

HARIJAN

Editor : MAHADEV DESAI

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[FIVE PICE

Notes

A Triple Tragedy

The *National Herald* is an institution. It has a directorate which has no personal or financial interest in it. It is founded by Jawaharlal Nehru. It is only in India that the security of such a paper can be forfeited. In fact why any security at all from it? And they need the greatest assistance possible from him in the war effort. They have exploited his stray sayings torn from their context. In any case, what do the Government expect from their repressive policy? Consider this forfeiture of security in conjunction with the arrest and detention of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, ex-Minister, the organiser of the Congress in U. P. and a Director of the *National Herald*. Put these two acts side by side with the wanton and almost indecent search of the A. I. C. C. Office. And the tragedy is complete. This triple act is in my opinion a great hindrance to national war effort. It is so mad as to amount to an invitation to the Japanese to walk into India. It is a justification for my friendly invitation to the foreign Government to abdicate in favour of the nation whatever it may be. It is bold, it is hazardous. The British are capable of taking risks such as very few are. Let them take the risk I have suggested and it will be their greatest war effort. It alone can save the situation, if anything can, so far as India is concerned. As a first step let them revoke the forfeiture order, discharge Rafi Saheb, and return the papers seized from the A. I. C. C.

Sevagram, 31-5-42

Jodhpur

From Jodhpur comes the news that Shri Jainarayan Vyas has been arrested for daring to seek an interview with the Maharaja and for proposing to carry on the movement for responsible government in Jodhpur.

Evidently Shri Jainarayan Vyas had no other choice. I wish the Jodhpur workers all success. But I hope they have realised that they have to plough the lonely furrow. They will have abundant sympathy from all over India, but dry sympathy will give them no help. Help must come from their own resolute will and unflinching courage.

Sevagram, 30-5-42

Sardar Prithvisingh

I am sorry that after association with me since his discovering himself and allowing himself to be arrested, Sardar Prithvisingh has parted company with me, having lost all faith in me all of a sudden

and as a result of a single talk with me. This naturally led him to tender his resignation from the Ahimsaka Vyayam Sangh. As a natural corollary to this step, the trustees of the Sangh have decided to wind up the Sangh and close the Vyayam Shala, which was established by the Sangh, purely to let him make experiment and find out, under my guidance, the scope and quality of non-violent Vyayam. I am hoping that, though he has lost faith in me, he has not lost it in *ahimsa* to which he was led after close and careful self-examination during years of secrecy.

Sevagram, 29-5-42

M. K. G.

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Q. "Is it a fact that your present attitude towards England and Japan is influenced by the belief that you think the British and the allies are going to be defeated in this War? It is necessary that you clear the position in this respect. A very important leader in the Congress thinks like that and he says that he is sure because he has this knowledge from his personal talks with you."

A. I wish you could have given the name of the leader. Whoever he is, I have no hesitation in saying that it is not true. On the contrary I said only the other day in *Harijan* that the Britisher was hard to beat. He has not known what it is to be defeated. Of the Americans in this very issue you will see my answer to *The Sunday Despatch*. It contradicts the "leader's" statements. He has therefore either misunderstood me or you have misunderstood him. But I have said in my talk for the past twelve months and more that this war is not likely to end in a decisive victory for any party. There will be peace when the exhaustion point is reached. This is mere speculation. Britain may be favoured by nature. She has nothing to lose by waiting. And with America as her ally she has inexhaustible material resources and scientific skill. This advantage is not available to any of the Axis powers. Thus I have no decisive opinion about the result of the War. But what is decisive with me is that I am made by nature to side with weak parties. My policy of non-embarrassment is based upon that nature and it persists. My proposal for British withdrawal is as much in the Britain's interest as India's. Your difficulty arises from your disinclination to believe that Britain can ever do justice voluntarily. My belief in the capacity of non-violence rejects the theory of permanent inelasticity of human nature.

Sevagram, 30-5-42

A REMINISCENCE OF C. F. A.

The five lakhs for the Deenabandhu Memorial could not have been made up in a week but for the generous response of some of the wealthy friends in Bombay. But it must not be forgotten that these include the meagre contributions of the poor—some of whom cherish the memory of the Deenabandhu who worked for them in Fiji, New Zealand and South Africa. A number of people from a village—Karadi Matwad—in Surat District have sent a sum of Rs. 131-4-0 by M. O., made up of small contributions. Some of these, I am told actually knew C. F. A. in New Zealand, and in gladly giving their contributions they said that was the least they could do. Very little is known of C. F. A.'s arduous work in these distant lands. "His activities on behalf of suffering humanity were so extraordinarily varied," says Mr. Hoyland in his memoir, that "the details of them have been forgotten even by himself." But a friend who worked with him in Fiji has a vivid memory of the trips and sends a record which is worth preserving. The system of indenture was a kind of extension of the slavery system for over eighty years after slavery had been nominally abolished, and C. F. A. was one of those whose souls rebelled against the iniquity, immorality and inhumanity of that tyranny. Just as C. F. A. made up his mind as early as 1928 that the British rule in India must be ended and India should be made independent, even so he decided that the indenture system admitted of no improvement, and it must be abolished root and branch. With this end in view he made several pilgrimages to Fiji, incurred the wrath of the owners of sugar companies and the authorities, both of whom worked in an unholy alliance of exploitation and oppression of the poor labourers who went there not knowing what awaited them. All that the sugar companies were concerned about was cheap labour. Before the curse was abolished it was necessary that there should be some education among them. The Deenabandhu's first visit was on a commission of inquiry. The second visit he made on his own, determined that some proper arrangement should be made for the education of the children of the labourers, if Government or the Sugar Company would do nothing in that behalf. His visit was misunderstood and misrepresented. Some tried to make out that he had come to organise a strike and revolt of labour against the Company. He arrived at Lautoka, visited Indians in their cottages and various settlements, and within a week selected three centres—Nadi, Sabeto and Karavi—all on the northern side of the Island where only Christian Mission Schools under the supervision of Europeans existed. He decided that the schools should be in charge of Indians, and education to be given them should be such as would enable them to maintain contact with the land of their birth and their culture. He had to select for this teachers from ex-government interpreters who were then the only educated Indians available as teachers. Shri N. G. Mukerji was appointed in charge of

Sabeto School and Shri S. C. Mitter in charge of Nadi School. Both these men, our correspondent says, had come to Fiji under contract to serve as clerks and interpreters but both resigned. The third school could not be organised. Before any thing could be done, he received a confidential message that if he did not leave Fiji in dignity he would be expelled. An Indian merchant helped him in booking a passage for Sydney and he sailed without a word to the public. His visit was not appreciated by the Australian overseers in the employ of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, a district commissioner had asked his own Indian clerks to spy the Deenabandhu's movements, and an urgent meeting of the Legislative Assembly was called to bring into force a law for deporting undesirable persons from the colony. A warrant had been issued deporting him from Fiji as he was an agitator interfering with labour, but before the warrant could be served on him he had sailed for Sydney. On arrival in Australia he delivered his famous lectures. If he really wanted to make trouble and add to the discontent there he would have stayed in spite of the warrant and disobeyed it. But he was moderate to a degree, and he carried his ministry of conciliation to the extreme limit.

Sevagram, 24-5-42

M. D.

HARIJANS AND SAVARNAS

As usual there are good and bad items to note in connection with Harijan work. There has been plenty of agitation regarding temple-entry for Harijans in Maharashtra. The Kala Rama Temple in Nasik which was the centre of this agitation is not yet open to the Harijans, nor even the famous temple at Pandharpur where thousands of Harijans go from everywhere and have 'darshan' from a distance. But slowly and silently reform is progressing, and on the 7th of May, 1942, Her Highness the Dowager Maharani Saheba of Kolhapur threw open a newly built temple to the Harijans at Khatgun, a village in Satara District. The village has only a population of 1500, and may be thus regarded as insignificant. But the importance of the event lies in the fact that the inhabitants themselves collected about Rs. 10,000, built the Shri Ram Temple, and in the teeth of the opposition of a few sanatanists had this opened by the Maharani. The Chief of Aundh with his son Appasaheb, Shri Satvalekar, Kakasaheb Barwe, Shri Pandurang Patil and others interested in Harijan welfare and in the uplift and purification of Hinduisim were present at the ceremony. The village people made all the arrangements for the reception of the guests and for the huge meeting which was attended by about 10000 people including Harijans from neighbouring villages, and for a *bhajan* party in the *sabha-mandapa* of the temple, in which also Harijans took part.

There was, as I have mentioned above, a certain amount of opposition and those who sponsored it tried to scare away the Harijans without much success. But it is now the duty of the reformers who outnumber the orthodox to disarm their

opposition, and to win them over by patient persuasion, service, and work among the Harijans.

There is some glad news from Gujarat too. In the Kaira district the District Board has had to close some schools because Harijan children would not be admitted to the schools, and it has been a regular tussle between the orthodox and the workers. News now comes of a village Govindpura — where the Harijan Sevak Sangh has opened a school because there was none, and where the Baraiyas who are generally illiterate and superstitious gladly cooperated by sending their children to the school. The teacher is a Harijan, and the Baraiya children and Harijan children now learn sitting side by side in the school. The school has no building of its own. The inhabitants agreed to build one themselves, the Harijans undertaking to build the mud walls and the Savarna Hindus undertaking to build the rest. Foundation of the school was laid on the 20th of May. Harijans were invited to take part in the ceremony, and *prasad* was distributed to all including the Harijans and the Harijan priest was garlanded by the Savarnas.

Both the incidents are quite commendable. But when one thinks of the work still to be done one is filled with despair. No major State has yet followed the example of Travancore. Mysore which had in the late Maharaja a ruler noted for his piety and devotional temperament will not yet open its temples to the Harijans. Some of the best known of our shrines are still notorious for their having kept their gods untouchable and unseeable for the Harijans. The orthodox Patidars in some of the villages in Kaira district will not listen to reason and would rather let their children go without education than let them sit side by side with Harijan children in schools. Harijans in the Garhwal district and in parts of Rajputana are not suffered to celebrate their marriages and have marriage processions as any other Hindus can do.

As I am writing this comes a tale of woe from Gujarat.

"On the morning of May 13," says a newspaper report, "a Harijan went to take tea at a Muslim hotel, but as no one was in the hotel, he went to another hotel. When the owner of the first hotel learnt about this, it is alleged, he beat the Harijan mercilessly. Then at about 8 A. M. some Muslims went to the locality of the Harijans and, it is alleged, beat them mercilessly." This if true is a case of Muslims following the Hindus slavishly in their superstitions, and we have none but ourselves to blame for it. Only the other day in a public hotel situated in the compound of a police court in Nagpur district, an educated young man, the son of an ex-M. L. C., who had gone to the court on government work was belaboured by the men in the hotel. He reported the matter to the police, but the owner of the hotel, a government licensee, reported the matter to the Tahsildar who ordered the young man to pay Rs. 5 to the hotel-keeper by way of compensation as he had polluted the hotel!

And may I mention here the scandal of the crematorium at Vile Parle? To exclude dead

Harijans from a crematorium is a much worse sin than to exclude living ones from a hotel. Death ends all hates and should obviously end the hate that there is at the bottom of untouchability. When one thinks of these very dark spots, it becomes difficult to enthuse over the bright ones I have mentioned in this note.

Sevagram, 24-5-42

M. D.

ANTI-BRITISH FEELING

When a man like Kunwar Sir Jagadish Prasad asserts that there is plenty of anti-British feeling among the Indian public, he would not say so lightly, and without good reasons. A correspondent has sent a number of cuttings containing statements by responsible people about racial discrimination against the Indian evacuees from the Malay Peninsula, Singapore and Burma, and the Marwari Relief Society's report has just been published in the newspapers. The correspondent, a highly educated person, asks:

"Apart from non-violence, why talk of cooperation on any terms, in face of insults such as these? Why have to choose the first robber instead of the second who is trying to rob the first? Why choose at all? I am inclined to believe that so long as England is here, there shall be racial discrimination in all its worst forms. Such things bring out the worst in one. Hate is the predominant feeling."

Another correspondent who happened to interview a high placed Indian official with regard to the behaviour of the soldiers sends a report of the talk he had with this official:

"With regard to the question of compensation, he told me that the government were not responsible for the deeds and misdeeds of their servants when off duty, and therefore the question of compensating the victims of the assaults did not arise. I asked him to let me have his answer in writing, particularly his views with regard to compensation and action that the government were taking to check such ugly happenings. But he refused to give me anything in writing and told me that he was not obliged to answer my letter. He even went the length of telling me that agitators were making capital out of such incidents and he tried to compare conditions in this country with conditions in Great Britain where all these tommies were befriended by the people and specially young girls in the streets and cafes in towns and villages of England. He even regretted that the ungrateful people of this country were not providing all the fun and facilities for the soldiers who have come all the way from England to defend and protect our country."

It is things like these that sink and spread the anti-British feeling. If the British withdraw voluntarily, and withdrew their soldiers too who suffer from want of fun and frolic here, this anti-British feeling would vanish and give place to a genuine feeling of friendliness.

Sevagram, 29-5-42

M. D.

Christian Missions

Their Place in India

By Gandhiji

Pages 311. Price Rs. 2. Postage etc. As. 5 extra

HARIJAN

June 7

1942

DIFFERENCES VERY REAL

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"Your latest advice to the British to withdraw from all Asiatic possessions or at least India is in accord with a general but undefined wish of a good section of the Indian public. Rightly or wrongly that wish is based upon the feeling that but for the Britisher making India the arsenal of his fight against the Axis, Japan may not have good cause for attacking India and will not do so. Even supposing Britain were to accede to this position, you do not suppose that Japan will on no account attack us. Very probably they may, and I am sure they will if only to get control of the vast material resources we have and use the same against their enemy. In which event you have advised non-violent resistance by us, but the Britisher will still carry the war against his enemy into our country (as is now done over the air in Burma, Siam, Indo-China, and occupied Europe) dictated, so they will say, solely by military considerations. None of these troubles may arise if the belligerents accept your method of settling disputes. But I see no near prospect of it nor do you. Meanwhile we may still have war in our midst each side saying that it is absolutely necessary to prevent the other from getting support for his operations. The resultant suffering will be ours and even if we hold on non-violently against the invader, it will not prevent the erstwhile possessor, from showering death and destruction on account of the enemy but all in our land and exactly over our heads. Perhaps Rajaji's attempt to organise a nation-wide resistance to the invader even at the cost of cooperating with the British arms is aimed at avoiding this futility of suffering. Even his method involves suffering, but is it not likely to be accepted more readily and with enthusiasm as being connected with the sole desire for preserving freedom and independence from aggression? It may also be that he feels that during and by that actual operation of mutual cooperation there may arise on our side a greater strength to achieve our independence and on their side a real appreciation of that strength and induce a feeling that it would serve no purpose to refuse the Indian demand any longer. . . . I should entreat you to let me know if I am correct in the above analysis and if so it does not reveal a fundamental difference between you and Rajaji in this critical hour of our history. In which event, you alone can show us the good and real way out, without futile suffering."

This is a very cogent letter from a friend who is most anxious to bridge the political gulf between Rajaji and me. But it cannot be by any make-believe. On the contrary any make-believe will mislead the country and serve neither his immediate purpose nor mine. We love the country with an equal passion. But our modes of service for the time being are diametrically opposite. He

believes in resisting the threatened Japanese attack with the British aid. I regard this as impossible in the long end. India is not the home of the British people. If they are overwhelmed they will retire from India every man and woman and child, if they have facilities enough to carry them, even as they retired from Singapore, Malaya and Rangoon. This is no reflection on them or their bravery. Every army would have done likewise. But most probably from India they will not take with them the Indian army. They will perhaps expect them to carry on the battle by themselves. No doubt they would try to harrass the Japanese army if they can from outside. So there would be no difference in the position imagined by my correspondent and what I have adumbrated. Only under my plan what is contemplated is an orderly withdrawal by the British as if it was a premeditated military movement which will, let us assume, please millions of Indians. Then the hated British will become esteemed friends and allies. They will operate in concert with their allies the Indians even as they would, say, with the Chinese. The whole thing becomes natural and a mighty force is voluntarily available to the British and to us. Add to this the moral height which Britain will occupy.

As for communal unity, the third party being removed unity will follow as day follows night. Unity will not precede but will succeed freedom. Today we do not even know that the goal of the Congress and the League is one. And you cannot bribe the League to cooperate for independence. Either the League believes that India is as much the home of Muslims as of non-Muslims, or it does not. If it does, it must first free the home from bondage before partitioning it. To-day there is nothing to partition. After ridding the home of the foreign occupant, it can demand partition if it wishes and get it by negotiation or force. However, if it does not believe in India being the home of the Muslims, there is no question of negotiations for freeing India from bondage.

Rajaji's plan is, in my opinion, wholly unnatural. He wants to thrust himself on the British power which does not want him, for as the possessor by right of conquest it gets all it wants. In order to thrust himself on the British he gives the League the right of self-determination which every single individual has whether the others recognise it or not. Rajaji does not like partition and hugs the belief that his superfluous recognition of the inherent right will enable him to avoid partition.

I advise my correspondent not to worry over our differences. We know and love each other enough to let time correct the error, whether it lies on my side or his. Meanwhile a frank and bold admission of differences and their exact nature makes for healthy education of public opinion. What is needed is avoidance of anger and intolerance, the twin enemies of correct understanding.

Sevagram, 29-5-42

UNFAIR TO AMERICA?

Proceeding evidently on Reuters' summary of Gandhiji's statement about America during the interview he gave to the Bombay press, *The Sunday Despatch* of London sent Gandhiji the following cable:

"You are reported as saying that America could have kept out of the war if she had wished. How can you justify such a statement in view of the fact that while at peace America was attacked by the Japanese who simultaneously declared war on her."

To this Gandhiji sent the following reply:

"Cable just received. Evidently you have not my full statement. Part relating to America runs thus: 'I know that I have no right to criticise such a big nation. I don't know all the facts which have determined America to throw herself into the cauldron. But somehow or other opinion has forced itself on me that America could have remained out and even now she can do so if she divests herself of intoxication that her immense wealth has produced. And here I would like to repeat what I have said about the withdrawal of the British power from India. Both America and Britain lack the moral basis for engaging in this war unless they put their own houses in order by making it their fixed determination to withdraw their influence and power both from Africa and Asia and removed the colour bar. They have no right to talk of protecting democracy and protecting civilisation and human freedom until the canker of white superiority is destroyed in its entirety.' I adhere to that statement. How America could have avoided war I cannot answer except by recommending non-violent method. My American friendships had led me to build high hope on American contribution to peace. America is too big financially, intellectually, and in scientific skill, to be subdued by any nation or even combination. Hence my tears over her throwing herself in cauldron."

In war it is not always the first act of aggression that determines the causes of the war. That act becomes the occasion, but it is always the result of a series of events preceding it. The murder of the Austrian Crown Prince at Serajevo was but the matchstick that exploded the powder magazine in 1914, but the powder magazine had been getting ready for years before the war. The first act of aggression in America's war with Japan was certainly Japan's, but was that the cause? Rev. John Haynes Holmes who tendered his resignation as pastor of the community church in New York in December last, because he could not use his ministry "to bless, sanction, or support war", said in the course of his last sermon announcing his resignation: "The American people were not guiltless in a war which was the final outrage to the will of God . . . We have our share of guilt in this disaster. Ours is a war world, to which we have consented and in which we have participated, and this is what happens in such a world."

Evidently Rev. Holmes had better data before him than Gandhiji and so he had no hesitation in proclaiming to the world America's guilt.

Sevagram, 29-5-42

M. D.

ALCHEMY OF PRODUCING FOOD

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Below will be found an extract from a letter of the Hon. Secretary of Marwari Relief Society Social Service Department:

"We are on the threshold of an acute food shortage crisis today. A good deal is being heard of the "grow more food" campaign, and it is no doubt a move in the right direction. But in my humble opinion, our leaders have not given due consideration to one considerable potential source of food supply in our country, which if successfully tapped, would feed at least 50 lakhs of our starving fellow-men. I refer the tremendous waste of food that every one of us in this country indulges in, when taking our meals morning and evening and also the disgraceful waste that is usually seen on festive occasions. The aggregate amount thus thrown into the dustbins could easily keep 5 millions of our countrymen from a perpetual state of semi-starvation. While passing along the streets of Calcutta, I have been shocked to find my own brothers and sisters picking up rotten food from the dustbins and eating it. The thought of such a ghastly scene which can be described as nothing short of a national disgrace has haunted me day and night and I have felt ashamed to take my food at home."

The Secretary further asks me to suggest ways and means of organising a campaign popularising the plan suggested in the letter. The plan I can heartily recommend. All the belligerent countries have been forced to cut off food supplies all round. There is naturally therefore not much scope for wastage in these countries. In our country seemingly we are not reduced to the straits to which the belligerent countries are reduced. In reality, however, the wastage which is truly enormous is confined to the few within the cities. The millions are living in a state of perpetual semi-starvation. For them it is like living in a chronic state of war. Day in and day out they know not what a square meal is. For them who have no margin the pressure of the present war can better be imagined than described.

What the Secretary suggests is worthy of consideration. A campaign against waste can be easily organised in all the cities. No householder should be without the knowledge of how he or she can avoid waste. There is here no question of denial. The question is only one of consideration for the poor. All saving thus made will be equal to so much food production without effort. There will have to be literature on the subject. It should not be elaborate. Leaflets should suffice. They must not be argumentative. By facts and figures they should tell the citizens how much waste they are responsible for and how they can avoid it. The horrible superstition that the dishes of the rich should always be over-full so as to leave an ample margin for leavings should be banished forthwith. It should be considered a sign of bad breeding to leave one's plate with a heap of uneaten things, whether at home or in a hotel. One should regulate the helpings with strict regard to wants. If all who are given to the evil habit of having plates piled

up and merely sampling the courses served out were to follow the healthy rule here recommended much food can be saved for distribution among those who are in daily want. I think the Marwari Relief Society which has had rich and varied experience in social service is perhaps the fittest body to take the initiative in organising the work. Though the problem will be much the same in all the cities, with every city there will be variations according to people's habits. I suggest, therefore, that the work is begun in Calcutta. The experience gained there could be utilised in extending the scope of service. It ought not to take more than a week to organise the work in Calcutta. Naturally great concentration of energy and a large body of willing workers will be required for this essential and urgent service.

Sevagram, 30-5-42

TOWARDS DESTRUCTION

An innocuous little note on how common folk can do uncommon things has brought to me a sheaf of letters. A correspondent—a student—is profusely thankful that I wrote that note for it has helped him in giving up tobacco. Others have written angrily citing instances of leaders who set a bad example to the public. They forget that I was primarily concerned with citing an instance of an ordinary man having overcome a harmful habit, and not with instances of those who had tried and failed. I would now like to drive the lesson further home by citing two or three instances of well-known men who gave up the habit in the twinkling of an eye. The late Deenabandhu Andrews was one; Mr. Hermann Kallenbach, of Johannesburg, is another; and nearer home is the shining example of Sardar Vallabhbhai. He was once a chain smoker, and used to consume a tin of 50 every day. He began reducing the number until he refrained from smoking in public or in the presence of people. One fine morning in March 1930 he was arrested at Kaira, and was being taken by the police chief to Sabarmati Jail. The Chief was friendly and offered him a cigarette. The Sardar politely declined and said: "Of course you offer it as you know I smoke. But I smoke no more." Boxes of cigars and cigarettes sent by friends through the Superintendent of the Jail were returned. And he has not touched tobacco since.

All that is needed is the knowledge that it is a destructive habit and the will to give it up. If any more evidence is needed on the destructive quality of the drug, here is the testimony of Havelock Ellis, the scientist, sent me by a correspondent:

"Another such ambivalent test is the consumption of luxuries of which alcohol and tobacco are the types. There is held to be no surer test of civilisation than the increase per head of the consumption of alcohol and tobacco. Yet alcohol and tobacco are recognisably poisons, so that their consumption has only to be carried far enough to destroy civilisation altogether."

Sevagram, 29-5-42

M. D.

A RURAL ANTHOLOGY

II

At Tedderfield and Newby we were hardly 40 miles from the Anglo-Scottish border. But we must now proceed farther afield and observe the rural scene in the extreme north of Scotland. Here, as we are informed by Mr. Russell Montague Garnier in the *Annals of the British Peasantry*, the labourer had no necessity to spend his money on clothes as long as he possessed a wife and a few sheep.

"He did not even require money for procuring the machinery for manufacturing his clothing. Any fellow with moderate dexterity could cut what he wanted out of the nearest wood. In Eden's days the ancient beart or loom was still used for the weaving of broad gaiters and belts... The cuigel or distaff... could be worked from an elbow chair or low stool, by mere children... He had encountered old women in his walks abroad, spindle in hand, distaff in girdle, proving to his delight that

'Still froe the russet lap the spindle plays.'

"Many a shepherd and cotter, with wife and children, appeared at kirk 'neat, tidy and even fine', in clothes which, from the time the stuff of which they were made was sown in the flax ground, shorn from the sheep or cut from the cow's hide, had been touched by no hand but their own.

".....A seaped shirt was washed with soap home made, generally of hog's dung; other garments with chamber ley. I doubt if in many parts where wages were still paid in kind, a coin was ever exchanged the whole year through for any necessary of life.

"Every Highland peasant made out of his home-tanned leather, shoes of astonishing elegance and strength, sewn by himself with thongs of calf skin.

"I will end it [this chapter] by showing how easily the Highland housewife dispensed with most of these so-called resources of civilization. Except the awl, needle, thimble, dyeing cauldron and a few bits of iron work for the weaving shed, all implements and materials were manufactured on the spot. Trees, shrubs and herbs furnished the various ingredients of the dye pot and every want in life was supplied with those hands and feet which the English statute book some three centuries earlier had preferred to all the cunning contrivances of machinery. Truly there was a modicum of method in the madness of that machinery destroyer, Ned Ludd and his poor deluded followers after all—only they, unlike most reformers, had come into the world a few centuries too late.

"Even at the present time we can, if we journey up into the Highlands, see the cottage factory still in its perfection. Only the other day I asked my boatman in the Cromarty firth if anything he wore was of home manufacture, and he astonished me when he replied that his blue tweed suit, cap, shirt, stockings and boots were all made during the silent night watches by himself and his dexterous spouse." (The italics are mine.)

(To be continued)

V. G. D.

The Indian States' Problem

By Gandhiji

687 Pages, Price Rs. 4. Postage 10 As. extra.

FREE INDIA CAN HELP BEST

Answering to the question of a press correspondent whether his present policy as revealed by his writings did not vitiate his own declaration that he was a friend of China, Gandhiji said: "My answer is an emphatic 'no'."

"I remain the passionate friend of China that I have always claimed to be. I know what loss of freedom means. Therefore, I could not but be in sympathy with China which is my next-door neighbour in distress. And, if I believed in violence and if I could influence India, I would put in motion every force at my command on behalf of China to save her liberty. In making, therefore, the suggestion which I have made about withdrawal of British power, I have not lost sight of China. But because I have China in mind, I feel that the only effective way for India to help China is to persuade Great Britain to free India and let a free India make her full contribution to the war effort. Instead of being sullen and discontented, India free will be a mighty force for the good of mankind in general. It is true that the solution I have presented is a heroic solution beyond the ken of Englishmen. But being a true friend of Britain and China and Russia, I must not suppress the solution which I believe to be eminently practical and probably the only one in order to save the situation and in order to convert the war into a power for good instead of being what it is, a peril to humanity."

"I am Not Pro-Japanese"

"Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that he heard people in Lahore and Delhi saying that I have turned pro-Japanese. I could only laugh at the suggestion, for, if I am sincere in my passion for freedom, I could not consciously or unconsciously take a step which will involve India in the position of merely changing masters. If, in spite of my resistance to the Japanese menace with my whole soul, the mishap occurs, of which I have never denied the possibility, then the blame would rest wholly on British shoulders. I have no shadow of doubt about it. I have made no suggestion which, even from the military standpoint, is fraught with the slightest danger to British power or to Chinese. It is obvious that India is not allowed to pull her weight in favour of China. If British power is withdrawn from India in an orderly manner, Britain will be relieved of the burden of keeping the peace in India and at the same time gain in a free India an ally not in the cause of Empire—because she would have renounced in toto all her imperial designs, but in a defence, not pretended but wholly real, of human freedom. That I assert and that only is the burden of my recent writings and I shall continue to do so so long as I am allowed by the British power."

No Secrecy

"Now what about your plan; you are reported to have matured plans for launching some big offensive?" was the next question. Gandhiji replied: "Well, I have never believed in secrecy

nor do I do so now. There are certainly many plans floating in my brain. But just now I merely allow them to float in my brain. My first task is to educate the public mind in India and world opinion, in so far as I am allowed to do so. And when I have finished that process to my satisfaction, I may have to do something. That something may be very big, if the Congress is with me and the people are with me. But British authority will have a full knowledge of anything I may wish to do before I enforce it. Remember I have yet to see the Maulana Sahib. My talks with Pandit Nehru are yet unfinished. I may say that they were wholly of a friendly nature and we have come nearer to each other even with the unfinished talk of yesterday. Naturally I want to carry the whole of the Congress with me if I can, as I want to carry the whole of India with me. For my conception of freedom is no narrow conception. It is co-extensive with the freedom of man in all his majesty. I shall, therefore, take no step without the fullest deliberation."

TO RESIST SLAVE DRIVERS

The Rashtriya Yuvak Sangha of the C. P. Province have been having their annual in Wardha for some time. They are to finish it on 30th. They were anxious to have Gandhiji in their midst, even if it was for a few minutes. He therefore invited them to come to Sevagram. And a hundred of them walked four miles to have a talk with him at 6-15 in the morning. Gandhiji gave them a little over half an hour. The talk was in Hindustani. The following is the substance of the talk. It was in the nature of questions and answers.

"How are we to help in driving away the British from here?" was the first question that was asked.

"We don't want to drive away the British people from here. It is the British rulers whom we are asking quietly to withdraw. It is the British domination that we want to vanish from our land. We have no quarrel with the Englishmen, many of whom are my friends, but we want the rule to end altogether, for that is the poison that corrupts all it touches, that is the obstacle that stops all progress."

"And what is needed for this are two things—the knowledge that the domination is a greater evil than any other evil that we can think of, and that we have to get rid of it no matter what it may cost. The knowledge is so necessary because the British exercise their power and domination in all kinds of subtle and insidious ways that it is sometimes difficult to know that we are bound hand and foot. Next is the will to throw off the chains. We have simply to cultivate the will not to do the rulers' bidding. Is it very difficult? How can one be compelled to accept slavery? I simply refuse to do the master's bidding. He may torture me, break my bones to atoms, and even kill me. He will then have my dead body, not my obedience. Ultimately, therefore, it is I who am the victor and not he, for he has failed in getting me to do what he wanted done."

"That is what I am trying to impress both on those whom I want to retire and those who are bound in their chains. I am going to use all my powers to do so, but not violence—simply because I have no faith in it.

"Two forces of the same type are ranged against each other in the present war. We do not know what will be the upshot. At the present moment, the upshot is mutual destruction of life and property, and destruction not alone of the combatants but of innocent non-combatants. I do not want for our country this power of destruction that we find having full play. I do not want the power of a Hitler, I want the power of a free peasant. I have been trying to identify myself with the peasants all these years, but have not yet succeeded in doing so. What however differentiates me from the kisan today is that he is a *kisan* and a *labourer* not by choice but by force of circumstances. I want to be a *kisan* and a *labourer* by choice and when I can make him also a *kisan* and a *labourer* by choice, I can also enable him to throw off the shackles that keep him bound today and that compel him to do the master's bidding.

"For you to achieve identification with them, you have of course got to be able-bodied—not athletes like Sandow, but able to do all the body-labour that comes the peasant's way during his day's work. A Sandow may have a beautiful physique, but may not be able to carry a headload from here to Wardha in the heat of the sun—which a peasant here can do. We want a physical frame that can endure the sun and the rain and can stand any amount of labour. We want also the will to resist. We want to build up the muscles of the body, but we also want to build up the muscles of the will and the intellect.

"For that will enable us to do our part in the fight that is in front of us. But I am going to be patient, I am not going to hurry or hustle you. I am busy preparing the atmosphere, and whatever I will do I shall do having in view the limitations of our people. I know that neither the rulers nor public opinion understand the implications of my proposal."

"But", asked a friend, "have we not to see that the remedy may not be worse than the disease? There will be, in the course of the resistance, in spite of all our will to prevent them, clashes and resultant anarchy. May not that anarchy be worse than the present anarchy which you have called ordered anarchy?"

"That is a very proper question. That is the consideration that has weighed with me all these 22 years. I waited and waited until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude has now undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait I might have to wait till doomsday. For the preparation that I have prayed for and worked for may never come, and

in the meantime I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain risks which are obviously involved I must ask the people to resist the slavery. But even that readiness, let me assure you, depends on the non-violent man's unflinching faith. All I am conscious of is that there is not a trace of violence in the remotest corner of my being, and my conscious pursuit of *ahimsa* for the last 50 years cannot possibly fail me at this crisis. The people have not my *ahimsa*, but mine should help them. There is ordered anarchy around and about us. I am sure that the anarchy that may result because of the British withdrawal or their refusal to listen to us and our decision to defy their authority will in no way be worse than the present anarchy. After all, those who are unarmed cannot produce a frightful amount of violence or anarchy, and I have a faith that out of that anarchy may arise pure non-violence. But to be passive witness of the terrible violence that is going on, of the terrible anarchy that is going on in the name of resisting a possible foreign aggression, is a thing I cannot stand. It is a thing that would make me ashamed of my *ahimsa*. It is made of sterner stuff.

"I know that what I am saying today is not easy to understand. Language is but a poor vehicle of one's thoughts. What I have said is bound to suffer from the limitations of that vehicle. But I want you to ponder coolly over what I have been saying and writing, and perhaps you will be able to understand me. I am also sure that those who cannot or will not understand me will do so in the light of experience, i. e. if they survive the present catastrophe."

Sevagram, 28-5-42

M. D.

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