

nation of small workshops, the factory system, *laissez faire*, physical degradation, hideousness, trusts, the unemployed and unemployable...

“It is absolutely necessary for Swadeshi in India to be a far-sighted and constructive movement, if it is to be of ultimate and real benefit to the Indian people. The gaining of a temporary advantage, though valuable as a political weapon to-day, is a small matter compared with the ultimate development of Indian society. Swadeshi must be inspired by a broad and many-sided national sentiment and must have a definitely constructive aim...”

## 21. BOYCOTT.

A distinction is drawn in Indian nationalist literature between economic and political Swadeshim. The Government have shown themselves at least not opposed to a policy of “honest”, “economic” Swadeshim. The controversies have gathered round the use of Swadeshi not merely for the encouragement of home manufactures, but as a political and economic weapon against the British Government and the British people, either in a fight on a specific issue like the Partition, or in the general fight for Swaraj.

The so-called honest or pure Swadeshim is Swadeshim without any political reference or motive behind it. It is use and encouragement of Indian goods, consistently with the open door in trade and commerce. The English opinion and the Indian Liberal opinion on the whole, favour only this type of Swadeshim, except that as a temporary measure against the Partition, the Liberals had supported political Swadeshim. Both these schools are really opposed on principle to the boycott of foreign or British goods.

The boycott represents a really daring and quite a novel departure in Indian politics. It first shows a practical

parting of ways in politics. In the boycott, politics in India radically changes its character and transforms itself into a practical movement with an open anti-British and anti-foreign bias. Practically, it does not appear on the surface to be different from the Swadeshi movement. The Swadeshi emphasises the positive part of the industrial movement, and the Boycott represents the negative part. The Swadeshi is for the production and use of Indian manufactured goods by Indians; the boycott means the discontinuance of the consumption of those articles not made in India. The choice has to be made by Indians between Indian and foreign goods, not merely on the ground of their cheapness and their quality, but also on the ground of the country of their origin. The nationalist economics asks Indians to safeguard and promote the best Indian industrial and commercial interests, if necessary even at the sacrifice of money or quality in the goods which they buy. The anti-British or anti-foreign economics asks Indians to turn their faces away from foreign goods, to discard them even if they happen to be cheap and attractive, because the interests of India conflict in this matter with the interests of the foreigners. Thus while there seems to be no practical difference between the two, there is a considerable difference in the underlying psychologies of these movements and some difference in the results brought about by either policy.

The nationalist points out that economics and politics are organically related to each other, and you cannot separate the one from the other. Economic Swadeshim has ample scope in a free country and in a country that has fully developed its manufacturing industries. England, for example, may and does practise to a certain extent the policy of economic Swadeshim when she raised the cry of "Buy British Goods" and leaves it to the patriotism and good sense of the people of Great Britain to carry out the policy of Swadeshi. But what is the situation in India?

India comes very low in the field of world-competition. She has vast natural resources, but has not the means and appliances of working out finished commodities from her raw materials. India is under the domination of a highly industrialised country which controls and regulates the fiscal policy of India, not in India's interests but in her own interests. Under such circumstances, India can never raise her head by a policy of economic Swadeshism. Has Great Britain regulated her relations with India in the past on a perfectly free and natural basis? "England has something to do with the decay of indigenous industry in India, and that something, was it merely an economic something or a political something? Did she not impose restrictions upon our industries in the earlier days of the East India Company rule with a view to help and further her own industries? And when our industries, which though in those days could to a very large extent compete with English industries in certain matters, were strangled by the application of political power, is it fair to ask us now to cultivate honest Swadeshism, economic Swadeshism, non-political Swadeshism? What is this 6% excise duty on the coarse yarn that has been imposed on the products of the Bombay mills? Is that honest economics?"

Such is the Extremists' reply to the official advocates of pure Swadeshism. To turn to the Indian Liberals, who are afraid of creating any trouble or of alienating the British Government or the British people in England. These Liberals advise a policy of caution and circumspection; but they ignore the realities of the situation altogether.

Take the economic boycott first. The economic boycott of all foreign goods is a difficult and perhaps an impossible proposition in the present state of our country. The nationalist, therefore, proposed the boycott of certain selected articles which the country could herself produce—foreign textiles, foreign salt, foreign sugar, and foreign enamelled

wares. The boycott here operates exactly as a strong Swadeshi campaign or a protective tariff (except that it is voluntary and self-imposed); it too selects and discriminates. The nationalist did not propose the boycott of books or scientific instruments or machinery. The voluntary regulation of production and consumption of articles suited to the country as far as it lies in the country's power; this is the principle which underlies both the Swadeshi and the boycott movements and the principle is perfectly sound so far as it goes.

The whole point about the use of boycott as an economic weapon is that it and it alone profoundly affects the psychology of the Indian people. The boycott supplies the motive, the driving force to the Swadeshi movement. The Moderates are nationalistic to a fault; they imagine that an intellectual proposition which appears to be quite sound to the academician in his closet must be equally influential with the masses. Here they thoroughly misunderstand the psychology of the mass-mind. If the Swadeshi movement is not to be a mere academic proposition, if the Swadeshi movement is to be a live movement actually swaying the minds of millions in a perfectly practical way, it has to carry convictions, to rouse emotions, and to captivate the imagination of the masses. The Swadeshi movement made more progress in a few days after 1905 than it did in so many years before 1905 because of the militant character of the nationalist agitation. The boycott is a war-cry, Swadeshi is not; and only a war-cry thrills people and carries them off their feet, and not a tame geometrical proposition, however sound it may be. "Touch not even a small dose of that which intoxicates the brain, that has been the injunction everywhere of temperance reform; because all these temperance reforms can only proceed upon the determination of the people to avoid the strong drinks and this determi-

nation can be kept up by a rigid law of exclusion and if once you allow a man to drink and yet call himself a total abstainer, you open the floodgate of temptation, you destroy the motive power, the strength of determination by which you hope to carry out the programme of reform. In boycott also this psychological law is applied."

In India administration and exploitation are parts of a common policy of the Government of India; and whoever tries to fight the economic exploitation is sooner or later driven to fight the other. The English are not, like the Moghuls, mere rulers; and they will never shrink from using their authority to protect their trade-interests when they think it necessary. It is this peculiar position of the Government that converts a virile Swadeshi campaign necessarily into a political campaign. But the boycott as a political weapon may be deliberately adopted by Indians either for a specific purpose or for the general object of getting Swaraj. It may have some vindictiveness behind it and may, therefore, rouse considerable vindictiveness in the party against which it is directed. But that happens inevitably in all warfare. Passions are necessarily roused on both sides and the Indians may be expected to fight their battles with such weapons as they have. In boycott they find a perfectly legitimate weapon calculated to bring practical pressure upon the English people and capable of retaliating the inequity that is inflicted upon them by a specific law or administrative measure or the general policy of exploitation. The boycott is India's answer to Partition; the boycott is India's answer to commercial drain; the boycott is India's answer to a policy of repression.

It is perfectly understandable that the policy of boycott does not appeal to the Indian Liberals. Some of these amiable gentlemen hope to accomplish wonders by a policy of prayer and persuasion and sweet reasonableness.

These men want *peace at any price*; they do not want to give any pain to anyone at all, particularly to the official class. The prayer may be a powerful instrument of religious discipline; but it will require a great stretch, as Lajpat Rai pointed out, and an inconceivable amount of credulity to accept that such prayers would lead to practical result in political matters. "Prayers to Almighty God may be useful in intensifying your desire for political liberty and political privileges. Prayers to the ruling nation may be useful to you in proving the *uselessness* of appealing to the higher sense of man in matters political where the interests of one nation clash with those of another and in driving you to the conclusion that human nature, constituted as it is, is extremely selfish and is not likely to change or bend unless the force of circumstances compels it to do so in spite of itself."

There is then the practical consideration whether it is wise or politic on our part to alienate from us the British people, by a demonstration of this type. The Liberal party puts its faith on the good sense and sense of justice of the great British nation. The boycott is likely to hit hard both the British manufacturers and the British men. But a Swadeshi movement hurts these interests as much as the boycott movement. So far as the British interests go, there is no difference between the two.

What is further the value of the British electorate to the Indian cause? The British elector is often sympathetic to the tales of oppression in other countries; but usually he is too busy to be much interested in or informed about all our Indian affairs. Past history even shows that British people have often opposed proposals to do more justice to India made by the Government of India. This, then, is the situation. "To our wrongs, the British elector is indifferent; to our rights, even if supported by good Englishmen in India, they have been opposed."

There is, then, the ultimate question whether the British are prepared to give us full political privileges in exchange for open markets for their goods. This is a big problem; but it will face us only when we have been able to press boycott to its logical conclusion. Till then, the question simply does not arise.

The whole point about the boycott movement is to generate that force in India which may bring actual pressure upon the mind of the governing classes. The Moderates relied upon reasoning; but reasoning unsupported by facts, by the pressure of practical interest, by some concrete force, unfortunately proves a perfectly useless instrument in the affairs of man. The Extremists saw this fatal weakness of Indian politics as it was conducted upto 1905 and struck out this new direction. The boycott sprang from the despair to which the country was reduced by its own utter helplessness in political matters.

The English are a practical people, and practical arguments appeal to them more than philosophic considerations. John Bull's tender point is his economic sense; you can move him only if you touch his pocket. "The logic of losing business," said Lajpat Rai, "is more likely to impress this nation of shop-keepers than any arguments based on the ethics of justice and fair play. The British people are not a spiritual people. They are either a fighting race or a commercial nation. It will be throwing pearls before swine to appeal to them in the name of higher morality or justice or on ethical grounds. They are a self-reliant, haughty people, who can appreciate self-respect even in their opponents. It is then for the Indians to decide whether they mean to continue to appeal to them in the name of God, justice, fair play, or whether they intend to attract their attention to the existing intolerable condition of things in India by inflicting losses in business and by adopting an attitude of retalia-

tory self-reliance.”

The boycott movement was intended to develop into a movement for passive resistance. “In Eastern Bengal one flat loaded with Liverpool salt was sent to a mart in the river Magna. The coolies of that mart refused to unload the flat.” This is passive resistance. The essential object of the boycott movement was not the mere protection of Indian industries, but it was the creation of national determination which may work out the problem of Swaraj. The boycott, therefore, was to develop into a sort of repudiation of honours, titles, honorary offices, and even Councils and Municipalities. Its purpose was to create a new social atmosphere in which the Governmental institutions would wither and the popular institutions might flourish. “The meaning of the boycott is this. It desires to reduce the Government to Shylock’s pound of flesh rule. The primary thing is prestige of the Government and the boycott strikes at the root of that prestige. That illusory thing which they call prestige is more powerful, more potent than the authority itself and we propose to do this by means of boycott. . . . We do not hate the foreigner, not the British, nor even the Government. We want to be indifferent to them. It is benevolent indifference. We desire to turn our faces away from the Government House and turn them to the huts of the people. We desire to stop our mouth so far as an appeal to the Government is concerned, and to open our mouth with a new appeal to our own countrymen, to our own people, to the masses of our people. This is the psychology, this is the ethics, this is the spiritual significance of the boycott movement. We can kill the prestige, the social value, that is associated with Government service...The Deputy Magistrate pockets his conscience and pockets all the insults which he receives from the officials, because these things are known to nobody else; but when he goes



out of office, he receives salaams. But when he goes out of the office, nobody salaams him, then the temptation for sacrificing his conscience, then the self-respect for keeping the office will be reduced to a minimum; and this fact will create endless difficulties in maintaining the discipline of the Government offices. This is what it will come to and this is absolutely lawful. No law compels a man to give a chair to a man who comes to his house. He may give it to an ordinary shop-keeper; he may refuse that honour to the Deputy Magistrate. He may give his daughter in marriage to a poor beggar; he may refuse any alliance with the son of a Deputy Magistrate, because it is absolutely within his rights, absolutely within legal bounds."

The positive part of the movement aimed at setting up a machinery of self-government which may run parallel to, but independently of the Government. There are many admirable social objectives like industrial welfare, medical relief, education, which may stimulate the spirit of self-help, self-sacrifice, and above all of co-operation for national purposes. These institutions may be the training-ground in the art of civic life, in co-operative work for public good and in the art of self-government.

## 22. NATIONAL EDUCATION.

If the essential idea behind the new movement is radically different from the essential idea behind the Liberal and Imperial schools, the methods of attaining the idea will be equally different. Liberalism stands for a policy of progressive assimilation of the British. Hence there were differences only of detail between the official and the Liberal school as regards the methods of carrying out the common ideal. But the object of the new movement is to help the ancient spirit and genius of the Indian