be interpreted as a "change of heart" encouraging "responsive" or "honourable" cooperation. At this critical period of India's "constitutional advance" the nationalist bourgeoisie would not tolerate any note of discord from any political group or party depending largely on their vote. So the swarajist leaders must abandon their ambiguous position. They must choose their company. They are going to do this at Gauhati.

Thus the Swaraj Party will be unburdened of the last remnants of the bourgeois ballast. The last vestige of illusion will be dissipated. The line of class interest will be drawn clearly across the national interest. The future of Indian politics will be determined by these facts. The end of "swarajism" is, therefore, a blessing in disguise. It will free the petty-bourgeois revolutionary elements from the domination of feudal and capitalist ideology. It will help them see things in their proper perspectives. It will introduce realism in their political views. And as a result of all these, the petty-bourgeois revolutionary-nationalists will be forced to move towards an alliance with the workers and peasants—the most revolutionary social forces. The corollary to the formation of the bourgeois bloc of agreement with imperialism is the organisation of the revolutionary bloc of the middle class, peasantry and proletariat to carry on the struggle for national freedom as a preliminary to higher forms of freedom.

Recently the tendency to "go to the masses" has been growing among the petty-bourgeois revolutionary-nationalists. Objectively this is a tendency in the right direction. But no progress was made in that direction because of the reactionary subjective factor. The petty-bourgeois intellectuals desired to go to the masses to catch them for the landowning and capitalist classes, so to say. They acted as the instrument of feudal and capitalist domination. The Swaraj Party was the expression of this ideology. The break up of the Swaraj Party will destroy this ideology. The petty-bourgeois intellectuals will come closer to the masses not as agents of capitalist exploitation and feudal domination, but as a revolutionary factor irresistibly drawn to a mightier revolutionary force. The lessons of Gauhati will aid the crystallisation of the forces of national liberation in the form of a people's party. The deceived and betrayed rank and file of the Swaraj Party will provide the cadre for the party of the people fighting resolutely for the freedom of the people. Freed from the hypocrisy and demagogy of bankrupt "swarajism", the revolutionary element of the Swaraj Party will become the vanguard of the struggle for national freedom in its next stage.

The 41st annual session of the Indian National Congress was celebrated during the last days of December. The annual session of the Congress is the most important occasion in the annals of the nationalist movement. Important political decisions are taken there which govern the conduct of the movement during the following twelve months. The character of this year's session is indicated by the following quotation from the presidential address:

"No scheme of selfgovernment will be acceptable which denies full control of the civil service, the military, naval and air forces, and political relations with the Indian states, and which refuses India dominion status upon the same terms as those determined by the imperial conference."
This can be taken as the program of the Indian national-

ist movement for the immediate future. The program
formulated in these words may be extreme or moderate
according to the interpretation that will be put upon them
eventually. But in the midst of this ambiguity one thing
is very clear, i.e., that the leaders who are very definitely
against a revolutionary struggle are being pushed un-
willingly towards a more extreme position under the
pressure of the rank and file.

In spite of this general left tendency the Congress, as
a whole, presented not a very encouraging spectacle.
While three years ago as many as thirty thousand delegates
attended it, this year the number of delegates dropped to
two thousand five hundred. In other words, from a gigantic
mass demonstration—the annual session of the National
Congress has become a meeting of a certain section of the
nationalist movement.

Traditionally and theoretically, the National Congress
is not a party organisation; it is called the national parlia-
ment. As a matter of fact, since its foundation in 1885, up
till the stormy years immediately following the imperial-
ist war, the National Congress represented the political
platform of the native bourgeoisie. In the period of 1919-22
the Congress was a gigantic mass organisation focusing
the revolutionary will of the entire people to become free
from imperialist domination. But even during this revo-
lutionary period the Congress essentially remained under
bourgeois leadership. Its political outlook was reformist
and its social ideology was decidedly reactionary. Although
the conscious representatives of the big bourgeoisie left
the Congress, the petty-bourgeois nationalists who led the
movement actually represented the bourgeoisie. They tried
to use the revolutionary mass movement to further the
reformist demands of native capitalism. This contradic-
tion eventually led to the collapse of the movement. The
Swaraj Party which during the last two years has cap-
tured the National Congress arose out of this collapse of
the revolutionary mass movement.

The Swaraj Party itself embodied the two conflicting
tendencies inside the nationalist movement. The leader-
ship was reformist while the rank and file inclined to-
wards revolution. The central slogan of the nationalist
movement during the acutely revolutionary period of
1919-22 was the refusal to cooperate with the British
government in any way. Essentially this was a very revo-
lutionary slogan and in reality it did develop into revolu-
tionary action. The National Congress in 1920 decided to
boycott the pseudoparliamentary institutions introduced
by the reforms of 1919. That was the central pivot of the
noncooperation movement. The Swaraj Party was born in
the opposition to the program of boycotting the parlia-
mentary institutions. In other words, the Swaraj Party
was born by practically repudiating the program of ref-
using to cooperate with the British government. It pro-
posed to fight imperialist absolutism through constitu-
tional parliamentary ways. The essence of this program
was not an unconditional fight against imperialism but to
negotiate with imperialism for the best possible terms of
self-government within the British empire. In comparison
to this essential reformist nature of the swarajist program,
the demand contained in the above quotation from the
speech of the president of this year's congress is indeed
extreme. When the nationalist movement demands a con-
rol of the military forces a compromise with imperialism
becomes impossible. It is doubtful whether the president
was fully aware of the gravity of his pronouncement. He
might have said those words in order to pacify the rank
and file which are becoming very dissatisfied with the
policy of compromise; but the fact remains that the
National Congress has officially committed itself to such
an extreme position.

Apart from this, this year's national congress has prac-
tically taken no decisions. This undecisive character of it
is all the more remarkable because never in its history has
the national movement required more urgently and clearly
a determined lead. The big bourgeoisie has definitely
gone over to the side of imperialism. The policy of parliamentary opposition advocated by the Swaraj Party has gone bankrupt. The interests of the masses demand a decisive struggle against imperialism. The British rulers are laying clever plans to intensify the exploitation of the Indian masses in conjunction with the native bourgeoisie. Under these circumstances the nationalist movement is faced with two clear alternatives, namely: capitulation to imperialism, or a bold revolutionary fight. The national congress was expected to choose one or the other of these two alternatives. What it did, however, was to adopt the policy of "wait and see". But even this should be considered a victory for the revolutionary forces. The leaders had the intention of forcing upon the Congress their program of compromise with imperialism. Obviously, they have not succeeded in this. Although they have not come out squarely in favour of a revolutionary fight, they have not been able to carry through their program of capitulation. Of course the present bourgeois leaders will never go with the revolutionary forces. As soon as they see that their following is getting out of their control, they will go over to the camp of counterrevolution where they really belong.

The undecisive and ambiguous position taken by this year's congress has been determined by the results of the last election which took place immediately before the congress met. The Swaraj Party was split into not less than four factions by the controversy over the election program. The general demand was for abandoning the tactics of parliamentary obstruction and assuming the responsibility of office. The official swarajist leadership, however, could not agree to this demand. To do so would be tantamount to committing political suicide. The tactics of parliamentary obstruction was the one feature which distinguished the Swaraj Party from the other bourgeois parties. There is no difference in essentially political demands, the common demand being: self-government within the British empire to be attained by stages.

Consequently, the official Swaraj Party contested the elections with the program of nonacceptance of office. This program does not mean anything unless by not accepting office the swarajists can render the formation of a ministry impossible. This implies that the swarajists must have a majority in the legislative bodies in order to carry on their program. The swarajists lost the elections—only in one province they won the majority, and that also of one, of the elected members. This means even in that province a ministry can be formed with the help of the government and nominated members. In other provinces as well as in the central legislative the positions is much worse. The swarajists hoped to win the elections but they could not even maintain the position they had in the last parliament. In a number of provincial legislative councils their number has dwindled to half. In the national legislative assembly they have lost considerable ground.

Under these circumstances, the policy of parliamentary obstruction has become entirely untenable. Everywhere the rightwing bourgeois parties and the dissident swarajists are ready to form ministries which could not be opposed successfully. In consequence the swarajists will be practically eliminated from the political picture. In view of this situation the swarajist leaders are naturally eager to change their policy. As a matter of fact, already before the election they had declared that it would be necessary to change the policy if the country so demanded. By "the country" they meant: if the electorate did not approve of the swarajist policy of obstruction. Therefore if the Swaraj Party had a free hand to conduct the nationalist politics at the bidding of the fortunate few enfranchised by the grace of British imperialism, they would have the National Congress declare that the interests of the nation demanded acceptance of office. This they could not do and herein lies the significance of this year's national congress.

The revolutionary potentiality of the nationalist move-
province, the swarajists will not be asked to form a ministry. In the single province where they had the majority a tacit agreement has already been reached by which the swarajists will support the ministry formed by the nonswarajist nationalists. This method will be adopted everywhere. If not formally, the swarajists will cooperate with the British administration in reality. Attempts will be made to cover this policy of capitulation by radical phraseology, but this will not succeed. The revolutionary following will see through this strategy before long, and what should have been the outcome of this year's congress will be accomplished if not before the next year's congress, certainly then.

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26. THE GAUHATI CONGRESS

The Gauhati session of the National Congress was the most uneventful of recent years. After a year in which the growing bankruptcy of bourgeois-nationalism had been expressed not in mere verbal dissension as an accompaniment of political degeneration, but in actual splits, the formation of new parties and factions, and bewilderment and confusion on all sides, a session of the National Congress has been held which has caused not a ripple in the waters, which has passed away without leaving a trace. The chief characteristics of the congress are all negative; it took no momentous decisions, it settled no vexed questions, it excited no heated debate.

There are two chief reasons for this failure. In the first place, the Congress was no longer 'national' except in a geographical sense, and hardly even in that. The Congress has become the appanage of a single section, it has become practically synonymous with a single comparatively
ment becomes still more noticeable when it is remembered that the president of the Congress had himself declared on the eve of the congress that nonacceptance of office could not be a policy applicable under all circumstances. He even secured the assistance of Gandhi for his program of capitulation. For some time, Gandhi had preached the theory that to accept office was the logical conclusion of the swarajist policy of entering the legislative council. He argued that the swarajists could not honestly refuse to participate in the responsibility of administration once they entered the legislative bodies. Obviously, the mood of the congress was threatening. If the leaders had come out with their program of capitulation as they desired, they would have been faced with a rebellious following dangerously beyond their control. It would certainly have been more beneficial for the nationalist movement had the situation been brought to such a climax. In that case, the petty-bourgeois revolutionary forces that constitute the rank and file of the Congress would have been completely liberated from the ideological influence of the bourgeois leaders. The Congress would have become a real fighting organisation. But, as it is, the situation still remains rather unclear.

As in the previous sessions, this year also there was a resolution before the congress to change what is called "the creed". The demand was that the congress should declare complete independence as its goal instead of self-government within the empire. All the leaders spoke against this resolution—Gandhi being one of them. The defeat of the resolution indicates that the revolutionary wing is still not strong enough to assume the leadership of the movement. But the events in the following weeks, which have been predetermined by the election results, will clarify the situation. The policy of nonacceptance of office and parliamentary obstruction, half-heartedly sanctioned by the congress, cannot be maintained. The Swaraj Party must make its position clear. There is little doubt which way the leaders will move; except in one province, the swarajists will not be asked to form a ministry. In the single province where they had the majority a tacit agreement has already been reached by which the swarajists will support the ministry formed by the nonswarajist nationalists. This method will be adopted everywhere. If not formally, the swarajists will cooperate with the British administration in reality. Attempts will be made to cover this policy of capitulation by radical phraseology, but this will not succeed. The revolutionary following will see through this strategy before long, and what should have been the outcome of this year's congress will be accomplished if not before the next year's congress, certainly then.

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