiny and many other factors go to influence it, and the individual's will is itself supposed to have some play. If this freedom to vary the results of past action were not present, then indeed we would all be mere robots in the iron grip of an unavoidable fate. Yet that past

Karma is a powerful factor in shaping the individual and the nation, and nationalism itself is a shadow of it with all its good and bad memories of the past.

Perhaps, this past inheritance influences the national group even more than the individual, for large numbers of human beings are driven more by unconscious and impersonal urges than the individual, and it is more difficult to divert them from their course. Moral considerations may influence an individual but their effect on a group is far less, and the larger the group the less is their effect on it. And it is easier, especially in the modern world, to influence the group by insidious propaganda. And yet sometimes, though rarely, the group itself rises to a height of moral behaviour, forcing the individual to forget his narrow and selfish ways. More often the group fads far below the individual standard.

War produces both these reactions, but the dominant tendency is a release from moral responsibility and the collapse of the standards that civilization has so laboriously built up. Successful war and aggression lead to a justification and continuance of this policy, to imperialist domination and ideas of a master race. Defeat results in frustration and the nursing of feelings of revenge. In either event, hatred and the habit of violence grow. There is ruthlessness and brutality, and a refusal even to try to understand the other's viewpoint. And thus the future is conditioned and more wars and conflicts follow with all their attendant consequences.

The last 200 years of enforced relationship between India and England have built up this *Karma*, this destiny, for both of them, and it continues to govern their relations to each other. Entangled in its meshes, we have thus far struggled in vain to rid ourselves of this past inheritance and start afresh on a different basis. The last five years of war have unhappily added to that past evil *Karma* and made reconciliation and a normal relationship more difficult. That record of 200 years, like all else, is a mixture of good and evil. To the Englishman the good outweighs the evil, to the Indian the evil is so overwhelming that it darkens the whole period. But whatever the balance of good and evil there might be, it is obvious that any relationship that is enforced produces hatred and a bitter dislike of each other, and out of these feelings only evil consequences can flow.

A revolutionary change, both political and economic, is not only needed in India but would appear to be inevitable. At the end of 1939, soon after the war

started, and again in April, 1942, there seemed to be a faint possibility of such a change taking place by consent between India and England. But those possibilities and opportunities passed because every basic change was feared. But the change will come. Has the stage of consent passed? In the presence of common perils the past loses some of its obsessions and the present is viewed in terms of the future. Now the past has returned and has been grievously added to. The receptive mood has changed and become hard and bitter. Some settlement will come sooner or later, after more conflict or without it, but it is far less likely to be real, sincere, and co-operative. More probably it will be an unwilling submission on both sides to overriding circumstances, with continuing ill-will and distrust. No attempted solution which assumes even in principle the retention of India as part of the British empire has the slightest chance of acceptance or adoption. No solution which retains feudal relics in India can possibly last.

Life is cheap in India and when this is so, life is empty and ugly and shoddy and all the horrid brood of poverty envelop it. There is an enervating atmosphere in India, due to many causes, imposed or inherent, but essentially the resultant of poverty and want. We have a terribly low standard of living and a very high rate of dying. Industrially developed and rich countries have a way of looking at undeveloped and poor countries just as the rich man looks on the poor and unfortunate.

The rich man, out of his abundant resources and opportunities, develops high standards and fastidious tastes and blames the poor for their habits and lack of culture. Having denied them the opportunity to better themselves, he makes their poverty and its attendant evils justifications for a further denial.

India is not a poor country. She is abundantly supplied with everything that makes a country rich, and yet her people are very poor. She has a noble heritage of culture-forms and her culture-potential is very great; but many new developments and the accessories of culture are lacking. This lack is due to many causes and largely to deliberate deprivation. When this is so, the vital energy of the people must overcome the obstacles in the way and fill the lack. That is happening in India today. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that India has the resources as well as the intelligence, skill, and capacity to advance rapidly. She has the accumulated cultural and spiritual experience of ages behind

her. She can progress both in scientific theory and the applications of science and become a great industrial nation. Her scientific record is already noteworthy, in spite of the many limitations she suffers from and the lack of opportunity for her young men and women to do scientific work. That record is not great considering the size and possibilities of the country, but it is significant of what will happen when the energies of the nation are released and opportunities are provided.

Only two factors may come in the way: international developments and external pressure on India, and lack of a common objective within the country. Ultimately it is the latter alone that will count. If India is split up into two or more parts and can no longer function as a political and economic unit, her progress will be seriously affected. There will be the direct weakening effect, but much worse will be the inner psychological conflict between those who wish to reunite her and those who oppose this. New vested interests will be created which will resist change and progress, a new evil *Karma* will pursue us in the future. One wrong step leads to another; so it has been in the past and so it may be in the future. And yet wrong steps have to be taken sometimes lest some worse peril befall us; that is the great paradox of politics, and no man can say with surety whether present wrong-doing is better and safer in the end than the possibility of that imagined peril. Unity is always better than disunity, but an enforced unity is a sham and dangerous affair, full of explosive possibilities. Unity must be of the mind and heart, a sense of belonging together and of facing together those who attack it. I am convinced that there is that basic unity in India, but it has been overlaid and hidden to some extent by other forces. These latter may be temporary and artificial and may pass off, but they count today and no man can ignore them.

It is our fault, of course, and we must suffer for our failings. But I cannot excuse or forgive the British authorities for the deliberate part they have played in creating disruption in India. All other injuries will pass, but this will continue to plague us for a much longer period. Often I am reminded of Ireland and China when I think of India. Both differ from India and from each other in their past and present problems, and yet there are many similarities. Shall we have to tread that same path in the future?

Jim Phelan in his *Jail Journey* tells us of the effect of jail on human character, and everyone who has spent a long time in prison knows how true his statement is: ‘The jail … acts as a magnifying glass on human character. Every tiny weakness is brought out, emphasized, wakened, until presently there is no more of the convict with the weakness but only a weakness wearing convict clothes.’ Some such effect is produced on national character by foreign rule. That is not the only effect, for noble qualities also develop and strength is gradually built up through resistance. But foreign authority encourages the former and tries to suppress the latter. Just as we have convict warders in prison whose chief qualification is to spy on their fellow-convicts, so in a subject country there is no lack of puppets and sycophants who put on the livery of authority and act on its behalf. There are others also who do not consciously line up in this way but who are nevertheless influenced by the policies and intrigues of the dominant power.

To accept the principle of division of India, or rather the principle that there should be no enforced unity, may lead to a calm and dispassionate consideration of its consequences and thus to a realization that unity is in the interest of all. Yet obviously there is the danger that once this wrong step is taken, other like ones may follow in its train. The attempt to solve one problem in the wrong way may well create new problems. If India is to be divided into two or more parts, then the amalgamation of the major Indian states into India becomes more difficult, for those states will find an additional reason, which they might not otherwise have, for keeping aloof and holding on to their authoritarian regimes.⁹

Any division of India on a religious basis as between Hindus and Muslims, as envisaged by the Muslim League today, cannot separate the followers of these two principal religions of India, for they are spread out all over the country. Even if the areas in which each group is in a majority are separated, huge minorities belonging to the other group remain in each area. Thus instead of solving the minority problem, we create several in place of one. Other religious groups, like the Sikhs, are split up unfairly against their will and placed in two different states. In giving freedom to separate to one group, other groups, though in a minority, are denied that freedom and compelled to isolate themselves from the rest of India against their emphatic and deeply felt wishes. If it is said that the majority (religious) must prevail in each area, so far as the question of separation is concerned, there is no particular reason why the majority view

should not decide the question for the whole of India. Or that each tiny area should not decide its independent status for itself and thus create a vast number of small states—an incredible and fantastic development. Even so it cannot be done with any logic, for religious groups are intermingled and overlap in the population all over the country.

It is difficult enough to solve such problems by separation where nationalities are concerned. But where the test becomes a religious one it becomes impossible of solution on any logical basis. It is reversion to some medieval conception which cannot be fitted into the modern world.

If the economic aspects of separation are considered it is clear that India as a whole is a strong and more-or-less self-sufficient economic unit. Any division will naturally weaken her and one part will have to depend on the other. If the division is made so as to separate the predominantly Hindu and Muslim areas, the former will comprise far the greater part of the mineral resources and industrial areas. The Hindu areas will not be so hard hit from this point of view. The Muslim areas, on the other hand, will be the economically backward, and often deficit, areas which cannot exist without a great deal of outside assistance. Thus the odd fact emerges that those who today demand separation will be the greatest sufferers from it. Because of a partial realization of this fact, it is now stated on their behalf that separation should take place in such a way as to give them an economically balanced region. Whether this is possible under any circumstances I do not know, but I rather doubt it. In any event any such attempt means forcibly attaching other large areas with a predominantly Hindu and Sikh population to the separated area. That would be a curious way of giving effect to the principle of self-determination. I am reminded of the story of the man who killed his father and mother and then threw himself on the mercy of the court as an orphan.

Another very curious contradiction emerges. While the principle of self-determination is invoked, the idea of a plebiscite to decide this is not accepted, or at most, it is said that the plebiscite should be limited to Muslims only in the area. Thus in Bengal and the Punjab the Muslim population is about 54 per cent or less. It is suggested that if there is to be voting only this 54 per cent should vote and decide the fate of the remaining 46 per cent or more, who will have no

say in the matter. This might result in 28 per cent deciding the fate of the remaining 72 per cent.

It is difficult to understand how any reasonable person can advance these propositions or expect them to be agreed to. I do not know, and nobody can know till an actual vote takes place on this issue, how many Muslims in the areas concerned would vote for partition. I imagine that a large number of them, possibly even a majority, would vote against it. Many Muslim organizations are opposed to it. Every non-Muslim, whether he is a Hindu, or Sikh, or Christian, or Parsee, is opposed to it. Essentially this sentiment in favour of partition has grown in the areas where Muslims are in a small minority—areas which, in any event, would remain undetached from the rest of India. Muslims in provinces where they are in a majority have been less influenced by it; naturally, for they can stand on their own feet and have no reason to fear other groups. It is least in evidence in the Northwest Frontier Province (95 per cent Muslim), where the Pathans are brave and self-reliant and have no fear complex. Thus, oddly enough, the Muslim League's proposal to partition India finds far less response in the Muslim areas sought to be partitioned than in the Muslim minority areas which are unaffected by it. Yet the fact remains that considerable numbers of Muslims have become sentimentally attached to this idea of separation without giving thought to its consequences. Indeed, the proposition has so far only been vaguely stated and no attempt has been made to define it, in spite of repeated requests.

I think this sentiment has been artificially created and has no roots in the Muslim mind. But even a temporary sentiment may be strong enough to influence events and create a new situation. Normally, adjustments would take place from time to time, but in the peculiar position in which India is situated today, with power concentrated in foreign hands, anything may happen. It is clear that any real settlement must be based on the goodwill of the constituent elements and on the desire of all parties to it to co-operate together for a common objective. In order to gain that any sacrifice in reason is worthwhile. Every group must not only be theoretically and actually free and have equal opportunities of growth, but should have the sensation of freedom and equality. It is not difficult, if passions and unreasoning emotions are set aside, to devise such freedom with the largest autonomy for provinces and states and yet a strong

central bond. There could even be autonomous units within the larger provinces or states, as in Soviet Russia. In addition to this, every conceivable protection and safeguard for minority rights could be inserted into the constitution.

All this can be done, and yet I do not know how the future will take shape under the influence of various indeterminate factors and forces, the chief of these being British policy. It may be that some division of India is enforced, with some tenuous bond joining the divided parts. Even if this happens, I am convinced that the basic feeling of unity and world developments will later bring the divided parts nearer to each other and result in a real unity.

That unity is geographical, historical, and cultural, and all that; but the most powerful factor in its favour is the trend of world events. Many of us are of opinion that India is essentially a nation; Mr Jinnah has advanced a two-nation theory and has lately added to it and to political phraseology by describing some religious groups as sub-nations, whatever these might be. His thought identifies a nation with religion. That is not the usual approach today. But whether India is properly to be described as one nation or two or more really does not matter, for the modern idea of nationality has been almost divorced from statehood. The national state is too small a unit today and small states can have no independent existence. It is doubtful if even many of the larger national states can have any real independence. The national state is thus giving place to the multi-national state or to large federations. The Soviet Union is typical of this development. The United States of America, though bound together by strong national ties, constitute essentially a multi-national State. Behind Hitler's march across Europe there was something more than the Nazi lust for conquest. New forces were working towards the liquidation of the small states system in Europe. Hitler's armies are now rapidly rolling back or are being destroyed, but the conception of large federations remains.

Mr H.G. Wells has been telling the world, with all the fire of an old prophet, that humanity is at the end of an age—an age of fragmentation in the management of its affairs, fragmentation politically among separate sovereign states and economically among unrestricted business organizations competing for profit. He tells us that it is the system of nationalist individualism and unco-ordinated enterprise that is the world's disease. We shall have to put an end to the national state and devise a collectivism which neither degrades nor enslaves.

The prophets are ignored and sometimes even stoned by their generation. And so Mr Weds' warnings, and those of many others, are voices in the wilderness so far as those in authority are concerned. Nevertheless, they point to inevitable trends. These trends can be hastened or delayed, or if those who have power are so blind, may even have to wait another and greater disaster before they take actual shape.

In India, as elsewhere, we are too much under the bondage of slogans and set phrases derived from past events, and ideologies which have little relevance today, and their chief function is to prevent reasoned thought and a dispassionate consideration of the situation as it exists. There is also the tendency towards abstractions and vague ideals, which arouse emotional responses and are often good in their way, but which also lead to a woodiness of the mind and unreality. In recent years a great deal has been written and said on the future of India, and especially on the partition or unity of India; and yet the astonishing fact remains that those who propose 'Pakistan' or partition have consistently refused to define what they mean, or to consider the implications of such a division. They move on the emotional plane only, as also many of those who oppose them, a plane of imagination and vague desire, behind which lie imagined interests. Inevitably, between these two emotional and imaginative approaches there is no meeting ground. And so 'Pakistan' and 'Akhand Hindustan' (undivided India) are bandied about and hurled at each other. It is clear that group emotions and conscious or subconscious urges count and must be attended to. It is at least equally clear that facts and realities do not vanish by our ignoring them or covering them up by a film of emotion; they have a way of emerging at awkward moments and in unexpected ways. And decisions taken primarily on the basis of emotions, or when emotions are the dominating consideration, are likely to be wrong and to lead to dangerous developments.

It is obvious that whatever may be the future of India, and even if there is a regular partition, the different parts of India will have to cooperate with each other in a hundred different ways. Even independent nations have to co-operate with each other, much more so must Indian provinces or such parts as emerge from a partition, for these stand in an intimate relationship to each other and must hang together or deteriorate, disintegrate, and lose their freedom. Thus the very first practical question is: What are the essential common bonds which must

bind and cement various parts of India if she is to progress and remain free, and which are equally necessary even for the autonomy and cultural growth of those parts. Defence is an obvious and outstanding consideration, and behind that defence lie the industries feeding it, transport and communications, and some measure at least of economic planning. Customs, currency, and exchange also, and the maintenance of the whole of India as an internally free-trade area, for any internal tariff barriers would be fatal barriers to growth. And so on; there are many other matters which would inevitably, both from the point of view of the whole and the parts, have to be jointly and centrally directed. There is no getting away from it whether we are in favour of Pakistan or not, unless we are blind to everything except a momentary passion. The vast growth of air services today has led to the demand for their internationalization, or to some form of international control. Whether various countries are wise enough to accept this is doubtful, but it is quite certain that air developments can only take place in India on an all-India basis; it is inconceivable for a partitioned India to make progress in regard to them in each part separately. This applies also to many other activities which already tend to outgrow even national boundaries. India is big enough as a whole to give them scope for development, but not so partitioned India.

Thus we arrive at the inevitable and ineluctable conclusion that, whether Pakistan comes or not, a number of important and basic functions of the state must be exercised on an all-India basis if India is to survive as a free state and progress. The alternative is stagnation, decay, and disintegration, leading to loss of political and economic freedom, both for India as a whole and its various separated parts. As has been said by an eminent authority: 'The inexorable logic of the age presents the country with radically different alternatives: union plus independence or disunion plus dependence'. What form the union is to take, and whether it is called union or by some other name, is not so important, though names have their own significance and psychological value. The essential fact is that a number of varied activities can only be conducted effectively on a joint all-India basis. Probably many of these activities will soon be under the control of international bodies. The world shrinks and its problems overlap. It takes less than three days now to go right across the world by air, from any one place to another, and tomorrow, with the development of stratosphere navigation, it may

take even less time. India must become a great world centre of air travel; India will also be linked by rail to western Asia and Europe on the one side, and to Burma and China on the other. Not far from India, across the Himalayas in the north, lies in Soviet Asia one of the highly developed industrial areas, with an enormous future potential. India will be affected by this and will react in many ways.

The way of approach, therefore, to the problem of unity or Pakistan, is not in the abstract and on the emotional level, but practically, and with our eyes on the present-day world. That approach leads us to certain obvious conclusions, that a binding cement in regard to certain important functions and matters is essential for the whole of India. Apart from them there may be and should be the fullest freedom to constituent units, and an intermediate sphere where there is both joint and separate functioning. There may be differences of opinion as to where one sphere ends, and the other begins, but such differences, when considered on a practical basis, are generally fairly easy of adjustment.

But all this must necessarily be based on a spirit of willing cooperation, on the absence of a feeling of compulsion, and on the sensation of freedom in each unit and individual. Old vested interests have to go; it is equally important that no new ones are created. Certain proposals, based on metaphysical conceptions of groups and forgetting the individuals who comprise them, make one individual politically equal to two or three others and thus create new vested interests. Any such arrangement can only lead to grave dissatisfaction and instability.

The right of any well-constituted area to secede from the Indian federation or union has often been put forward, and the argument of the U.S.S.R. advanced in support of it. That argument has little application, for conditions there are wholly different and the right has little practical value. In the emotional atmosphere in India today it may be desirable to agree to this for the future in order to give that sense of freedom from compulsion which is so necessary. The Congress has in effect agreed to it. But even the exercise of that right evolves a pre-consideration of all those common problems to which reference has been made. Also there is grave danger in a possibility of partition and division to begin with, for such an attempt might well scotch the very beginnings of freedom and the formation of a free national state. Insuperable problems will rise and confuse all the real issues. Disintegration will be in the air and all manner of groups, who are otherwise

agreeable to a joint and unified existence, will claim separate states for themselves, or special privileges which are encroachments on others. The problem of the Indian states will become far more difficult of solution, and the states system, as it is today, will get a new lease of life. The social and economic problems will be far harder to tackle. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of any free state emerging from such a turmoil, and if something does emerge, it will be a pitiful caricature full of contradictions and insoluble problems. Before any such right of secession is exercised there must be a properly constituted, functioning, free India. It may be possible then, when external influences have been removed and real problems face the country, to consider such questions objectively and in a spirit of relative detachment, far removed from the emotionalism of today, which can only lead to unfortunate consequences which we may all have to regret later. Thus it may be desirable to fix a period, say ten years after the establishment of the free Indian state, at the end of which the right to secede may be exercised through proper constitutional process and in accordance with the clearly expressed will of the inhabitants of the area concerned.

Many of us are utterly weary of present conditions in India and are passionately eager to find some way out. Some are even prepared to clutch at any straw that floats their way in the vague hope that it may afford some momentary relief, some breathing space to a system that has long felt strangled and suffocated. That is very natural. And there is danger in these rather hysterical and adventurist approaches to vital problems affecting the well-being of hundreds of millions and the future peace of the world. We live continually on the verge of disaster in India, and indeed the disaster sometimes overwhelms us, as we saw in Bengal and elsewhere in India last year. The Bengal famine, and all that followed it, were not tragic exceptions due to extraordinary and unlooked for causes which could not be controlled or provided for. They were vivid, frightful pictures of India as she is, suffering for generations past from a deep-seated organic disease which has eaten into her very vitals. That disease will take more and more dangerous and disastrous forms unless we divert all our joint energies to its uprooting and cure. A divided India, each part trying to help itself and not caring for, or co-operating with, the rest, will lead to an aggravation of the disease and to sinking into a welter of hopeless, helpless misery. It is terribly

late already and we have to make up for lost time. Must even the lesson of the Bengal famine be lost upon us? There are still many people who can think only in terms of political percentages, of weightage, of balancing, of checks, of the preservation of privileged groups, of making new groups privileged, of preventing others from advancing because they themselves are not anxious to, or are incapable of, doing so, of vested interests, of avoiding major social and economic changes, of holding on to the present picture of India with only superficial alterations. That way lies supreme folly.

The problems of the moment seem big and engross our attention. And yet, in a longer perspective, they may have no great importance and, under the surface of superficial events, more vital forces may be at work. Forgetting present problems then for a while and looking ahead, India emerges as a strong united state, a federation of free units, intimately connected with her neighbours and playing an important part in world affairs. She is one of the very few countries which have the resources and capacity to stand on their own feet. Today probably the only such countries are the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Great Britain can only be reckoned as one of these if the resources of her empire are added to her own, and even then a spread-out and disgruntled empire is a source of weakness. China and India are potentially capable of joining that group. Each of them is compact and homogeneous and full of natural wealth, manpower, and human skill and capacity; indeed India's potential industrial resources are probably even more varied and extensive than China's, and so also her exportable commodities which may be required for the imports she needs. No other country, taken singly, apart from these four, is actually or potentially in such a position. It is possible of course that large federations or groups of nations may emerge in Europe or elsewhere and form huge multi-national states.

The Pacific is likely to take the place of the Atlantic in the future as a nerve centre of the world. Though not directly a Pacific state, India will inevitably exercise an important influence there. India will also develop as the centre of economic and political activity in the Indian Ocean area, in South-East Asia and right up to the Middle East. Her position gives an economic and strategic importance in a part of the world which is going to develop rapidly in the future. If there is a regional grouping of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean on either side of India—Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya,

Siam, Java, etc.—present-day minority problems will disappear, or at any rate will have to be considered in an entirely different context.

Mr G.D.H. Cole considers India to be itself a supra-national area, and he thinks that in the long run she is destined to be the centre of a mighty supra-national state covering the whole of the Middle East and lying between a Sino-Japanese Soviet Republic, a new state based on Egypt, Arabia, and Turkey, and the Soviet Union in the north. All this is pure conjecture and whether any such development will ever take place no man can say. For my part I have no liking for a division of the world into a few huge supra-national areas, unless these are tied together by some strong world bond. But if people are foolish enough to avoid world unity and some world organization, then these vast supra-national regions, each functioning as one huge state but with local autonomy, are very likely to take shape. For the small national state is doomed. It may survive as a culturally autonomous area but not as an independent political unit.

Whatever happens it will be well for the world if India can make her influence felt. For that influence will always be in favour of peace and co-operation and against aggression.

Realism and Geopolitics. World Conquest or World Association. The U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

The war has entered on its final stage in Europe and the nazi power collapses before the advancing armies in the east and west. Paris, that lovely and gracious city, so tied up with freedom's struggle, is itself free again. The problems of peace, more difficult than those of war, rise up to trouble men's minds and behind them lies the disturbing shadow of the great failure of the years that followed World War I. Never again, it is said. So they said also in 1918.

Fifteen years ago, in 1929, Mr Winston Churchill said:

It is a tale that is told, from which we may draw the knowledge and comprehension needed for the future. The disproportion between the quarrels of nations and the suffering which fighting out those quarrels involves; the poor and barren prizes which reward sublime endeavour on the battlefield; the fleeting triumph of war; the long, slow, rebuilding; the awful risks so hardly run; the doom missed by a hair's breadth, by the spin of a coin, by the accident

of an accident—all this should make the prevention of another great war the main preoccupation of mankind.

Mr Churchill should know, for he has played a leading part in war and peace, led his country with extraordinary courage at a time of distress and peril and, in victory, nursed great ambitions on its behalf. After World War I, British armies occupied the whole of western Asia from the borders of India across Iran and Iraq and Palestine and Syria right up to Constantinople. Mr Churchill saw then a vision of a new Middle Eastern empire for Britain, but fate decided otherwise. What dreams does he cherish now for the future? ‘War is a strange alchemist,’ so wrote a gallant and distinguished colleague of mine, now in prison,

and in its hidden chambers are such forces and powers brewed and distilled that they tear down the plans of the victorious and vanquished alike. No peace conference at the end of the last war decided that four mighty empires of Europe and Asia should fall into dust—the Russian, the German, the Austrian, and the Ottoman. Nor was the Russian, the German, the Turkish revolution decreed by Lloyd George, Clemenceau, or Wilson.

What will the leaders of the victorious nations say when they meet together after success in war has crowned their efforts? How is the future taking shape in their minds, and how far do they agree or differ between themselves? What other reactions will there be when the passion of war subsides and people try to return to the scarce-remembered ways of peace? What of the underground resistance movements of Europe and the new forces they have released? What will the millions of war-hardened soldiers, returning home much older in mind and experience, say and do? How will they fit into the life which has gone on changing while they were away? What will happen to devastated and martyred Europe, and what to Asia and Africa? What of the ‘overpowering surge for freedom of Asia’s hundreds of millions,’ as Mr Wendell Wilkie describes it? What of all this and more? And what, above all, of the strange trick that fate so often plays, upsetting the well laid schemes of our leaders?

As the war has developed and the danger of a possible victory of the fascist powers has receded, there has been a progressive hardening and a greater conservatism in the leaders of the United Nations. The four freedoms and the Atlantic charter, vague as they were and limited in scope, have faded into the background, and the future has been envisaged more and more as a retention of the past. The struggle has taken a purely military shape, of physical force against force, and has ceased to be an attack on the philosophy of the nazis and fascists.

General Franco and petty or prospective authoritarian riders in Europe have been encouraged. Mr Churchill still glories in the conception of empire. George Bernard Shaw recently declared that: ‘There is no power in the world more completely imbued with the idea of its dominance than the British empire. Even the word “empire” sticks in Mr Churchill’s throat every time he tries to utter it.’¹⁰

There are many people in England, America and elsewhere who want the future to be different from the past and who fear that unless this is so, fresh wars and disasters, on a more colossal scale, will follow this present war. But those who have power and authority do not appear to be much influenced by these considerations, or are themselves in the grip of forces beyond their control. In England, America, and Russia we revert to the old game of power politics on a gigantic scale. That is considered realism and practical politics. An American authority on geopolitics, Professor N.J. Spykman, has written in a recent book:

The statesman who conducts foreign policy can concern himself with the values of justice, fairness, and tolerance only to the extent that they contribute to, or do not interfere with, the power objective. They can be used instrumentally as moral justification for the power quest, but they must be discarded the moment their application brings weakness. The search for power is not made for the achievement of moral values: moral values are used to facilitate the attainment of power.¹¹

This may not be representative of American thought, but it certainly represents a powerful section of it. Mr Walter Lippman’s vision of the three or four orbits encompassing the globe—the Atlantic community, the Russian, the Chinese, and later the Hindu-Muslim in South Asia—is a continuation of power politics on a vaster scale, and it is difficult to understand how he can see any world peace or co-operation emerging out of it. America is a curious mixture of what is considered hard-headed realism and a vague idealism and humanitarianism. Which of these will be the dominating tendency of the future, or what will result from their mixing together? Whatever the mass of the people may think, foreign policy remains a preserve for the experts in charge of it and they are usually wedded to a continuation of old traditions and fear any innovations which might involve their countries in new risks. Realism of course there must be, for no nation can base its domestic or foreign policy on mere good-will and flights of the imagination. But it is a curious realism that sticks to the empty shed of the past and ignores or refuses to understand the hard facts of

the present, which are not only political and economic but also include the feelings and urges of vast numbers of people. Such realism is more imaginative and divorced from today's and tomorrow's problems than much of the so-called idealism of many people.

Geopolitics has now become the anchor of the realist and its jargon of 'heartland' and 'rimland' is supposed to throw light on the mystery of national growth and decay. Originating in England (or was it Scotland?), it became the guiding light of the Nazis, fed their dreams and ambitions of world domination, and led them to disaster. A partial truth is sometimes more dangerous than a falsehood; a truth that has had its day blinds one to the reality of the present. H.J. Mackinder's theory of geopolitics, subsequently developed in Germany, was based on the growth of civilization on the oceanic fringes of the continents (Asia and Europe), which had to be defended from pressure from land invaders from the 'heartland,' which was supposed to be the centre of the Eurasian block. Control of this heartland meant world domination. But civilization is no longer confined to the oceanic fringes and tends to become universal in its scope and content. The growth of the Americas also does not fit in with a Eurasian heartland dominating the world. And air-power has brought a new factor which has upset the balance between sea-power and land-power.

Germany, nursing dreams of world conquest, was obsessed by fears of encirclement. Soviet Russia feared a combination of her enemies. England's national policy has long been based on a balance of power in Europe and opposition to any dominating power there. Always there has been fear of others, and that fear has led to aggression and tortuous intrigues. An entirely new situation will arise after the present war, with two dominating world powers—the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.—and the rest a good distance behind them, unless they form some kind of bloc. And now even the United States of America are told by Professor Spykman, in his last testament, that they are in danger of encirclement, that they should ally themselves with a 'rimland' nation, that in any event they should not prevent the 'heartland' (which means now the U.S.S.R.) from uniting with the rimland.

All this looks very clever and realistic and yet is supremely foolish, for it is based on the old policy of expansion and empire and the balance of power, which inevitably leads to conflict and war. Since the world happens to be round,

every country is encircled by others. To avoid such encirclements by the methods of power politics, there must be alliances and counter-alliances, expansion, and conquest. But, however huge a country's domination or sphere of influence becomes, there is always the danger of encirclement by those who have been left out of it, and who, on their part, fear this abnormal growth of a rival power. The only way to get rid of this danger is by world conquest or by the eliminations of every possible rival. We are witnessing today the failure of the latest attempt at world domination. Will that lesson be learnt or will there be others, driven by ambition and pride of race and power, to try their fortunes on this fatal field?

There really seems no alternative between world conquest and world association; there is no choice of a middle course. The old divisions and the quest of power politics have little meaning today and do not fit in with our environment, yet they continue. The interests and activities of states overflow their boundaries and are world-wide. No nation can isolate itself or be indifferent to the political or economic fate of other nations. If there is no co-operation there is bound to be friction with its inevitable results. Co-operation can only be on a basis of equality and mutual welfare, on a pulling-up of the backward nations and peoples to a common level of well-being and cultural advancement, on an elimination of racialism and domination. No nation and no people are going to tolerate domination and exploitation by another, even though this is given some more pleasant name. Nor will they remain indifferent to their own poverty and misery when other parts of the world are flourishing. That was only possible when there was ignorance of what was happening elsewhere.

All this seems obvious, and yet the long record of past happenings tell us that the mind of man lags far behind the course of events and adjusts itself only slowly to them. Self-interest itself should drive every nation to this wider co-operation in order to escape disaster in the future and build its own free life on the basis of others' freedom. But the self-interest of the 'realist' is far too limited by past myths and dogmas, and regards ideas and social forms, suited to one age, as immutable and as unchanging parts of human nature and society, forgetting that nothing is so changeable as human nature and society. Religious forms and notions take permanent shape, social institutions become petrified, war is looked upon as a biological necessity, empire and expansion as the prerogatives of a

dynamic and progressive people, the profit motive as the central fact dominating human relations, and ethnocentrism, a belief in racial superiority, becomes an article of faith and, even when not proclaimed, it taken for granted. Some of these ideas were common to the civilizations of East and West; many of them form the background of modern Western civilization out of which fascism and nazism grew. Ethically there is no great difference between them and the fascist creed, though the latter went much further in its contempt for human life and all that humanism stands for. Indeed, humanism, which coloured the outlook of Europe for so long, is a vanishing tradition there. The seeds of fascism were present in the political and economic structure of the West. Unless there is a break from this past ideology, success in war brings no great change. The old myths and fancies continue and, pursued as of old by the Furies, we go through the self-same cycle again.

The two outstanding facts emerging from the war are the growth in power and actual and potential wealth of the U.S.A and the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union actually is probably poorer than it was prior to the war, owing to enormous destruction, but its potential is tremendous and it will rapidly make good and go further ahead. In physical and economic power there will be none to challenge it on the Eurasian continent. Already it is showing an expansionist tendency and is extending its territories more or less on the basis of the Tsar's Empire. How far this process will go it is difficult to say. Its socialist economy does not necessarily lead to expansion for it can be made self-sufficient. But other forces and old suspicions are at play and again we notice the fear of so-called encirclement. In any event the U.S.S.R. will be busy for many years in repairing the ravages of war. Yet the tendency to expand, if not in territory then in other ways, is evident. No other country today presents such a politically solid and economically well-balanced picture as the Soviet Union, though some of the developments there in recent years have come as a shock to many of its old admirers. Its present leaders have an unchallengeable position, and everything depends on their outlook for the future.

The United States of America have astonished the world by their stupendous production and organizing capacity. They have thus not only played a leading part in the war but have accelerated a process inherent in American economy and produced a problem for themselves which will tax their wits and energies to

the utmost. Indeed it is not easy to foresee how they will solve it within the limits of their existing economic structure without serious internal and external friction. It is said that America has ceased to be isolationist. Inevitably so, for she must now depend to an extent on her exports abroad. What was a marginal factor in her pre-war economy, which could almost be ignored, will now be a dominant consideration. Where will all these exports go to, without creating friction and conflict, when production for peace takes the place of war production? And how will the millions of armed men returning home be absorbed? Every warring country will have to face this problem, but none to the same extent as the U.S.A. The vast technological changes that have taken place will lead to very great over-production or to mass unemployment, or possibly to both. Unemployment on any major scale will be bitterly resented and has been ruled out by the declared policy of the United States Government. Much thought is already being given on the absorption of the returning soldiers, etc., in gainful employment and to the prevention of unemployment. Whatever the domestic aspect of all this may be, and it will be serious enough unless basic changes take place, the international aspect is equally important.

Such is the curious nature of the present-day economy in these days of mass production, that the U.S.A., the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world, becomes dependent on other countries absorbing its surplus production. For some years after the war there will be a big demand in Europe, China, and India for machinery as well as manufactured goods. This will be of considerable help to America to dispose of her surplus. But every country will rapidly develop its own capacity to manufacture most of its needs, and exports will tend to be limited to specialized goods not produced elsewhere. The consumption capacity will also be limited by the purchasing power of the masses, and to raise this fundamental economic changes will be needed. It is conceivable that with the substantial raising of the standard of living all over the world, international trade and exchange of goods will prosper and increase. But that raising itself requires a removal of political and economic fetters on production and distribution in the colonial and backward countries. That inevitably involves big changes, with their consequent dislocation and adaptation to new systems.

England's economy has been based in the past on a big export business, on investments abroad, on the City of London's financial leadership, and on a vast

maritime carrier trade. Before the war Britain depended on imports for nearly 50 per cent of her food supplies. Probably this dependence is less now owing to her intensive food-growing campaign. These imports of food as well as raw materials had to be paid for by exports of manufactured goods, investments, shipping, financial services, and what are called 'invisible' exports. Foreign trade and, in particular, a large volume of exports were thus an essential and vital feature of the British economy. That economy was maintained by the exercise of monopoly controls in the colonial areas and special arrangements within the empire to maintain some kind of equilibrium. Those monopoly controls and arrangements were much to the disadvantage of the colonies and dependencies and it is hardly possible to maintain them in these old forms in future. Britain's foreign investments have disappeared and given place to huge debts, and London's financial supremacy has also gone. This means that in the post-war years Britain will have to depend even more on her export business and her carrier trade. And yet the possibilities of increasing exports, or even maintaining them at the old level, are strictly limited.

Great Britain's imports (*less* re-exports) in the pre-war years 1936-38 averaged £866,000,000. They were paid for as follows:

Exports	£478 million
Income on foreign investments	£203 million
Shipping services	£105 million
Financial services	£40 million
Deficit	£40 million
	£866 million

Instead of the substantial income from foreign investment there is going to be a heavy burden of external debt, due to borrowings in goods and services (apart from American Lend-Lease) from India, Egypt, Argentine, and other countries. Lord Keynes has estimated that, at the end of the war, these frozen sterling credits will amount to £3,000,000,000. At 5 per cent this will amount to £150 million per annum. Thus on a pre-war average basis Britain may have to face a deficit of considerably over £300 millions annually. Unless this is made good by additional income from exports and various services, it will lead to a marked reduction in living standards.

This appears to be the governing factor in Britain's post-war policy, and if she is to maintain her present economy, she feels she must retain her colonial empire, with only such minor changes as are unavoidable. Only as the dominant partner of a group of countries, colonial and non-colonial, does she hope to play a leading role, and to balance, politically and economically, the vast resources of the two giant powers—the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Hence the desire to continue her empire, to hold on to what she has got, as well as to extend her sphere of influence over fresh territories, for instance over Thailand. Hence also the aim of British policy to bring about a closer integration with the Dominions, as well as some of the smaller countries of western Europe. French and Dutch colonial policy generally support the British view in regard to colonies and dependencies. The Dutch Empire is indeed very much a 'satellite empire' and it could not continue to exist without the British Empire.

It is easy to understand these trends of British policy, based as they are on past outlook and standards, and formulated by men tied up with that past. Yet, within that past context of a nineteenth-century economy, the difficulties facing Britain today are very great. In the long run, her position is weak, her economy unsuited to present-day conditions, her economic resources are limited, and her industrial and military strength cannot be maintained at the old level. There is an essential instability in the methods suggested to maintain that old economy, for they lead to unceasing conflict, to lack of security, and to the growth of ill-will in the dependencies, which may make the future still more perilous for Britain. The desire of the British, understandable enough, to maintain their living standards on the old level and even to raise them, is thus made dependent upon protected markets for British exports and controlled colonial and other areas for the supply of raw materials and cheap food. This means that British living standards must be kept up even at the cost of keeping down at subsistence level or less hundreds of millions of peoples in Asia and Africa. No one wants to reduce British standards, but it is obvious that the peoples of Asia and Africa are never going to agree to the maintenance of this colonial economy which keeps them at a sub-human level. The annual purchasing power (prewar) in Britain is said to have been £97 *per capita* (in the U.S.A. it was much greater); in India it was less than £6. These vast differences cannot be tolerated, and indeed the diminishing returns of a colonial economy ultimately affect adversely even the dominating

power. In the U.S.A. this is vividly realized, and hence their desire to raise the colonial peoples' purchasing power through industrialization and self-government. Even in Britain there is some realization of the necessity of Indian industrialization, and the Bengal famine made many people think furiously on this subject. But British policy aims at industrial development in India under British control with a privileged position for British industry. The industrialization of India, as of other countries in Asia, is bound to take place; the only question is one of pace. But it is very doubtful if it can be fitted in with any form of colonial economy or foreign control.

The British Empire, as it is today, is not of course a geographical unit; nor is it an effective economic or military unit. It is a historical and sentimental unit. Sentiment and old bonds count still, but they are not likely to override, in the long run, other more vital considerations. And even this sentiment applies only to certain areas containing populations racially similar to the people of Britain. It certainly does not apply to India or the rest of the dependent colonial empire, where it is the other way about. It does not even apply to South Africa, so far as the Boers are concerned. In the major Dominions subtle changes are taking place which tend to weaken their traditional links with Britain. Canada, which has grown greatly in industrial stature during the war, is an important power, closely tied up with the U.S.A. She has developed an expanding economy which will, in some respects, come in the way of British industry. Australia and New Zealand, also with expanding economies, are realizing that they are not in the European orbit of Great Britain but in the Asiatic-American orbit of the Pacific, where the United States are likely to play a dominant role. Culturally, both Canada and Australia are progressively drawn towards the U.S.A.

The British colonial outlook today does not fit in with American policy and expansionist tendencies. The United States want open markets for their exports and do not look with favour on attempts by other powers to limit or control them. They want rapid industrialization of Asia's millions and higher standards everywhere, not for sentimental reasons but to dispose of their surplus goods. Friction between American and British export businesses and maritime trade seems to be inevitable. America's desire to establish world air supremacy, for which she has at present abundant resources, is resented in England. America probably favours an independent Thailand while England would prefer to make

it a semi-colony. These opposing approaches based, in each case, on the nature of the respective economy aimed at, run through the whole colonial sphere.

The aim of British policy to have a closer integration of the commonwealth and empire is understandable in the peculiar circumstances in which Britain is placed today. But against it is the logic of facts and world tendencies, as well as the growth of dominion nationalism and the disruptive tendencies of the colonial empire. To try to build on old foundations, to continue to think in terms of a vanished age, to dream and talk still of an empire and of monopolies spread out all over the globe, is for Britain an even more unwise and shortsighted policy than it might be for some other nations; for most of the reasons which made her a politically, industrially, and financially dominant nation have disappeared. Nevertheless Britain has had in the past, and has still, remarkable qualities—courage and the will to pull together, scientific and constructive ability and capacity for adaptation. These qualities, and others which she possesses go a long way to make a nation great and enable it to overcome the dangers and perils that confront it. And so she may be able to face her vital and urgent problems by changing over to a different and more balanced economic structure. But it is highly unlikely that she will succeed if she tries to continue as of old, with an empire tacked on to her and supporting her.

Much will inevitably depend on American and Soviet policy, and on the degree of co-ordination or conflict between the two and Britain. Everybody talks loudly about the necessity for the Big Three to pull together in the interests of world peace and co-operation, yet rifts and differences peep out at every stage, even during the course of the war. Whatever the future may hold, it is clear that the economy of the U.S.A. after the war will be powerfully expansionist and almost explosive in its consequences. Will this lead to some new kind of imperialism? It would be yet another tragedy if it did so, for America has the power and opportunity to set the pace for the future.

The future policy of the Soviet Union is yet shrouded in mystery, but there have been some revealing glimpses of it already. It aims at having as many friendly and dependent or semi-dependent countries near its borders as possible. Though working with other powers for the establishment of some world organization, it relies more in building up its own strength on an unassailable basis. So, presumably, do other nations also, in so far as they can. That is not a

hopeful prelude to world cooperation. Between the Soviet Union and other countries there is not the same struggle for export markets as between Britain and the U.S.A. But the differences are deeper, their respective viewpoints further apart, and mutual suspicions have not been allayed even by joint effort in the war. If these differences grow, the U.S.A. and Britain will tend to seek each other's company and support as against the U.S.S.R. group of nations.

Where do the hundreds of millions of Asia and Africa come in this picture? They have become increasingly conscious of themselves and their destiny, and at the same time are also world conscious. Large numbers of them follow world events with interest. For them, inevitably, the test of each move or happening is this: Does it help towards our liberation? Does it end the domination of one country over another? Will it enable us to live freely the life of our choice in co-operation with others? Does it bring equality and equal opportunity for nations as well as groups within each nation? Does it hold forth the promise of an early liquidation of poverty and illiteracy and bring better living conditions? They are nationalistic but this nationalism seeks no domination over, or interference with, others. They welcome all attempts at world co-operation and the establishment of an international order, but they wonder and suspect if this may not be another device for continuing the old domination. Large parts of Asia and Africa consist of an awakened, discontented, seething humanity, no longer prepared to tolerate existing conditions. Conditions and problems differ greatly in the various countries of Asia, but throughout this vast area, in China and India, in South-East Asia, in western Asia, and the Arab world run common threads of sentiment and invisible links which hold them together.

For a thousand years or more, while Europe was backward and often engulfed in its dark ages, Asia represented the advancing spirit of man. Epoch after epoch of a brilliant culture flourished there and great centres of civilization and power grew up. About five hundred years ago Europe revived and slowly spread eastward and westward till, in the course of centuries, it became the dominant continent of the world in power, wealth, and culture. Was there some cycle about this change and is that process now being reversed? Certainly, power and authority have shifted more to America in the far west and to eastern Europe, which was organically hardly part of the European heritage. And in the east also there has been tremendous growth in Siberia, and other countries of the East are

ripe for change and rapid advance. Will there be conflict in the future or a new equilibrium between the East and the West?

But only the distant future will decide that, and it serves little purpose to look so far ahead. For the present we have to carry the burden of the day and face the many problems which afflict us. Behind these problems in India, as in many other countries, lies the real issue, which is not merely the establishment of democracy of the nineteenth-century European type but also of far-reaching social revolution. Democracy has itself become involved in that seemingly inevitable change, and hence among those who disapprove of the latter, doubts and denials arise about the feasibility of democracy, and this leads to fascist tendencies and the continuation of an imperialist outlook. All our present-day problems in India—the communal or minority problem, the Indian princes, vested interests of religious groups and the big landowners, and the entrenched interests of British authority and industry in India—ultimately resolve themselves into opposition to social change. And because any real democracy is likely to lead to such change, therefore democracy itself is objected to and considered as unsuited to the peculiar conditions of India. So the problems of India, for all their seeming variety and differences from others, are of the same essential nature as the problems of China or Spain or many other countries of Europe and elsewhere, which the war has brought to the surface. Many of the resistance movements of Europe reflect these conflicts. Everywhere the old equilibrium of social forces has been upset, and till a new equilibrium is established there will be tension, trouble, and conflict. From these problems of the moment we are led to one of the central problems of our time: how to combine democracy with socialism, how to maintain individual freedom and initiative and yet have centralized social control and planning of the economics of the people, on the national as well as the international plane.

Freedom and Empire

The U.S.A. and the Soviet Union seem destined to play a vital part in the future. They differ from each other almost as much as any two advanced countries can differ and even their faults lie in opposite directions. All the evils of a purely

political democracy are evident in the U.S.A.; the evils of the lack of political democracy are present in the U.S.S.R. And yet they have much in common—a dynamic outlook and vast resources, a social fluidity, an absence of a medieval background, a faith in science and its applications, and widespread education and opportunities for the people. In America, in spite of vast differences in income, there are no fixed classes as in most countries and there is a sense of equity. In Russia, the outstanding event of the past twenty years has been the tremendous educational and cultural achievements of the masses. Thus in both countries the essential basis for a progressive, democratic society is present, for no such society can be based on the rule of a small intellectual *élite* over an ignorant and apathetic people. Nor can such an *élite* long continue to dominate over an educationally and culturally advanced people.

A hundred years ago de Tocqueville, discussing the Americans of those days, said:

If the democratic principle does not, on the one hand, induce men to cultivate science for its own sake, on the other, it does enormously increase the number of those who do cultivate it ... Permanent inequality of conditions leads men to confine themselves to the arrogant and sterile researches of abstract truths, whilst the social condition and institutions of democracy prepare them to seek the immediate and useful practical results of the sciences. The tendency is natural and inevitable.

Since then America has developed and changed and become an amalgam of many races, but its essential characteristics continue.

Yet another common characteristic of both Americans and Russians is that they do not carry that heavy burden of the past which has oppressed Asia and Europe, and conditioned to a great extent their activities and conflicts. They cannot, of course, escape, as none of us can, the terrible burden of this generation. But they have a clearer past, so far as other people are concerned, and are less encumbered for their journey into the future.

As a result of this they can approach other peoples without that background of mutual distrust which always accompanies the contacts of well-established imperialist nations with others. Not that their past is free of spots and stains and suspicions. Americans have their negro problem which is a continuing reproach to their professions of democracy and equality. Russians have yet to wipe out memories of past hatreds in eastern Europe and the present war is adding to

them. Still Americans make friends easily in other countries. Russians are almost totally devoid of racialism.

Most of the European nations are full of mutual hatreds and past conflicts and injustices. The imperialist powers have inevitably added to this the intense dislike for them of people over whom they have ruled. Because of England's long record of imperialist rule, her burden is the greatest. Because of this, or because of racial characteristics, Englishmen are reserved and exclusive and do not easily make friends with others. They are unfortunately judged abroad by their official representatives who are seldom the standard-bearers of their liberalism or culture, and who often combine snobbery with an apparent piety. These officials have a peculiar knack of antagonising others. Some months ago a secretary to the Government of India wrote an official letter to Mr Gandhi (in detention) which was an example of studied insolence, and which was looked upon by large numbers of people as a deliberate insult to the Indian people. For Gandhi happens to be a symbol of India.

Another era of imperialism, or an age of international co-operation or world commonwealth, which is it going to be in the future? The scales incline towards the former and the old arguments are repeated but not with the old candour. The moral urges of mankind and its sacrifices are used for base ends, and rulers exploit the goodness and nobility of man for evil purposes and take advantage of the fears, hatreds, and false ambitions of the people. They used to be more frank about empire in the old days. Speaking of the Athenian empire, Thucydides wrote: 'We make no fine profession of having a right to our empire because we overthrew the Barbarian single-handed, or because we risked our existence for the sake of our dependents and of civilization. States, like men, cannot be blamed for providing for their proper safety ... It is fear that forces us to cling to our empire in Greece, and it is fear that drives us hither, with the help of our friends, to order matters in Sicily.' And again when he referred to the tribute of the Athenian colonies: 'It may seem wickedness to have won it; but it is certainly folly to let it go.'

The history of Athens is full of lessons of the incompatibility of democracy with empire, of the tyranny of a democratic state over its colonies, and the swift

deterioration and fall of that empire. No upholder of freedom and empire today could state his case so well and so eloquently as Thucydides did:

We are the leaders of civilization, the pioneers of the human race. Our society and intercourse is the highest blessing man can confer. To be within the circle of our influence is not dependence but a privilege. Not all the wealth of the East can repay the riches we bestow. So we can work on cheerfully, using the means and the money that flow into us, confident that, try as they will, we shall still be creditors. For through effort and suffering and on many a stricken field we have found the secret of human power, which is the secret of happiness. Men have guessed at it under many names; but we alone have learnt to know it and to make it at home in our city. And the name we know it by is freedom, for it has taught us that to serve is to be free. Do you wonder why it is that alone among mankind we confer our benefits, not on conditions of self-interest, but in the fearless confidence of freedom?

All this has a familiar ring in these days when freedom and democracy are so loudly proclaimed and yet limited to some only. There is truth in it and a denial of truth. Thucydides knew little of the rest of mankind and his vision was confined to the Mediterranean countries. Proud of the freedom of his famous city, praising this freedom as the secret of happiness and human power, yet he did not realize that others also aspired to this freedom. Athens, lover of freedom, sacked and destroyed Melos and put to death all the grown men there and sold the women and children as slaves. Even while Thucydides was writing of the empire and freedom of Athens, that empire had crumbled away and that freedom was no more.

For it is not possible for long to combine freedom with domination and slavery; one overcomes the other and only a little time divides the pride and glory of empire from its fad. Today, much more than ever before, freedom is indivisible. The splendid eulogy of Pericles for his beloved city was followed soon after by its fall and the occupation of the Acropolis by a Spartan garrison. Yet his words move us still for their love of beauty, wisdom, freedom and courage, not merely in their application to the Athens of his day, but in the larger context of the world:

We are lovers of beauty without extravagance, and lovers of wisdom without unmanliness. Wealth to us is not mere material for vainglory but an opportunity for achievement; and poverty we think it no disgrace to acknowledge but a real degradation to make no effort to overcome ... Let us draw strength, not merely from twice-told arguments—how fair and noble a thing it is to show courage in battle—but from the busy spectacle of our great city's life as we have it before us day by day, falling in love with her as we see her, and remembering that all this greatness she owes to men with the fighter's daring, the wise man's understanding of his duty, and the good man's self-discipline in its performance—to men

who, if they failed in any ordeal, disdained to deprive the city of their services, but sacrificed their lives as the best offerings on her behalf. So they gave their bodies to the commonwealth and received, each for his own memory, praise that will never die, and with it the grandest of all sepulchres, not that in which their mortal bones are laid, but a home in the minds of men, where their glory remains fresh to stir to speech or action as the occasion comes by. For the whole earth is a sepulchre of famous men; and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbols, woven into the stuff of other men's lives. For you now it remains to rival what they have done and, knowing the secret of happiness to be freedom and the secret of freedom a brave heart, not idly to stand aside from the enemy's onset.¹²

The Problem of Population. Falling Birth-Rates and National Decay

Five years of war have brought about enormous changes and displacements of population on a vaster scale probably than at any previous epoch of history. Apart from the scores of millions of war casualties, more especially in China, Russia, Poland, and Germany, masses of people have been uprooted from their homes and countries. There have been military requirements, labour demands and enforced evacuations, and swarms of refugees have fled before invading armies. Even before the war the refugee problem in Europe, due to nazi policy, had grown to formidable proportions. But these pale into insignificance when compared to war developments. Apart from the direct consequences of the war, the changes in Europe are largely due to a deliberate demographic policy pursued by the nazis. They have apparently killed off million of Jews and broken up the population integrity of many countries occupied by them. In the Soviet Union many millions have moved east, forming new settlements on the other side of the Urals, which are likely to be permanent. In China it is estimated that fifty million people have been torn from their roots.

Attempts will, no doubt, be made to repatriate and rehabilitate these people, or such as survive after the war, though the task is one of prodigious complexity. Many will come back to their old homes, many may choose to remain in their new environment. On the other hand, it seems also likely that, as a result of political changes in Europe, there will be further displacement and exchange of populations.

Of far deeper and more far-reaching significance are the changes, partly physiological and biological, that are rapidly changing the population of the world. The industrial revolution and the spread of modern technology resulted in a rapid growth of population in Europe, and more especially in north-western and central Europe. As this technology has spread eastwards to the Soviet Union, aided by a new economic structure and other factors, there has been an even more spectacular increase in population in these regions. This eastward sweep of technology, accompanied by education, sanitation, and better public health, is continuing and will cover many of the countries of Asia. Some of these countries, like India, far from needing a bigger population, would be better off with fewer people.

Meanwhile, in western Europe a reverse process has set in as regards population and the problem of a fading birth-rate is growing in importance.

This tendency appears to be widespread and affects most countries in the world, with some notable exceptions like China, India, Java and the U.S.S.R. It is most marked in the industrially advanced countries. The population of France ceased to grow many years ago and is now slowly declining. In England a steady fall in the fertility rate has been noticeable since the 'eighties of the last century, and it is the lowest now in Europe, except for France. Hitler's and Mussolini's efforts to increase the birth-rate in Germany and Italy bore only temporary results. In northern, western and central Europe the decline is more marked than in southern and eastern Europe (exclusive of the U.S.S.R.), but similar tendencies are observable in all these regions. Europe, apart from Russia, reaches its maximum population, according to present trends, about 1955 and then begins to decline. This has nothing to do with war losses which will aggravate this downward tendency.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, goes on rapidly increasing its population and is likely to reach a figure exceeding 250 millions by 1970. This does not include any additions due to territorial changes as a result of the war. This growth of population taken together with technological and other kinds of progress inevitably makes it the dominant power in Europe and Asia. In Asia much depends on the industrial development of China and India. Their huge populations are a burden and a weakness unless they are properly and productively organized. In Europe the great colonial powers of the past appear to

have definitely passed the stage of expansion and aggression. Their economic and political organization and the skill and ability of their people may still give them an important place in world affairs, but they will progressively cease to count as major powers, unless they function as a group. ‘It does not seem likely that any nation of north-western and central Europe will challenge the world again. Germany, like her western neighbours, has passed the period in which she could become a dominant world power, owing to the diffusion of technological civilization to peoples that are growing more rapidly.’¹³

Technological and industrial growth have brought power to a number of Western peoples and countries. It is exceedingly unlikely that this source of power will remain the monopoly of a few nations. Hence the political and economic dominance of Europe over great parts of the world must inevitably decline rapidly and it will cease to be the nerve-centre of the Eurasian continent and Africa. Because of this basic reason the old European powers will think and act more in terms of peace and international co-operation and will avoid war in so far as they can. When aggression is almost certain to lead to disaster, it ceases to attract. But those world powers that are still dominant have not the same urge to co-operation with others, unless it is the moral urge, which is very seldom associated with power.

What is the cause of this widespread phenomenon of falling birthrates? The increasing use of contraceptives and the desire to have small regulated families may have produced some effect, but it is generally recognized that this has not made any great difference. In Ireland, which is a Catholic country and where contraceptives are presumably little used, a fall in the birth-rate started earlier than in other countries. Probably the increasing postponement of marriages in the West is one of the causes. Economic factors may have some influence but even that is hardly an important consideration. It is well-known that as a rule fertility is higher among the poor than among the rich, as it is also higher in rural areas than in urban. A smaller group can maintain higher standards, and the growth of individualism lessens the importance of the group and the race. Professor J.B.S. Haldane tells us that it is a general rule that in a great many civilized societies those types which are regarded in the particular society in question as admirable are less fertile than the general run of the population. Thus those societies would appear to be biologically unstable. Large families are often

associated with inferior intelligence. Economic success is also supposed to be the opposite of biological success.

Little seems to be known about the basic causes behind the falling birth-rate, though many subsidiary ones are suggested. It is possible, however, that certain physiological and biological reasons lie at the back of it—the kind of life industrialized communities lead and the environment in which they live. A deficient diet, alcoholism, neurotic conditions or poor health generally, mental or physical, affect reproduction. And yet disease-ridden and insufficiently-fed communities, as in India, still reproduce themselves at a prodigious rate. Perhaps the strain and stress of modern life, the ceaseless competition and worry, lessen fertility. Probably the divorce from the life-giving soil is an important factor. Even in America the fertility of farm labourers is considerably more than double that of the professional classes.

It would seem that the kind of modern civilization that developed first in the West and spread elsewhere, and especially the metropolitan life that has been its chief feature, produces an unstable society which gradually losses its vitality. Life advances in many fields and yet it loses its grip; it becomes more artificial and slowly ebbs away. More and more stimulants are needed—drugs to enable us to sleep or to perform our other natural functions, foods and drinks that tickle the palate and produce a momentary exhilaration at the cost of weakening the system, and special devices to give us a temporary sensation of pleasure and excitement—and after the stimulation comes the reaction and a sense of emptiness. With all its splendid manifestations and real achievements, we have created a civilization which has something counterfeit about it. We eat ersatz foods produced with the help of ersatz fertilizers; we indulge in ersatz emotions and our human relations seldom go below the superficial plane. The advertiser is one of the symbols of our age with his continuous and raucous attempts to delude us and dull our powers of perception and induce us to buy unnecessary and even harmful products. I am not blaming others for this state of affairs. We are all products of this age with the characteristics of our generation, equally entitled to credit or blame. Certainly I am as much part of this civilization, that I both appreciate and criticize, as any one else, and my habits and ways of thought are conditioned by it.

What is wrong with modern civilization which produces at the roots these signs of sterility and racial decadence? But this is nothing new, it has happened before and history is full of examples of it. Imperial Rome in its decline was far worse. Is there a cycle governing this inner decay and can we seek out the causes and eliminate them? Modern industrialism and the capitalist structure of society cannot be the sole causes, for decadence has often occurred without them. It is probable, however, that in their present forms they do create an environment, a physical and mental climate, which is favourable for the functioning of those causes. If the basic cause is something spiritual, something affecting the mind and spirit of man, it is difficult to grasp though we may try to understand it or intuitively feel it. But one fact seems to stand out: that a divorce from the soil, from the good earth, is bad for the individual and the race.

The earth and the sun are the sources of life and if we keep away from them for long life begins to ebb away. Modern industrialized communities have lost touch with the soil and do not experience that joy which nature gives and the rich glow of health which comes from contact with mother earth. They talk of nature's beauty and go to seek it in occasional week-ends, littering the countryside with the product of their own artificial lives, but they cannot commune with nature or feel part of it. It is something to look at and admire, because they are told to do so, and then return with a sigh of relief to their normal haunts; just as they might try to admire some classic poet or writer and then, wearied by the attempt, return to their favourite novel or detective story, where no effort of mind is necessary. They are not children of nature, like the old Greeks or Indians, but strangers paying an embarrassing call on a scarce-known distant relative. And so they do not experience that joy in nature's rich life and infinite variety and that feeling of being intensely alive which came so naturally to our forefathers. Is it surprising then that nature treats them as unwanted step-children?

We cannot go back to that old pantheistic outlook and yet perhaps we may still sense the mystery of nature, listen to its song of life and beauty, and draw vitality from it. That song is not sung in the chosen spots only, and we can hear it, if we have the ears for it, almost everywhere. But there are some places where it charms even those who are unprepared for it and comes like the deep notes of a distant and powerful organ. Among these favoured spots is Kashmir where

loveliness dwells and an enchantment steals over the senses. Writing about Kashmir, M. Foucher, the French savant, says:

May I go further and say what I believe to be the true reason for this special charm of Kashmir, the charm which everybody seeks, even those who do not try to analyse it? It cannot be only because of its magnificent woods, the pure limpidity of its lakes, the splendour of its snowy mountain tops, or the happy murmur of its myriad brooks sounding in the cool soft air. Nor can it be only the grace or majesty of its ancient buildings, though the ruins of Martand rise at the prow of their Karewa as proudly as a Greek temple on a promontory, and the little shrine of Payar, carved out of ten stones, has the perfect proportions of the choragic monuments of Lysicrates. One cannot even say that it comes of the combination of art and landscape, for fine buildings in a romantic setting are to be found in many other countries. But what is found in Kashmir alone is the grouping of these two kinds of beauty in the midst of a nature still animated with a mysterious life, which knows how to whisper close to our ears and make the pagan depths of us quiver, which leads us back, consciously or unconsciously, to those past days lamented by the poet, when the world was young, when

le del sur la terre

*Marchait et respirait dans un peuple de dieux.*¹⁴

But my purpose is not to praise Kashmir, though my partiality for it occasionally leads me astray, nor to advance an argument in favour of pantheism, though I am pagan enough to believe that a touch of paganism is good for the mind and body. I do think that life cut off completely from the soil will ultimately wither away. Of course there is seldom such a complete cutting off and the processes of nature take their time. But it is a weakness of modern civilization that it is progressively going further away from the life-giving elements. The competitive and acquisitive characteristics of modern capitalist society, the enthronement of wealth above everything else, the continuous strain and the lack of security for many, add to the ill-health of the mind and produce neurotic states. A saner and more balanced economic structure would lead to an improvement of these conditions. Even so it will be necessary to have greater and more living contacts with the land and nature. This does not mean a return to the land in the old and limited sense of the word, or to a going back to primitive ways of life. That remedy might well be worse than the disease. It should be possible to organize modern industry in such a way as to keep men and women, as far as possible, in touch with the land, and to raise the cultural level of the rural areas. The village and the city should approach each other in regard to life's amenities, so that in both there should be full opportunities for bodily and mental development and a full all-rounded life.

That this can be done I have little doubt, provided only that people want to do it. At present there is no such widespread desire and our energies are diverted (apart from killing each other) in producing ersatz products and ersatz amusements. I have no basic objection to most of these, and some I think are definitely desirable, but they absorb the time that might often be better employed and give a wrong perspective to life. Artificial fertilizers are in great demand today and I suppose they do good in their own way. But it does seem odd to me that in their enthusiasm for the artificial product, people should forget natural manure and even waste it and throw it away. Only China, as a nation, has had the good sense to make full use of the natural stuff. Some experts say that artificial fertilizers, though producing quick results, weaken the soil by depriving it of some essential ingredients, and thus the land grows progressively more sterile. With the earth, as with our individual lives, there is far too much of burning the candle at both ends. We take her riches from her at a prodigious pace and give little or nothing back.

We are proud of our increasing ability to produce almost anything in the chemical laboratory. From the age of steam, we proceeded to that of electricity and now we are in an age of biotechnics and electronics. The age of social science, which we hope will solve many of the intimate problems that trouble us so much, looms ahead. We are also told that we are on the threshold of the magnesium-aluminum age and as both these metals are extremely abundant and universally distributed, there can be no lack for anyone. The new chemistry is building a new life for mankind. We seem to be on the verge of increasing enormously the power resources of humanity and all manner of epoch-making discoveries hover over the near future.

All this is very comforting and yet a doubt creeps into my mind. It is not lack of power that we suffer from but a misuse of the power we possess or not a proper application of it. Science gives power but remains impersonal, purposeless, and almost unconcerned with our application of the knowledge it puts at our disposal. It may continue its triumphs and yet, if it ignores nature too much, nature may play a subtle revenge upon it. While life seems to grow in outward stature, it may ebb away inside for lack of something yet undiscovered by science.

The Modern Approach to an Old Problem

The modern mind, that is to say the better type of the modern mind, is practical and pragmatic, ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian. It is governed by a practical idealism for social betterment. The ideals which move it represent the spirit of the age, the Zeitgeist, the Yugadharma. It has discarded to a large extent the philosophic approach of the ancients, their search for ultimate reality, as well as the devotionalism and mysticism of the medieval period. Humanity is its god and social service its religion. This conception may be incomplete, as the mind of every age has been limited by its environment, and every age has considered some partial truth as the key to all truth. Every generation and every people suffer from the illusion that their way of looking at things is the only right way, or is, at any rate, the nearest approach to it. Every culture has certain values attached to it, limited and conditioned by that culture. The people governed by that culture take these values for granted and attribute a permanent validity to them. So the values of our present-day culture may not be permanent and final; nevertheless they have an essential importance for us for they represent the thought and spirit of the age we live in. A few seers and geniuses, looking into the future, may have a completer vision of humanity and the universe; they are of the vital stuff out of which all real advance comes. The vast majority of people do not even catch up to the present-day values, though they may talk about them in the jargon of the day, and they live imprisoned in the past.

We have therefore to function in line with the highest ideals of the age we live in, though we may add to them or seek to mould them in accordance with our national genius. Those ideals may be classed under two heads: humanism and the scientific spirit. Between these two there has been an apparent conflict but the great upheaval of thought today, with its questioning of all values, is removing the old boundaries between these two approaches, as well as between the external world of science and the internal world of introspection. There is a growing synthesis between humanism and the scientific spirit, resulting in a kind of scientific humanism. Science also, while holding on to fact, is on the verge of other domains, or at any rate, has ceased to deny them contemptuously. Our five senses and what they can perceive, obviously, do not exhaust the universe. During the past twenty-five years there has been a profound change in the

scientist's picture of the physical world. Science used to look at nature as something almost apart from man. But now, Sir James Jeans tells us that the essence of science is that 'man no longer sees nature as something distinct from himself.' And then the old question arises which troubled the thinkers of the Upanishads: how can the knower be known? How can the eyes that can see external objects see themselves? And if the external is part and parcel of the internal, what we perceive or conceive is but a projection of our minds, and the universe and nature and the soul and mind and body, the transcendent and the immanent are all essentially one, how then are we, within the limited framework of our minds, to understand this mighty scheme of things objectively? Science has begun to touch these problems and though they may elude it, still the earnest scientist of today is the prototype of the philosopher and the man of religion of earlier ages. 'In this materialistic age of ours,' says Professor Albert Einstein, 'the serious scientific workers are the only profoundly religious people.'¹⁵

In all this there appears to be a firm belief in science and yet an apprehension that purely factual and purposeless science is not enough. Was science, in providing so much of life's furniture, ignoring life's significance? There is an attempt to find a harmony between the world of fact and the world of spirit, for it was becoming increasingly obvious that the over-emphasis on the former was crushing the spirit of man. The question that troubled the philosophers of old has come up again in a different form and context: How to reconcile the phenomenal life of the world with the inner spiritual life of the individual. The physicians have discovered that it is not enough to treat the body of the individual or of society as a whole. In recent years, medical men, familiar with the finding of modern psychopathology, have abandoned the antithesis between 'organic' and 'functional' diseases, and lay greater stress on the psychological factor. 'This is the greatest error in the treatment of sickness,' wrote Plato, 'that there are physicians for the body and physicians for the soul, and yet the two are one and indivisible.'

Einstein, most eminent among scientists, tells us that 'the fate of the human race was more than ever dependent on its moral strength today. The way to a joyful and happy state is through renunciation and self-limitation everywhere.' He takes us back suddenly from this proud age of science to the old philosophers, from the lust for power and the profit motive to the spirit of

renunciation with which India has been so familiar. Probably most other scientists of today will not agree with him in this or when he says: 'I am absolutely convinced that no wealth in the world can help humanity forward, even in the hands of the most devoted worker in the cause. The example of great and pure characters is the only thing that can produce fine ideas or noble deeds. Money only appeals to selfishness and always tempts its owners irresistibly to abuse it.'

In facing this question, that is as old as civilization itself, modern science has many advantages denied to the old philosophers. It possesses stores of accumulated knowledge and a method which has abundantly justified itself. It has mapped and chartered many regions which were unknown to the ancients. As it has enlarged man's understanding and control over many things, they have ceased to be mysteries to be exploited by the priests of religion. But it has some disadvantages also. The very abundance of its accumulated knowledge has made it difficult for man to take a synthetic view of the whole, and he loses himself in some part of it, analyses it, studies it, partly understands it, and fails to see its connection with the whole. The vast forces science has released overwhelm him and carry him forward relentlessly, and often an unwilling victim, to unknown shores. The pace of modern life, the succession of crisis after crisis, comes in the way of a dispassionate search for truth. Wisdom itself is hustled and pushed about and cannot easily discover that calm and detached outlook which is so necessary for true understanding. 'For still are the ways of wisdom and her temper trembleth not.'

Perhaps we are living in one of the great ages of mankind and have to pay the price for that privilege. The great ages have been full of conflict and instability, of an attempt to change over from the old to something new. There is no permanent stability or security or changelessness; if there were life itself would cease. At the most we can seek a relative stability and a moving equilibrium. Life is a continuous struggle of man against man, of man against his surroundings, a struggle on the physical, intellectual, and moral plane out of which new things take shape and fresh ideas are born. Destruction and construction go side by side and both aspects of man and nature are ever evident. Life is a principle of growth, not of standing still, a continuous becoming, which does not permit static conditions.

Today, in the world of politics and economics there is a search for power and yet when power is attained much else of value has gone. Political trickery and intrigue take the place of idealism, and cowardice and selfishness the place of disinterested courage. Form prevails over substance and power, so eagerly sought after, somehow fails to achieve what it aimed at. For power has its limitations, and force recoils on itself. Neither can control the spirit, though they may harden and coarsen it. ‘You can rob an army of its general,’ says Confucius, ‘but not the least of men of his will.’

John Stuart Mill wrote in his autobiography: ‘I am now convinced that no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible, until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought.’ And yet that fundamental change in the modes of thought itself comes from a changing environment and the pain and suffering that accompany life’s unceasing struggles. And so, though we may try to change those modes of thought directly, it is even more necessary to change the environment in which they grew and found sustenance. Each depends on and influences the other. There is an endless variety of men’s minds. Each one sees the truth in his own way and is often unable to appreciate another’s viewpoint. Out of this comes conflict. Out of this interaction also a fuller and more integrated truth emerges. For we have to realize that truth is many-sided and is not the monopoly of any group or nation. So also the way of doing things. There may be different ways for different people in different situations. India and China, as well as other nations, evolved their own ways of life and gave them an enduring foundation. They imagined, and many among them vainly imagine still, that their way is the only way. Today, Europe and America have evolved their own way of life which is dominant in the world, and which, their people imagine, is the only way. But probably none of these ways is the one and only desirable way and each may learn something from the other. Certainly India and China must learn a great deal, for they had become static and the West not only represents the spirit of the age but is dynamic and changing and has the capacity for growth in it, even though this functions through self-destruction and periodical human sacrifice.

In Indian, and perhaps in other countries also, there are alternating tendencies for self-glorification and self-pity. Both are undesirable and ignoble. It is not through sentimentality and emotional approaches that we can understand life,

but by a frank and courageous facing of realities. We cannot lose ourselves in aimless and romantic quests unconnected with life's problems, for destiny marches on and does not wait for our leisure. Nor can we concern ourselves with externals only, forgetting the significance of the inner life of man. There has to be a balance, an attempt at harmony between them. 'The greatest good', wrote Spinoza in the seventeenth century,

is the knowledge of the union which the mind has with the whole of nature ... The more the mind knows the better it understands its forces and the order of nature; the more it understands its forces or strength, the better it will be able to direct itself and lay down rules for itself; and the more it understands the order of nature the more easily it will be able to liberate itself from useless things; this is the whole method.

In our individual lives also we have to discover a balance between the body and the spirit, and between man as part of nature and man as part of society. 'For our perfection,' says Tagore, 'we have to be vitally savage and mentally civilized; we should have the gift to be natural with nature and human with human society.' Perfection is beyond us for it means the end, and we are always journeying, trying to approach something that is ever receding. And in each one of us are many different human beings with their inconsistencies and contradictions, each pulling in a different direction. There is the love of life and the disgust with life the acceptance of all that life involves and the rejection of much of it. It is difficult to harmonize these contrary tendencies, and sometimes one of them is dominant and sometimes another.'

'Oftentimes,' says Lao Tzu:

*Oftentimes, one strips oneself of passion
In order to see the Secret of life;*

*Oftentimes one regards life with passion,
In order to see its manifold results.*

For all our powers of reason and understanding and all our accumulated knowledge and experience we know little enough about life's secrets, and can only guess at its mysterious processes. But we can always admire its beauty and, through art, exercise the god-like function of creation. Though we may be weak and erring mortals, living a brief and uncertain span of life yet there is something of the stuff of the immortal gods in us. 'We must not,' therefore, says Aristotle, 'obey those who urge us, because we are human and mortal, to think human and

mortal thoughts; in so far as we may we should practise immortality, and omit no effort to live in accordance with the best that is in us.'

Epilogue

Nearly five months have gone by since I took to this writing and I have covered a thousand hand-written pages with this jumble of ideas in my mind. For five months I have travelled in the past and peeped into the future and sometimes tried to balance myself on that 'point of intersection of the timeless with time.' These months have been full of happenings in the world and the war has advanced rapidly towards a triumphant conclusion, so far as military victories go. In my own country also much has happened of which I could be only a distant spectator, and waves of unhappiness have sometimes temporarily swept over me and passed on. Because of this business of thinking and trying to give some expression to my thoughts, I have drawn myself away from the piercing edge of the present and moved along the wider expanses of the past and the future.

But there must be an end to this wandering. If there was no other sufficient reason for it, there is a very practical consideration which cannot be ignored. I have almost exhausted the supply of paper that I had managed to secure after considerable difficulty and it is not easy to get more of it.

The discovery of India—what have I discovered? It was presumptuous of me to imagine that I could unveil her and find out what she is today and what she was in the long past. Today she is four hundred million separate individual men and women, each differing from the other, each living in a private universe of thought and feeling. If this is so in the present, how much more difficult is it to grasp that multitudinous past of innumerable successions of human beings. Yet something has bound them together and binds them still. India is a geographical and economic entity, a cultural unity amidst diversity, a bundle of contradictions held together by strong but invisible threads. Overwhelmed again and again, her spirit was never conquered, and today when she appears to be the plaything of a proud conqueror, she remains unsubdued and unconquered. About her there is the elusive quality of a legend of long ago; some enchantment seems to have

held her mind. She is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet very real and present and pervasive. There are terrifying glimpses of dark corridors which seem to lead back to primeval night, but also there is the fullness and warmth of the day about her. Shameful and repellent she is occasionally, perverse and obstinate, sometimes even a little hysterical, this lady with a past, But she is very lovable, and none of her children can forget her wherever they go or whatever strange fate befalls them. For she is part of them in her greatness as well as her failings, and they are mirrored in those deep eyes of hers that have seen so much of life's passion and joy and folly, and looked down into wisdom's well. Each one of them is drawn to her, though perhaps each has a different reason for that attraction or can point to no reason at all, and each sees some different aspect of her many-sided personality. From age to age she has produced great men and women, carrying on the old tradition and yet ever adapting it to changing times. Rabindranath Tagore, in line with that great succession, was full of the temper and urges of the modern age and yet was rooted in India's past, and in his own self built up a synthesis of the old and the new. 'I love India,' he said, 'not because I cultivate the idolatry of geography, not because I have had the chance to be born in her soil but because she has saved through tumultuous ages the living words that have issued from the illuminated consciousness of her great ones.' So many will say, while others will explain their love for her in some different way.

The old enchantment seems to be breaking today and she is looking around and waking up to the present. But however she changes, as change she must, that old witchery will continue and hold the hearts of her people. Though her attire many change, she will continue as of old, and her store of wisdom will help her to hold on to what is true and beautiful and good in this harsh, vindictive, and grasping world.

The world of today has achieved much, but for all its declared love for humanity, it has based itself far more on hatred and violence than on the virtues that make man human. War is the negation of truth and humanity. War may be unavoidable sometimes, but its progeny are terrible to contemplate. Not mere killing, for man must die, but the deliberate and persistent propagation of hatred and falsehood, which gradually become the normal habits of the people. It is dangerous and harmful to be guided in our life's course by hatreds and

aversions, for they are wasteful of energy and limit and twist the mind and prevent it from perceiving the truth. Unhappily there is hatred today in India and strong aversions, for the past pursues us and the present does not differ from it. It is not easy to forget repeated affronts to the dignity of a proud race. Yet, fortunately, Indians do not nourish hatred for long; they recover easily a more benevolent mood.

India will find herself again when freedom opens out new horizons, and the future will then fascinate her far more than the immediate past of frustration and humiliation. She will go forward with confidence, rooted in herself and yet eager to learn from others and co-operate with them. Today she swings between a blind adherence to her old customs and a slavish imitation of foreign ways. In neither of these can she find relief or life or growth. It is obvious that she has to come out of her shell and take full part in the life and activities of the modern age. It should be equally obvious that there can be no real cultural or spiritual growth based on imitation. Such imitation can only be confined to a small number which cuts itself off from the masses and the springs of national life. True culture derives its inspiration from every corner of the world but it is home-grown and has to be based on the wide mass of the people. Art and literature remain lifeless if they are continually thinking of foreign models. The day of a narrow culture confined to a small fastidious group is past. We have to think in terms of the people generally, and their culture must be a continuation and development of past trends, and must also represent their new urges and creative tendencies.

Emerson, over 100 years ago, warned his countrymen in America not to imitate or depend too much culturally on Europe. A new people as they were, he wanted them not to look back on their European past but to draw inspiration from the abounding life of their new country.

Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves ... there are creative manners, there are creative actions and creative words ... that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

And again in his essay on self-reliance:

It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign fields, he is at home still, and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or a valet.

'I have no churlish objection,' continues Emerson,

to the circumnavigation of the globe, for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding something greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

But the rage for travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action ... We imitate ... Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties, lean on and follow the past and the distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed ... Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession.

We in India do not have to go abroad in search of the past and the distant. We have them here in abundance. If we go to foreign countries it is in search of the present. That search is necessary, for isolation from it means backwardness and decay. The world of Emerson's time has changed and old barriers are breaking down; life becomes more international. We have to play our part in this coming internationalism and, for this purpose, to travel, meet others, learn from them and understand them. But a real internationalism is not something in the air without roots or anchorage. It has to grow out of national cultures and can only flourish today on a basis of freedom and equality and true internationalism. Nevertheless Emerson's warning holds today as it did in the past, and our search can only be fruitful in the conditions mentioned by him. Not to go anywhere as interlopers, but only if we are welcomed as equals and as comrades in a common quest. There are countries, notably in the British dominions, which try to humiliate our countrymen. They are not for us. We may, for the present, have to suffer the enforced subjection to an alien yoke and to carry the grievous burdens

that this involves, but the day of our liberation cannot be distant. We are citizens of no mean country and we are proud of the land of our birth, of our people, our culture and traditions. That pride should not be for a romanticised past to which we want to cling; nor should it encourage exclusiveness or a want of appreciation of other ways than ours. It must never allow us to forget our many weaknesses and failings or blunt our longing to be rid of them. We have a long way to go and much leeway to make up before we can take our proper station with others in the van of human civilization and progress. And we have to hurry, for the time at our disposal is limited and the pace of the world grows ever swifter. It was India's way in the past to welcome and absorb other cultures. That is much more necessary today, for we march to the one world of tomorrow where national cultures will be intermingled with the international culture of the human race. We shall therefore seek wisdom and knowledge and friendship and comradeship wherever we can find them, and co-operate with others in common tasks, but we are no suppliants for others' favours and patronage. Thus we shall remain true Indians and Asiatics, and become at the same time good internationalists and world citizens.

My generation has been a troubled one in India and the world. We may carry on for a little while longer, but our day will be over and we shall give place to others, and they will live their lives and carry their burdens to the next stage of the journey. How have we played our part in this brief interlude that draws to a close? I do not know. Others of a later age will judge. By what standards do we measure success or failure? That too I do not know. We can make no complaint that life has treated us harshly, for ours has been a willing choice, and perhaps life has not been so bad to us after all. For only they can sense life who stand often on the verge of it, only they whose lives are not governed by the fear of death. In spite of all the mistakes that we may have made, we have saved ourselves from triviality and an inner shame and cowardice. That, for our individual selves, has been some achievement.

Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him to live but once, he must so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past, so live as not to be tortured for years without purpose, so live that dying he can say: 'All my life and my strength were given to the first cause of the world—the liberation of mankind.'¹⁶