

# HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

## INITIATED

Butler, who in his *Erewhon* put sickmen in prison and criminals in hospitals, would have found in Gandhiji a kindred spirit and an enthusiastic supporter. For the latter regards sickness as a crime. He never excuses it in himself or in others. "I have lost all self-confidence," he remarked in the Aga Khan's Palace after the attack of malaria which resulted in his premature release. "It only shows that I am not in tune with God. I am unworthy to be a guide." And he seriously proposed to his companions each to go his own way as he had proved to be a broken reed and forfeited the moral right to their allegiance. Recently when he sent out the members of his party separately on their "Do or Die" assignment, he repeated that warning. In the army, he told them, a soldier of violence who does not take care of his feet, for instance, and allows corns to form makes himself liable to be cashiered; much more is expected of a soldier of non-violence. Having on a previous occasion trekked through the villages of East and South Bengal for over a month and sampled the wonderful element euphemistically called "water" from nearly over 700 *pukurs* (*pushkara-tank*) without a mishap, I felt rather confident about myself. But an irony of fate had destined me to be the first casualty. Even before I had settled in my village an attack of malaria laid me up. Shri Charu Babu—Shri Satish Babu's steward-in-chief in charge of the Kazirkhil camp—sent word to my sister Dr. Sushila while I was semi-conscious and asked Gandhiji to send her to look after me. Nemesis followed the next day. I received a note from which the following are pregnant extracts:

"Now don't rush back to the village. Those who go to the villages have to go there with a determination to live and die there. If they must fall ill, they have to get well there or die there. Then alone could the going would have any meaning. In practice, this means that they must be content with home remedies or the therapy of nature's five 'elements'. Dr. Sushila has her own village to look to. Her services are not at present meant for the members of our party. They are pre-mortgaged to the village folk of East Bengal. . . . It won't do to live in the villages like a Frankenstein. They must learn to live and move cautiously like the proverbial she-elephant. Then alone would they be qualified to live there. To live in the villages of Bengal calls for a special talent. We have all to cultivate that. You and I have to pass that test."

I managed to throw off malaria after a couple of days and the 'sentence' was commuted or perhaps only suspended! Soon after, first Dr. Sushila and then Kanu Gandhi had the baptism of malaria and had a dose of the "Do or Die" lesson from Gandhiji like myself. We are now all in our villages slowly learning our steps. We take consolation by looking upon ourselves as "initiates", and if the deadly we come out unscathed from the paradise of all microbes and diseases in the world that is Bengal, we may well expect to become "unkillables"—proof against all diseases, known and unknown.

As for the story of experiences in the villages, I must reserve it for another time.

Bhatialpur, 14-12-'46

PYARELAL

## Notes

### To Nature-cure Seekers

Dr. A. K. Bhagwat writes from Uruli-Kanchan that since the publication of his six monthly report, he is flooded with letters from nature-cure-seekers desiring admission into his clinic. It is necessary, therefore, to inform the public that the Nature Cure Clinic of Uruli Kanchan is mainly intended for local residents. There is no adequate accommodation for local indoor patients even, and so it is working as an out-door clinic only. Correspondents are, therefore, requested not to apply for permission to go to Uruli Kanchan, or to proceed to that place in the hope of getting admission.

Those who are interested in Dr. Bhagwat's system can get it from two Marathi books (price including postage, 10 and 14 annas respectively) and an English pamphlet (price 7 annas including postage). The order should be sent directly to Dr. A. K. Bhagwat, Naturopath, Uruli Kanchan, District Poona, along with the necessary remittance in postage stamps or money order. No order will be executed by V. P. P.

Sabarmati, 30-12-'46

### Tiruvarur

The Christian new year has begun well in the matter of Temple-entry by Harijans. The opening day of the year witnessed Jagjivan Ram, Labour Minister in the Interim Government, offering homage with a batch of Harijans to the well-known deity Shri Tyagaraja at Tiruvarur in South India. It is hoped that several other temples will soon follow suit. The Madras Government backed by a progressive and intelligent public and enthusiastic Harijan Sevaks is after it in all earnest.

Sabarmati, 5-1-'47

K. G. M.



## MEDICAL MEN'S STATEMENT ON LEPROSY

[The reader will remember a letter published in the *Harijan* of 22-9-'46 of Dr. R. G. Cochrane, M. D., Honorary Director, Leprosy Campaign, Vellore, giving his considered opinion on the question of the segregation of lepers from healthy people. Dr. Cochrane is held to be one of the high authorities living on this subject. However, a naturopath doubted the correctness of his opinion. So, Gandhiji requested Dr. Cochrane to prepare a popular and well-considered statement signed by representative medical men throughout India. The doctor undertook to do so and has now sent a statement, published below, signed by 27 prominent medical men of India. The signatories include besides Drs. Jivraj Mehta and T. S. S. Rajan, Principals of five Medical Colleges of India, five professors of Medicine and several Leprosy and other specialists.]

It will be seen that the statement is meant more for laymen, legislators and members of public bodies like municipalities and district boards, the public in general, and the victims of the disease and their relatives and neighbours in particular, than for doctors themselves. A good deal of superstitious dread on the one hand, and of neglect of simple rules of cleanliness and caution on the other, makes the leper problem more difficult to handle than it should. The public should study the statement carefully and profit by it. Dr. Cochrane deserves our thanks for his labours in the cause.

Vapi, 17-12-'46 — K. G. M.]

The medical public has shown an increasing interest in Leprosy during the past 25 years and as the result of the research work undertaken in India, particularly in Calcutta and Madras, certain facts with regard to leprosy have become established. Leprosy is only a mildly contagious complaint and a disease which is difficult to acquire. A fairly large number of cases of leprosy in India are non-infective and are no danger to the public. Even in the cases of persons suffering from infective leprosy if they take elementary precautions, such as avoiding close contact with healthy persons particularly infants and children, there is little likelihood that the disease will spread. The campaign against leprosy is unduly influenced by traditional beliefs so that even medical men do not look upon leprosy as an ordinary disease. If the growing interest in leprosy is to result in effective measures for its control, then the following points must be stressed and given widespread publicity.

1. Leprosy is an ordinary disease and not a particular visitation of Divine displeasure.

2. It is no more of a disgrace to get leprosy than to acquire other diseases like tuberculosis, typhoid or pneumonia.

3. Leprosy is not hereditary. Like tuberculosis it may run in families because of close contact.

4. Leprosy is not venereal in origin.

5. A fairly large number of cases in India are non-infective. These should be free to go about in life without restrictions.

6. The infective power of leprosy is low, but the infective cases are a particular danger to infants and children.

7. The leprosy patient does not as a rule require asylum nor an alms-house; he does need treatment, human care and sometimes hospitalization. But as far as possible, we must keep him in or return him to a life of usefulness and self-respect.

8. Leprosy can be prevented by elementary precautions, and unduly harsh measures for the segregation of infective persons with leprosy are not necessary.

9. As leprosy is a household disease the problem will not adequately be dealt with by enforcing measures which chiefly aim at the control of leprosy among beggars.

10. Beggars with leprosy who are deformed and not infective should be treated in the same way as any other beggar. The problem of mendicancy can only be solved in relation to all beggars, not particularly beggars with leprosy.

11. Leprosy chiefly prevails in certain areas of India and before widespread measures are taken for the control of leprosy, information must be collected as to its seriousness in a given district or area.

12. Medical men and others should be given the opportunity to acquire a modern knowledge of the disease so that they will be able to help intelligently in the campaign against leprosy.

13. The general public can perform a major part in the elimination of leprosy in India by adopting the following attitude towards leprosy:

(a) Not being alarmed when they discover the disease in a house or family.

(b) If a case is declared infective, by seeing that they exercise elementary precautions viz:

i. Sleeping away from infants and children.

ii. Keeping all bedding, mats and personal utensils apart from those of the rest of the family.

iii. The words 'isolation' and 'segregation' suggest to people's minds the rigour almost of banishment. But 'isolation' with regard to leprosy practically means avoidance of close contact between the infective cases and healthy individuals, particularly infants and children.

(c) Securing the best possible medical advice when cases of leprosy are discovered in a family or community. In many cases early treatment gives the greatest hope of complete recovery without leaving any disfiguring marks.

Several other questions arise. Many ask whether leprosy is curable. There are forms of leprosy in which the body itself is able to put up an active defence and 'cure' the disease, in some instances this happens without any deformity or damage, in other instances as a result of this resistance the battle-field of the body is scarred and mutilated: such persons are honorable casualties in the battle against disease. It is true to say that many persons with leprosy have a form of the disease which is of no significance or danger, yet it remains also correct to point out that other forms are mutilating and still others (a minority) are so serious that our present remedies can only alleviate and seldom cure.

To conquer a disease which has baffled mankind for years, energy, time and money must be spent. There is no short cut to the control of leprosy.



Only patient study, real devotion on the part of the doctors and lay workers and intelligent and sympathetic understanding on the part of the leaders and the public will result in the desired end—the elimination of leprosy from our beloved land.

## SIGNATORIES

Name	Degrees	Designation
T. Bhashkara Menon	M. D., D. Sc., F. R. C. P. (Lon.)	Principal, Andhra Medl. College, Vizagapatam.
P. V. Cherian, M. B. E.	M. B. B. S., F. R. C. S. (Edin.)	Principal, Medl. College, Madras.
Dharmendra	M. B. B. S., D. B. (Lon.)	Leprosy Research Department, Calcutta.
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S. K. Ghosh Dastidar	M. B. (Cal.) M. R. C. P. (Lon.) (Edin.), D. T. M. (Cal.)	Professor of Medicine, Prince of Wales Medl. College, Patna.
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Mukerji	...	Leprosy Specialist, Raipur.
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## STORY HOUR

(Continued from p. 449)

[ VII is from *Plutarch's life of Cato* (Dryden and Clough's translation, Everyman), and VIII from Smiles' *Self-Help* (John Murray). V. G. D. ]

## VII

The little country house of Manius Curius, who had been thrice carried in triumph, happened to be near Cato's farm; so that often going thither, and contemplating the small compass of the place, and plainness of the dwelling, he formed an idea of the mind of the person, who, being one of the greatest of the Romans, and having subdued the most warlike nations, nay, had driven Pyrrhus out of Italy, now, after three triumphs, was contented to dig in so small a piece of ground, and live in such a cottage. Here it was that the ambassadors of the Samnites, finding him boiling turnips in the chimney corner, offered him a present of gold; but he sent them away with this saying; that he who was content with such a supper had no need of gold; and that he thought it more honourable to conquer those who possessed the gold than to possess the gold itself.

## VIII

A preacher of the Evangelical Alliance on the borders of Wales said, "As I was going to the hills early one misty morning, I saw something moving on a mountain side, so strange looking that I took it for a monster. When I came nearer to it, I found it was a man. When I came up to him, I found he was my brother."



## HARIJAN

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## AT SHRIRAMPUR

"We believe your attempt is to raise humanity from the lowest level. But we are sceptical as to whether you will succeed," thus spoke a friend who paid Gandhiji a visit the other day at Shrirampur with a party of co-workers from Calcutta.

"I myself am sceptical about it," replied Gandhiji. "I may succeed, I can perish in the attempt. Success or failure is not the final test."

"You are right," the interviewer remarked.

"And attempt up to the last is the only real test," added Gandhiji.

The friend next asked Gandhiji if there was any change of mentality on the part of the authorities. Gandhiji replied that there was a change in the Government policy for the better. "But as for the change of heart, it is for you and me to make a contribution to that consummation."

The interviewer remarked that it was painful to see how listless the Hindus had become. Gandhiji replied: "It is no prerogative of the Hindus. Listlessness is common to us all. Even if I am the only one, I shall fight this listlessness that has come over the Hindus of East Bengal." He proceeded, "I have not come here to do a good turn to this community or that. I have come to do a good turn to myself. Non-violence is not meant to be practised by the individual only. It can be and has to be practised by society as a whole. I have come to test that for myself in Noakhali. Has my *ahimsa* become bankrupt? If I fail here, it won't be any proof that the theory is wrong. It will simply mean that my *sadhana* has been imperfect, that there is some fault somewhere in my technique."

Turning again to the Noakhali situation the friend proceeded: "If the League leaders were to take the Noakhali situation as seriously as you and Jawaharlal took Bihar, order will be restored in a day." Gandhiji replied that to make such comparisons was to degrade oneself. What was called for was self-introspection and more self-introspection. He proceeded with the same warmth, "I have come here not only to speak to the Mussalmans but to the Hindus as well. Why are they such cowards? The Harijans, the Namashudras have been relatively better so far as courage and physical prowess is concerned. They are brave. But the other Hindus must shed utterly the caste distinctions. If this calamity would open the eyes of the Hindus and result in eradicating untouchability, root and branch, it will have served a good purpose."

Narrating his earlier experiences in India he recalled how during the Champaran Satyagraha, in Rajendra Babu's absence, he could only sit in the outhouse in Rajendra Babu's house and how Rajendra Babu's servant would not let the speaker bathe

at the well. Things had improved, but much more remained to be done. The visitor agreed that Hinduism had still to go a long way to eradicate the evil.

Talking of forced conversions in Noakhali the interviewer remarked that unless those who had been converted were brought back to the Hindu fold quickly, the cleavage between the Hindus and the Muslims may become permanent. Gandhiji admitted the force of the argument. "Many had returned. But all must be. I have of course, always believed in the principle of religious tolerance. But I have even gone further. I have advanced from tolerance to equal respect for all religions. All religions are branches of the same mighty tree, but I must not change over from one branch to another for the sake of expediency. By doing so, I cut the branch on which I am sitting. Therefore, I always feel the change-over from one religion to another very keenly, unless it is a case of spontaneous urge, a result of inner growth. Such conversions by their very nature cannot be on a mass scale and never to save one's life or property or for temporal gain."

He narrated his meeting with a South Indian Bishop who was a Harijan converted to Christianity and retained all his original weakness in spite of the change of religion. He had told the late Shri Charlie Andrews that to his mind he was no bishop at all.

"There is no end to the monstrosities that have been committed here and that too in the name of religion. It is enough to fill one with blank despair," remarked the friend. "I have met human monsters from my early youth," replied Gandhiji. "I have found that even they are not beyond redemption, if we know how to touch the right chord in their soul." And he cited two instances within his recent experience of the milk of human kindness welling up in hard-boiled sun-baked functionaries at the sight of stark human misery and devastation.

"The whole thing is so ghastly. You do not need to exaggerate it," he remarked. "I have told the authorities, I do not care for numbers. Has a single case of abduction, rape, forcible marriage, or forcible conversion occurred? If so, it is enough for me. It admitted that such things have happened."

"What about the rescue of abducted women?" was the next question. It was complained that as soon as information was received about such cases and the rescue party with the military police set out on their assignment, the miscreants received intimation and removed the victim to some other place.

"I have told our people," replied Gandhiji, "do not depend on military and the police help. You have to uphold democracy, and democracy and dependence on the military and the police are incompatible. You cannot say it is good in one place and bad in another. Military help will degrade you. In a democracy, if the electorate sets up a hooligan as the head of the Government, they then lie in the bed they have made or else convert the



electorate through *Satyagraha* if necessary. That is democracy. Whether it is Bihar or Bengal, the people have to be brave and start on their legs. I want every one to die at his post like a brave man and not to leave his home or his village."

Another interviewer asked Gandhiji why Pandit Jawaharlal went to Bihar and took such an active part in putting down disturbances there while he did nothing for Bengal. If the Interim Government could not interfere in one province because of provincial autonomy, how could it do so in another? Gandhiji replied that they must not forget that besides being the Vice-President of the Interim Government, Jawaharlal was the first servant of the Congress. As the Vice-President of the Central Cabinet, he must act within the four corners of the constitution. It does not permit interference with provincial autonomy. But in Bihar Pandit Nehru and Rajendra Babu have a standing and responsibility as Congressmen.

One of the interviewers remarked that Bengal was being used as a pawn on the political chess-board. "No," replied Gandhiji. "Bengal is in the forefront today because Bengal is Bengal. It is Bengal that produced Tagore and Bankim Chandra. It was here that the heroes of the Chittagong Armoury Raid were born, however misguided their action might have been in my eyes. No, you must understand it. If Bengal plays the game, it will solve all India's problem. That is why I have made myself a Bengali. Why should there be cowardice in the Bengal of such men?"

"Yes," remarked the visitor, "when I see these desecrated places of worship, I ask, why did not every man, woman and child of the house die there before those places were touched?"

"If they had done that," resumed Gandhiji, "you would not have required any other help. Today Noakhali is bereft of its leading men. They refused to take the risk and have left their hearths and homes. Poor Manoranjan Babu is in a fix. Whom is he to put on the Peace Committees? I have told him the common man must rise to fill the vacuum. There is no such thing as a vacuum in nature. Nature abhors it. Let him write to them, I have told him. If they come back, well and good. Otherwise, the common man must come forward. It is his day."

"Mahatmaji, tell us in one word," said another member of the party, "whether it is war or peace? Peace Committees or War Committees?"

"Peace Committees," replied Gandhiji. "War results when peace fails. Our effort must always be directed towards peace. But it must be peace with honour and a fair security for life and property. On these two conditions alone will the refugees return. Of course, if they develop enough courage, they will return without any safeguard. Today I have suggested one Hindu and one Muslim standing surety for each village. If the people have the requisite courage, they would depend on none but God and their own strength of spirit for their defence. If they did that, all the *goondas* in Noakhali will feel the change in the atmosphere and behave

decently. I know what I am saying. I come from Kathiawad, a province notorious for its bandits. I know that they are not beyond redemption. Nor do I believe that *goondas* are responsible for all that has happened."

A suggestion was next made as to why they should not have only Muslims on the Peace Committees as the Hindu had played no part in breaking the peace.

"No" replied Gandhiji. "The Hindus must be there to play their part, else the Peace Committees will be a farce."

"Was it not possible to control Bihar with non-violence?" Was the last question put by the friend.

"Yes", replied Gandhiji. "But Bihar has been having a lesson in organized violence since 1942 and before. Our weakness for the *goondas* rose to the highest in 1942. I know the merits of 1942. The people were not cowed down. But all the same I cannot shut my eyes to our mistakes. We have to learn to do better."

Bhatialpur, 14-12-'46

PYARELAL

### "DO OR DIE" AT WORK

"Come to me when you are well and I shall further explain the meaning of 'Do or Die,'" wrote Gandhiji in his final note which he sent to me during my initial illness. Accordingly I went to Shrirampur as soon as I could leave my bed. I met him some way up the road to Rajbari—his residence. Accompanied by Shri Nirmal Babu, he was having his morning walk. He had to cross a small dry *khal*, spanned by a single log *shanko* without any side support. These bridges, "marvels of engineering skill" as Gandhiji called them, are a speciality of East Bengal and demand no small degree of acrobatic skill to cross them. He insisted on performing the feat unaided. Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, however, stood close by and his caution was vindicated when, unable at 78 to emulate the agility of the "teens", he saved himself from falling by quickly taking support of Nirmal Babu's shoulder. That day, in a heart-to-heart talk—it was thinking aloud on his part rather than a 'talk'—he poured out the whole of his mind. In spite of his exhortations to the contrary, the exodus of refugees from East Bengal continued. Everywhere there was a demand for more and more military and police protection. He, on the contrary, had asked them not to rely on the police or the military at all for their protection if they valued independence. What was the substitute for police and military protection? He had presented to them the *ahimsa* of the strong. It was a novel suggestion on his part and it only mystified them. He did not blame them for it, for he had yet to make it good in his own case. "Have faith and a heart that staggers not. And if then as Jesus has said you say to a mountain, 'Remove thyself into the sea,' it shall so happen," a friend had remarked to him sometime back. Had he that faith? He had come to live all alone in a devastated village but had not succeeded even in completely stripping himself of all company as he would have liked to do. He wanted to put his faith in God to test. If He



wanted to get some work out of him. He would surely see him through all vicissitudes. Why should he then be afraid of death?

Further outlining his plans, he mentioned that as soon as he had recouped sufficiently and the water in the rice fields dried up, he proposed to walk from village to village and knock at every door to deliver his message of fearlessness to the people. He would not return to the village from which he started. Thus he would share the life of the villager.

The late Mahadev Desai used often to remark to me in the course of intimate exchanges of confidence, "Take care of him, he is one day going to emulate Tolstoy and venture forth into the storm alone, giving all of us the slip." And lo, and behold, his prophesy has nearly come true.

At meal time Prof. Amiya Chakravarty of the Calcutta University, who had come to him on a visit, asked him the question as to what should be the technique for approaching the wrong-doers so that their resistance should be dissolved. "The chief difficulty with the callous perpetrators of the crime is," Dr. Chakravarty remarked, "that they are not only unrepentant but defiant and even jubilant over their misdeeds."

"Yes, they have their own reason to be jubilant and the only way to meet their attitude is not to succumb to it but to live in their midst and retain one's sense of truth. Goodness must be joined with knowledge. Mere goodness is not of much use as I have found in life. One must cultivate the fine discriminating quality which goes with spiritual courage and character. One must know, in a crucial situation, when to speak and when to be silent, when to act and when to refrain. Action and non-action in these circumstances become identical instead of being contradictory."

"I am groping for light," he added. "I am surrounded by darkness—but I must act or refrain as guided by truth. I find that I have not the patience and the technique needed in these tragic circumstances,—suffering and evil often overwhelms me and I stew in my own juice. Therefore, I have told my friends that they should bear with me and work or refrain as guided by wisdom which is now utterly demanded of us."

"The new basis," continued Gandhiji, "has to be built here in the villages where the Hindus and the Muslims have lived and suffered together on the land of their forefathers and must live together in the future. For the time being I have become a Bengali and a Noakhali man. I have come to live and share their task, to cement the two together or to perish in the attempt. I am in the midst of a raging fire and will stay here till it is put out. For this reason, I do not want to leave these parts. Life must be made livable for the sorely afflicted men and women. The work of organization must go on and the physical as well as moral rescue achieved."

Dr. Chakravarty next suggested that the reports from Gandhiji's associates who are now working separately in the different villages should be collected and collated so that fellow-workers could

gain new light on the technique of the non-violence of the strong that was being evolved and experimented with in East Bengal. Gandhiji replied that the time for it was not yet. "They have gone with my best wishes but to an atmosphere which is still unhelpful. They are following not a beaten path but a trackless route. Their work lies in the midst of a sullen population. They do not know the language and are not familiar with local problems."

"I myself don't know what the next step is and cannot guide them. They are unable to send reports now. If I made a chart for them, they would be able to keep a log book. Even the great Thakkar Bapa, as old as myself, a seasoned worker and utterly selfless, is working away without knowing what he is doing—a thing he has never done before in his life. But I am hopeful that order will come out of what is for us the necessary chaos. Then what you wish, and I also, will be forthcoming and will be a most valuable record for future workers."

"That is what all our people feel and also workers abroad. Noakhali has now become a laboratory where a crucial test is being made; the remedy will apply to situations all the world over where disputes arise between communities and nationalities and a new technique is needed for peaceful adjustment," said Dr. Chakravarty.

"From London too I have heard to the same effect," Gandhiji replied. "People are interested in what happens in Noakhali. I feel that my responsibility is great and that our work has to ring true."

"That Bengal should be chosen for this great task, that you should have made this your centre," finally remarked Dr. Chakravarty, "is to us, a supreme privilege though people have suffered and are suffering beyond description. The whole of Bengal is conscious of your arrival and of the fact that you have come to live and work with the suffering men and women who need you so much at this hour."

"For me," replied Gandhiji, "if this thing is pulled through, it will be the crowning act of my life. I had to come down to the soil and to the people of East Bengal. The first person to whom I mentioned this was Jawaharlal. Without a moment's hesitation he replied: 'Yes, your place is there. Although we need you so much here, we need you more in Noakhali.' I asked him, 'When?' 'As soon as you feel like it,' he replied. In two days I started."

When I saw him a week later his only remark was: "I am still groping." In a note to me he poured out all the pent-up anguish of his soul. "I see I have not the knack. I have not yet quite found the key to *ahimsa*. Here I am out to perform a stupendous *yagna* but my unfitness for the task is being demonstrated at every step. There can, however, be no running away. And where can I run away? Success or failure is not in our hands. It is enough if we do our part well. I am leaving no stone unturned. Ours is but to strive. In the end it will be as He wishes."

To another friend he remarked: "I don't want to return from Bengal in a defeatist way. I would rather die, if need be, at the hands of an assassin."



But I do not want to court it, much less wish it." And he made it clear that he expected no less from his associates. Sometime later when I ran unawares into a nest of trouble in the course of my work from which I came out barely by the skin of my teeth, he wrote: "I have said from the very beginning that it is going to be a most hazardous task. A more hazardous task is not likely to fall to our lot in this life. Let us entirely resign ourselves to Him. His will be done."

"... You are not to rush into danger unnecessarily but unflinchingly face whatever comes in the natural course. If, in this way, all of us are wiped out, I would not mind it in the least."

For himself, he added in another note: "I am going more and more in God's hands."

Bhatialpur, 14-12-'46

PYARELAL

### CONGRATULATIONS

The Lunawada State has made the following announcement in Gujarati on 30-11-1946 under the signature of H. H. the Maharana of Lunawada:

The term *Harijan* should be used henceforth for all communities considered backward and untouchable such as *Dhed, Bhangi, Chamar, Vankar*, etc. in all official records. The municipalities and other semi-State institutions should also use the word *Harijan* for the above-mentioned communities.

All State schools and schools receiving grants or recognition from the State as well as all State dispensaries and hospitals are open to the *Harijans* from this date.

All State offices and semi-State offices are similarly open to all the *Harijans*.

All wells, tanks, *wavs*, bathing *ghats* etc. are also open to the *Harijans* from this date.

All temples and religious places belonging to the State namely, Shri Luneshwar, Shri Ambajee, Shri Ranchhodjee etc. are henceforth open to the *Harijans*.

We trust that all classes of our dear subjects will fully observe this order and make others do so.

This announcement should be made known as widely as possible in the town of Lunawada and the districts.

(Sd.) Veerbhadrasingh

30-11-1946

Maharana of Lunawada

The Maharana of Lunawada deserves congratulations for this announcement. Lunawada has thereby made a substantial contribution in the cause of the removal of untouchability. But as has been repeatedly said in these columns, untouchability cannot be abolished root and branch as long as the idea of high and low is not totally wiped out from our society. This cannot be done only by a State order or by legislation. Of course, they are very helpful. But they are successful only when public opinion fully endorses them. Public opinion has two sides: enlightened as well as unenlightened. Enlightened and progressive people must train the 'unenlightened and custom-ridden sections. Legislation and State orders render substantial help to such workers.

Much depends upon the behaviour and attitude of the government officers also. If they insist upon the loyal and sympathetic observance of such rules, much work is done. But if they hoodwink or throw obstacles, the order remains a dead-letter. We trust that the State officers will try to enforce this order in the same noble spirit which has inspired the Maharana to proclaim it. We also hope that this commendable action of the Lunawada Darbar will be emulated by other States.

Sabarmati, 23-12-'46

(From the original in Gujarati)

N. P.

### THE TEXTILE POLICY OF THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT

Commencing from a leading article in the *Hindu* of Madras up to the present time, a good lot of criticism has been levelled against the Textile policy of the Government of Madras as propounded by the Premier. Needless to say that the prime objectors are the vested interests. This is but natural, and should have been expected in the ordinary course of things. Really what is not understandable is the argument advanced by them. None of them has chosen to attack the Khadi Scheme as such, or the principles underlying it. Evidently they find nothing to find fault with either. Nor do they object to the development of Khadi, as they put it, *side by side*. The only question therefore is, "Is such a thing possible?" The answer is simple. Gandhiji has time and again declared, and it has been found from experience also, that the two are fundamentally opposed to each other and Khadi cannot compete, nor *live side by side* with the mills. You may as well say that mice and kitten can be reared together.

The three main objections raised by the critics against the Madras Scheme are as follows:

1. It is most inopportune at the present juncture when there is scarcity of clothing in the province.
2. It will block all industrial progress and will make our province backward, while others will march onwards.
3. It will interfere with the freedom of man to clothe himself according to taste, and not to work if he so chooses.

Let us examine each of these objections one by one.

First, the present scarcity of cloth is hurled in our face. What is it due to? It was because of the stoppage of foreign cloth due to war. It will not take long, for those countries to dump their goods on us once again, and that at competitive prices. In the mean while, our mill-owners want to forestall them by enlarging their mills or creating new ones. That is, they want the exploitation to be transferred from foreign to indigenous hands. But how does this transfer help the poor villager? What does it matter whether he is exploited by his own country-man, or by the foreigner? It is exactly this exploitation of the dumb millions (be it by the foreigner or by our own country-men) that is sought to be prevented by the Khadi Scheme. Then what can be the most appropriate



time for it than this? The foreigner will take some more time to begin his nefarious trade again, and before that could be possible we should try to adjust our economy. This could only be achieved by intelligent and well thought out *nation-building work*. Mere transfer of exploitation from one party to another will not in any way help us. The labour of the millions of the unemployed countrymen of ours should be harnessed together and directed to the benefit of the inhabitants of this vast country of ours of whom a large majority dwell in the seven *lacs* of our villages. What else could achieve this object with dignity and self-respect than the spinning wheel which stands both for the 'equality of man' and 'the dignity of labour.'

Then it is argued as if there is no cloth at all in our province. I beg to bring to their notice that our province even today, is producing more yarn than is necessary for it, and yet there are 5 lacs of handlooms which go without work for 20 days in the month. Is the introduction of more spindles and the establishment of more mills the solution of the problem? The hungry weavers should be given more work and thereby, more wages. This they will not get, as long as they have to depend upon mill yarn. The mechanical and wholesale production of yarn by the mills has really been the cause of the unemployment of many. This should be progressively remedied by the introduction of more spinning wheels in the villages. Fortunately for us we have made much more head-way in this direction than any one else, and this experience of ours should not go in vain. Another great circumstance in our favour is that we are 'only knee-deep in the so-called civilization of the West. Our handlooms are still intact unlike our wheels, and more than 90% of our population still wears and prefers hand-loom varieties. Thus there can be no scarcity in our province and even assuming for a moment that there is some deficit, should we not turn it to our advantage and give an impetus to production of more yarn by the wheel? After all, it is necessity that becomes the mother of invention.

Though a believer in *ahimsa* and loathe to wound the feelings of others, yet when one sees the crocodile tears shed by our capitalist friends over the abnormal price and scarcity of cloth, one is but tempted to ask, "Where was this kindness during the war when they sold their yarn and cloth at unimaginable prices and filled not only their own pockets but also the coffers of the Imperial Government by way of Income and Excess Profits Tax, amounting to crores and crores?"

As for the second argument namely, the blocking of Industrial progress and our province lagging behind others, one really fails to understand its significance. Is the progress of a country to be measured by the number of cotton mills or is it to be measured by the status of its man in the street? Mere addition to the mills or the produc-

tion of more cloth or yarn will not help us to solve the problem of the poverty and unemployment of our millions. The greater the goods of that kind you produce, the greater will be the competition for finding markets for them and the fight for possessing them. This fight, be it of one province against another or of any country against its neighbour, will be a never ending fight, unless you tackle it at its very source and remedy the root cause. Otherwise, all sorts of manouvers will have to be employed, not excluding the very destruction of the goods themselves. The coffee market is a glaring example which we cannot close our eyes to. Is not the sinking of huge ships loaded with coffee, to keep up the price levels, a disgrace to our civilization? Cloth is, therefore, not the field for the so-called industrialization. There are many others.

The third argument namely, of individual taste and liberty does not carry much water. It has only to be stated before it is brushed aside. To claim to have one's own way of living without caring for its repercussions on the community living is a thing of the past. In every department of life individual freedom, either to live, or to do or not to do a thing according to one's own desire, has to be reasonable, i. e. consistent with the advancement of the country as a whole, and the upliftment of the lowest individual in particular. It can never be allowed to go against his interests. No civilization will be worth its name if it has not got the interest of the least of its member at heart, and individual liberty should be subject to this most humane limitation.

It will thus be seen that the scheme of the Madras Government is undoubtedly meant to improve the lot of the villagers and help them to take their proper place in society in a manner consistent with dignity and self-respect. The charge that it will injure the villagers is either ignorant or interested.

L. N. GOPALASWAMI

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