

A Policy for India

BY HENRY STANLEY

NEARLY four months have passed since the jailing of Nehru, Gandhi, and the leaders of the Indian National Congress, together with the leaders of several other Indian political organizations. During this period we have had an opportunity to judge how successful has been the British policy of intransigent determination to surrender none of the essentials of power to authentic Indian politicians. News from India is meager and even the London *Times* has protested against the severe and uncompromising censorship which has shut off practically all information from this unsettled part of Asia. However, what little information we have seems to indicate that the Churchill policy of future promises, coupled with a present retention of power, has produced something approaching a state of civil war. It seems pretty obvious from all accounts that the British determination to smash Indian nationalist resistance before it has had an opportunity to organize effectively has been successful. There does not appear to be any prospect of a widespread armed revolt by the Indian people. In spite of this "success" of Mr. Churchill's policy it also seems apparent that rioting, bloodshed, and violence have not subsided. It has been casually admitted that Bengal, which has a population four times that of the State of New York, was cut off from the rest of India by the militant activities of Indian partisans. Reports of bombing and sabotage continue to come from the Bombay Presidency. Comments on the loyalty of the Indian police by British officials leave the suggestion that there has been some disaffection even among these people.

The total effect of these hazy details of violence is a feeling of grave uneasiness on the part of a very large number of people. A growing number are in like manner extremely disturbed, not only by the accounts of riot and disorder but by the swing away from Britain and the United Nations of Indian moderates: men like Mr. Rajagopalachariar, the former Premier of the Madras Presidency, the Moslem Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh, the Premier

of the province of Sind, and the Indian liberal leader, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. This indicates pretty clearly that men who want a compromise on almost any terms are either fed up or are being driven into opposition by rising popular pressure. There seems to be some defection even in the ranks of the "loyal" Indian princes. The deposition of the Maharajah of Indore may mean anything, but it is disquieting to say the least.

The classic reply to criticisms of British policy in India is that no one except a few Englishmen understand the Indian situation and its vast complexity. It is quite true that India and its problems are not well known and are largely misunderstood, but it is doubtful whether repeated statements about the stubborn separatist character of the Moslems and the evils of the Indian National Congress will assist us along the path of brotherhood with the Indian people.

In his speech of September 10 in the British House of Commons, Mr. Churchill had this to say about the Indian National Congress: "The Indian Congress Party does not represent all India; it does not represent a majority of the people of India; it does not even represent the Hindu masses. It is a political organization built around a party machine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests."

How does this description square with the facts as it is possible to ascertain them from published documents?

The only test of Indian opinion which has ever been permitted by the British Government was the election of 1937 held under the authority of the India Act. The high property qualifications for voters excluded all but 20 per cent, or 30 million, of the people of voting age in British India proper, and it can be argued that any vote under such conditions is not representative. In so far, however, as the voting minority is representative of India, the Indian National Congress speaks for the people because it won an overwhelming electoral victory. The Congress had large absolute ma-

majorities in six of eleven provinces and the largest single vote in three more. In eight out of the eleven of the provinces of British India the Congress leaders had sufficient popular support to form ministries.

There are no means of measuring accurately the support for the Congress among the unenfranchised masses. The fact that the Congress is committed to the introduction of universal franchise would seem to argue that the Congress leaders are at least not afraid of the unenfranchised people. In so far as it is possible to ascertain opinion in a non-democratic country, it can be justly said that the Indian National Congress is the most representative political organization in India.

Mr. Churchill's references to party machines and financial backing require scrutiny. Like the British Conservative party, and the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States, the Indian National Congress receives financial assistance from what may be described as "interests." The principal financial supporters of the Congress are Messrs. Birla and Sarabhai, who have a considerable interest in textiles, life insurance, and several other undertakings. The "interests" are very close to Mr. Gandhi, and it is generally understood that his policies are the most agreeable to them. The friends of Indian business do not, however, run the Indian National Congress. Like the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States, there are both reactionary and progressive elements within the Congress. There is a group known as the Congress Socialist party which operates inside the Congress. Its representative is Jawaharlal Nehru, whose support for democratic socialism is well known. Since 1938, the All-India Trade Union Congress has had a working agreement with the Indian National Congress very similar to that existing between the British Trade Union Congress and the British Labor party.

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THE Indian National Congress is, of course, predominantly Hindu, which must necessarily be the case in any country where the Hindus constitute 70 per cent of the population. The Congress is not, however, a sectarian organization. Its president is a Moslem born in Mecca and widely respected as a theologian among Mohammedans. There are several Moslems

on the Working Committee, the best known of whom is Dr. Ansari. These men are not just show pieces. They represent the Moslem supporters of the Congress who voted for Congress candidates in the elections of 1937. Moslem candidates endorsed by the Congress won twenty-six of the seats set aside for Moslem voters, and in the Northwest Frontier Province, which is inhabited predominantly by Moslems, the Congress won an absolute majority. The movement of Moslems is toward the Congress. Abdul Gaffar Khan, the leader of the Moslem Red Shirt Organization, has joined the Indian National Congress, and, it should be added, he has recently gone to jail. The Congress has been officially endorsed as the representative Indian political organization by the religious organization of the Shias, a Moslem sect numbering 16,000,000.

There is a prevalent impression that the vast majority of the ninety million Moslems in British India are opposed to the Congress policy of working for an independent, United Indian State. This impression does not square with the facts. Apart from those who support the Indian National Congress, Moslems are organized in a number of political parties. The best known of these is the Moslem League. In the election of 1937, candidates supported by the Moslem League secured 321,772 votes of the 7,319,445 Moslem votes cast. Contrary to popular belief, the greatest concentration of Moslems in India is in Bengal, where there are 27,000,000 of them. In this province the Moslem League won 40 seats, the Indian National Congress 50 seats, Moslem independents, 43 seats, and the Proja party (a poor peasants party) 38 seats. In the provinces of Sind and the Punjab, where there are also large concentrations of Moslems, the Moslem League won only one seat. The by-elections of the last five years in these two provinces have revealed a considerable increase in the League's strength in this area, but their gains have not been sufficient to alter the general picture. In the United Provinces, which, next to Bengal, is on the basis of the electoral record, the League's strongest area, the League won 27 seats, the Indian National Congress 134 seats, and the Moslem independents 30 seats.

These electoral figures show that the Moslem League is not the representative Moslem organization. It is very largely a landowners and lawyers party and it has practically no fol-

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lowing among the poor Moslem peasants who constitute the vast majority of Indian Moslems. The League supports Indian independence, however, and Mr. Jinnah, its spokesman, associated himself with Nehru and Azad in rejecting the Cripps proposals. The Moslem League's stand on the question of a separate Moslem State has become well defined in the past two years, but from his recent statements it seems equally clear that Mr. Jinnah would not reject office in any provisional government of a united India provided he was given real power.

The Moslem League is the only Moslem political organization which has flirted with the idea of a separate Moslem State. The other organizations: the Proja party in Bengal, the Jamiat Ul-Ulema, the Ahrars, and the Red Shirt Organization of Abdul Gaffar Khan support Indian *independence and unity*. This is also the case of the religious organization of the Momin sect, the All-Indian Momin Conference. This organization speaks for 45,000,000 Moslems, and it has gone on record as favoring Indian independence and the convocation of a Constituent Assembly.

A good many Moslems, particularly in northwestern India, are not within any political organization. These independents provide the support which exists for the governments of the Punjab and Sind which remained in office when the Congress ministries in the other provinces quit on the outbreak of war in 1939. Today the Premier of the Punjab, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, is still in office and presumably supports the policies of the Viceroy's Government. The Premier of Sind, Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh, has resigned since the beginning of the armed repression of the Indian National Congress and other militant Indian political organizations. He has also returned all honors and decorations given him by the British.

When the facts relating to the political position of the Moslems are carefully examined, it becomes clear that the Moslem population, far from constituting a danger to any authentically Indian provisional government which may be set up, is so well disposed to Indian unity and independence that Moslems are likely to be active supporters of such a national government. Separatist Moslems are a small minority of the Moslem community, and the one Moslem organization which has toyed with separatism has only recently dared to advocate a separate Moslem state in categorical terms.

NO serious person can help regretting the civil disobedience campaign which has broken out in India. It is possible, however, to understand if not to approve it. Whatever Mr. Gandhi may be in politics, he has become a symbol for the Indian people: a symbol of poverty, simplicity, and austerity. His arrest at a time when he had offered to negotiate with the Viceroy has driven many Indians crazy with exasperation. It is not hard to believe that, were a foreign government to imprison Mr. Churchill, not a few Englishmen would start throwing stones at the police, blowing up railway lines, and chopping down telephone poles. They would do this whether it was in their ultimate interest or not, and such action would be a worthy manifestation of the human spirit.

The unrest in India today is a testimony to the fact that Indians can and will fight. In a recent letter to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, Mr. Gandhi states that the majority of the Indian people do not accept his policy of non-violent, non-co-operation. This being so, the problem for us is to canalize these fighting energies against the enemy and away from Britain, which already has enough to do.

It seems pretty evident that the present Indian policy of the British Government in all its integrity can accomplish little more than the suppression of the immediate threat of internal anarchy. It contains within it no political dynamic capable of rallying the people of India for the attack and the defense. In many respects the policy laid down by Mr. Churchill on September 10 resembles that of the Czar following the abortive uprisings of 1905-06. It differs in this important respect, that the Czar had the advantage of being at least a symbol of Russian nationalism. Neither the King-Emperor nor the Viceroy has this advantage.

More and more people in North America, Britain, and China are becoming from all accounts gravely worried by the state of affairs in India. There seems to be emerging from this anxiety a belief in the necessity of some common action by the United Nations; some action of international readjustment which rises above national sovereignty and demonstrates that the United Nations stand for a new international order.

The concrete suggestions made under this

head are worth looking at. There should be formed at once an international body representative of the United Nations on which there would sit men from Great Britain, the British Dominions, the United States, China, the U.S.S.R., and at least one representative of the exiled European governments and at least one representative of the Latin American States. This body should have plenary powers to assist in the establishment of a provisional government in India drawn from the ranks of authentic Indian politicians with a popular following who are prepared to fight against the Axis and preserve Indian unity. It should be frankly agreed that defense policy must be entirely within the power of the provisional government, and Chinese advisers, because of their familiarity with the problems of mass resistance as they exist in Asia and because of their record of successful resistance to Japan, should be sent to help guide the steps of the new government.

There is growing support for such a policy. From all accounts, Colonel Louis Johnson, President Roosevelt's representative in India, did all he could to insure agreement between Cripps and the Indian leaders. This indicates

that Mr. Roosevelt would welcome a solution of the Indian problem. Mr. Willkie has demonstrated that he will support any steps that may be taken to draw India into the world front against the Axis. In Canada, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation has called for a solution based on joint action by the United Nations. In Britain, no political party has yet advocated joint action, but the liberal *Manchester Guardian*, the socialist *New Statesman and Nation*, and the communist *Daily Worker* have spoken out strongly in support of some action by the United Nations; the *London Economist* seems well disposed to some humane settlement, although it has not specifically endorsed the policy suggested.

The Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, has said: "Much is being said about a new world order to take the place of the old world order when the war is at an end. If that new order is not already on its way before the war is over, we may look for it in vain." This seems to apply exactly to our relations with India, and indeed with all the peoples of Asia. We have to build a new order to win the war, and that order will make the peace good and true.

WALTER P. REUTHER

In adding the name of Walter P. Reuther to our International Honorary Board, we are proud to welcome to FREE WORLD one of the most distinguished leaders of the American labor movement. The Reuther Plan, proposed in 1940 and put into practical application immediately after Pearl Harbor, has been recognized as a major contribution of labor to the war effort.

Mr. Reuther is giving direct service to the nation in many ways. He is now one of the members of a joint AFL-CIO committee which advises the War Production Board on labor problems. As International Vice President and Director of the General Motors Department of the UAW-CIO, he is continuing to play a major role in the organization of the vast automobile industry in Detroit. From 1936, the year of his election to the Executive Board of the International Union, he has been re-elected each year.



THE HISTORIC ROOTS

of

French Principles

of

Government

WE shall endeavor in this study to determine what, in our opinion, constitutes the traditional conception of the French respecting the nature of government, in so far as the conception of a community of millions of men, and one that has persisted through the centuries, can be dealt with as a unity.

The French, in their traditional conception of the nation, consider it as an association of individual persons, who are invested with a sacred character; not as a mystic and indecomposable entity in which, by definition, the notion of the individual disappears. Let us say at once that this conception in no sense excludes the willingness of these separate persons to submit themselves to the requirements of the whole, but *this willingness is expressed by these persons as individuals*, who always remain the elementary components of the nation as here defined. One may say that the dogma of the "Moloch-state," adopted by other nations, was never accepted by the French. Those of their rulers, for example, certain kings, who showed the greatest scorn for the individual never made their practice the basis of a formulated doctrine; the theoreticians of the ancient monarchy, even at its most absolute, such as Bossuet, never preached such a doctrine; the contemporary doctrinaires of this regime, the writers of the *Action française* take pride in their profession of respect for the individual. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, despite the assertions of some of his adversaries, is no exception; the



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"general will" that he exalts in his "*Contrat social*" is in no sense an indivisible thing in which the notion of the distinct person is dissolved, but on the contrary a sum of individual wills.

For this reason he was formally condemned by Hegel, the typical apostle of the state for which the individual does not exist. In France the only professed theoretician of a society which negates the individual would seem to be the Vicomte de Bonald, and it will be admitted that, as such, he has not attracted many disciples. In upholding the idea of the individual and of the moral reality that he represents, the French conception of society is essentially Christian.

It may also be said that, for the French, the primordial element of the nation has always been the individual; the nation is made for him and not he for it. A French government which declared as its principle that the nation was an end in itself, that it might use the individual simply as a means for the fulfillment of purposes which it alone was to judge with no need to take into account the individual's sense of the proper and the suitable, and which officially stated—in the phrase of the Fascist Congress of Bologna—that "the individuals are the instruments used by the nation to achieve the plenitude of its power"—such a government would realize that it was setting itself up in direct opposition to what has always been, among Frenchmen, the conception of the nation.

The French have always believed in a certain degree of liberty for the citizen. This con-