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# INDIA AND THE WAR

BY JAMES S. ALLEN

**T**OTAL mobilization of India for its own defense against the Axis aggressors is daily becoming more imperative in the interests both of Indian independence and of the successful waging of the war against Hitler and his allies. The "non-violent, non-cooperation" stand taken by the Working Committee of the All-India Congress at the recent meeting in Allahabad shows that India still has to be transformed from a largely passive barrier to Axis expansion into a dynamic, fighting ally in the camp of the United Nations.

It is a heavy blow for the United Nations that at this late stage in the war against fascist tyranny the leadership of the dominant party of India should have made what can prove to be a suicidal compromise with Gandhi and Gandhism, whose doctrines of "non-violent" resistance can provide only comfort and aid to a Japanese army of invasion. If this decision is permitted to stand by the mass independence movement which the Congress heads, the defense of India will be seriously impaired and all important fronts of the global war will be affected.

The necessity of mobilizing India is linked in with the crucial ques-

tion of the war, the launching of the main offensive in Europe now against Hitler, as well as with stopping Japan in the Far East. If Japan is able to establish additional bases in India, she will be in a position to interfere seriously with the whole system of supply lines flowing from around the Cape of Good Hope to the Soviet Union and the Middle East, as well as to China and India. And if England and the United States are to concentrate their forces mainly in Europe for a decisive blow at Hitler, it would be of great assistance to count on the strength and the resources which can be made available in India, through the full alliance of an aroused Indian people, fighting together with China and her allies in the Pacific to stop Japan.

India, therefore, has a key importance for the war as a whole. What is done in India will not only decide its own immediate fate, but will affect the whole Pacific, particularly China, will have direct bearing upon the relations of forces in the Middle East, will influence the attitude of the whole colonial world toward the United Nations, and will have repercussions on the decisive European fronts.

There is no question but that the

main, although not the sole, responsibility for the present situation has to be borne by Great Britain, not only because of its historical record but chiefly because of the glaring inadequacy of the War Cabinet proposals recently presented to the Indian leaders by Cripps. Unfortunately, the great lessons of the Pacific phase of the war have not yet produced a decisive reorientation of British policy. The reverses of Britain and her allies in the Far Pacific since December 7 have aroused the English people to the necessity of a new and progressive approach to the colonial peoples—an approach which would lead to the full participation of the native populations in the war—as a matter vitally affecting the survival of England itself. It was for this reason, as well as the great popular appreciation of the role of the Soviet Union and of the need to cooperate more fully with that country through the opening of a Western Front, that Cripps was invited to join the War Cabinet and subsequently sent to reach an agreement with the Indian people.

#### *The British Proposals*

However, the War Cabinet proposals fell far short of what was demanded by the situation. Aside from the content of the plan, the take-it-or-leave-it admonition of the Cabinet and its messenger gave the proposals the flavor of an ultimatum and did not contribute to bettering relations. But this might easily have been forgiven if the proposals had turned out to be more acceptable to the Indian peo-

ple, and had not been aimed instead at convincing the world at large of the "sincerity" of the British intentions. As it was, the scheme which, in the terms of the document, was to assure "the earliest possible realization of self-government in India" proved entirely inadequate with regard to immediate measures for the mobilization of the Indian people—the crux of the whole problem—and instead centered attention upon a future status, to be achieved after the war.

It is true that in some respects the Cabinet plan did represent a further advance along the lines established by previous British-sponsored reforms. For the first time in any official document was Dominion status definitely promised, and also for the first time was a more or less definite date set for the realization of self-government, that is, "immediately upon cessation of hostilities." The long standing demand of the Congress for a Constituent Assembly was indirectly recognized in the proposal that as soon as the war was over a semi-elected body be set up with the task of framing a constitution. The Congress took note of these concessions when it recognized "that self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle in that uncertain future," but pointed out that "this is fettered and circumscribed and that certain provisions have been introduced which gravely imperil the development of a free and united national government and establishment of a democratic state."

In fact, the provisions introduced into the scheme for Dominion status showed that while the British Cabinet was ready to promise further constitutional reforms it was not yet ready to commit itself to an important departure from past policy. These provisions, which were the main cause for the Congress rejection of the Dominion plan, concerned the two major domestic problems of national unity in India: the question of the Indian States and the communal problem. The first of these problems was introduced in connection with the constitutional body, which according to the Cripps plan was to be formed by delegates elected from the lower houses of the provincial legislatures of British India together with representatives appointed by the Princes of the Indian States on the same base of proportional representation as in British India, and with the same power as the elected delegates from the provinces. This would mean the introduction into the constitution-making body of a reactionary feudal bloc, able to obstruct the proposals of the democratically elected representatives.

The other sharp domestic issue unsatisfactorily handled by the British Cabinet is the communal question. The Cabinet plan commits Britain to accept and implement the Constitution framed by the proposed body, subject to the right of any province of British India which is not ready to accept the Constitution to refrain from joining the Union and have the right to agree with Britain upon a separate constitution for itself or together with

other provinces remaining outside the Union.

This provision has the appearance of applying the principle of self-determination to the solution of the communal tension between Hindus and Moslems. In reality, as Congress pointed out in its reply, it constitutes "a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces." Congress made it clear that it did not favor compulsion of any section to join a United India, but that the Cabinet proposals do not help create conditions making it easier for the different provinces and sections to develop a common and cooperative life; rather do these proposals encourage separation and friction, favor the obscurantist and reactionary groups within the religious communities, and divert attention from the main issues facing the country.

The British demand that the right of non-accession for the "Moslem" provinces be recognized as a condition for the establishment of the Indian Union was clearly a concession to the Moslem League, which represents only a small section of the Moslem community, and can only have the result of encouraging the separatist program which it advocates. In 1940, that is, *after* the outbreak of the war in Europe, this organization officially adopted the demand for Pakistan, which means the state separation of the Moslems by establishing a confederation of Moslem States. Aside from the fact that such a demand is reactionary and retrogressive from the viewpoint of Indian

unity, the encouragement of such tendencies under present circumstances especially cannot help but play into the hands of the Axis, which is energetically at work to encourage disunity. (For example: the arousing by the Japanese of the predominantly Buddhist population of Burma against the Hindus, and the fifth column work of the Nazis in the Middle East dedicated to arousing the Moslem Arabs against the Western powers.) It is no accident that the Moslem League's reply to Cripps, in which the British proposals are flatly rejected unless the principle of Pakistan is unequivocally accepted, contains not a single word on the war or on the defense of India, and is marked throughout by a spirit of intransigency.

Thus, the British Cabinet plan for India's future status marked no radical departure from the established policy, which had already been emphatically repudiated by the Indian people, when they unanimously rejected the Constitution of 1935 largely because of those features found most objectionable in the new plan. The conclusion is inescapable that if the British Cabinet as at present constituted could not permit itself to go further than it did in meeting the well-known and long established aspirations of the Indian people, it should not have attempted at this time to propose a plan for a future status. As it is, the plan has injected new elements of discord and sharpened old ones in a situation which is already complicated enough.

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What the situation required was for the British Cabinet to propose immediate practical steps to mobilize the Indian people to participate in their own defense. It would seem to be axiomatic that no confidence in any British scheme for future self-government could be expected unless concrete steps in that direction were taken now in connection with the defense of India. On this point the British proposals offered some concessions but again fell far short of what was required. The British were to have the "responsibility for and retain control and direction of the defense of India as a part of the whole war effort," while inviting the people of India to cooperate with the government in "the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India." The Cabinet was also ready to welcome the immediate participation of "leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations."

In its reply, the Congress recalled that since the beginning of the war in September, 1939, it had taken the position that the Indian people "would line themselves up with the progressive forces of the world" and "asked that the necessary conditions to enable them to do so be created." This condition, says the Congress, is the freedom of India, for "only the realization of present freedom could light the flame which would illuminate millions of hearts and move them to action." The proposals on present status are characterized as "vague and altogether in-

complete" with no vital changes in the existing structure, in which India's responsibility is reduced to a "farce and a nullity." Defense can be assured only if the fullest trust is placed in the people:

"It is only thus that even in this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanize the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion. . . . It is only the people of India through their popular representatives who may shoulder this burden worthily. But that can only be done by present freedom and full responsibility being cast upon them."

In his farewell broadcast to the Indian people Cripps revealed that the Congress had made two suggestions with a view to establishing an immediate working arrangement guaranteeing the fullest participation of the people in the war effort. The first of these was an immediate change in the existing Constitution to assure representative government now. This was rejected by Cripps with some justification as impracticable. The second suggestion was that a full national government with a cabinet of Indian leaders be established, free from control by the Viceroy or the British Government. Cripps explained that he rejected this proposal as well because it would mean a central government, nominated by political parties, but responsible to no legislature or electorate, and would thus constitute a "possible inimical majority rule." Strange indeed that Cripps should reject this proposal as undemocratic when the political

parties are the most democratic phenomena in India and in the face of the Cabinet proposals which excluded any popular representative participation in the defense of India! It is not at all surprising that the Indian leaders should be a little piqued that Cripps, who was heralded as a warm friend of India, should hold forth the old Tory bogey of the "inimical" Hindu majority oppressing the Moslem minority as a reason for rejecting national government. Nor could it have been any more pleasant for the Indian people to hear Cripps explain in his broadcast that the British Cabinet is in the position of an "arbiter" attempting to arrange a fair compromise between conflicting viewpoints *among the Indian people*.

In any case, the Cripps farewell broadcast did reveal that the Nehru leadership of the Congress had been straining every effort to obtain the acceptance of national government now, as the best condition for mobilizing India for its own defense. In fact, before the British plan was made known, it had been generally expected by democratic and anti-fascist opinion everywhere that the minimum to which the British could agree was a provisional national government for India. This was known in advance to be the attitude of the Nehru leadership. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had expressed a similar opinion during his trip to India. Even *The Tribune* (London), which is said to reflect Sir Stafford Cripps' opinion, declared before the Cabinet proposals were published:

"Nehru must be asked to become Prime Minister and Minister of Defense with full powers and with a provisional All-India Legislative Assembly to act as the representative organ of the State." (*New York Times*, March 6.)

Immediately after the Cabinet plan was made known the British Communist Party, which now speaks for a rapidly growing sector of British working class opinion, declared that the scheme was undemocratic and that it would favor "separation and tendencies to partition which would be as harmful for India as it has been for Ireland," and pointed out that the crucial weakness was the absence of concrete recommendations for a provisional national government now. (*New York Times*, April 1) In its May Day Manifesto the British Communist Party raises the slogan "Form a National Government in India!" alongside the demand for a second front in Europe and the strengthening of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance for victory over fascism in 1942.

"Not for one moment," declares the Manifesto, "can the people of Britain tolerate blind refusal to establish an Indian National Government. Malaya, Singapore and Java, now in the bloody grip of the fascists, are a sombre warning of the consequences that attend imperialist subjugation of colonial peoples, deprived of the right to organize their own defense."

The Cabinet's obstinate refusal even to consider the establishment of a provisional national government charged with the responsibility

of mobilizing the people for defense was the crucial mistake, totally inexcusable in view of the very recent experiences in Malaya, the Dutch East Indies and Burma.

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While the Indian leaders must share in varying degrees the responsibility for the present uncertain state of India's defense, the main burden of responsibility for the situation and therefore of taking the initiative to overcome the present impasse still rests with the British Government. While it is correct, as Cripps said in his last broadcast to the Indian people, that "the essential need of India today is for all leaders of all main parties and communities to come together in a single national government," it is quite evident that this is precisely what the Congress leaders of the type of Nehru wish and that it is stubborn British Toryism which still remains the main obstacle to its accomplishment. To insist that the Indian leaders bear the main responsibility for the failure of the negotiations, as Cripps intimated in his statements in India, or to hold that the responsibility for overcoming the impasse now rests upon the shoulders of the Indians, as Cripps said upon his return to London, is to close the door to the development of united action and fighting collaboration between England and India, together with the other members of the United Nations. The main responsibility, despite the mistakes of the Nehru group and the service rendered Japan by Gandhism, must necessarily rest with the

British, upon whom two centuries of imperialist oppression inevitably places the weight of taking the initiative in reorientating its policy much more decisively and adequately in the direction of freedom for India.

To do this, British policy must unchain itself rapidly from the shackles of the past. To win the alliance and the confidence of the oppressed peoples the decisive thing is for the oppressing nation to take the initiative. It is nothing extraordinary or unexpected that the oppressed peoples should desire national independence and fight for those steps which now lead in that direction. They have been accustomed to do so for a long time. What is demanded and what is necessary is that the democratic powers now take the initiative in developing those practical measures which open up for the oppressed peoples the perspectives of national freedom.

If the recent British proposals to India are inadequate, it is because the old view still predominates and is only slowly, under the pressure of events, being forced to give way to a more progressive approach. The less influence the defeatist and old-line Tory forces have on the course of national policy, and the more influence exerted by the progressive forces within England, the more rapidly and effectively will the change take place. The close inter-relation of pressing events in the colony and the home country, a connection now under conditions of the anti-fascist war operating almost instantaneously, is demon-

strated in the case of Britain and India. Thus, the sharp projection of the colonial question arising from the defeats suffered in the Far East contributed, together with the paramount question of opening the Western Front in Europe, to important shifts in the War Cabinet. And the failure of the first phase of Indian negotiations is likewise a powerful factor, together with the even more pressing need for the European front, making for further progressive changes in the British Cabinet and government. The British people have come to understand the close connection between winning the war through main concentration upon the defeat of Hitler and advancing Indian freedom, and they are not disposed to permit imperial practices and prejudices to stand in the way of saving England.

So decisive has the question become, from the viewpoint of the preservation of England itself, that if the government as at present constituted cannot come to terms with the Indian nationalist movement, which is closely connected with the launching of the offensive in Europe now, the question then again arises of reconstituting the government. Never before in the recent history of the British Empire has the existence of a home government been so closely linked with its policy to the colonies. Up to the very recent past, during the first two years of the present war, the usual course was followed by the government of suppressing the nationalist movement and imprisoning its leaders when their demands were found distasteful. Today this course cannot be so

readily pursued because it is too dangerous for England herself as for all the United Nations. A new departure becomes necessary which must give freer play to the more advanced forces at home and to the nationalist movement within the colony, and which is in turn facilitated by the interplay of these forces. In this way, within the necessities created by the world struggle against Axis tyranny, there develops under new conditions and in a new form the alliance between the oppressed national and colonial peoples and the labor and progressive forces of the home country.

#### *The Allahabad Decision and Gandhi's Role*

The failure of the British Cabinet to recognize the necessity of national government in India and of taking steps to mobilize and arm the population against impending invasion contributed heavily to Gandhi's victory at the Allahabad meeting of the Congress. It must be noted that the official reply of the Congress to the Cabinet proposals contemplated resistance to Japanese invasion by every means and it was to facilitate such resistance that national freedom now was demanded. But as it became clear after Cripps' arrival in London that the British Government was not disposed to make any immediate change in policy, Gandhi was able to decisively influence the Congress, more out of the default of British policy and the lack of tactical flexibility on the part of the Nehru leadership than out of the intrinsic weight of his

own position. It is again a case of permitting the enemy the opening for taking the initiative.

The Allahabad resolution, which is now official Congress policy, is clearly a compromise between Gandhi and Nehru, and therefore full of contradictions. Thus, while it calls upon the people to refuse to give up their homes and their fields even if they die in the effort to resist, it counsels the people to adopt "complete non-violent non-cooperation to the invading forces" and non-interference with the British forces engaged in defense. Although it should be noted that "non-violent non-cooperation" is not accepted in principle but only as an expedient in view of the British Government's refusal to organize national defense by the people, the decision in effect means non-cooperation with the British and the Japanese alike. It is equivalent to a policy of "neutrality," clothed in Gandhian terms, which has so often proved itself the most effective means of committing national suicide. Such a policy is merely an invitation for the Japanese to march into the country, provides direct aid to the Axis fifth column which is preparing this invasion, and amounts to a repudiation of national freedom for India.

Again has the "passive resistance" program of Gandhi, which in the past was so detrimental to the movement for Indian independence provided a serious obstruction to national freedom. A revelation of Gandhi's present role is provided in a *New York Times* dispatch from New Delhi (April 28) which quotes

him as objecting to the arrival of U.S. troops and the expected coming of Chinese troops to participate in the defense of India. "Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions?" he asks. "Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then why foreigners? It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule, added to the British." And then, after thus demagogically playing upon the nationalist sentiments of the people to reject cooperation with the United Nations for the defense of India, he resumes his pose of "non-violence" to attack Nehru for encouraging Indians to resist attackers by force! In his own resolution presented to the Congress Working Committee on April 29 he coupled a proposal for ending further negotiations with Britain with the advocacy of non-violence against Japan.

The propaganda of "non-violence" gained vogue in India not because Gandhi's general philosophic views were shared by the people, but because non-violence proved to be expedient for a nationalist mass movement unprepared for civil war against much superior forces. In practice, Gandhi's advocacy of "non-violence" was used to hamper the growth of the mass independence movement and particularly of working class participation in it. During the first World War, which was a war for imperialist domination, Gandhi called for loyal support to the British Crown and recruited for the army. At one critical stage after

another when the nationalist mass movement was reaching an apex he always managed to call it off or disorientate it when important victories were within grasp. Although he has also played a positive historical role during the early stages of the nationalist movement as a bridge between the past and the present of India, which accounts for his popularity among the masses, the emergence of the mass movement and particularly of its growing working class contingent has increasingly made his role more and more retrogressive. In the present situation his position is of direct advantage to Japanese military fascism.

However, there is good reason to believe that the Indian people, long schooled in their fight for independence, will yet be able to brush aside the paralyzing influence of a Gandhi and overcome other obstacles which stand in the way of national unity and successful defense of their country, using every means at their disposal. The increasing role of the working class over the past years in the independence movement is now standing India in good stead. The basis of a correct and constructive approach was provided on the eve of the important meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Allahabad on April 29 by Communist members of Congress, who offered the following resolution:

"1. Defense of the motherland against fascist aggressors by every available means is the paramount sacred duty of every Congress member.

"2. Our struggle for the defense and freedom of our country is not a lone struggle; it is part and parcel of the struggle of the United Nations.

"3. No effective resistance by our people to the invader is possible unless we of the Congress take a determined initiative to establish unity, especially Hindu-Moslem unity." (*New York Times*, April 30.)

Further evidence that the Allahabad decision does not represent the views of an important sector of the leadership is demonstrated by the position of Chakravarthi Rajagopalachari, former president of the Congress and recently premier of Madras, which is among those points most directly threatened by invasion. Resigning from the Congress Working Committee, he condemned as futile the position adopted at Allahabad and called for a new national front, a new national policy and a national army to combat Japanese aggression. He urged the nation to "get together to face current difficulties which the official policy of the Congress does not meet," particularly stressing the need for Moslem-Hindu unity and for the formation of home guards to get ready for the use of weapons. (Associated Press, May 4.)

Despite the sharp differences with Britain, a large section of the non-Gandhi sector of the Congress leadership, as well as of the membership, undoubtedly agree on the crucial point, which was summarized by Cripps in his farewell address as follows:

"We may differ as to the method

by which that freedom can best be reached both now and in the future. But upon one thing surely we must all agree—that it cannot be reached through fresh conquest of India by a power such as Japan, that has shown itself brutal and intolerant to its Asiatic sister nations."

Thus, in a letter to Cripps before his departure, Abul Kalam Azad, President of the Congress, said:

"We are agreeable to postponing the entire issue [of dominion status or independence] so that the largest measure of unity might be achieved in the present crisis of India's defense." (*New York Times*, April 12.)

And, again, during the course of the Working Committee meeting at Allahabad, the Congress President declared that India would fight to the end against invasion. (*New York Times*, May 1.) According to a United Press dispatch from Calcutta on April 19, Nehru is quoted to the effect that failure of India to cooperate with Great Britain "would be an invitation for Japanese invasion," and that although the Congress effort failed "to build up a citizen army of millions . . . we can never shirk the responsibility to defend India."

Later, according to the press stories coming from India, there was noticeable a much sharper attitude toward Britain, fed by some of the statements which had emanated from London after Cripps' arrival. On Nehru's return from the border province of Assam, where he investigated conditions of Indians evacuated from Burma ("separate

roads are maintained for 'whites' and 'blacks,' but some Indians are allowed to take the 'white' road, 'provided they have trousers on.'"  
—United Press dispatch from Calcutta, April 25), he is reported to have taken a position against cooperation with British efforts in India, emphasizing that "We can only cooperate as free men and a free national government *with others who acknowledge us as such.*" (*New York Times*, April 27.) At the same time, in a message to the India League in London, he appealed to the United Nations to "acknowledge the independence of India" as a means of ending the British-Indian conflict. (*New York Times*, April 28.)

It should be clear that the persistence of a stubborn non-cooperative attitude toward the British matters of defense of India, making cooperation conditional upon the realization of full independence now, will redound neither to the best interests of Indian independence nor to the best interests of the peoples of the world. The biggest blow to the struggle for Indian independence would come from an Axis victory. The key link in the struggle for Indian independence today is to do everything possible to bring about the defeat of the Axis powers, in the first place Hitler Germany, the very heart of the Axis, a task in which Britain has a leading role to perform. It must also be realized, as Nehru himself stated previously, that failure to cooperate with Great Britain in the defense of India "would be an invitation for Japanese invasion." Nehru and his

associates must bear their share of the responsibility not only for the failure of the Cripps mission but for the present state of uncertainty with regard to defending India to the extent that they fail to take the fullest opportunity afforded by the situation to hasten the mobilization of the people for defense (including all its forms—civil as well as cooperation with the army, organization of home guards, guerrilla groups, scorched-earth tactics, etc.), and thereby contribute not only to the defeat of the Axis but to the strengthening of their own independence movement and of those forces in England who can and are working to bring about a more satisfactory reorientation of British policy.

Fortunately, the authentic nationalist leaders cannot fail to take seriously into account their responsibility not only to India but to China, whose struggle for liberation they have always supported and whose troops are playing a courageous part in the defense of Burma, equally important to the security of China and India. They cannot but fail to appreciate that in the fulfillment of this responsibility they can help forge the alliance of the colonial nations and subject peoples within the United Nations and within the framework of the anti-Axis war which will provide the most substantial assurance that their aspirations for freedom and independence will be fully realized.

Fortunately, there is nothing but the greatest admiration and support among the Indian people for the great liberation struggle of the Soviet Union against Hitler and for

the Soviet accomplishments, especially in the solution of the national question, which is an additional powerful factor determining the anti-Axis position of most of the Indian Congress leadership and people and which helps them to understand that the triumph of the United Nations is indispensable for the liberation and independence of all peoples.

Fortunately, despite the **chagrin** at the attitude of some sections of the American press, the Indian people have grounds to expect effective aid from the United States in their defense and in solving their conflict with England, as was shown by the welcome given the U.S. Economic Mission by the Indian industrialists and the reception received by Colonel Louis Johnson, President Roosevelt's personal envoy in India.

Fortunately, they feel their responsibility to the whole colonial world, as shown by Nehru's message to the meeting of the Council on African Affairs in New York and his reply to the cable of Vicente Lombardo Toledano, president of the Latin American Confederation of Labor, asking that he use his influence to align the people of India on the side of the democracies against the Axis.

The Indian people cannot help but take into account the lesson of China which, despite the fact that neither Britain nor the United States has yet given up their extraterritorial rights in China and despite the insulting American immigration exclusion of Orientals, does everything possible to assure the greatest measure of cooperation from

both Britain and the United States for its own struggle of liberation.

As the Indian Communists, who have been persecuted by British rule even more than the Congress leaders, have emphasized in their farsighted statement, the defense of India by all means available is the sacred duty of every fighter for independence, and in this struggle, which can only strengthen the whole movement for independence and create the conditions for its final realization, they are not alone but part of the United Nations in their just war against Axis domination. On the part of the Indian people, the situation demands that they subordinate all antagonisms, no matter where the historic responsibility for them may rest, to the dominant issue of achieving internal unity and cooperation with Britain, the United States, China and the other United Nations for the defense of their country and their whole liberation movement. This is the only road through which independence can be obtained.

#### *The United States and India*

The increasing role of the United States in Asiatic affairs, particularly now in India, where it is exerting its influence to win the full cooperation of the Indian people with the United Nations and where its armed forces are already participating in joint defense, places a special responsibility upon the labor and progressive forces of our country. These forces cannot permit themselves to be identified with the position of the British Cabinet toward India, nor be drawn into the posi-

tion of placing the main burden of responsibility upon the Indian leaders, as has been done by a leading section of the American anti-Axis press, to the amazement of Indian opinion. Such a position would be dangerously detrimental to the cause of the united offensive against Hitler and his allies and would leave an open field for the demagoguery of the defeatists and fifth columnists at home as well as in the colonial world. An indication of how the defeatists in this country operate in this situation is offered by Hearst's *New York Journal-American* in its issue of March 9, which described the Japanese armies as "thundering at the gates of India, bringing the promise of freedom that the 350,000,000 people of India demand"; and again on March 31 the military-fascist armies of Japan are described as armies of liberation whose promise "is for Indian independence—not eventually, but now."

This type of demagoguery can only flourish in an atmosphere of indifference or passivity on the part of the labor and progressive forces of the anti-Axis camp to the great issues raised by India. It is not acci-

dental that American representatives in India had to deny charges that their interest was to establish long-range economic advantages for themselves. This suspicion arises and is strengthened among the Indian people in the absence of a great body of labor and progressive opinion on the Indian question which would give assurance to the Indian people that the best representative forces of the people of our country understand and sympathize with the position of the Indian nationalist movement and will exert their influence, together with the labor movement of Britain, to assure a provisional national government in India now, the arming and participation of the people in their own defense, and protection of India's right to independence at all times. Such assurance from our great organizations of labor to the Indian Congress and to the All-India Trade Union Congress would greatly help to weld the unity between the progressive forces of the Western powers and the peoples of the colonial world, and strengthen the united struggle of all anti-Axis forces for the defeat of Hitler and fascist tyranny.