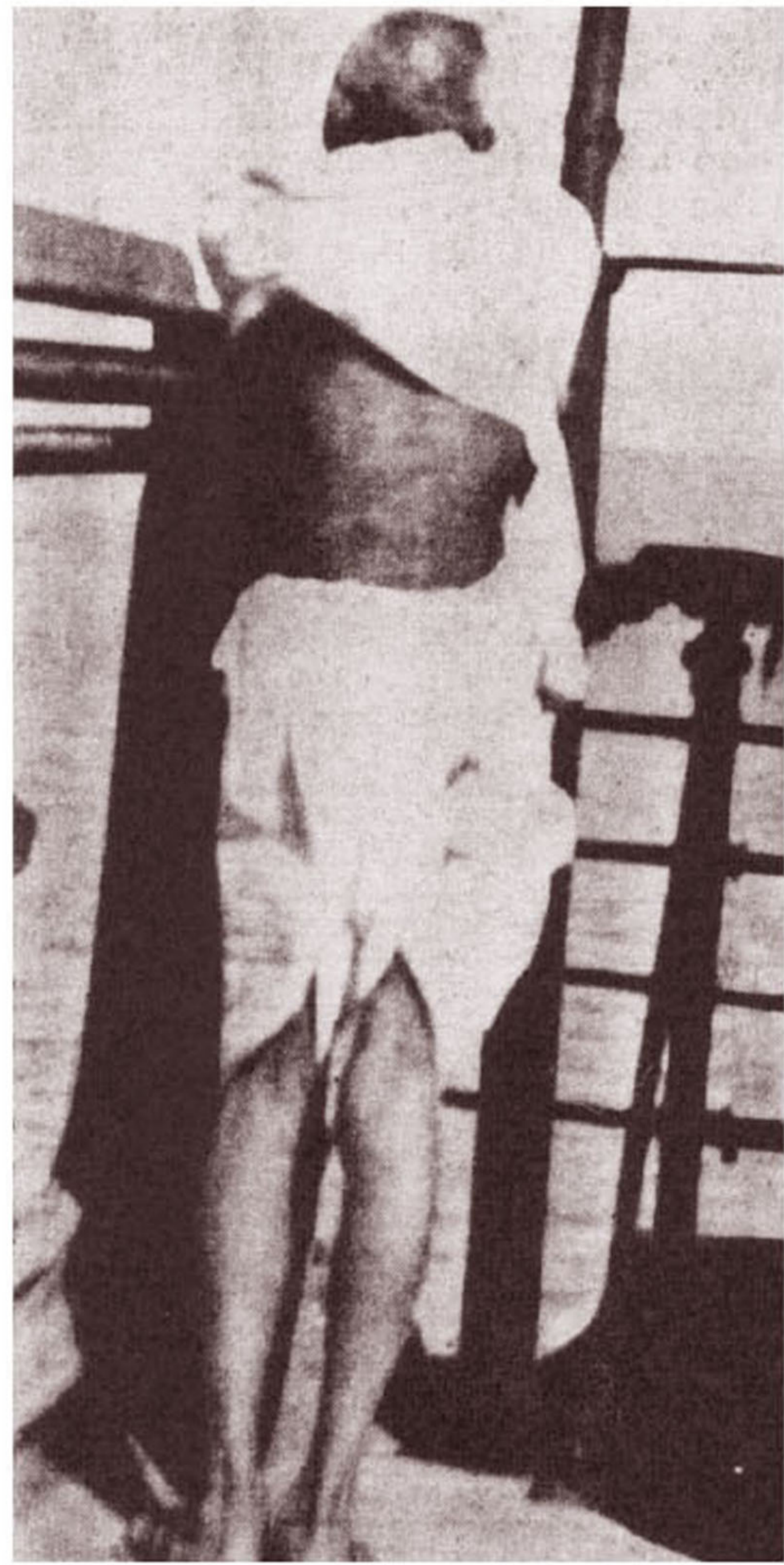


## INDIAN MUDDLE: The Mahatma's Fight Against British-Made Constitution

At Faizpur, little-known village in the easternmost center of Bombay Presidency, 60,000 Hindus, Moslems, Parsees, Sikhs, Rajputs and Bengalis chatted gaily—mostly in English Hindustani or Urdu—as they jostled one another last week to catch a glimpse of their most famous countryman and leader—scrawny, loin-clothed Mahatma Gandhi.

They blithely suffered the inconvenience of traveling to this backwoods Khandesh hamlet principally to honor the Mahatma's policy of close association with Hindustan's downtrodden village outcasts and laborers as the foundation-stone for a united, progressive India.

As members of the Indian National Congress, however, they held views as



Gandhi turns his back to British imperialism

variegated as their multicolored attire and headgear. Tho as one in demanding complete independence from Great Britain, their political opinions ranged from progressive conservatism, through passive resistance along Gandhi lines, to communism.

**Leader**—Next to the Mahatma, the restless personality of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the Congress, commands the greatest respect throughout India. Of Kashmiri blood, Nehru is a composite of high-caste Hindu spirituality and ultramodern European thought. As an Indian patriot, he is a fiery advocate of total independence from British rule. Politically, he prescribes socialism as the best solution of India's poverty and distress, which he blames on Britain's "imperialistic" greed.

The first item on the Congress platform to engage his attention this year was a set of resolutions, which delegates approved: (1) Indians must reject the new Federal Constitution, which England granted India in 1935; (2) they must boycott the Coronation Durbar of King George VI, who is expected to ascend the throne at Delhi as Emperor of India, probably early next year.

"The basic policy of this Congress," Nehru admonished, "is to combat the

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Government of India Act (the Federal Constitution); resist in every way the attempt by British imperialism to strengthen its hold on India and its people; stress a positive demand for a constituent assembly, elected by adult suffrage."

**Weighty Laws**—What Nehru attacked is perhaps the most verbose political document in British history—a tome of 105,000 words, bound together with sheaves of speeches, reports and discussions which would fill twenty Bibles weighing about two pounds each. Eight years were spent in producing this Constitution.

Two years previously, while Gandhi was its President, the Congress resorted to civil disobedience campaigns, which led to his imprisonment, and hunger strikes. Framed to knit India's States and Provinces into a federation, the Constitution fails to grant it the self-government demanded both by the Congress Party and the moderate Indian elements. India's 60,000,000 Moslems grudgingly support it because of the electoral advantages it accords them, but in general they are united with the rest of their 300,000,000 Hindu countrymen in condemning it as curtailing their self-rule.

Dead set against the class warfare which Nehru's socialistic tenets might induce, Gandhi retired to a tiny village two years ago and announced that he was out of politics. Nehru became his spiritual successor and launched out his fiery campaigns against British "imperialism."

**Mediator**—While the Indian Nationalists debated ways to defeat the Constitution, tall, forty-seven-year-old Lord Linlithgow held long conferences with his advisers in Delhi, the Capital, with a view to obtaining support from other Indian leaders, of the moderate National Liberal Federation, for the change in the Government of India on April 1.

When he came into office last April, he had made a favorable impression among Indians by his solicitude in trying to improve the condition of the lower classes. Overnight, he gained wide popularity by presenting to Delhi a set of bulls as a first step in bettering India's live stock.

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