

HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

WEEKLY LETTER

A DILEMMA

Four more days were to elapse before Gandhiji could actually leave for Noakhali. As harrowing details of the happenings in Noakhali trickled through, they added to the existing tension. *Bakr Id* was close at hand and it was the wish of the Chief Minister of Bengal and his colleagues that Gandhiji should prolong his stay in the city at least till the *Id* festival was safely over. The root of the trouble, as represented to him, lay in Calcutta. If the peace could be stabilized in the Metropolis, it would have a salutary effect all over. Gandhiji acquiesced. The whole of India was faced with a difficult situation, that of Bengal was still more so, he remarked in his after-prayer address on Friday last. He had been asked as to what their duty was under the circumstances. According to the scriptures, that was *dharma* which was enjoined by the holy books, followed by the sages, interpreted by the learned and which appealed to the heart. The first three conditions must be fulfilled before the fourth came into operation. Thus one had no right to follow the precepts of an ignorant man or a rascal even though they commended themselves to one. Rigorous observance of harmlessness, non-enmity and renunciation were the first requisites for a person to entitle him to lay down the law, i. e. *dharma*.

He had told them what he considered to be his duty. But they had to judge for themselves what their duty was. He did not ask them to follow him but he pointed out to them the way to discover what their duty was in the difficult position they found themselves in. The Gita had told them that if they only waited on God, they would know the way.

A HAPPY INSPIRATION

The visit of the four Ministers of the Interim Government to Calcutta to help further the peace efforts was a happy inspiration. It had a salutary effect and for the time being at least an impending crisis was averted. As their visit coincided with that of the Viceroy it gave rise to all kinds of speculation. Would they ask the Viceroy to intervene or would they exert pressure on the Bengal Governor to make the Bengal Ministry take more effective measures? In a series of after-prayer addresses Gandhiji impressed upon the people how the desire of retaliation and the tendency to look to the Viceroy or the Governor, the military and the police, for protection were incompatible with Independence to which they were all pledged. The

Viceroy's powers vested in the Cabinet, the Governor's in the Bengal Ministers. If they wanted lasting peace, it must come from the people's hearts. He had been proclaiming from the housetops that no one could protect them except their own stout hearts. No one could ever dishonour the brave. Retaliation was a vicious circle. If they wanted retaliation they could not have Independence. "Supposing someone kills me, you will gain nothing by killing someone else in retaliation. And, if you only think over it, who can kill Gandhiji except Gandhiji himself? No one can destroy the soul. So let us dismiss all thought of revenge from our hearts. If we see this clearly we shall have taken a big stride towards Independence."

A PLEA FOR SANITY

The warning came none too early. Already there were rumblings of a storm in Bihar. The cry for reprisals had gone forth. Gandhiji devoted his next address to show the illogicality and irrationality of that cry.

From his earliest childhood he had learnt to dislike the wrong, never the wrong-doer. Therefore, even if the Muslims had done any wrong, they still remained his friends, but it was his duty to tell them that they had done wrong. He had always applied that rule in life with regard to his nearest and dearest. He held that to be the test of true friendship. He had told them on the previous day that revenge was not the way of peace, it was not humanity. The Hindu scriptures taught forgiveness as the highest virtue. Forgiveness became a brave man. A learned Muslim friend had come to see him on the day before. He had told the speaker that the teaching of the *Quran* was also similar. If a man kills one innocent person he brings upon his head the sin, as it were, of murdering the entire humanity. Islam never approves of but condemns murder, arson, forcible conversions, abductions and the like.

If they could not be generous enough to forgive a person who gave them a slap, remarked Gandhiji, they could give him one in return. He could understand that. But if the miscreant ran away and the injured party slapped his relation or co-religionist by way of retaliation, it was below human dignity.

If someone abducted his daughter, the speaker continued, was he to abduct the abductor's or the abductor's friend's daughter? He held it to be infamous. Muslim friends had condemned such acts in Noakhali. But what was he to say of Bihar, if what he was told was true? He was pained beyond

measure to hear of the reported happenings in Bihar. He knew the Biharis well. The cry of blood for blood was barbarous. They could not take revenge in Bihar for the happenings in Noakhali. He was told that some Muslims, who were running away from Bihar in panic, were murdered by Bihari Hindus. He was shocked to hear it. He hoped that the report was not true. It was contended that the Mahabharata advocated the way of retaliation. He did not agree with that interpretation. The lesson of the Mahabharata was that the victory of the sword was no victory. That great book taught that the victory of the Pandavas was an empty nothing.

He told them of the talk he had with Saheed Saheb, their Prime Minister. Years ago he had met him at Faridpur. Saheed Saheb then took pride in calling himself the speaker's son. He knew they had many grievances against their Prime Minister. But the latter had given him his assurance that he wanted peace. It had grieved him to alienate his Hindu friends. He the speaker, could not disbelieve that assurance till it was found to be untrue. He had by giving that assurance put himself to test. The golden way was to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family like members of one family. He who distinguished between one's own family and another's, miseducated the members of his own and opened the way for discord and irreligion.

RUMBLINGS FROM BIHAR

Immediately on seeing the report of the conflagration in Bihar in the Press, Gandhiji sent a wire through the Chief Minister to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who with his three colleagues had proceeded to Patna from Calcutta. The latter wired in reply that the situation was tense and grave in many parts but Government were doing their utmost to bring it under control. He himself with his colleague Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar had decided to stay on in Bihar as long as it might be necessary. "The Congress belongs to the people," commented Gandhiji in his silent day's written message to the prayer congregation. "The Muslim League belongs to our Muslim brothers and sisters. If Congressmen fail to protect Mussalmans where the Congress is in power, then what is the use of a Congress Premier? Similarly, if in a League Province the League Premier cannot afford protection to the Hindus, then why is the League Premier there at all? If either of them have to take the aid of the military in order to protect the Muslim or Hindu minority in their respective provinces, then it only means that none of them actually exercises any control over the general population when a moment of crisis comes. If that is so, it only means that both of us are inviting the British to retain their sovereignty over India. This is a matter over which each one of us should ponder deeply."

He deprecated the habit of procuring moral alibi for ourselves by blaming it all on the *goondas*. "We always put the blame on the *goondas*. But it is we who are responsible for their creation as well

as encouragement. It is therefore not right to say that all the wrong that has been done is the work of the *goondas*."

QUIT INDEPENDENCE ?

He repeated the warning on the next day even more forcefully. The Hindus might say: did not the Muslims start the trouble? He wanted them not to succumb to the temptation for retort but to think of their own duty and say firmly that whatever happened, they would not fight. He wanted to tell them that the Muslims who were with him in the course of the day had assured him that they wanted peace. They were all responsible men. They said clearly that Pakistan could not be achieved by fighting. If they continued quarrelling with each other, Independence would vanish into thin air and that would firmly implant the third power in India, be it the British or any other. India was a vast country, rich in minerals, metals and spices. There was nothing in the world that India did not produce. If they kept on quarrelling, any of the big powers of the world would feel tempted to come and save India from Indians and at the same time exploit her rich resources.

They wanted Independence. They were ready to sacrifice their all for the Congress, the organization which had done so much for India. Were they going to undo all that the Congress had done for more than the last 60 years? He had told them they could return blow for blow if they were not brave enough to follow the path of non-violence. But there was a moral code for the use of violence also. Otherwise, the very flames of violence would consume those who lighted them. He did not care if they were all destroyed. But he could not countenance the destruction of India's freedom.

The reports of the happenings in Bihar were awful if true. Pandit Jawaharlal had told the guilty parties that the Central Government would never tolerate such barbarism. They would even use aerial bombing to put it down. But that was the way of the British. The Congress was an organization of the people. Was the Congress to use the foreign mode of destruction against the people whose representative it was? By suppressing the riots with the aid of the military, they would be suppressing India's freedom. And yet what was Panditji to do if the Congress had lost control over the people? The better way, of course, was to give up the reins of Government, if the people were not amenable to discipline and reason.

To retaliate against the relatives of the co-religionists of the wrong-doer was a cowardly act. If they indulged in such acts, they should say good-bye to Independence.

TO BIHAR

Fallen upon evil times as we are, we have to be thankful even for small mercies. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief when it was known that the *Bakr Id* had passed off quietly all over India. But the news from Bihar had set Gandhiji at war with himself. It was in Bihar that mass Satyagraha in India

was born. It was in Bihar that his political career in India had practically commenced. And now it was the people of Bihar, for whom he had indefatigably laboured and who had showered upon him such love and affection — Bihar of Brijkishore Babu and Rajendra Babu — that had gone mad and besmirched the fair name of India. He had declared times without number that if the people of India should run amok against the English, they might find him dead. How could he be a witness to the same in regard to innocent Mussalmans who were after all our countrymen, our own kith and kin. "I went on spare, milkless diet, principally for reasons of health soon after coming to Calcutta. The happenings in the country induced me to prolong it. Now Bihar will send me to complete fast if things do not radically mend," he wrote in a letter to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur on Sunday the 4th. "There will be no time limit," he added. "Do not agitate yourself but be really glad that I feel I have the strength to go through the ordeal and live up to my creed." On the following day in a letter to Pandit Jawaharlal he wrote: "The news from Bihar has shaken me. My own duty seems to me to be clear. A deep bond unites me with Bihar. How can I forget that? If even half of what one hears is true, it shows that Bihar has forgotten humanity. To blame it all on the *goondas* would be an untruth. Although I have striven hard to avert a fast, I can do so no longer . . . My inner voice tells me, 'You may not live to be a witness to this senseless slaughter. If people refuse to see what is clear as daylight and pay no heed to what you say, does it not mean that your day is over?' The logic of the argument is driving me irresistibly towards a fast. I, therefore, propose to issue a statement that unless this orgy of madness ceases, I must go on a fast unto death. The fast may have to be delayed for some time. When you asked me at Delhi about it, I had replied that I was not thinking of it at the time. All that has now changed. You can strive with me, if you think differently. Whatever you say will carry weight with me. But knowing as you do my temperament, I am sure you will approve of my proposed step. In any event you will go on with your work without a moment's thought about my possible death and leave me in God's good care. No worry allowed." But neither Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru nor the Sardar to whom he had caused a copy of the letter to be sent tried to dissuade him. They understood better the magnitude of the stake. It was nothing less than India's Independence. Pandit Jawaharlal sent him word from Patna over the telephone that he did not think it was necessary for him (Gandhiji) to go to Bihar at present. He added that his (Panditji's) own place was in Bihar rather than in Delhi. "I am going to stay on here as long as it may be necessary." On the morning of the 6th, just before he was leaving for Noakhali, Gandhiji issued the statement foreshadowed in the letter to Pandit Nehru that has since appeared in the Press.

Chaumuhani, 8-11-'46

PYARELAL,

GREEN CROSS SOCIETY

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Red Cross Society one is aware of. It had at one time only military associations and used to have an imperialist flavour. Now it has expanded into civil work and covers every form of first-aid work for the relief of suffering humanity. Nevertheless its activities are largely confined to cities. It has hardly touched Indian life.

England is a country for lost causes: humanitarian and even strange causes. One such is represented by the Green Cross Society for the wild life heritage. Mrs. M. H. Morrison is its Hon. Secretary (41, Asmuns Place, London, N. W. 11).

The Society aims at the U. N. O. identifying itself with it. The following resolution is to be submitted to the U. N. O. for acceptance:

"(a) That U. N. O. ideals should include immediate effort in each country to delimit the area of any suitable National Park incorporating Nature Reserves for the protection of unique and valuable wild life — Flora, Fauna, Avifauna, with the distinctive terrain upon which these depend.

"(b) And, further, that the world at large should consent to an International Park, or World National Park in South America, Africa or Asia. If in Asia, then upon, around or within — it is suggested — the immense mountains encircling Tibet: Britain, China, India, Russia and U. S. A., appointing Custodians and acting as Trustees."

Reasons adduced for inviting the U. N. O. to pass the foregoing resolution are:

"1. That a stand must now be made against the maddening encroachments of Materialism.

"2. That the idealism and realism of the United Nations Organization should include an urge to all the world and to each nation to protect our heritage of Wild Life — its beauty, grandeur and interest — wild birds, wild animals, wild flora (flowers, plants, trees) and wild country or landscape: to protect our heritage wherever possible; and with special care within the Nature Reserves of National Parks.

"3. That the United Nations will jointly set an example to the component nations by claiming its own World Nature Park, or International Park in South America, Africa or Asia. If in Asia, then upon, around, or within the immense mountains encircling Tibet. In this case Britain, China, India, Russia and U. S. A. might appoint Custodians and act as Trustees to prevent disastrous and disfiguring exploitation.

"4. And, further, that such "Far Horizon" can give direction and cohesion to friends, allies, sympathizers and well-wishers gathering in groups along the way for the march and drive on toward the distant goal."

Among the numerous signatories to the resolution are Sir Alfred J. Munnings, President, Royal Academy of Arts, Dame Laura Knight and the world famous George Bernard Shaw.

Mrs. Morrison would like the signatures of leading Indians and other leaders in Asia and Africa. Those who would endorse the resolution should put themselves in communication with Mrs. Morrison.

Sodepur, 2-11-'46

HARIJAN

November 17

1946

A CHALLENGE TO FAITH

[The following are questions put by the Associated Press of America correspondent and Gandhiji's answers (6-11-'46). PYARELAL]

Q. 1. In view of recent Indian history — 1942 unrest, I. N. A. movement and unrest, R. I. N. mutiny, Calcutta-Bombay disturbances, movements in Indian States such as Kashmir and recent communal riots—can it be said your creed of non-violence has failed, insofar as non-violence has not taken roots in Indian life?

A. This is a dangerous generalization. All you mention can certainly be called *himsa* but that can never mean that the creed of non-violence has failed. At best it may be said that I have not yet found the technique required for the conversion of the mass mind. But I claim that the millions of the 7,00,000 villages of India have not participated in the violence alluded to by you. Whether non-violence has taken roots in Indian life is still an open question which can only be answered after my death.

Q. 2. What should one do in his day-to-day life—that is, what is the minimum programme—so that one can acquire non-violence of the brave?

A. The minimum that is required of a person wishing to cultivate the *ahimsa* of the brave is first to clear one's thought of cowardice and in the light of the clearance regulate his conduct in every activity, great or small. Thus the votary must refuse to be cowed down by his superior, without being angry. He must, however, be ready to sacrifice his post, however remunerative it may be. Whilst sacrificing his all, if the votary has no sense of irritation against his employer, he has *ahimsa* of the brave in him. Assume that a fellow passenger threatens my son with assault and I reason with the would-be-assailant who then turns upon me. If then I take his blow with grace and dignity, without harbouring any ill-will against him, I exhibit the *ahimsa* of the brave. Such instances are of every day occurrence and can be easily multiplied. If I succeed in curbing my temper every time and though able to give blow for blow I refrain, I shall develop the *ahimsa* of the brave which will never fail me and which will compel recognition from the most confirmed adversaries.

THE SPINNING WHEEL AND THE ATOM BOMB

Mr. Andrew Freeman of the *New York Post*, who took lessons in spinning with Kanu Gandhi, followed up the subject on return from his assignment in the N. W. F. P. tour with Pandit Nehru by an interview with Gandhiji. He had come to Gandhiji with the assumption that the spinning wheel had a cultural and therapeutic value especially for the malaise from which the West was suffering and which had culminated in the atom bomb.

"Has the spinning wheel a message for America? Can it serve as a counter weapon to the atom bomb?" he asked.

"I do feel," replied Gandhiji, "that it has a message for the U. S. A. and the whole world. But it cannot be until India has demonstrated to the world that it has made the spinning wheel its own, which it has not done today. The fault is not of the wheel. I have not the slightest doubt that the saving of India and of the world lies in the wheel. If India becomes the slave of the machine, then, I say, heaven save the world."

"India," he continued, "has a far nobler mission, viz. to establish friendship and peace in the world. Peace cannot be established through mere conferences. Peace is being broken, as we all see, even while conferences are being held."

"It seems so tragic," remarked Mr. Freeman. "India must lead the way and India is in turmoil. If any country can really take up the wheel, it is India. Do you think it will?"

"It is doing so," replied Gandhiji, "but I confess the process is very slow. Pandit Nehru called Khadi the 'livery of our freedom'. It cannot be that, so long as it is the consolation of cranks and paupers only. There are many things that are not possible for man to accomplish. But everything is possible for God. If there is no living power called God, the spinning wheel has no place."

"Those who spin are not called cranks here?" asked Mr. Freeman with some concern.

"No. I used that expression to anticipate what Americans would say. I allow myself to be called by that name to protect myself. I was described by a friend as a 'practical idealist'."

"As a fairly intelligent human being and an American I can only say," remarked Mr. Freeman. "that though many Americans would call spinners cranks, there are not a few who are thinking hard. Something has to be found, that would save civilization from destruction. Life must be simplified."

"Human personality cannot be sustained in any other way," replied Gandhiji. "I stand by what is implied in the phrase 'Unto This Last'. That book marked the turning point in my life. We must do even unto this last as we would have the world do by us. All must have equal opportunity. Given the opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth. That is what the spinning wheel symbolizes."

"Would you like the American to take to the spinning wheel?" he again asked.

"Yes," replied Gandhiji. "But I do not know whether it will be taken up by anybody before it is well established here. If, on the other hand, India adopts it for clothing itself, I won't need to tell the world. It will adopt it of itself. Today there is such an onslaught on India of Western machinery that for India to withstand it successfully would be nothing short of a miracle. I must confess that today everything seems to point to the contrary. Look at our internecine quarrels."

"But you have not given up hope?"

"I cannot so long as I have faith in that living Power who is more with us than we know. But let me ask you a counter-question. Has America with all its Mammon-worship abolished unemployment, poverty, corruption, Tammany Hall?"

"The answer is obvious."

Gandhiji continued: "Has England? Has it not still to grapple with the problems that baffle her? It is a very curious commentary on the West that although it professes Christianity, there is no Christianity or Christ in the West or there should have been no war. That is how I understand the message of Jesus. There is much ignorance and superstition in India. But deep down in us is that faith in God—the instinct for religion."

"All newspapermen and others have sensed that," remarked Mr. Freeman. "But I must confess there are moments when I feel it is hopeless. Look at the recent attack on Pandit Nehru in the tribal area from which I have just returned, and the happenings in East Bengal. You too must at times have felt the hopelessness of it all. Would you say Islam has repudiated its teacher as Christianity of today has its Jesus?"

"I have said so openly" replied Gandhiji. "Where is Mohammed and his message which is Peace?" I said recently at a public gathering that if Mohammed came to India today, he would disown many of his so-called followers and own me as a true Muslim, as Jesus would own me as a true Christian."

"How can we bring man back to God or the teaching of Jesus or that of Mohammed?" asked Mr. Freeman next.

"I might give the answer," replied Gandhiji, "that Jesus gave to one of his followers: 'Do the will of my Father who is in Heaven, not merely say Lord, Lord.' That holds true of you, me and everybody. If we have faith in the living God, all will be well with us. I hope not to lose that faith even to my dying day. In spite of my numerous failings and shortcomings of which I am but too well aware, my faith in God is burning brighter every day. If it did not, I would take the same prescription that I gave to women threatened with dishonour and with no prospect of help or escape viz. commit suicide."

"Have you thought of the Charkha as a therapeutic agent?" finally asked Mr. Freeman, reverting to his original theme.

"Yes," replied Gandhiji. "I have read some literature on the subject sent to me by a Glasgow

professor. A retired Superintendent of a jail in Bengal too wrote to me describing the use of the spinning wheel for curing lunatics, particularly by virtue of the soothing effect of its rhythmic motion."

"I propose to interpret the Charkha to Americans as a 'thinking machine'," remarked Mr. Freeman in conclusion. "I found while I was attending my spinning class that if alone with it, it made me think. If only Americans could get down to spin they might be able to do some thinking for which otherwise they get no time. It might make them forget the atom bomb."

New Delhi, 26-10-'46

PYARELAL

THREE Fs

Foodgrains, fats and fuel are the triple support of life in the villages. There is at present a scarcity in respect of all the three. A friend sends the following suggestions to meet the triple scarcity. Although meant primarily for the Punjab, they are equally applicable to other parts of India where similar conditions prevail:

1. A lot of land on the banks of rivers and nullahs is at present overrun by rushes and reeds only. If it could be cleared up with the help of the military, it could be used for growing wheat, barley, gram and musoor. The soil is extremely fertile and would yield bumper crops, besides providing straw in plenty for the cattle.

2. Similarly, there is a lot of uncultivated land along the railway lines and roads. If the military department could either itself undertake it or make available for irrigation the equipment or heavy-oil burning vehicles that can be adapted to this use, all this waste land could immediately be reclaimed and brought under cultivation.

3. There are lots of dry areas in the Punjab which are at present under scrub. With a little labour the scrub can be cleared and castor oil grown in its place. It is a very hardy plant and can subsist mostly by drawing moisture from the air. Castor oil is the base *par excellence* for the manufacture of soap and will serve to relieve the consumption of mustard, gingelli, groundnut and other edible oils which are at present being used in soap manufacture.

4. Owing to scarcity of wood fuel, cattle dung and other farm-yard manure in the villages are used for burning, resulting in the progressive impoverishment of the soil. A systematic effort should therefore be made to have reserves of trees planted along roads and on canal banks to provide fuel and timber for building.

His other suggestions include brick and cement lining for canals to reclaim thousands of acres of land that have become decadent owing to water logging and excessive salinity resulting from seepage, also checking the evil of excessive fragmentation of land which is strangulating cultivation in many parts on the one hand and consolidation of uneconomical holdings, power irrigation and so on.

Sodepur, 30-10-'46

PYARELAL

HINDUSTANI

The question of our national language has become as intricate as that of Swaraj. We did not work out beforehand what problems would face us in the process of building up a free nation. The result is that we have been confronted by a whole lot of them like a legion of ghosts.

For sometime we tried to popularize Hindi as our national language. We said Urdu was included in Hindi and tried to retain the Arabic and Persian words commonly used in Hindi.

Then there came a time when Urdu scholars tried to eliminate all simple Hindi words from Urdu and replace them with Persian and Arabic ones. Ordinary Urdu became *Urdu-e-moulla* which the man in the street found hard to understand. At the same time some Hindi scholars too set about eliminating commonly understood Persian and Arabic words and replaced them with Sanskrit ones.

We tried to check both these tendencies and simplify the language. But we found that it was not enough. Although Hindi and Urdu to begin with were one and the same, they became two separate and distinct dialects in course of time. Today they are so different from each other that it is not easy at once to fuse them into one.

We have defined the national language as that language which is commonly spoken by the Hindus and Muslims in their everyday life in the villages of North India and which is written in both Nagari and Persian scripts.

Some people ask us to define North India where Hindustani is the language of the people. We have to leave out Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Sindh and Kashmir. That leaves us Punjab, Rajasthan, U. P., Bihar and Mahakoshal. The villagers of these parts do not speak the current Hindi or Urdu. Local dialects are used in some parts.

In Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, Karnatak, Tamilnad etc. the same language is spoken in the home and in the bazar. There is some difference between the spoken and the written language, but all can see that basically it is the same language. Things are, however, different when we turn to Hindi or Urdu. The Hindi that Shri Amarnath Jha, Shri Tandonji, Shri Viyogi Hari, Rajendra Babu, Birlaji, Sardar Tara Singhji etc. speak when addressing a meeting is not the same as they speak at home. The tongue in which they speak in their homes is so different from the language of the press and the platform that the latter would hardly be understood in their homes.

The Muslims of the Punjab speak Urdu at public meetings, but in their homes they use a dialect called Derewali or the Punjabi. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan will speak in Pushtu, Sheikh Abdulla in Kashmiri and Dr. Syed Mahmud in Bihari. This system of having one language for the home and another for outside is not found in any other part of India.

Again in the U. P. a few Hindus while talking among themselves use Hindi, but if a Muslim joins them they will at once revert to Hindustani. The

Hindus of U. P. can speak simple Hindi and simple Urdu which they call Hindustani. The result is that the Muslims of the Punjab, U. P. or Bihar, can talk in Hindustani wherever they go. A plausible attempt is sometimes made to show that whilst "Hindustani is the language of the area extending from the Punjab to Bihar, Hindi is an artificial creation of the Hindus, meant to keep the Muslims and Hindus apart". The fact is that the Hindus in these parts are good enough to talk to the Muslims in simple Urdu called Hindustani for the sake of the latter's convenience.

The Hindi which is said to be an artificial language by the Muslims does not belong to a different category in regard to its origin and evolution from other provincial languages like Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati. No one will say that Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati are artificial languages. Then why is Hindi an artificial language? The various provincial languages were evolved in the normal process of history. To separate Hindi from the rest and dub it as artificial is not just.

The only fault of the Hindi-speaking people was that instead of speaking Hindi both in their homes and outside, they spoke their local dialect in their homes. For instance, there are several dialects in Rajasthan. There are two or three dialects in Bihar. Chhatisgadhi and Bundelkhandi are quite different from each other. To call Hindi one's mother tongue and not use it in one's home is indeed anomalous. And if the use of local dialects is to be continued, then, in this age of democracy, simple literature for the common man will also have to be got ready in those dialects.

Difficulties arise when one tries to find out the historical definition of Hindustani. People ask you, "Tell us in which part of India is Hindustani spoken by the common people? Where is the literature in Hindustani? Is there a single daily, weekly or monthly written in Hindustani, the language which is going to be our national language? Leave aside Gandhiji's *Harijansevak* and Pandit Sundarlalji's *Naya Hind*. These are creations of yesterday. We have yet to see how North India takes to them."

In order to steer clear of all these complications, we shall reply that in the Punjab, Rajasthan, Mahakoshal and Bihar a language called Hindi is prevalent. There are several newspapers and monthly magazines etc. published in this language and it has a vast literature which will grow from day to day.

In these very provinces Urdu is also prevalent, more in some parts, less in others. Hindus and Muslims publish newspapers etc. in this language, produce literature and serve it with loving affection. The body of Hindi and Urdu is the same but the former derives nourishment from Sanskrit and the latter from Persian and Arabic. Thus both these languages are used in North India. They should be an amalgam of the two and popularized as Hindustani.

This can only happen if Hindi and Urdu are simplified in the first place. They can be simplified

to such an extent that but for the script there should be no difference between the two. The process which led to the evolution of Hindi and Urdu as separate languages will have to be reversed in order to reunite them and fuse them into one. If in a sentence of ten words, five words have to be put in brackets to indicate the equivalent in Hindi or Urdu, such a language will not be easy to read. The best thing to do would be to use simple Urdu for such literature as is published in the Persian script and introduce in it commonly understood Hindi words and for the Nagari script use simple Hindi with commonly understood Urdu.

By torturing Hindi and Urdu in order to forcibly amalgamate them, a sort of language may be evolved, but very few will have the patience to read it. Hustling won't quicken the pace. By giving up high pressure and adopting a simple, harmless technique we will be able to draw together the good elements of both. We must leave the two forms to take care of themselves and not rest till an amalgam is produced. If people will do this much, the rest can then be left to time and nature.

Those whose mother tongue is neither Hindi nor Urdu will have to learn both the two scripts.

KAKA KALELKAR

(From the original in *Hindustani*)

EXCISE DEPARTMENT IN C. P.

The outstill system of liquor production and distribution may be described as one entailing the manufacture of liquor by Government through the agency of licensed manufacturers, who are also retailers of the same. In ordinary times and in ordinary circumstances liquid liquor meant for public consumption is manufactured in a central distillery — either one or two or three — situated in central places in the Province. Under the outstill system, hundreds of such small distilleries are located in various districts, where the restrictions are fewer, and at the same time the liquor produced here is much cheaper than the distillery liquor.

It need not be said here that under the outstill system, the manufacture and consumption of liquor is increased several times the normal consumption for two reasons: (1) the number of those small distilleries is nearly 500 in 1946 as against two or three big distilleries in the Province, (2) the liquor sold in the outstill shops is much cheaper than the distillery liquor. I cannot say how much cheaper, but roughly speaking the price of the outstill liquor is about one fourth or thereabouts of the distillery liquor. Thus it does not require any saying that these two factors lead to an enormously large increase in the liquor consumption.

Unfortunately these outstills are located in the areas inhabited by Aboriginal tribes like Gonds, Korkus, Pardhans etc. They are not located in any other district.

I give below the list of districts and the number of outstills located in each of them in 1946. This is enough to show that the six districts chosen for

the purpose are those which are predominated by the Tribal people :

Districts	Outstills
Chanda	81
Mandla	175
Raipur	45
Bilaspur	89
Drug	49
Balaghat	39
Bhandara	5
Total	483

In the year 1939 the number of outstills in the Province was 159. As a result of some change in the policy, probably by the first Congress Ministry of 1937-'39, the number was reduced in the year 1940 to 69 only, and it remained the same the following year 1941. Subsequently, owing to war conditions and perhaps a change in the Excise policy a sudden change for the worse occurred. The number 69 of 1941 went up to the figure 486 or seven times in the year 1945 and it stands at the figure 483 in the current year 1946.

I give below the figures year by year :

1939	159
1940	69
1941	69
1942	207
1943	248
1944	457
1945	486
1946	483

No doubt there has been a plethora of money in the rural parts of the Province due to inflation, and there has been, therefore, a larger provision of liquor. Specially in the Tribal areas, which is a synonymous term for backward areas, a large supply creates a large demand. The greatest sufferers from drink and the increased drink have been the 30 lakhs of Tribal people in the Province. Under the name of want of transport of the distillery liquor, the Tribal or Backward areas are flooded with thousands and lakhs of gallons of cheap liquor as Government policy.

The increase in the excise revenue from country spirit and toddy only due to their enormous liquor and toddy consumption is not quoted by me in detail. But I give below the figures of revenue for three prominent years :

1939	Rs. 33,76,516
1945	1,64,17,653
1946	1,08,89,479 (for the first 6 months only)

Thus it is evident that in 1945 the revenue from country spirits and toddy only had increased five times during the period of six years from 1939. The revenue in 1946, first half year, has been nearly 109 lakhs. Thus during the whole of the year 1946, it may be surmised that the revenue from the country spirit and toddy only will not be less than two crores, or in other words six times the revenue of 1939. The pity of it is, all this increased excise revenue has been got from the pockets of the poorest

section of the people viz. the Tribal people, who form about one fifth of the total population.

A. V. THAKKAR

[This is a scandalous abuse of authority for raising revenue. Let us hope that now that the Government is representative in C. P. as elsewhere, this abuse will be set right.]

On the train to Calcutta, 29-10-'46 — M. K. G.]

HOW VILLAGES CAN MANUFACTURE THEIR CLOTH

(By M. K. Gandhi)

After reciting the scheme which I copied in the *Harijan* of 4-8-'46, from his letter to me Shri Manu Subedar has given his argument in support of the scheme in the *Rast Rahbar*. I copy below two relevant paragraphs from the interesting article:

"I do not advocate this scheme for any sentimental or spiritual value of hand spinning, though undoubtedly there is some charm in the traditional restoration of the Charkha in every home as it existed for centuries, but because of the stark economic necessity of clothing the rural people, who would otherwise go without this elementary requirement of life. If cotton is put at their door, with the hands, which God has given them and with the skill, which could be acquired in less than a week, they ought to be able to help themselves and save womenfolk from a distressing situation. Not only will the cloth produced under the above scheme be cheaper than the black market, but it would be cheaper than the mill cloth for the reason that many items, which go into the price of the mill cloth to the consumer, would be eliminated. Amongst these are profits of the mills and of the middleman distributor of cloth, the cost of transport of cloth and cotton both ways, the cost of supervision and management, and interest charges and depreciation. Since the labour upto the stage of the yarn would be contributed and the labour charges for weaving would be in kind, even in normal peace time cloth produced under these conditions would be cheaper than factory cloth. For a poor country, what is required is not labour-saving devices, but capital-saving and profit-saving devices, such as is set forth in this scheme.

"I would invite the leaders to note that in the above scheme not only is there co-operation under the guidance of the village *Panch* and complete self-government, free from any interference of anybody outside, but there is the seed of the kind of economic revolution, which we seek in this country. Millions of men and women, as good as you and me, are not able to get full work for the full year. Their standard of life has been progressively pressed down by forces, which they do not understand. Charity can possibly alleviate their lot, but is bound to pauperize them and take away their self-respect. It is the scheme put forward here, which would enable them to feel that they are getting something for

themselves with their own labour. They would not feel hurt about it. The amount of State assistance involved in the proposal is so miserably small per head and is actually lower than the cost incurred by the State for many other purposes for the benefit of other groups and grades of the Indian population. The further advantage in this scheme is that it would be automatic in so far as in some villages it would take root quickly and they may want another bale inside a month. In other villages it might take them three or four months. Some of the villages will probably supply all their requirements by this method in the next few months and may have something to spare, and indeed I would not consider it wrong, if cloth produced under these circumstances after it was found to be in excess of the requirement of the village, which has produced it, was made available in the larger cities for sale to the general public. I would, however, sound a warning that the scheme would break down if individual exploitation is permitted. The surplus should not be dealt with except through the village collectively and should not be brought to the city except through the Government agency, which lands the bale at the door of the village. Nor should it be sold in the cities except at the Government retail shop. In other words, the middleman should never be able to lay his hands on this, or he will destroy what the energy and the co-operation of the villagers has produced, as he has destroyed so many handicrafts and so much that was good in India in the past,"

In a letter in Gujarati Shri Subedar says:

"If my scheme is not adopted we may have the sorrowful spectacle of womenfolk going without cover and therefore remaining indoors.

"The hard-heartedness which mill-owners and middlemen have exhibited require some such immediate remedy as I have suggested.

"You have rightly said that the removal of the salt tax will drive home to the millions of villagers the truth that our *Sarkar* has now the reins of Government in its hands. Will they not also realize the truth if the villages have cotton delivered at their homes on the easiest terms possible so that with a little corporate labour they can clothe themselves without difficulty?"

New Delhi, 23-10-'46

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