

VI. AFTERMATH OF AUGUST

THE REAL STORY OF OUR AGREEMENT AND DIFFERENCES did not end with the August Resolution. We have unfolded the story in your exact words and ours, as they were spoken or written then. It has been no pleasure to us to have to do this and claim that you have been proved wrong, your illusions ended up in smoke and our warnings came true. We did not want to see our fears come true; tragically enough for our country and our people, they did come true.

Your self-contradictory stand in the August Resolution played havoc with the Congress so that the anti-British anti-Fascist Congress has become the anti-Communist Congress of to-day.

We are convinced that no honest man on the basis of facts and not prejudices, on the basis of policy and not passions can find fault with us on the grounds that we let the Congress down or betrayed it. The lead that you gave was not fighting the British Imperialists but playing into their hands; the lead that you gave was not helping to resist Jap aggression but acts that threatened to blow up whatever defences we had against them. It inevitably failed and the hunt for the scape-goat began a long time ago. You have only taken it over.

You have been in jail, we have been out. We shall briefly sketch before you the logical working out of what to us appears to be a tragedy not for us alone but for the Congress and the country, though it appears to you to be a small but nasty problem to be liquidated through the disciplinary clauses in the Congress constitution. You are once again deluding yourselves and being grossly unjust to us, your brother Congressmen.

Spontaneous Upsurge?

On the 9th morning what happened was what you had not provided for, your arrest. Now began the period of what is called "August Revolution" and what we characterise as "national crisis." Every Congressman and Congress group had to think for himself and act according to his conscience, do what

he thought would best realise the Congress aim. You had left no plan behind, nor provided for the contingency.

Several groups of Congressmen went underground and began to issue instructions, printed or cyclostyled or in some other form. We give just a few representative quotations from what they said :

I. A group of Congress Socialist leaders, called themselves the "CENTRAL DIRECTORATE OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS" and issued "Instructions from the AICC Office." Their leaflets began by paying lip-service to non-violence and ignoring the Jap invasion and passed through sabotage to preaching openly a pro-Jap policy.

In their first leaflet dated August 10, 1942, they said :

"This is our final struggle. If all do their duty the struggle should finish in two months' time . . . Millions have to move and break the chains that bind India. . . Let us be true to the message which Gandhiji has left us, 'Do or Die'."

They have an eleven-point programme advocating among other items the following :

- Item (1) "There shall be hartal throughout the country, in all the cities and villages of India."
- Item (11) "Ending of foreign rule is our objective. Whatever helps in the attainment of that objective is, subject to the inexorable condition of non-violence, permissible and legitimate. People in the provinces have to devise and adopt all non-violent ways of paralysing the administration. . ."
- Item (12) "Last but not least let us not forget 'spinning' so dear to Gandhiji. If millions spin it will administer a powerful stimulus to the struggle.
"DO OR DIE"

But in their leaflet, entitled, "Appeal to Workers," carrying the same date, they said :

"In addition to stoppage of work you have to see that *communications in any shape or form must stop*, the foreign army

must be immobilised so that it can have no power to strike you and your countrymen."

II. The Forward Bloc which was openly pro-Jap also brought out leaflets, entitled, "War of Independence". In its leaflet of August 10, 1942 it tried its best to make the enraged people go blinder with hatred of the British. It said:

"So the war for Indian liberation has begun. . . .

Since yesterday our women and children are being shot in the streets, our men are being hounded to jails. But the Press is silent. . . . However you will find this Bulletin every day which will give you information about the progress of Indian war of independence.

Bombay

"Early in the day the students and workmen *mostly women were shot at in the different localities by blood-thirsty tommys*. Tons of gas was used to fight the non-violent Indian armies. These blood-thirsty British gangsters are using gas against Indians while it has not so far been used even in wartime Europe and Russia. . . .

OUR TASK

"Rally in your thousands to defend the honour of your motherland. *Make the communication of the blood-thirsty army of Britain impossible, break the black laws of the black-out*. Feel as free sons of free India and march towards your goal of complete independence. . . .

INDIA FOR INDIANS

Indians Shall Never Be Slaves

1857

Slavery

1942

Freedom." †

III. The "Bombay Congress Bulletin" leaflet brought out on September 7, 1942 says:

"CUT THE VEINS OF YOUR TYRANT

"The Congress call goes today from end to end 'Cut the veins of your tyrants and you will see him collapse.'

"We call for acts of non-violent sabotage against British railways in India, British shipping in India, British telegraph and telephone system in India. Let us follow the shining examples of the saboteurs in Nazi-occupied territories and hit the enemy at his nerve centres. This would result in the crumbling of the government transport network which is already overtaxed and cracking. That is where the patriotic Indians can help. That is where the Congress revolutionaries can strike.

STRIKE AND WIN
DO OR DIE."

Not Gandhiji's Instructions

The people were angry and waiting for a lead. As it happens at such times, people assembled in numerous places to protest against your arrest, the police used lathis or firearms and there was a spontaneous outburst followed by a reign of terror which suppressed for the moment but did not extinguish the patriotic fire of our masses. They hated the British Raj more than before and cursed their helplessness, thus becoming ready victims to any pro-Jap propaganda.

The instructions we have cited above almost universally passed off as Congress directives and wherever any active Congress workers or Congress groups could save themselves they tried to organise and direct the people according to this programme.

What these underground groups said seemed plausible to Congressmen in view of what Syt. Mashruwalla wrote in the *Harijan* of August 23, 1942 and the famous *Andhra Circular* of Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, one of you.

Syt. Mashruwalla wrote in the *Harijan* and said:

"Dislocation of traffic communications is permissible in a non-violent manner without endangering life. . . .

"Cutting wires, removing rails, destroying small bridges cannot be objected to in a struggle like this, provided precautions are taken to safeguard life. . . .

"The non-violent revolutionaries have to regard the

British power in the same way as they would the Axis powers and carry out the same measures.”

Harijan, August 23, 1942.

Gandhiji later repudiated him *in toto*, and in his reply (of July 14, 1943) to Tottenham's pamphlet he said :

“Shri Mashruwalla was a valued co-worker who carries non-violence to an extreme.

. . . Nevertheless I do not propose to defend the paragraph quoted.

. . . Nor would I expect the classification of the British power in the same category as the Japanese for the purposes of the movement.”

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1942-44, p. 159.

The *Andhra Circular* mentioned “cutting telegraph and telephone wires” as “not prohibited but not encouraged” and a special note of caution says : “Rails should not be removed or permanent way obstructed. No danger to life should be a great caution.”

The circular was repudiated by Gandhiji, owned by Dr. Pattabhi after his release, disowned by Gandhiji once again after which Dr. Pattabhi issued a long statement which makes it difficult to know whether he owns or disowns it.

We need not comment on it today. You had fixed upon Gandhiji to plan and initiate the movement which you had in mind. Just on the eve of the 1945 AICC, Gandhiji released for publication the instructions he had prepared on August 7, 1942 and which had never seen the light of day. The differences are clear enough.

The draft instructions were ready on August 7, 1942 and were placed before you and discussed by you on August 8, 1942. You know well what they were.

In the preamble Gandhiji writes :

“I was to put before the Working Committee my view of the negotiations which I was to carry on with the Government. They were to cover a period of at least three weeks.

The instructions were to see the light of day only on failure of the contemplated negotiations.

“The object of publishing the draft at present is twofold. It shows how my mind was running at the time. The draft is an additional answer to the adverse suggestions made in the Government indictment about my non-violence. *The second and more relevant object is to let Congress workers know how I would have acted at the time. I have come to know that my name was freely used to justify acts of sabotage and the like. . . .*”

Bombay Chronicle, September 21, 1945.

Gandhiji's draft instructions are revealing by the prohibitions he categorically makes in them.

He calls for a Hartal and 24-hour fast but categorically says :

“Those employed in Government offices, Government factories, railways, post offices etc. may not participate in the hartal because our object is to make it clear that we will never tolerate Japanese, Nazi or Fascist invasion, nor British rule.”

If even a Hartal is prohibited in those departments which are occupied with Defence measures etc., does it not stand to reason that sabotage of Defence measures, cutting communications, removing rails, etc. could not conceivably be Congress programme? If we did so, it would only have harmed the national cause. How then can you charge us for not supporting “that policy which had arisen spontaneously as the result of the people's movement.”?

You say in your Sub-Committee's report that “the *People's War* in its various editions in different languages carried out ceaseless propaganda against this people's movement in which nearly all Congressmen were involved in some form or other.”

Gandhiji says that had he been out he would not have countenanced sabotage. What would you have done had you been out? Would you have acted as Gandhiji says or acted differently? And we ask this question in all seriousness because

Pandit Nehru at the Bombay AICC in September 1945 said: "I don't know how I would have acted if I were out."

Is it fair and just to refuse to answer this crucial question and still condemn us for having acted according to our conscience as Congressmen who had thought about and felt, not without reason, that we were correctly interpreting Congress policy at a time when passions were running high and the judgment of many was clouded?

We are not using Gandhiji's instructions lawyer-like in our defence. But we want you not to use the Congress name and fling arguments like the following against us.

You Echo Tottenham

The Sub-Committee in order to prove its case against us says:

"While it was clear that no movement had been officially started by the AICC or Gandhiji, it was equally clear that this mass upheaval of unprecedented proportions *was the direct consequence of the chain of events that preceded it. Undoubtedly it was a direct manifestation of the people's will, which the Congress had claimed to represent.*"

We are shocked to see that you are using against us the very arguments that Tottenham used to fix responsibility for the disturbances on you.

In his lying pamphlet, *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, he said:

"The violent and widespread nature of the disturbances which followed the arrests of August 9th, 1942, soon led to endeavours in certain quarters to suggest that this was no Congress movement, but a spontaneous outburst on the part of the public at large, precipitated by the action of Government against the popular leaders. *The evidence of events themselves (that go) against this theory has already been sketched.*"

Page 26—words in brackets ours.

How can you repudiate Tottenham and condemn us in the same breath?

Gandhiji has defined what he had planned the Congress struggle to be. If you want to find fault with our post-August activity, you will have to disown the General whom you had appointed to lead you and instead recognise and sanction the directives of the "AICC Directorate" which took the field.

In the very first AICC meeting you hold, you officially disown responsibility for what happened between 1942-45 and immediately afterwards you charge us for "our past" therein.

You have every right to judge us and we want you to judge us aright. Before you ask us to answer for our attitude towards certain activities you should define Congress policy towards those activities. You do nothing of the sort. Over and over again in your report you speak of policies "which had arisen spontaneously as a result of the people's movement" and the August Resolution, but you nowhere define them.

In the Bombay AICC Session, September 1945, in your official resolution "On Congress Policy" you described the struggle, the people's movement that you speak of, thus:

"The people stunned, leaderless and incensed gave vent to their just anger in the manner they thought best, both violently and non-violently, but the governmental violence in every case put the popular acts of violence into the shade."

Official Resolution "On Congress Policy."

If any neutral honest democrat read the September AICC resolution on Congress policy and your report against us he would spontaneously say that your indictment against us is not enough to hang a dog!

But we will help you to be more precise and exact by putting before you briefly and from phase to phase what others said in the name of the Congress, and what we said in our own name. We do want you to give your verdict and say who was true to the Congress banner and who was false, who carried forward the Congress tradition and who failed.

Communist Policy After August

Let us now tell you briefly what we told the people then.

In the very first Editorial after August 9, 1942 in our organ, *People's War*, of August 16, 1942, we outlined our whole policy and the way we understood what was happening. Before this, on the 9th August 1942 itself, within three hours of your arrest, P. C. Joshi, the General Secretary of our Party had nailed down the Imperialists as the provocateur and demanded release of leaders and negotiations for settlement.

We give below extracts from our Editorial.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE ?

"Who are responsible for this monstrous crime against India and freedom-loving humanity? Mr. Amery and the die-hard gang who have always revelled in instituting blood-baths for the Indian freedom movement, who forced disasters on the British people by their pro-fascist appeasement policy. They are repeating their old performance, in the ghastliest manner possible, at the most critical time in the life of the British and Indian peoples.

"It is this criminal gang, who ape the fascists and hate the people—ours as well as their own, which has the hardihood to point their blood-stained finger at the national leadership and scream: 'arch-saboteurs'."

People's War, Vol. I, No. 6, page 2.

We claim that never before had the Imperialist Government been condemned so strongly and fearlessly. But please look into your Sub-Committee's report and see what it has to say on the point. They say:

"It is true that they mildly criticised British policy occasionally and asked for the release of leaders. . . ."

Have we not a right to ask: "Did you care to learn what we had said or read what we had written before you came to that conclusion?"

It pains us very much to see that you, the foremost leaders of our greatest organisation, the Congress, should so lightly and

even irresponsibly condemn a young patriotic party like ours on the basis of prejudice and ignorance of our words and deeds.

WHAT WAS IMPERIALIST POLICY

"The blitz of brutal repression let loose by the imperialist bureaucracy has set the country aflame. It is an attempt to goad the accumulated anger and discontent of the people into unorganised and spontaneous outbursts and then meet them with lathi, bullets and tear gas. It is a criminal culmination of the imperialist policy of keeping our nation paralysed and powerless even on the eve of the Fascist aggressors' onslaught. They denied us National Government and now they are out to crush the only organised force, the Congress, which could unite the nation and snatch National Government from their unwilling hands."

People's War, August 16, 1942.

MEANING OF EVENTS

In *All Together*, an article by P. C. Joshi, published in *People's War*, of August 23, 1942, we said:

"India is in peril as it has never been before. As the monsoon lifts, the menace of Fascist invasion draws nearer. Face to face with peril from without, a new and dangerous situation has developed within, intensifying the peril a hundredfold. Our defence is in danger, our freedom at stake, our existence as a nation hangs in the balance. . . .

"Let there be no doubt about the character of the struggle. At one end it is REPRESSION, the struggle of the police against the people which no decent Indian can support. At the other end, it is SABOTAGE, the struggle of deluded patriots against the defence of their own country, which if successful, will lead to fascist enslavement and not Indian freedom."

WHAT THE PEOPLE SHOULD DO

"Our appeal to all Congress patriots is: Turn your face against sabotage . . . put your shoulder to the job of

uniting all parties and organisations, this is your patriotic responsibility. . . . Our appeal to all non-Congress patriots : A foreign government has banned the Congress, the main organisation . . . that put the Indian nation on its feet. . . . *Remain true to the heritage of the nation, support the national demand, demand the release of the national leaders and negotiations for National Government.*

“ ALL TOGETHER HEAVE ! ”

You do not tell us either in your charge-sheet or in your report what you would have liked us to do. Should we have followed the directives of the “ AICC Directorate ” ?

We set our face firmly against them and told the people plainly and bluntly that this way the British won't quit but the Japs would come in and it would be the death-dance of Indian Nationalism.

When we thought for our country we thought of our Chittagong comrades, ex-Armoury Raiders, who were calling upon the people to stand firm against Jap raids. We thought of our comrades in the Eastern districts of Bengal, whose leaders had killed or planned to kill the British oppressors when they were mere boys and who as young men after serving a good part of their youth in jails or detention camps in the thirties were rousing the peasants, to get ready to save themselves if and when the Japs came, and to give their young sons to be trained as guerilla fighters.

We thought of our Sylhet comrades who were the majority in the District Congress Committee who took the risk of being misunderstood by the *bhadralogs* of the towns and dispersed themselves among the villages to see that panic and defeatism do not come over the mass of peasants.

We thought of our Manipuri comrades who had to do even anti-Jap resistance propaganda secretly. We thought of our beloved comrades behind the bars, heroes of the Indian freedom struggle, the Manipuri leader Irawat Singh, the leaders and organisers of every single terrorist case of importance in the 1930's who sent word to us in every way they could to do exactly what we were doing.

You could not send word outside but Gandhiji did write for you to the Viceroy and we shall take that up later.

Why No General Strike

Had not the Congress spoken of the unity of India ? Was it a danger only to the area from Chittagong to Dibrugarh and the coastal belt in the South or was it a danger to the whole of India ?

Our Party unhesitatingly said : Yes ! And it taught us to function as we would if we were in the danger-zone ourselves.

In the danger zones the common people did not say that we had gone over to the British but that we were rousing the people against the Japs and much more.

Unfortunately outside the danger zones, the people were reeling under the British blow and forgetting the Jap threat and spontaneously wanting to hit back.

We said : don't act spontaneously, blindly ; hitting back for a people must not be merely an act of revenge but must open wide the way to freedom and not lead into the lap of the Japs. In these areas the Japs sounded remote and the British and their agents were playing hell. We were misunderstood, misrepresented and lost popularity. But we held the majority of the working class firm ; because of our propaganda of years the Fascist invader and Indian freedom were easily seen by them as two different categories one cancelling the other out.

It is not that their freedom sentiment was not sought to be exploited by elements who talked in the name of the Congress. These men did their hardest to provoke them into a “ general strike ” for complete independence. We did our best to prevent the general strike for Jap invasion. We asked the workers to listen to the Jap Radio in the very restaurants that they frequent and hear for themselves what the enemy they hated was provoking them into doing. The Japs were wanting frantically three things to take place before they marched in to help “ the battle for India's liberation ” ; a revolt in the Indian Army, disruption of communications and a general strike of the industrial workers.

On our own, on the basis of the organised strength of the

Party, within 24 hours, we could have brought about a general strike of workers in the majority of industrial centre, torn up the whole the South Indian Railway and most of the Assam-Bengal Railway upto the Assam border and enough of the G.I.P. to unlink Bombay port, the only functioning one for Allied supplies with the front. We consciously and planfully did not do it.

To us it would have been betraying India to the Japs, becoming party to the butchery of our people and Fascist enslavement of our country and in no way the way of Indian freedom. We refused to jump from the frying pan into the fire.

C. S. P. Gives Lead To Sabotage

The main problem before us was what form to give to the just indignation of the people. The "AICC Directorate," the CSP and the Forward Bloc as parties and some Congressmen individually or in local groups were trying to give it the form of an organised sabotage campaign as the concretisation of Sardar Patel's slogan of a "short and swift struggle"! For this they were using Gandhiji's last words: "Do or die."

The AICC Directorate of CSP leaders in a bulletin addressed to "Workers of India" dated August 10, 1942 said:

"In addition to stoppage of work you have to see that communications in any shape or form must stop, the foreign army must be immobilised so that it can have no power to strike you and your countrymen."

Jai Prakash Narain in a message to the Trade Union Congress advocated sabotage of all war effort by the workers and said:

"From the purely working-class point of view, the faster the wheel of war effort runs, the more completely will the Indian worker be strangled by high prices."

Ninth August, styled the *Fortnightly*

Journal of the Indian National Congress and edited by Achyut Patwardhan, August 9, 1943.

Again *Ninth August* No. 24 of 1943 editorially says:

"Only a solid wall of irresistible resolve and organised effort can sweep away the force which will be maintained here to hold us down. *That solid wall can only be achieved by unity of action in a common plan to cut communications, to dislocate the working of the Government machine and to withdraw labour from its daily work. . . .*"

Ram Manohar Lohia writing on the "August Resolution" in *Ninth August* of August 23, 1943 (p.9) says:

"The things that our enemy needs today are trade between the village and the town, outward calm in the towns and no stoppage of industrial production. LET US DO WHAT WE CAN IN THESE SPHERES."

Of these elements the Forward Bloc was the most ineffective and ineffete. They could not do much, not even in Bengal, except bring out badly written and badly printed handbills; they can't even claim any big sabotage action in Bengal. They did kill five of our comrades in their impotent rage at our mass mobilisation.

They called us traitors but we, instead of being provoked, simply called them blind patriots in the very first days of the struggle—the spontaneous stage. Later when they began to organise sabotage we called them misguided patriots. It is only when they came out with an open pro-Jap policy that we called them a fifth column. The pages of *People's War* are our evidence.

They spoke in the name of Congress. We challenged their claim but did not claim to be Congress spokesmen ourselves.

We argued against their illusions, in terms of common patriotism, whether what they were doing helped to bring Indian freedom nearer.

We remembered how you when you were out had worked your hardest to rouse our people to see the new period of invasion.

Once again we would like to remind you that Pandit Nehru in the Press Conference after the failure of Cripps talks, categorically declared:

"The fundamental factor is not what the British Government does to us or what we do to them although that governs much. The fundamental factor is the peril to India and what we are going to do about it. Therefore, certainly, in spite of all that happened, we are not going to embarrass the British war effort in India or the effort of our American friends, who may come here. *We want production to go on full speed ahead.* We want the people to hold to their jobs and not run away from them."

Bombay Chronicle, April 13, 1942.

We ask you, how then can you condemn us for having carried out in spite of great difficulties, that policy which has based upon the new and grave peril to India?

Did the peril cease as soon as you, the leaders, were jailed? Rather, did it not increase a hundredfold?

How then can you say that we acted in opposition to Congress policy? Was not Congress policy based precisely upon the need to defend India against this peril? It is because of this that we opposed sabotage, appealed to brother Congressmen to turn their face away from it.

We opposed them because we had no doubt that if they succeeded the Japs would be the happiest and if they failed, the people will become demoralised for being able to do nothing against British terror.

From Struggle To Dacoities

Some of you glorified Ballia, Bhagalpur, Midnapore, Satara. You referred to the heroism of the people, the fearless way they fought repression. Yes, there was and is plenty of heroism in our people. Where is the man who knows our history that can doubt it?

But that was not all that took place. As this big upsurge began to subside, pro-Jap propaganda was made among them, to fire them with hope of success with Jap aid. Even this did not work. Soon the organisers of sabotage lost their links with the people. They forged new links with professional dacoits and

degenerated into gangs that preyed upon their own people, terrorised and oppressed them. They killed as spies and informers—those who would not obey their orders.

You must be aware that Congress leaders of Bihar soon after their release openly disowned them and told the people not to give them shelter out of fear, etc.

In July 1944, Congress workers of Behar met at Patna, Syt. Anugraha Narain Sinha presided.

We give an extract from an account of the meeting that appeared in the *Searchlight* of August 1, 1944, and which has never since been contradicted.

"Congress workers of Purnea district are having leaflets printed and circulated among the masses explaining that neither Gandhiji nor the Congress authorised anybody to commit any act of violence as it is inconsistent with the Congress policy of truth and non-violence. Those persons who indulge in such acts should not therefore be regarded as Congressmen and people should give no quarters to such persons. Similar steps are being taken at Gaya and Monghyr. Other districts are likely to follow."

At the beginning of 1945 Anugraha Babu went to see Gandhiji; an account of the advice given to him by Gandhiji was given in the *Searchlight* of February 10, 1945; this also has not since been contradicted.

"I (the reporter) understand Gandhiji expressed himself very strongly on the issue of non-violence and declared that he is as rigid as ever, if not more so, on questions of non-violence and that he had never favoured sabotage.

"He said that Congressmen should fearlessly condemn dacoities of every variety; of course they should declare at the same time that what the Government had done was worse than dacoity because they had put thousands of innocent people to harassment and imprisonment. Non-violence demanded that both these crimes should be exposed fearlessly. 'I believe that by taking recourse to dacoity we can only establish dacoit Raj. Therefore even if dacoits threaten to kill us

we'll say that we don't want their help nor can we help them,' said Gandhiji in reply to another question."

We went to the people and exposed and fought the men who carried on these anti-national activities among the people, the people who knew both them and us as Congressmen in past years; and we did not use the name of the Congress, we told the people that *they* were misusing the name of the Congress; in all this did we defend or betray the Congress?

We know that inside Monghyr and Bhagalpur and other places it is difficult to glorify struggle without condemning those who organised it. Hundreds of persons who have been Congressmen all their lives complain of the anti-social and cowardly deeds of those who called themselves revolutionaries, and who belonged to the Congress Socialist and Forward Bloc groups.

We, of course, did expose them in the localities concerned but till now we have not given the full story of what happened for obvious reasons.

If you are really interested to find out the whole truth we could send you several local comrades of ours to give their reports to you.

All our comrades in these districts have been Congress workers. A good part of them are those who participated in the struggle and later became disillusioned with it.

We have naturally more faith in ourselves than in those who led the August struggle because in every locality and on a country-wide scale, many thousands of those who were with them are now with us. About a third of our student Party members are from what we call the "August cadre," the patriotic youth who were in the struggle, believing that it was a freedom struggle.

Those that left our Party because they disagreed with our August policy do not number more than ten in any province. Many of them left because it was far more difficult to function as a Communist under cross-fire both from the police and the patriots than to pose as a "revolutionary." Some of them who had gone away from us have since come back to us.

Our Anti-Repression Campaign

We, however, immediately thought out a plan to give form, direction and purpose to the just anti-British indignation of the people and concretise their love for and confidence in you. We organised a country-wide mass campaign against repression and for your release.

We did not then parade our differences with you except keep them in our inner-Party documents for the correct understanding of our comrades so that they grasped how exactly the present situation had arisen.

We concentrated all our fire on the British Imperialists as the provocateurs. We kept our differences to be thrashed out with you when you came out, before our people. We earnestly hoped and worked that when you did come out there would be no more differences left because your lead comes "spontaneously" from the situation in which you find yourselves at a given moment.

To us your release became the central task of the hour, assertion of our patriotism against the British Imperialists, make them undo what they had planned, viz: "Keep you in jail for the war period and thus escape the formation of a National Government and when the war was over, decide afresh how to keep India safe for themselves."

To foil the British game was our first concern. We agitated and worked for your release so that you might start where you left.

It was not that we protested against British terror in words, like the Liberals, and remained safe at home ourselves. While on the one hand our comrades called upon the people not to get provoked, on the other hand they stood *between* the police and the people, neither *with* the people, nor standing *outside* but always taking the lathis on our own heads, striving to protect the people from their enemies.

We do not think you know that the first patriot to be shot down in Ahmedabad in the August "struggle" was a young 20-year old Communist lad, Umabhai Kadia of Ahmedabad. He had vowed Death to the Jap Fascists for the Defence of his

Motherland. He had trained to be a guerilla. On 10th August a demonstration in protest against repression was taken out. There were elements who were trying to provoke the people into acts of destruction. The police only wanted an excuse to shoot. Umabhai stood between the police and the people, appealing to the people not to fall into the police trap. When the police opened fire wantonly, indiscriminately, it was the Communist, Umabhai, who was the first to fall. A true son of the people, he stood by them, tried to save them.

We bore our own share of repression for the anti-repression campaign and for demanding your release.

C. S. P. Opposes Your Release

Those who opposed us in the name of the Congress not only made fun of our release campaign as "liberalism" among Lefts but in big demagogical words exploited the old Congress tradition that the leaders had gone to jail for freedom and it was treachery to them and the cause to get them out in a slave India!

They opposed not only your release but also National Government.

"The Congress would suffer another great loss. As soon as Mahatma Gandhi, President Azad, Pandit Nehru and others are out of prison the world would forget India. The pressure that the deadlock exercises over those who guide the destinies of the world would be suddenly relaxed and the Churchills and Amerys would go peacefully to sleep—rightly thinking that the Indian question was settled for the time being and would not become pressing again till the mad Gandhi took into his head to march his flock once more to the prison. Pandit Nehru released from the jail might make statements which American correspondents might lap up with avidity, but there would be no strength behind those statements, despite the beauty and grace of their expression. Nehru imprisoned is a greater problem for the Roosevelts and

Churchills than Nehru proliferating nobly worded statements and casting his spell over the envoys of great nations."

Jai Prakash Narain's 2nd Letter to All Fighters of Freedom, page 7.

"Closely connected with the above discussion is the question of a national government and Congress-League agreement. A National Government by all means. But the most amusing thing is that while Congress fights for such a government and suffers others merely talk. If a National Government is not the same thing as coalition ministries under the Act of 1935 or a glorified Viceroy's Council, it cannot be won by holding conferences. The Congress left that futile path years ago and if Communists expect to establish such a government by petitioning to their imperial masters, they are welcome to their toading. But they will achieve nothing but the ridicule of the people and the contempt of their paymasters."

Ibid, p. 8

The Japs were proclaiming that they were about to begin any day their march to Delhi and help to release you and liberate India. We knew what it meant, invasion of India, temporary release for you only to face the firing squad or prison camp again and Fascism over India.

Real Way To Freedom

We were convinced that the only way to save the country and help the national movement assert itself for Indo-British settlement and war against the Axis was to get you out **FIRST** and create the conditions for what we called a Jawahar-Jinnah Sarkar at New Delhi, by popularising self-determination among Congress-minded people and by drawing the League-minded people into the campaign for your release. League leaders at the top no doubt sat tight, but the Behar and Bengal Provincial League leaders spoke up, together with any number of District League leaders.

The only answer to the slanderous charge against us that our

release campaign was only a smoke-screen to hide our identification with the British was : What was Amery & Co.'s policy—detention or release ? Do Linlithgow and Maxwell gain or lose if the leaders are released and once again are free to lead the country ?

It was not faith in the British nor even elementary patriotic duty towards victims of terror but of love and respect for you, despite our very serious differences, that inspired us, and columns after columns of the *People's War* bear witness to this ; and all those who in their thousands heard our agitators speak.

We knew that you were the foremost leaders of our country and that if you were not free to do your best and you did not give your best to the burning problems facing the country, there was no way out for our national movement except its disintegration and disillusionment, bitterness with others and helplessness in themselves among our people. We were only doing our duty towards you and the country in the hope that you would do yours.