

HARIJAN

Editor : MAHADEV DESAI

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[FIVE PICE

Notes

Deenabandhu Memorial

I am glad to be able to inform the readers of *Harijan* that the efforts of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Sheth Ghanashyamdass Birla, who had asked me to go to Bombay for eight days for the purpose of finishing the Deenabandhu Memorial collections, have been crowned with full success. Only over Rs. 60,000 were collected in response to the appeal through the papers. The whole of the balance of five lacs was collected during the eight days' strenuous labour. Bombay has never disappointed me whenever I have gone there for collections. I am most grateful to the donors for their generosity. They have taken a great load off my mind. I am quite clear that they have never given to a better cause. The Memorial to Deenabandhu started by and at the wish of Gurudev became on his death Memorial to Gurudev, in which the former merged. The object of both could only be identical. Subscriptions were required partly for the discharge of monies due by Shantiniketan and largely for the building etc. mentioned in the original appeal. I may mention that while the donations received included large sums from wealthy men they included also small sums from unknown persons from all over India. They were received from all communities, Parsis, Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus. I repeat the thanks on behalf of the fellow signatories and myself to the donors for their generous donations as also to the friends who organised the collection and laboured to make a success.

Harijan Collections

If the collections I make at railway stations and at evening prayer when I am out of Sevagram are any index to the progress of the removal of untouchability it must be very substantial, for I notice that the response is more liberal than before. Hardly a bystander at stations or a visitor to the prayer meeting refrains from giving his mite. Much need not be made of the response. But there can be no doubt that if the cause did not make any appeal, the response would be meagre, if any. Whereas it was hearty and willing. It gave me great joy as I studied the smiling faces of those who gave. The Bombay collection for the seven meetings was Rs. 4000. Each day's collection showed a substantial rise on the previous day. Thus the first day's collection was Rs. 205-5-6 and the last Rs. 1342-10-9.

On the way to Wardha, 18-5-42

Confusion

There is evidently confusion in some minds about my invitation to the British to withdraw. For a Britisher writes to say that he likes India and her people and would not like willingly to leave India. He likes too my method of non-violence. Evidently the writer has confused the individual as such with the individual as the holder of power. India has no quarrel with the British people. I have hundreds of British friends. Andrews' friendship was enough to tie me to the British people. But both he and I were fixed in our determination that British rule in India in any shape or form must end. Hitherto the rulers have said, "We would gladly retire if we know to whom we should hand over the reins." My answer now is, "Leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy." I invite every Britisher who loves Britain, India and the world to join me in the appeal to the British Power and, if it is rejected, to adopt such non-violent measures as would compel the Power to comply with the appeal.

What Could Have Been Done ?

Some Pressmen asked me in Bombay what could Sir Stafford have done in the absence of an agreement between the Congress and the League. I gave the answer. I do not know whether it has appeared anywhere. Any way it is better for the public to know what answer I gave to the question. Sir Stafford could have asked either the Congress or the League to form the cabinet. If he had done so, probably the party they entrusted with responsibility would have succeeded in having the cooperation of the other party. In any event the Government would then have dealt with the real representatives of their party rather than having their own nominees. I do not know that they made any such offer either to the Congress or the League. So far as the public know the negotiations did not break over the want of agreement between the two organisations but over differences with Sir Stafford as to what powers the British Government wanted to part with during the war.

Sevagram, 18-5-42

M. K. G.

Note

In a note in the last issue Gandhiji mentioned the editions of *Harijan* being published in various Indian languages. The Kanarese edition of *Harijan* was inadvertently omitted. It is being published by Shri Divakar from Hubli.

M. D.

BOMBAY RESPONDS GENEROUSLY

Bombay has enabled Gandhiji to fulfil a debt that had weighed on him for over a year. Deenabandhu Andrews died on the 5th of April, 1940, and an appeal for a memorial to him was issued by among others the Gurudeva and Gandhiji. Before even a lakh of rupees could be collected, the Poet was removed from our midst, and ever since his death Gandhiji had been worrying over the poor response to the appeal. The circumstances in which he decided to visit Bombay are now well-known.

The response was naturally expected, when Gandhiji himself decided to devote a week to the purpose, but there is no gainsaying the fact that with most of the donors regard for Gandhiji was a greater consideration than the purpose. A friend who was talking with Gandhiji the other day frankly said to him: "Gandhiji, you are backing the wrong horse." It was in order to correct this wrong impression that Gandhiji explained to more than one donor that the cause was worthy of their generous support.

"I am not exaggerating," he said, "when I say that Shantiniketan is worthy of a greater support than the Bangalore Research Institute for which Tata gave Rs. 30 lakhs. I wonder if the Research Institute is known anywhere outside India. But the Shantiniketan is known wherever the Poet's name is known, and known as an institution that inspired the Poet's great poetry. The Poet used to call it his toy or plaything, but his poesy would have been barren without the plaything. The Shantiniketan whose school of art and culture attracts students from far and near has produced painters and poets and scholars. There are among those who humbly serve it—a scholar like Kshitibabu and an artist like Nandababu, who are both unrivalled in their respective domains. And no institution of this type in India is managed with so little finance."

"Our devotion to the Poet will remain as long as we live. But how can we have the same devotion for Shantiniketan? How long will it last?"

"The institution which inspired the Poet received in its turn inspiration from the Poet, and you may be sure that there are people there who will devote their lifetime to its service. Shantiniketan is a romance. It grew out of the Poet's father's idea to found a home of peace and culture. It is a tragedy that monied men, who have gained so much from Shantiniketan, do not appreciate its full worth. The Poet is an asset for India and for the world for all time, and it is the duty of monied men to put his institution on a sound basis."

If Gandhiji appreciates Shantiniketan so much as a home of art, why does he himself have *ashrams* of a different character? For the simple reason that art is the need of quite a fair number of our people and it must be fulfilled in a clean, wholesome and inexpensive way. Shantiniketan, with its branch at Shriniketan, does it. That was

what attracted Deenabandhu Andrews to it, and he identified himself with it, and he became its champion collector.

"You can never give too much to Shantiniketan," said Gandhiji summing up his impassioned appeal.

"But," some one said, "we are in the midst of turmoil. These are not times for money collection. Can't we wait until we have won our freedom?"

"Rabindranath could not wait to come to the world until freedom was won," said Gandhiji in a neat retort.

Bombay, 18-5-42

M. D.

QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The Difference

Q. You have repeated in your interview to the Press in Bombay what you have said often that nothing can prevent the Muslims from having what they want unless the objectors would fight over the issue. What is the difference between you and Shri Rajgopalachari's attitude?

A. Though he has quoted me in his support I see the same difference between him and me that there is between chalk and cheese. He yields the right of secession now to buy unity in the hope of keeping away the Japanese. I consider the vivisection of India to be a sin. My statement amounts to the enunciation of the proposition that I cannot prevent my neighbour from committing a sin. Shri Rajgopalachari would be party in the sin, if the neighbour chooses to commit it. I cannot be party. What is more, I am firmly of opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it keeps it up. In its presence both Hindus and Muslims and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled interests and elements will look to it for support and will get it. Their interest is greater than the independence of their country. No one need throw my other statement in my face, viz., that there is no independence without unity. I do not withdraw a word of it. It is an obvious truth. From its contemplation I have discovered the formula of inviting the British power to withdraw. Their withdrawal does not by itself bring independence. It may induce unity or it may lead to chaos. There is also the risk of another power filling in the vacancy if it is there. If, however, the withdrawal is orderly and voluntary the British not only gain a moral height but secure the ungrudging friendship of a great nation. I wish all conflicting elements and interests will make a combined effort to rid India of foreign domination. If they do not, any understanding with them will be like a house built on sand. Fear of the Japanese occupation of India has blinded C. R. to the obvious truth. Independence sheds all fear—fear of the Japanese, of anarchy, and of the wrath of the British lion.

Sevagram, 18-5-42

NEED OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

[The following is a free rendering of Shri Vinoba's address to a national school at Tumsar:]

The greatest need in our education today is science. India may be said to be primarily an agricultural country, but she cannot maintain herself wholly on farming. European countries are mainly industrial, and yet France can show $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land per head; whereas we in India own land to the extent of only an acre and a quarter per head. In America, the wealthiest country in the world, both agriculture and industry go hand in hand on a large scale. She is spending 55 crores daily on the war. According to our standard of living it would cost 5 crores daily to feed our population of 40,00,00,000. America could, therefore, feed us for 11 days with what she is spending daily on destruction! Our income from land per capita is Rs. 50 to 60 per annum and from industry Rs. 12. There is no difference between our land income and that of England, but the average income from industry in England is Rs. 512 as against our Rs. 12 per head!

In order to change this piteous state of affairs all our teachers, students and the general mass of people must take to handicrafts and become experts therein. And one cannot become an expert without scientific knowledge in the subject concerned.

Our kitchens should, for example, be experimental laboratories. Those who work in them should have a knowledge of dietetics, and thereby know what type and what amount of food is required by different persons.

Everyone has to use a latrine, but few have proper knowledge of sanitation and hygiene which is essential for the health of society. What is now wasted could be turned into wealth, if only we had the requisite knowledge.

Why disease attacks one is a matter of research; likewise how it should be treated and what should be done in order to prevent recurrence. No adequate answers can be found without scientific knowledge.

We may spin and weave, and yet if we are unacquainted with all the processes of khadi production, we are not far removed from the factory automaton.

Shri Vinoba said he had been told that boys in the Tumsar School were not one whit behind those of other institutions in passing examinations in English, but he wondered what special pride could be taken in this. It would be far better if they had a good knowledge of hygiene, sanitation, physics and chemistry than English. And this knowledge could easily be assimilated in craft-work.

But while the greatest stress must be laid on scientific knowledge in regard to our daily lives and work, the spiritual side was on no account to be neglected. Language is the medium for instruction in both spheres, but it is a mere messenger in either case. For example, we will not sit down and cry if our spinning wheel goes out of order or a scorpion stings us. We will apply our scientific knowledge to remedy the wheel or decrease the pain. In the same way we ought to

cultivate the realisation of the detachment of the soul (*atma*) from matter. This detachment must grow and become a habit with us.

A true school is that where work is scientifically done and the student understands the whys and wherefores of each action. Otherwise the institution is a mere factory. An ideal school may cost a little more to run, but the effort will be amply repaid in the mental and moral growth of the students and in the quality of their output. The minutest details will be attended to in every department of life. Nothing will be forgotten, there will be no cramming, and craft-work will be fascinating. If the teachers are able to make the students take a live interest in their work, nothing will be humdrum, nothing will be a burden. The teacher must be able to impart knowledge from the seemingly little things of everyday life. National schools should be made attractive, and it is the duty of parents to send their children there.

Children are a nation's wealth, but today they are underfed. The minimum requirements in diet should be made available to them in our national schools, or else how can we expect them to work?

(From *Khadi Jagat*)

A. K.

PURPOSEFUL POLITICS

(Continued from last issue)

Government

Even granting that we obtain this freedom what shall we do with it? Government is the delegated permanent part of the people's self. Therefore a free people will strive to control the activities of this their better half. Politics is the lever with which this great instrument is switched off or on. This switch board must be operated under the will of the people. A Government properly conceived should be the largest partner in the business of the people, the senator of the people's education, the arbitrator to settle their disputes, the communities' social panchayat—in short, the head, arms, legs and heart of the nation. For any Government to so function it will have to be imbued with the spirit and culture of the people. The Britishers have consciously kept themselves apart from the people. Hence it is impossible for them to play this role. Only a free people can thus be at the helm of their own ship of State and direct her course towards national prosperity.

It is against human nature to expect Great Britain to govern India for India's good. Hence it is not fair even to Britain to let her continue in this impossible position. The purpose of our politics is to get control of these key positions in the country so as to serve the needs of the masses better and help them to develop themselves to the utmost capacity they have been endowed with.

(Concluded)

J. C. K

By R. B. Gregg

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HARIJAN

May 24

1942

LAWLESSNESS IN SINDH

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Prof. Ghanashyam assisted by Shri Assandas, a worker in Thar Parkar, has recently visited the area affected by the Hurs' rebellion. He has prepared an elaborate report of which he has sent me a copy. The following is a condensed summary of the report in the Professor's own language :

"Not many people in Sindh realise the grave situation that has arisen owing to the activities of the Hurs. Hurs are followers of the Pir of Pagaro who has been arrested by Government and is said to be under detention in Nagpur. All his followers are not Hurs. His following is said to run in lacs. The Hurs are mostly concentrated in Sanghar, Sinjhora and Shahdadpur Talukas. They are considered to be a criminal tribe and several of them were kept in criminal settlements. These were abolished some years ago. But they were still under orders to report themselves regularly to the police. The Hurs believe that their Pir has been arrested on the false reports of the police against him. They nurse the grievance that none of them is allowed to interview him. They are said to complain of police oppression in having to report themselves daily at police stations.

"After the arrest of the Pir of Pagaro, search of his house near Sanghar and destruction by fire of the huts attached to the bungalow where the Pir's followers used to gather, have so enraged the Hurs that they have started on a fierce campaign, as a challenge to Government, of murders, dacoities, attacks on railway stations, destruction of property in P. W. D. bungalows, cutting of telephone and telegraph wires, making breaches in canals etc. There is not a day when reports of these criminal activities are not received. They were in the beginning mostly confined to Sanghar, Sinjhora and Shahdadpur Talukas, but have now spread to other parts of Sindh also, specially the Khipro Taluka which adjoins Sanghar Taluka. The Hurs may be said to have risen in rebellion against the Government with a view to get the Pir of Pagaro released. They have such an intense faith in him that they are prepared to sacrifice their all and even their lives for his sake. It is now more than six months since the Pir of Pagaro was arrested. In the beginning of this period the frequency of the criminal activities of the Hurs was not as great as now. With the passage of time their activities have assumed not only greater frequency but have extended to other talukas than the original three. The Hurs have started their own Government. Not only have they appointed a leader whom they call their King but have appointed commanders, captains etc.. They are said to have divided themselves into groups, and assigned separate jurisdiction

to each group. Their activities were in the beginning directed against Government and those whom they considered as enemies of the Pir of Pagaro or who in any way aided Government against them. But it appears they have changed their tactics and are now attacking all and sundry. No one seems to be free from their attacks, whether he be a zamindar or a *sethia*, Hindu or Muslim, a high paid official or a petty *kotar* or *beldar*, rich or poor, innocent or guilty. Even women are not spared. There is a tradition that Hurs do not attack women or innocent persons. But it is said latterly young and mischievous elements among them have thrown the old traditions to the winds and spare no one. With a view to make their activities more effective, they have started a deliberate move for collecting rifles, guns, ammunitions, clothes and money. Latterly their attacks in many cases have been directed against those who are in possession of these things. In this way they are said to have collected many guns and a large amount of money-cash or ornaments. They organise their attacks in military fashion and are on occasions dressed in Khaki shirts and shorts. When the Khipro-Sanghar bus was attacked on the 16th April, the Commander of the groups was not only dressed in Khaki but wore a hat also. Those who attacked ex-military zamindar Beantsing near Shahpur Chakar were also clad in military dress. This put Khalsa Beantsing off guard. He approached to greet them thinking they were some military soldiers. They attack and shoot under orders. They are also said to be levying taxes from zamindars and merchants. Threats are given to them that their 'Kharas' of wheat would be burnt or they would be dealt with in some other way if they did not pay taxes to them, as they declare themselves to be the Government in those areas. It is said that many people do yield to their threats as otherwise not only their property but even their lives are at stake. There is a general belief in the affected areas that Government are powerless to protect those who render aid to the authorities or who refuse to submit to the dictates of the Hurs. Several persons who have acted thus have been murdered or been targets of other attacks. People are in a state of sheer helplessness. It must not be supposed that Hurs are responsible for all the crimes that are now being committed in Sindh or even in the above talukas. Taking advantage of the situation created by the Hurs several unsocial and criminal elements, of which there is an abundance in Sindh, have let themselves loose, thinking either that the suspicion of their crimes would fall on the Hurs or the police would not take effective steps against them being pre-occupied with the Hur menace. The two main streams of criminal activities: one of the Hurs and the other of non-Hur criminals, have combined into a mighty current which has now flooded the whole of Sindh in general and the above talukas in particular. The enormity of the situation can be realised from the fact that normal functioning of the Government machinery in this area has ceased. In the Sanghar Taluka all the police posts are said to have been

abolished and only one police station has been retained in the Taluka Headquarter, for fear of their being attacked and overpowered by the Hurs and their rifles being taken away. The police parties that go out for investigation of crimes return to the headquarter before sunset. Being afraid of attack at night, they do not venture to do their normal work after sunset. The withdrawals of police posts and the return of police parties to Taluka Headquarter before sunset have so emboldened the Hurs and other elements that they think the British Government has ceased to exist for them. Like the police, the normal functioning of the Revenue Department has also to some extent ceased. The *tapadars*, I was informed, find it very hazardous to move out in 'Tapas' and so they are working in Taluka Headquarters. All revenue collection is done at the Taluka Headquarters and not at the *tapadar's deras*, as is normally done. One *tapadar* was robbed of his revenue collection; two *kotars* were killed. It was said that one mukhtiarkar had to go under police escort for remission work and had to change his dress for that of an ordinary rustic to escape detection as an official. Officials and subordinates are so terror-stricken that they do not function as they would normally do. Even the District Magistrate has to guard himself very strongly during his movements. It was said that trees have been cut off from near his bungalow lest dacoits under cover of these make an attack on him. Even when he goes to play tennis in the club near his bungalow, he has to go heavily protected. Armed police men are stationed near the tennis court and round about the club. Camel-men who carried the kit of Deputy Collector were threatened with dire consequences. They reported the matter and were given strong armed escort. Similar is the fate of the Public Works Department in the affected area. P. W. D. bungalows have been attacked. There is no safety even for zamindars who keep themselves protected with arms as they are being now selected for attacks with a view to rob them of their guns and ammunition.

"The Government have taken some measures to bring the situation under control. Special police has been stationed in hundreds in the affected areas. A special District Magistrate and a special District Superintendent of Police have been put on the duty to suppress the Hur menace, with jurisdiction over both the Thar Parkar and Nawabshah Districts, as the area affected forms part of both these districts. Military has been sent to aid the police. The Sindh Assembly passed a special Hur Menace Act in secret session to meet the situation, setting aside ordinary procedure of criminal law in the matter of security proceedings and trials for scheduled offences against Hurs and those who aid them. All these measures have so far proved ineffective in bringing the situation under control. The things are going from bad to worse. The police is concentrated in Taluka Headquarters and a large portion of it is used in guarding Government offices and officers. It was complained that it was not sufficient for the task before it. The offences are so

many that it is not possible for it to trace each one. The military simply gives patrol rounds at times. These have ceased to create any awe among the Hurs and so have become ineffective in suppressing their rising. The public will be surprised to learn that up to this time, most of the arrests in connection with specific offences in the affected area are those of 'non-murids', that is those who do not follow the Pir of Pagaro. I have stated above that some unsocial and criminal elements other than Hurs have, taking advantage of the situation, started indulging in crime. Some of these elements have been arrested, but so far as the Hurs are concerned, who are directly connected with any specific offence, there has been almost no arrest, compared to the long list of the offences committed. It is true a large number of Hurs, which is estimated to be over fifteen hundred, have been roped in, but they have been arrested not as a result of pursuit in specific offences, but were rounded up with a set plan of which they were not aware, on the occasion of their reporting their presence to police as most of them are required to do.

"None, or almost none, of those who are absconding and who are said to be responsible for murders, dacoities, robberies etc. have been arrested."

The Government machinery has evidently broken down. The real remedy is for Congress members to withdraw from the Assembly and Khan Bahadur Allabux and his fellow-ministers to resign. These should form a peace-brigade and fearlessly settle down among the Hurs and risk their lives in persuading these erring countrymen to desist from the crimes. A deputation known to Pir Pagaro should visit him and induce him to issue unequivocal instructions to his followers to stop their murderous activities. This should not be on condition of release. If he is aggrieved he is entitled to an inquiry. The Government should take the public into their confidence. All this can be done without the resignation of Congressmen and the ministers, it may be urged. My answer would be that the resignations are necessary as proof of the earnestness of the members and the Khan Bahadur and his co-ministers. If they remain in the Assembly they cannot give undivided attention to their task. The decisive reason, however, for my recommendation is that there should be an admission of their helplessness to do anything effective through the Assembly to put a stop to these rebellious activities. That should be an earnest of their desire to make room for those who think they can deal with the grave situation with better effect. The resignations must produce a healthy effect among the people. The selflessness and courage of resigners is likely to prove infectious and induce others to join them. The murder of Seth Sitaldas, a member of the Assembly, regrettable though it is in every respect, pales into insignificance in face of Prof. Ghanashyam's gruesome report. Let the murder serve as a spur to the other members to go among the Hurs and court murder in the act of weaning them from their unlawful and inhuman activities.

On the way to Wardha, 18-5-42

[P. S.

Since writing the above, I have heard about the terrible railway accident resulting in several deaths including that of Sir Gulam Hussain Hidayatulla's son. The shooting by the Hurs thereafter shows the state of desperation they have reached. This emphasises the recommendation I have made. Nothing short of such heroic action will bring the Hurs to their senses. Frightfulness will only make matters worse. I hope that all parties will join in the attempt to rid Sindh of the spreading rebellion.

Sevagram, 19-5-42

M. K. G.]

IMPLICATIONS OF WITHDRAWAL

The following are the questions put by a representative of *The News Chronicle* (London) to Gandhiji, [Bombay, 14-5-42] and the latter's replies to them :

1. Q. You have recently asked the British to withdraw from India. Do you think it possible in the present circumstances for them to withdraw all at once? To whom are they to entrust the administration?

A. It has cost me much to come to the conclusion that the British should withdraw from India, and it is costing me still more to work out that conclusion. It is like asking loved ones to part, but it has become a paramount duty. And the beauty and the necessity for withdrawal lie in its being immediate. They and we are both in the midst of fire. If they go, there is a likelihood of both of us being safe. If they do not, Heaven only knows what will happen. I have said in the plainest terms that in my proposal there is no question of entrusting the administration to any person or party. That would be a necessary consideration, if the withdrawal was part of a settlement. Under my proposal, they have to leave India in God's hands—but in modern parlance to anarchy, and that anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for a time or to unrestrained dacoities. From these a true India will rise in the place of the false one we see.

2. Q. How is your policy of non-embarrassment reconcilable with this advice?

A. My policy of non-embarrassment remains intact in terms in which I have described it. If the British withdraw, surely there is no embarrassment; not only so, they become eased of a tremendous burden, if they would calmly consider the meaning of the enslavement of a whole people. But if they persist, well knowing that they are surrounded by hatred, they invite embarrassment. I do not produce it by stating the truth, however unpalatable it may appear for the moment.

3. Q. Already there are signs of civil insecurity; and would not life be even more insecure, were the present administration suddenly to withdraw?

A. Of course, there is civil insecurity, and I have already confessed that insecurity is likely to increase very much only to give place to real security. The present insecurity is chronic and therefore not so much felt. But a disease that is not felt is worse than one that is felt.

4. Q. Were the Japanese to invade India, what would your advice be to the Indian people?

A. I have already said in my articles that it is just likely that the Japanese will not want to invade India, their prey having gone. But it is equally likely that they will want to invade India in order to use her ports for strategic purposes. Then, I would advise the people to do the same thing that I have advised them to do now, viz. offer stubborn non-violent non-cooperation, and I make bold to say that, if the British withdraw and people here follow my advice, then non-cooperation will be infinitely more effective than it can be today, when it cannot be appreciated for the violent British action going on side by side.

THE BOMBAY INTERVIEW

After a lapse of nearly three years, Gandhiji gave the newspaper representatives in Bombay a political interview. He is so much possessed by his latest idea—the suggestion to the British to withdraw from India—that he readily agreed to meet the press, if only to be able to explain the implications of the suggestion. The whole of the Bombay press was represented, and it is gratifying to note that they confined themselves to strictly relevant and important questions. I must give for the readers of *Harijan* an authentic report.

Arbitration

“Would you review the situation created by the Allahabad A. I. C. C. meeting? What would you say regarding Rajaji's quoting your words regarding Pakistan in support of his latest move?”

“I would leave the Allahabad resolutions to themselves. C. R. has quoted me correctly, and I repeat that, if Muslims want anything—no matter what it is—no power on earth can prevent them from having it. For the condition of refusal will be to fight. Supposing Muslims ask for something which non-Muslims do not want to give or could not give, it means a fight. This applies to both the communities. If the Hindus want a thing and if they are all united in the demand, no non-Hindus can resist them, unless they want to fight. But my hope is that some day or other all parties will come to their senses and not insist on their demands being accepted, and consent to go to arbitration. It is an age-long method and a civilised method, and I hope it will be accepted.

“But it is from the frustration of every effort made to bring about unity by me among many others, that has arisen the, for me, logical step that not until British power is wholly withdrawn from India can there be any real unity, because all parties will be looking to the foreign power. For the time being it is British, but it may be French, Russian, Chinese, even then it would be the same thing. I have, therefore, come to the conclusion that real heart-unity, genuine unity, is almost an impossibility unless and until British power is withdrawn and no other power takes its place, that is to say, when India not only feels but is actually independent without a master in any shape or form. Nevertheless I shall try and welcome every effort for peace, well knowing that it is likely to be fruitless.”

Non-violent Non-cooperation

Q. "There is a report about some new scheme that you want to propound in one of your *Harijan* articles about non-violent non-cooperation if any invader came to India. Could you give us an idea?" was the next question.

A. "It is wrong. I have no plan in mind. If I had, I should give it to you. But I think nothing more need be added when I have said that there should be unadulterated non-violent non-cooperation, and if the whole of India responded and unanimously offered it, I should show that without shedding a single drop of blood Japanese arms—or any combination of arms—can be sterilised. That involves the determination of India not to give quarter on any point whatsoever and to be ready to risk loss of several million lives. But I would consider that cost very cheap and victory won at that cost glorious. That India may not be ready to pay that price may be true. I hope it is not true, but some such price must be paid by any country that wants to retain its independence. After all, the sacrifice made by the Russians and the Chinese is enormous, and they are ready to risk all. The same could be said of the other countries also; whether aggressors or defenders. The cost is enormous. Therefore, in the non-violent technique I am asking India to risk no more than other countries are risking and which India would have to risk even if she offered armed resistance."

"But," promptly came the question, "unadulterated non-violent non-cooperation has not been successful against Great Britain. How will it succeed against a new aggressor?"

"I combat the statement altogether. Nobody has yet told me that non-violent non-cooperation, unadulterated, has not succeeded. It has not been offered, it is true. Therefore, you can say that what has not been offered hitherto is not likely to be offered suddenly when India faces the Japanese arms. I can only hope that, in the face of danger, India would be readier to offer non-violent non-cooperation. Perhaps India is accustomed to British rule for so many years that the Indian mind or India's masses do not feel the pinch so much as the advent of a new power would be felt. But your question is well put. It is possible that India may not be able to offer non-violent non-cooperation. But a similar question may be put regarding armed resistance. Several attempts have been made and they have not succeeded. Therefore, it will not succeed against the Japanese. That leads us to the absurd conclusion that India will never be ready for gaining independence, and seeing that I cannot subscribe to any such proposition, I must try again and again till India is ready to respond to the call of non-violent non-cooperation. But if India does not respond to that call, then India must respond to the call of some leader or some organisation, wedded to violence. For instance, the Hindu Mahasabha is trying to rouse the Hindu mind for an armed conflict. It remains to be seen whether that attempt succeeds. I for one do not believe it will succeed."

Scorched Earth Policy

Q. "Would you advise non-violent non-cooperation against scorched earth policy? Would you resist the attempt to destroy sources of food and water?"

A. "Yes. A time may come when I would certainly advise it, for I think it is ruinous, suicidal, and unnecessary—whether India believes in non-violent non-cooperation or in violence. And the Russian and Chinese examples make no appeal to me. If some other country resorts to methods which I consider to be inhuman, I may not follow them. If the enemy comes and helps himself to crops, I may be obliged to leave, because I cannot or care not to defend them. I must resign myself to it. And there is a good example for us. A passage was quoted to me from the Islamic literature. The Khaliphs issued definite instructions to the armies of Islam that they should not destroy the utility services, they should not harass the aged and women and children; and I do not know that the arms of Islam suffered any disaster because the armies obeyed those instructions."

Q. "But what about factories—especially factories for the manufacture of munitions?"

A. "Suppose there are factories for grinding wheat or pressing oilseeds. I should not destroy them. But munitions factories, yes; for I would not tolerate munitions factories in a free India if I had my way. Textile factories I would not destroy and I would resist all such destruction. However, it is a question of prudence." Gandhiji continued: "I have not suggested immediate enforcement of the whole programme in pursuance of the demand for British withdrawal. It is there of course. But I am trying, if I am allowed to continue to cultivate and educate public opinion, to show that behind this demand of mine there is no ill-will, no malice. It is the most logical thing that I have suggested. It is in the interests of all, and since it is an entirely friendly act, I am moving cautiously, watching myself at every step. I will do nothing in haste, but there is the fixed determination behind every act of mine that the British must withdraw."

"I have mentioned anarchy. I am convinced that we are living today in a state of ordered anarchy. It is a misnomer to call such rule as is established in India a rule which promotes the welfare of India. Therefore, this ordered disciplined anarchy should go, and if there is complete lawlessness in India, as a result, I would risk it, though I believe, and should like to believe, that 22 years of continuous effort at educating India along the lines of non-violence will not have gone in vain, and people will evolve real popular order out of chaos. Therefore, if I find that all the best effort fails, I would certainly invite people to resist destruction of their property."

No Moral Support to Britain or America

Q. "Can India give her moral sympathy or support to either of the parties to the war?" was the next question.

A. "My own personal view is well-known. And if I can convert India to my view, there would be no aid to either side; but my sympathies are undoubtedly in favour of China and Russia."

Q. "But what about Britain?"

With quiet determination Gandhiji said: "I used to say that my moral support was entirely with Britain. I am very sorry to have to confess that today my mind refuses to give that moral support. British behaviour towards India has filled me with great pain. I was not quite prepared for Mr. Amery's performances or Sir Stafford Cripps's Mission. These have, in my estimation, put Britain morally in the wrong. And, therefore, though I do not wish any humiliation to Britain — and therefore no defeat — my mind refuses to give her any moral support."

Q. "What about America?"

A. "I expressed my opinion some time ago that it was a wrong thing for America and unfortunate for the world peace that America, instead of working — as she could have worked — for world peace, identified herself with war."

Q. "But was there any alternative for her?"

A. "I am sure she would have, if she had intended, brought about peace. But it is my firm opinion that she did not use her opportunity. I know that I have no right to criticise such a big nation. I do not know all the facts that determined America to throw herself into the cauldron. But somehow or other, opinion has forced itself upon me that America could have remained out, and even now it can do so if she divests herself of the intoxication that her immense wealth has produced. And I would like to repeat what I have said about the withdrawal of 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, while making a fixed determination to withdraw their influence and power both from Africa and Asia, and remove the colour-bar. They have no right to talk about protecting democracies and protecting civilisation and human freedom until the canker of white superiority is destroyed in its entirety."

Arbitration on Indo-British Question

An English correspondent, keen on finding a solution or a way out, put a most pertinent question at the end: "Would you advocate arbitration for the Indo-British problem? And if so, of what sort?"

A. "Any day. I suggested long ago that this question could be decided by arbitration. How to bring that arbitration about, I do not know. But if the British rulers will accept the principle, it should not be impossible to find impartial arbitrators, though I admit it is a tremendously difficult problem to find impartial arbitrators in this case."

Q. "But you may say the same thing about finding arbitrators on the domestic question too?"

A. "No. It is a comparatively simpler thing. Where British power is concerned it has such great

influence and power — and rightly so — it would be difficult to get hold of arbitrators who would not be biassed in favour of Great Britain, and deliver a fearless and just award."

Q. "Cannot there be any arbitration on the question of Independence?"

A. "No, not on the question of Independence. It is possible only on questions on which sides may be taken. The outstanding question of Independence should be treated as common cause. It is only then that I can conceive possibility of arbitration on the Indo-British question. But, as I have said, it is a most difficult question. If ever there is a real adjustment, it will come only when Britain feels that it is wrong to rule over another nation. But when that conviction goes home, they won't need arbitration — we in India won't. But if there is to be any arbitration — and I cannot logically say there should not, for if I did, it would be an arrogation of complete justice on my side — it can be done only if India's Independence is recognised."

Q. "Why did you not go to America in 1931, even though you were pressingly invited by Bishop Fisher?"

A. "Because I had no faith in myself. The invitation was very pressing indeed, and the offer was sincere, and I could easily have spared a fortnight, but I had no faith that I would be able to do any good to India. It would have been a nine days' wonder. I would be lionised and torn to pieces. The American people would listen to you, lionise you, but would go their own way. Gurudeva had been there, Vivekanand had been there, and his followers are still there. But the soul of America is untouched because of her worship of 'the golden calf'. As a people, they are, after all is said and done, worshippers of Mammon."

"Does not America send her troops to India for a personal and selfish motive?" was the last question which revealed the sentiment of the common man in the street.

Gandhiji, correcting the questioner, said: "I suggest a better way of putting the question: 'Is it not disastrous for foreign armies to come to India when India has sufficient man-power?' If you put the question like that, my answer is: 'Decidedly so.'"

Bombay, 18-5-42

M. D.

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