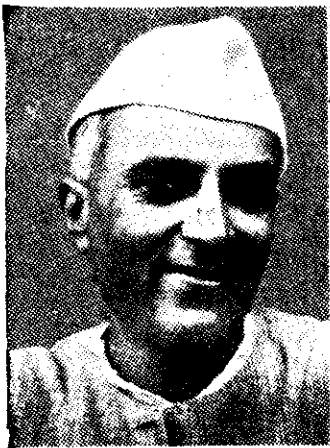


FIVE MEN OF INDIA:



NEHRU
Realist



GANDHI
Pacifist



AZAD
Theologian



JINNAH
"Orangeman"



BOSE
Quisling

“WHAT neither persuasion nor disturbance could compel, has now been, in the exaltation of war's comradeship, freely granted.” So Mr. Lloyd George hailed the long-fought-for enfranchisement of British women. There is a more realistic attitude toward the present necessity-born offer to India. At present, we are saving our breath merely to ask “Where will India go? Whom will she follow?” At the time of writing, Britain's offer had been neither accepted, rejected, nor amended, but whatever happens to it, the following brief pen-portraits by our contributor A.M.R., are of interest as revealing something of several Indians who have played, are playing, and may continue to play, a prominent part in moulding their country's destiny. Who among them is likely to lead the New India?

A PRINCE?

INDIA is the land of almost universal poverty and of occasional immense wealth. The Duke of Devonshire, Churchill's Under-Secretary for India, is England's biggest landowner, having a family estate valued at £5,000,000; but the Nizam of Hyderabad, a Muslim ruling twelve million Hindus, has a yearly income from land of £5,000,000. The Indians on the Viceroy's Council (not Cabinet, as official spokesmen now miscall this purely-appointed body), are mainly such *zemindars*, large landlords. India, too, with three hundred million peasants, is the land of princes, picturesque, absolute, and—frequently—inefficient. When her vital part in the 1914-18 war effort (some ten million peasants died through the resultant lowering of India's standard of life), brought forth the first promises of “Dominion Status,” these were then the men, *zemindars* and *rajahs*, who were expected to lead. But to-day, the Aga

Khan, for all his hereditary headship of fifty million Muslims, has no political significance. Nor will the Maharajah of Bikaner, that progressive aristocrat who signed for India at Versailles, ever represent her again. Nor will the myriad tenant votes and rupees that made Sir Sekander Hayat Khan the Governor of the Punjab carry him to still higher office. For time marches on. And Congress marches Left. And the Indian masses are suspicious of the landlords and princes who have lent their talents and authority to British rule. Even the noble past services of the Liberal Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and his refusal to join the Viceroy's Council are not likely to avail him now. Almost certainly the leader of New India will be a Congress Party man.

A MUSLIM?

BUT what about Mr. Jinnah? He is no Government supporter. When some members of his Muslim League joined the Council, he forced them immediately to resign. And he resents the Congress contention that he is a kind of Henlein, giving Britain a “concern-for-minorities” excuse to keep the country divided and conquered, on the lines of what happened in Czechoslovakia. “India,” he says, “is two nations, Hindu and Muslim, and the independence each craves must be safeguarded from becoming a Hindu tyranny.” Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Bombay's most brilliant barrister, is, in short, no more a possible All-India leader than is Dr. Ambedkar, champion of the Untouchables. His role corresponds to that of an Orange advocate in negotiations for a United Ireland.

Various Congress leaders, however, have suggested that the first Premier of Free India should be a Muslim, for the precise reason that Hyde, a Protestant, is President of Eire. The obvious candidate is Maulana Kalam Azad, the present President of Congress. He comes from Arabia, studied Muhammadan theology at the great orthodox University of El Azhar, Cairo, and is a scholar

to his sandals. Among his Hindu fellow-members of the Congress Working Committee these last 10 years are Joshi, Patel and Prasad. But Joshi's activities have mainly lain in organising India's infant trade unions; Patel, who is Gandhi's most trusted lieutenant after Nehru, is 63; and Prasad, acting-President of Congress, is (I imagine), too much a pacifist to help anyone's war. Bose might have been the man. But Bose has vanished. . .

A QUISLING?

IF Anthony Eden could not be found or Herbert Morrison evaporated, the sensation in Britain would hardly be greater than the sensation caused in India when Subhas Chandra Bose, aged 45, graduate with honours of Cambridge University and eleven British prisons, General Secretary and later President of Congress, Chairman of the All-India Trade Union Federation, and Mayor of Calcutta, suddenly disappeared a year ago. Later, rumour had it that he had turned up in Berlin via Moscow—a not-improbable move, in those days of what could have been called the Pact for Mutual Preparation, since Bose was as Left as Lenin. Now comes a report that he was killed in a Philippine air crash. But Tokio contradicts this by producing his authentic tones from Station JOAK. And since the Japanese, those worst of all speakers of English, can hardly be faking Bose's perfect university idiom and bhery Bengal bhronunciation, he is probably now somewhere just off-stage waiting his cue to play Quisling. In the event of a Japanese victory in India, or perhaps even without it, Bose might yet fill a part in India's destiny.

A PACIFIST?

HOWEVER, whoever may hold highest office, the real leaders of India remain Gandhi and Nehru. This statement may surprise some to whom the Mahatma is an established world figure, but to whom the Pandit is still unknown. And it may equally surprise others who have gathered that Gandhi's popularity

collapsed along with his programme of non-violent resistance, when India faced the grim reality of a Japanese invasion. The facts are, however, that non-violent disobedience was never accepted by the majority of Congress as anything more than the only weapon available against a Government that could not be attacked any way but through its conscience. Once before (in 1940), a two-thirds majority voted to drop civil disobedience in favour of offering co-operation in the war effort—at the price of independence. It was not panic, but a desire to commend themselves to the British Public as practical persons fit to be lifted from “native subjects” to “noble allies,” that made them recently renew that offer—again at that price. And yet, despite Press messages to the contrary, I remain very doubtful whether anyone is going to stone Gandhi, however hopelessly idealist, wrong headed, pigheaded, or reactionary many feel him to be. For Gandhi remains India Incarnate, idol of her unpolitical toiling peasant millions as Nehru is the idol of her active minority of politically-minded intellectuals.

Everyone is by now familiar with the picturesque external features of Gandhi's life and habits—his loincloth, his goat's milk, his days of silence, his fasts. Many know something of his ideals—a purely peasant India, without wage-slavery and without slumps, because wants are few, and all are provided for in the spare time home-factory itself; armies that win by enduring blows meekly; the re-vitalisation of Hinduism by a Christian concern for the oppressed. But few appreciate the very basis of his being—non-violence.

No one can hope to understand the Indian situation without trying to understand the complex personality, teaching, and influence of Mahatma Gandhi; and equally no one can hope to understand Gandhi without trying to understand what he means by “non-violence,” unpalatable though that may be to some people at this juncture.

Gandhi is not primarily concerned that Indians should rule themselves or that “untouchability” should end (for all that he has nearly died in both causes). Neither of these objects is in

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Written for “The Listener” by A.M.R.