

able to act up to it. . . . But this argument and doubt are based upon the assumption that the members of the Congress Working Committee represent the feeling of the vast majority of congressmen. They would wish and I hope that the vast majority of congressmen had in them the nonviolence of the strong. . . . The probability, however, is that there is no majority but a good minority which represent the nonviolence of the strong. It should be remembered that the matter does not lend itself to argument. The members of the Working Committee had all the argument before them. But nonviolence, which is a quality of the heart, cannot come by an appeal to the brain. (Tendulkar, Vol. 5, pp. 287-288.)

After the Congress Working Committee, Gandhi met the Gandhi Seva Sangh and the Spinners Association, two of the constructive program bodies. He addressed them: "Now is the testing time for you. The Congress Working Committee, let us say, were weighed and found wanting. Can the Gandhi Seva Sangh do anything to repair their failure?" One very significant thing he said in the concluding part of his address at this meeting was: "In placing civil disobedience before the constructive work I was wrong, and I feared that I should estrange my coworkers and so I carried on with imperfect ahimsa. . . ." Evidently, he must have realized that he had failed to convince the Congress leadership that the work for the swaraj he was trying to attain did not end with the driving away of the British, but that it was a swaraj which will also be defended and maintained with nonviolent means, and that unless India continued to develop nonviolently all the aspects of its life, internal as well as external, the freedom won by nonviolent methods would be of little significance. He said to the constructive workers:

The Working Committee's decision was simply an echo of the atmosphere around them. My decision could not be its echo. For, ahimsa is my special *sadhana*, not that of the Congress. I congratulate the members for their

honesty and their courage, although I am sorry for myself that I could not inspire them with confidence in our creed and in my leadership. We have now to show that we have faith in the nonviolence of the brave. It does not mean the development of the capacity to go to jail. It means increasing faith in the potency of constructive work to bring about swaraj, and in constructive work being the vital part of the programme of ahimsa (Tendulkar, Vol. 5, p. 289-91.)

At that moment in the history of India there were two major issues before Gandhi and his companions: Independence from the British rule, which had declared India a belligerent country without even consulting the Indian leadership, and a real danger of invasion of the country by the Japanese. On the one hand Gandhi was contemplating on the Quit India mass struggle, and on the other he was preparing the country for nonviolent defence in case of an invasion.

We shall end with some quotations to show how determined he was to face the Japanese Fascist forces nonviolently. Mira Behn (Miss Madeline Slade) has given an interesting and full account of how she was instructed and asked by Gandhi to "go to Orissa and help to prepare the masses for nonviolent noncooperation resistance to the expected Japanese invasion of the east coast." Mira Behn toured the coastal area with some local leaders and found that the atmosphere there was panicky. There was no sign anywhere of the British forces, which she later understood and retired into the wooded hills which lay inland. The provincial government objected to organizing even an unarmed volunteer body for self-defense and internal order unless it was under their direct control. She had an interview with the Chief Secretary in which she explained Gandhi's plans. After the interview Mira Behn sent a full report to Gandhi, to which he replied on May 5, 1942: