

# HARIJAN

Editor: PYARELAL

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TWO ANNAS

## CONGRESS MINISTERS AND NON-VIOLENCE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Shri Shankarrao Dev writes:

"Many people do not understand why those who call themselves Satyagrahis, resort to the use of the military and the police, the moment they become Ministers of Government. The people feel that this is a breach of both the creed and the policy of *ahimsa*. This popular belief seems to be consistent with reason. The inconsistency between belief and action of the Congress Ministers and the exploitation of the same by their opponents, both Congress and non-Congress, makes it hard for our workers to stand up to the criticism.

"Generally speaking, Congress *ahimsa* has been the *ahimsa* of the weak. It was bound to be so in the present development of the country and this fact is well-known to you. You claim that there is a special fire in the *ahimsa* of the strong. At the same time you accepted leadership of the weak, in order to make them strong through the use of *ahimsa*. And, in spite of their weakness, governmental power has today come into their hands. It is impossible for them today to put down disturbances without the use of the police and the military, and if they tried to do so, they would not only not succeed, but they would not get the co-operation of the people either.

"I did once ask you, whether a Satyagrahi should take high office if it came his way and if he did, how should he promote non-violence? I hold that the person who has made non-violence his creed, should not take office and he will never be happy there. But there can be no such difficulty for those who have accepted *ahimsa* only as a policy. Many Congressmen have accepted office and you have permitted them to do so. The question arises as to whether you can expect those who believe in *ahimsa*, to act up to it, at least in their personal capacity, during disturbances. Further, having acquired strength through non-violence, how should it be used, in order to bring in a State, where there is need for the least government? If you cannot lighten our path towards the desired goal, Satyagraha will not be considered a full-fledged weapon."

From my point of view the answer is easy. I have been saying for some time, that the words "truth and non-violence" should be removed from the Congress constitution. But whether they are actually removed or not, let us assume that they

are and then we shall be able to come to an independent judgement on the rightness or wrongness of any action. I am convinced that so long as we have to rely on the use of the military and even the police for preserving internal order, we shall continue to remain the slaves of either Britain or some other foreign power. It matters little then, whether the Government is in the hands of Congress- or non-Congressmen. Let us assume that Congress Ministers are not pledged to non-violence. Let us further assume that Hindus, Mussalmans and others want military and police protection. If they do, they will continue to receive it. Those Ministers who are wedded to non-violence, must resign, since they would object to the use of the military and the police. The significance of it all is that so long as our people have not the wisdom to come to a mutual understanding, so long will goondaism continue and we shall not be able to generate the true strength of *ahimsa* within us.

Now as to how this non-violent strength can be created. I gave the answer to this question in the *Harijan* of August 4th, in replying to a letter from Ahmedabad. So long as we have not cultivated the strength to die with courage and love in our hearts, we cannot hope to develop the *ahimsa* of the strong.

There remains the question as to whether in an ideal society, there should be any or no government. I do not think, we need worry ourselves about this at the moment. If we continue to work for such a society, it will slowly come into being to an extent, such that the people can benefit by it. Euclid's line is one without breadth but no one has so far been able to draw it and never will. All the same it is only by keeping the ideal line in mind that we have made progress in geometry. What is true here is true of every ideal.

It must be remembered that nowhere in the world, does a State without government exist. If at all it could ever come into being, it would be in India; for, ours is the only country where the attempt has, at any rate, been made. We have not yet been able to show that bravery to the degree which is necessary and for the attainment of which there is only one way. Those who have faith in the latter, have to demonstrate it. In order to do so, the fear of death has to be completely shed, just as we have shed the fear of prisons.

New Delhi, 6-9-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

## Notes

### The Lowly Cow

A knowledgeable sister writes :

"Q. 1. With the exception of those cows or buffaloes that are in calf, cannot all others, whether in milk or not, be used to plough the land? This would be of immense help to the farmer but the general public is averse to the idea. What is your opinion?"

"Q. 2. There is a great dearth of pasture land in our country. It is difficult for the farmer to provide fodder even for useful cattle. Are you then in favour of the slaughter of all such animals as cannot be made use of or do you think, this slaughter should be forbidden by law?"

A. 1. The first question was put to me as long ago as 1915. I felt then as now, that if the cows referred to, were used for purposes of ploughing the land, it would not hurt them. On the contrary, it would make them strong and increase their yield of milk. But this benefit could only come about, provided the cow was treated as a friend and not cruelly, as cattle in our land so often are. This friendly treatment should of course be insisted on for animals from whom we take service. Every living being has to work within his or its limitations. Such work uplifts, never lowers either man or beast.

A. 2. The second question also has long since been answered by me. Cow slaughter can never be stopped by law. Knowledge, education, and the spirit of kindness towards her alone, can put an end to it. It will not be possible to save those animals that are a burden on the land or perhaps even man if he is a burden. New Delhi, 4-9-'46  
(From *Harijansevak*)

### Khaddar

Readers of the *Harijan* may well say that in the present atmosphere of mad frenzy, any talk of Khadi is meaningless, because many Khadi-loving persons live in cities and so far, the trouble is, by the grace of God, confined to cities. As a matter of fact, all city-dwellers are by no means party to the senseless strife, and those who truly love Khadi, must always be actuated by thoughts of peace. We have either to make Khadi universal among the masses or give up all dreams of non-violent Swaraj. Therefore, all who love and believe in peace, however fiercely the storm of communal strife may rage around them, will forget neither the spinning wheel nor Khadi. They may omit their meals but not the Charkha.

The request given below on behalf of the Charkha Sangh is thus quite proper. Such requests have been made by other Khadi-loving organizations too. Those who look upon Khadi in the above light, will act on the resolution passed by the A. I. S. A. as referred to below :

"1. The Trustees of the Charkha Sangh hereby appeal to all Khadi Bhandars and all Khadi lovers to try their utmost to secure 78,000 ordinary co-operators for the coming Seventy-eighth Khadi Jayanti, of which number, at least half shall be self-sufficient.

"2. By an ordinary co-operator is meant one who is a habitual Khadi-wearer and will donate

at least 6 hanks of self-spun yarn annually to the Charkha Sangh.

"3. By 'self-sufficient' is meant one who, unless prevented by illness or other sufficient and unavoidable cause, regularly produces, whether spun by himself or through his family members or friends, at least 7½ hanks yarn, per month or 5 hanks, if he has done his own ginning, carding and slivering.

"4. The Charkha Sangh has also passed a resolution to the effect that in all Khadi producing centres, at least one square yard per person, according to the population, must be used by the people in the area. This much at least must be accomplished."

New Delhi, 4-9-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

### The Devadasi System

A correspondent writes :

"It is a well known fact that you are trying your best to uplift the Harijan community and even spending your most precious time in the Harijan Colony. But may I assure you that there are thousands of Devadasi girls of the Harijan community residing in Poona and Bombay and are leading a life of public prostitution. Why should this be so? Is it because these girls belong to low caste community and are induced to lose their moral character that they are neglected by the public and put to the shameful life of prostitution?"

"May I be justified in stating that this is a most important and urgent problem. Is it not possible to stop this illegal practice in the Bombay Province as in Madras and Madras by the Madras Government under the ruling of Section 366 A, 366 B, 372 and 373 of the Indian Penal Code, page No. 574?"

I have, on more than one occasion, written about the shame attached to the Devadasi system, whether in temples or in other places. "Prostitutes" is commonly supposed to apply to women of lewd character. But the men who indulge in vice are just as much, if not more, prostitutes than the women who, in many instances, have to sell their bodies for the sake of earning a livelihood. The evil practice should be declared illegal. But the law can only help up to a point. The evil exists clandestinely in every country in spite of the law. Vigorous public opinion can help the law as it also hinders.

New Delhi, 2-9-'46

### Untouchability and the Flush System

Q. Do you consider that the adoption of the flush system is one way of eradicating untouchability? If so, you would not presumably oppose its introduction on the basis of your dislike of machinery.

A. Where there is ample supply of water and modern sanitation, can be introduced without any hardship on the poor, I have no objection to it. In fact, it should be welcomed as a means of improving the health of the city concerned. At the moment, it can only be introduced in towns. My opposition to machinery is much misunderstood. I am not opposed to machinery as such. I am opposed to machinery which displaces labour and leaves it idle. Whether the flush system will remove the curse of untouchability, is open to grave doubt. This latter

has to go from our hearts. It will not disappear through such means as has been suggested. Not until we all become *bhangis* and realize the dignity of the labour of scavenging and latrine-cleaning, will untouchability really be exorcized.

New Delhi, 2-9-'46

### Harijans and Wells

Shri Hardev Sahay writes:

"Last evening (4-9-'46) in your address to the prayer gathering, you drew the attention of the public to the disability attached to Harijans in the matter of drawing water from public wells. After 25 years of incessant effort on their behalf, we have not yet succeeded in removing this disability. No one knows of their sufferings more than you.

"It is my humble opinion that now that Congress Governments are in power, they should forthwith proclaim their policy towards the Harijans and remove all such of their disabilities as they can by law. In this connection I should like to draw your attention to conditions in the Punjab. Leave aside the question of drawing water from wells, Harijans are not even permitted to obtain land for sinking a well for themselves. I would beg of you to appeal to the Punjab Government to provide wells for Harijans at State expense, wherever there are no facilities of drawing water or at least provide them with land for sinking wells for themselves. There are ever so many villages in the Punjab where, even if the Harijans are willing to spend their own money, they are not given the requisite land.

"There are a few places where the Government has started making wells for the Harijans; but they are wholly insufficient. It is surely the duty of the State to see that a proper supply of drinking water is available to all its citizens."

The writer is perfectly right in what he says. It is the duty of the Government to provide wells for the Harijans. It is not enough only to give the land; the Government should be responsible for sinking the wells.

(From *Harijansevak*)

New Delhi, 6-9-'46

M. K. G.

### An Australian Experiment

Sometimes back a case was reported of effluent from a paper mill polluting the flow of a river in Orissa to the detriment of villages on its banks who drew their water supply from it. It presented a tough problem for the paper mill to tackle. A recent issue of the Australian Agricultural Newsletter describes an experiment, showing the value of mill-sludge as fertilizer. It says:

"A 250 acre dairy farm in Tasmania, Australia, has had its carrying capacity increased from 45 to 200 cows by sludge pumped from paper mills and then dispersed by irrigation channels. The sludge was previously spoiling water for landholders further down the stream.

"The sludge is residue after straw has been 'cooked' for eight hours, and looks like black liquid mud. It is diverted into eight miles of intricate channels, and dispersed for soil building. In 1937 it was directed over a useless stony outcrop which today is completely covered and carrying deep grass."

"The only weed," adds the bulletin, "the sludge has not exterminated from the property is artichoke thistle. In 13 years only four cases of sick stock have been noticed."

New Delhi, 7-9-'46

P.

### Independence Celebrations

An Indian friend from Egypt writes:

"On the radio and from newspapers, we have heard the news that India is soon to get her Independence and that the event is to be celebrated all over the country. The Indian community here would like to join in the celebrations. But as we do not care to do so, unless you are wholly satisfied that the country really is independent, we will await hearing from you."

In reply, Gandhiji has written as follows:

"I have received your letter. You have done right to wait. What is there to celebrate until and unless we are really independent? The most that can be said today is that the door to Swaraj has been opened. But it would be wholly foolish to be content with this. Today Hindus and Muslims are fighting with each other in our cities. In these circumstances, Indians abroad can best help us on the road to freedom by standing for unity. You who live in Egypt, can make a valuable contribution in this matter."

New Delhi, 8-9-'46

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

### QUESTION BOX

(By M. K. Gandhi)

#### NATURE CURE A PANACEA

Q. It has been said that 'Nature Cure' can be applied to every disease. If so, can it cure short or long-sightedness, cataract and other eye diseases? Can one avoid spectacles? Can hernia, tonsils etc. which need the surgeon's knife be cured by Nature Cure?

A. I know that the claim attributed to Nature Cure has been made by its exponents. I do not count myself among them. This much, however, can be safely claimed. Disease springs from a wilful or ignorant breach of the laws of nature. It follows, therefore, that timely return to those laws should mean restoration. A person who has tried nature beyond endurance, must either suffer the punishment inflicted by nature or in order to avoid it, seek the assistance of the physician or the surgeon as the case may be. Every submission to merited punishment strengthens the mind of man, every avoidance saps it.

#### ENFORCED MARRIAGE

Q. A sister writes:

What is an unwilling girl to do when her parents insist either upon her marriage or leaving the parental home? Where is she to go, if she has not been educated enough to earn her own living? Whose protection is she to seek?

A. The question makes sad reading. It is wholly wrong of parents to force marriage on their daughters. It is also wrong to keep their daughters unfit for earning their living. No parent has a right to turn a daughter out on to the streets for refusal

to marry. Let us hope that such cruel specimens are rare. To the girl concerned, my advice would be not to look on any labour with her hands, down to scavenging, as beneath her dignity. Women may not look for protection to men. They must rely on their own strength and purity of character and on God as did Draupadi of old.

New Delhi, 6-9-'46

## HARIJAN

September 15

1946

### WHAT TO DO?

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A friend sends the following questions:

Q. 1. You have all along held and expressed the view that persons should observe strict non-violence even when attacked by hooligans or others. Does this hold good when women are attacked or outraged? If people are unable to follow your lead regarding non-violence, would you advise them to die as cowards or resist aggression with violence?

Q. 2. Should you not unequivocally condemn the dual role that the Muslim League is playing today? While, on the one hand, its leaders are openly preaching violence and *jihad* against Hindus, the same men continue, on the other hand, to hold office as Ministers, having a controlling hand on all the threads of administration, including police and justice.

Q. 3. Is there no constituted authority in India which can put a stop to this grave anomaly which is unprecedented in history?

Q. 4. Do you realize that if the present happenings are allowed to continue, civil war will become inevitable? How would you advise your countrymen to face such a catastrophe, if it comes?

A. 1. In a society of my imagination, outrage posited by the questioner cannot take place. But in the society in the midst of which we are living, such outrages do take place. My answer is unequivocal. A non-violent man or woman will and should die without retaliation, anger or malice, in self-defence or in defending the honour of his womenfolk. This is the highest form of bravery.

If an individual or a group of people are unable or unwilling to follow this great law of life, which is miscalled my lead, retaliation or resistance unto death is the second best, though a long way off from the first. Cowardice is impotence worse than violence. The coward desires revenge but being afraid to die, he looks to others, may be the Government of the day, to do the work of defence for him. A coward is less than man. He does not deserve to be a member of a society of men and women. Lastly, let me add that if women had followed or would now follow my advice, every woman would protect herself without caring or waiting for aid from her brother or sister.

A. 2. Of course, the dual role adverted to is unequivocally bad. It is a sad chapter in our national life. My condemnation is of universal application. Fortunately it is so bad that it cannot last long.

A. 3. The only constituted authority is the British. We are all puppets in their hands. But it would be wrong and foolish to blame that authority. It acts according to its nature. That authority does not compel us to be puppets. We voluntarily run into their camp. It is, therefore, open to any and every one of us to refuse to play the British game.

Let us also admit frankly that the British authority is struggling to quit India. It does not know how. It honestly wants to leave India but wants before leaving, to undo the wrong it has been doing for so long. Being in the position of 'the toad under the harrow', I must know where it hurts. I have been telling the authority, if it will undo the wrong quickly, to leave India to her fate. But those who compose the British service cannot realize this obvious fact. They flatter themselves with the belief that they know India better than we do ourselves. Having successfully kept us under subjection for over a century, they claim the right to constitute themselves judges of our destiny. We may not grumble, if we are to come into our own through the way of peace. Satyagraha is never vindictive. It believes not in destruction but in conversion. Its failures are due to the weaknesses of the Satyagrahi, not to any defect in the law itself. The British authority having decided to quit, (whatever the reason), will show growing defects and weaknesses. Parties will find that it is more and more a broken reed. And, when parties quarrel as Hindus and Muslims do, let one or the other or both realize that, if India is to be an independent nation, one or both must deliberately cease to look to British authority for protection.

A. 4. This brings me to the last question. We are not yet in the midst of civil war. But we are nearing it. At present we are playing at it. War is a respectable term for goondaism practised on a mass or national scale. If the British are wise, they will keep clear of it. Appearances are to the contrary. Even the English members in the provincial Assemblies refuse to see that they were given seats by the Act of 1935, not because it was right but in order that they might protect British interest and keep Hindus and Muslims apart. But they do not see this. It is a small matter. Nevertheless it is a straw showing the way the wind is blowing. Lovers and makers of Swaraj must not be dismayed by these omens. My advice is Satyagraha first and Satyagraha last. There is no other or better road to freedom. Whoever wants to drink the ozone of freedom must steel himself against seeking military or police aid. He or they must ever rely upon their own strong arms or what is infinitely better, their strong mind and will which are independent of arms, their own or other.

New Delhi, 9-9-'46

## PROHIBITION

(By M. K. Gandhi)

The following extracts from Rev. E. Gordon's writing provoke thoughts on total prohibition :

"With famine facing the country, we cannot very well quarrel with sincere efforts for combating the menace, but why prohibition of foodstuffs such as, pastries, ice cream etc. which have real food value, and why talk of prohibition or severe reduction of supply of sugar to aerated water and other mineral water manufacturers and yet keep absolutely silent about the prohibition or severe reduction of cereals and sugar to the distilleries and breweries? Is the drinking of alcoholic liquors any less of a luxury than the eating of pies, pastries and cakes? Can even the most astute and ardent lovers of alcoholic beverages argue that these drinks are so essential to life that no reduction can be made in the amount of cereals and sugar required to make whisky, beer etc. ?

"Granted that there is a certain amount of food value in beer, is it equal in value to the barley that could be used in making bread or cakes ?

"The President of the United States has ordered a drastic cut in the quota of wheat to be issued to distilleries in the U. S. A. How can we from India plead with America to send us large quantities of grain to save millions from death by starvation, when no published statements assure us that grains, whether imported or grown in this country, will be used for intoxicating drinks ?

"We give our whole-hearted approval to the Congress Ministry of Madras in their desire to introduce prohibition as soon as possible. Notwithstanding all that anti-prohibitionists say about the failure of prohibition in the United States, if they would honestly look at the other side of the picture, they would find that the drinking is far worse now than it was then and the amount of spiritous liquors is increasing year by year. Other things being equal, we sincerely believe that under prohibition, India will forge ahead much quicker and more rapidly than she could without prohibition. Honestly tried and courageously and indefatigably enforced, she will prove to the world the extent to which liquor has dragged and is dragging down the nations of the world."

The Reverend gentleman is right. India has the capacity and the opportunity to lead the world in the matter of prohibition. Can she forego the revenue derived from this degrading traffic? She must, if she is to live. I have a hideous tale from South Africa, related to me by Satyagrahi Cachalia Junior, a worthy son of his deceased father who was a hero of the first Satyagraha campaign in that country. He tells me that a thoughtless agitation has brought to the Indian community, the freedom to drink, with the result that it is sapping their moral strength. I know what this deadly freedom means. On this issue there is no difference of opinion between Indians, Mussalmans and, shall I say, others in India, save the liquor interest.

I have no doubt that the loss of revenue which drains the moral and material means of the poor drinkers, will be more than balanced by the gain accruing to them from prohibition. Moreover, the military burden in defence of which the argument for the maintenance of the excise revenue has so far been used, cannot hold water in the New India, where that burden will no longer exist. The excise revenue must, therefore, be sacrificed without delay and without hesitation. No thought of the loss of this revenue, should interfere with the progress of this much-needed reform. Whether the happy conjunction between the Congress and the League takes place or not, the Congress Provinces should dare to do the right.

The positive side of prohibition must run side by side with the negative. The positive consists in providing the drinker with counter-attractions giving him health and innocent amusement.

New Delhi, 7-9-'46

## REGARDING HINDUSTANI

(By M. K. Gandhi)

"The great and encouraging work that is being done on behalf of Hindustani is of real benefit to the country and a help towards attainment of freedom. The country that has no national language has no right to exist. But that is our unfortunate position today. And yet our leaders are not paying due attention towards this matter. In spite of your efforts, Congress workers do not put your advice into practice. You are aware that in our Congress Committee meetings as also in our legislatures, most people, including even those whose mother tongue is either Hindi or Urdu, prefer to speak in English. Is it not possible to make it compulsory for Congressmen to speak and carry on work whether in meetings or legislatures in Hindustani, just as it is made incumbent on them to wear Khadi? Of course, some latitude will have to be given to those who are wholly unacquainted with Hindustani, but even they should be given a definite time limit within which to learn the national language. My experience is that responsible Congressmen who know Hindustani prefer to speak in English. This must be stopped if we want the change to be universal. Today Congressmen are taking high office. There too they should try to carry on their work in the mother tongue."

The correspondent is quite right. The lure for English has not left us. And until it goes, our own languages will remain paupers. Would that the people's Governments everywhere would do their work either in the national or provincial languages! But to attain this, they must have language experts in their offices and the public must be encouraged to write in their provincial or the national language. We shall not only be saved much expense by adopting our own languages but it will also make things much easier for the general public.

New Delhi, 7-9-'46

(From *Harijansevak*)

## HARIJAN WORK IN KISTNA DISTRICT

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Shri G. Ramachandra Rao writes a letter giving an account of his Harijan work. The following is a precis of it :

"We have taken up the problem of the use of public wells by Harijans. Section 126A of the Madras Local Boards Act of 1920 provides for the use, by persons of whatever caste or creed, of wells, tanks, reservoirs, water-ways etc. maintained by a *Panchayat*. It even imposes a fine of Rs. 100 on anyone who obstructs its operation. But the law is honoured in the breach where the Harijans are concerned. It is pathetic to see the latter often waiting in long queues for hours at a time in front of a public well for some generous non-Harijan to fill their pots with water. We chose Kankipadu village where a public well is maintained by the local *Panchayat* and explained to the leaders, not only the implications of the law but also their moral obligations. The response, after about three weeks of propaganda, being heartening, we called a public meeting where, owing to overwhelming support for the proposition, it was announced that in future Harijans would be allowed to use the well in question without molestation.

"The next morning, however, the Harijans themselves were found to be too timid to take advantage of the decision. It was a sad commentary on their mentality and we had to work hard to bring them to the well. As soon as they began drawing water, a reaction set in among the caste Hindus, the vast majority of whom, even at personal inconvenience, refrained from coming to the well. A few, however, remained staunch to their resolve and gradually the opposition was worn down. I had also to appeal to the Deputy Inspector of Local Board to explain to the people the implications of section 126A.

"This experience has encouraged us to take up similar work in other villages too, where Harijans have no facilities for obtaining water. I am of opinion that for the removal of such disabilities, moral persuasion and legal provision should go hand in hand. Absence of one renders the other inefficient. The existing Government acts dealing with social disabilities are vague and weak. This defect must be remedied and the Government of Madras, who have set aside one crore of rupees for Harijan work, might well utilize a certain sum for publicity of the provisions of the relevant laws already on the statute book. Execution of the law is as important as its passing."

Professor Rao deserves hearty congratulations for his assiduous work on behalf of the oppressed Harijans. His effort ought to be supported by the public.

New Delhi, 7-9-46

## WEEKLY LETTER

LAND WITHOUT SUFFERING

Gandhiji echoed the sentiment of the whole country when he remarked the other day after the evening prayer, that they had a right to hope that now their country would become the land where there was no sorrow and no suffering as described in the song which they had sung so often at the prayer. That consummation would not be brought about merely by their Ministers wearing the crown of thorns. That land, as the poet had sung, was within us. It was within the power of every one to raise him or herself above the sphere of sorrow and suffering by fulfilling certain conditions and if many people did that in India, we should realize the dream of a society in which there is no sorrow and suffering. But today alas! the people were filled with fear and anger. Brother quarrelled with brother and returned anger for anger and blow for blow. What could their Ministers do? Were they expected to send the military and the police to protect them? The whole atmosphere was rotten. Offices and staff had been multiplied a hundredfold. No wonder, bribery and corruption were rampant.

If they did not purify themselves within and without, they would make government impossible for their Ministers and displace the very men whom they had put in power.

Again how could their country become the land without sorrow and regrets while their *bhangi* brethren continued to be oppressed. It pained him to hear and read of the persecution of Harijans in villages. If there was an epidemic, they were beaten. They could not draw water from wells. They lived in hovels. This state of affairs may not exist in the country of our dreams. All human beings are one in the sight of God and they must look upon Harijans as no less members of the great human family than they themselves were.

It pained him to hear too that bribery and corruption were rampant among the *bhangis* themselves. They should not demean themselves by giving bribes to corrupt officials or their own foremen and *jamadars* etc. They should not look upon themselves as beggars at anyone's door. They must demand justice and fight for it, but with clean hands. And with their own Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and others as Ministers, they need have no fear that justice would not be meted out to them.

ALL EYES ON MINISTERS

Soon after the new Ministers took office, Gandhiji received a note in which some English friends had expressed the fear that the lovely gardens of the houses, formerly occupied by the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, would now suffer neglect. There would be no flowers, grass would be allowed to grow anyhow where there were velvety lawns and the compound would be untidy. Carpets, chairs and other furniture would probably be ruined by oil or grease stains, the lavatories would be dirty etc. Gandhiji said that having lived in England and South Africa and known Englishmen well, he could be witness to the

fact that cultured English people do understand and observe the laws of sanitation and hygiene. English officials were living in palaces as kings. They kept a huge staff of servants to keep their houses and surroundings clean. The people's leaders had gone to the Interim Government as their servants. They were of the people and one with them. There was no need for them to depend on a large staff of servants. They would be untrue to their calling, if they did. But they could and should keep their houses and surroundings spotlessly clean by self-help. The women of their household would be their caretakers with themselves and Gandhiji knew that not one of the leaders would hesitate to clean their own lavatories. A doctor lady had told him years ago, that while the Viceroy's House was a palace and spotlessly clean, the quarters of his staff of Harijans etc. were a very different show. The people's leaders would make no such difference. One of Jawaharlalji's personal staff—a Harijan—had been an M.L.A. They treated their servants as members of the family. Gandhiji would not be happy, unless the Ministers of the nation maintained the highest standards in every department of life and he was sure, they would not disappoint the nation.

#### A FOOLISH WASTE OF MONEY

One of the new Ministers was describing to Gandhiji the other day how Pandit Jawaharlal had to wade through a pile of 500 to 800 wires every day and an equal number was probably being received by the Viceroy. Characterizing the practice as a foolish waste of money as well as of the Viceroy's and their Ministers' precious time, in one of his prayer addresses, he described how at one time, people used to send wires to the King, little realizing that as a constitutional monarch, he was bound by the advice of his ministers.

Time was when the Viceroy was all-powerful and could do everything. But now he had of his own free will, relegated his powers to the Cabinet of which, like the King of England, he was the constitutional head. The King of England could not do anything without the consent of his ministers. The people of England had even beheaded one monarch because he went against their will. Gandhiji hoped that the people's ministers here would never do anything of the kind because they had in their possession the matchless weapon of Satyagraha, should occasion ever arise for its use. In any case, the people who sent these wires, should realize that apart from burdening the recipients and the telegraph offices, they were also wasting the people's money. The well-to-do imagined it was their money, but it really belonged to the starving masses whom they exploited.

#### BOMBAY'S SHAME

Gandhiji then turned with a heavy heart to the continued strife in Bombay. He did not know who killed whom. But it was tragic that some people even rejoiced that Hindus were now strong enough to kill in return those, who tried to kill them. He would far rather that Hindus died

without retaliation, for, that was the only way to quench the fire of hatred. But today they had neither that valour nor that non-violence or love in their hearts. Demand for more and more military and police protection was pouring in from all sides. To quarrel among ourselves was bad enough. But far worse was to call in troops whom the British had trained and whose oath of allegiance was to the British King. He did not want the people to ask the Government anywhere for military and police protection. They must generate their own strength and not rely on anyone else. If they insisted on being provided with military and police help, the Ministers should resign rather than comply with a request that would strangle Independence at its very inception. Instead, they and their leaders should be willing to go into the fray themselves and lay down their lives for the sake of Hindu and Muslim honour. As for the military, they should be harnessed to all kinds of constructive work at which they were adepts. Let them grow more food for the starving millions and do all kinds of other work that was waiting to be done.

#### DELHI MUNICIPALITY

Some members of the Delhi Municipality and businessmen had come and complained, said Gandhiji, that in Delhi it was the Chief Commissioner's and Deputy Commissioner's *raj*. He had told them in reply that the remedy lay in their own hands. They should go to the Municipality for service only, with no personal end to serve. He was afraid, they would not be able to stand that test. They had many sins of omission and commission to answer for. As elected representatives in the Municipality, they were responsible for the Harijan hovels and the dirt and squalor of Delhi. Businessmen and contractors exploited the poor. If communal strife occurs in Delhi, it is the citizens who are responsible. The day for the Commissioner's *raj* is over. It must now be the people's *raj*, but the people must be alive to their responsibilities.

#### COMMUNAL STRIFE

Gandhiji brought his discourse to an end by expressing sorrow at the Qaid-e-Azam's recent utterances. He was the leader of a powerful organization and it behoved him to weigh every word he spoke. If he did, it would redound to his credit, it would be for the good of Islam, for the benefit of Hinduism too and for the welfare of India as a whole. But, said Gandhiji, each one was responsible for his own correct action and correct action on the part of everyone would make the Qaid-e-Azam act aright too.

The rising tide of communal hatred, passion and violence and as a result, false propaganda in the country made Gandhiji open out his heart to his audience on the day following. It had hurt him to hear some of the recent pronouncements of the Qaid-e-Azam and his lieutenants. They go on saying that they will take what they want by force. He wondered where this was going to lead the ship of State. Congressmen may have the reins of power come into their hands but this has only increased

their duties and responsibilities a hundredfold. While Congress was in the wilderness, they were arrested, beaten and punished, even killed; but that is past history for the time being at any rate. If Congress had resorted to violence, they would have fallen. The only true suffering is that which does not retaliate and it alone can bear fruit. Moreover, the 40 crores of India, i. e. Village India did not think in terms of violence. They were slaves. The violence today was in the hearts of a handful of towns people. Gandhiji said that as a villager, he became one with the ocean of Indian humanity and Congress has taken office for the sake of this suffering humanity. He had espoused the Hindu-Muslim cause, long before he joined the Congress. Even as a boy at school he had many Muslim friends. He went to South Africa in charge of a case for Muslim friends of his brother. He went to South Africa to earn his living but he soon put service first. He became a coolie barrister in order to serve his labourer friends there and he really served Hindus through Muslims whose employee he was. Hindu-Muslim unity was part of his very being. The memory of those days, Gandhiji said, was full of fragrance for him. Even today, although alas! communal differences have raised their head there too, all were fighting as one man for Indian rights. He recalled stalwart Muslims who had joined the Satyagraha movement, especially Sheth Cachalia now gone, who said he would rather die than remain a slave. He, therefore, wondered and was hurt when the Qaid-e-Azam and his disciples called Hindus their enemies. He was not a Muslim but he claimed that Islam did not teach enmity to any man. If he was as he believed, a true Hindu, he was equally a good Christian and a good Sikh and a good Jain. No religion teaches man to kill fellow man because he holds different opinions or is of another religion, and yet this was what was being done. No one can look upon another as his enemy unless he first becomes his own enemy. The Muslim League leaders talked of forcing the Congress and the Hindus and even the British to yield to their demands. This surely was not the right way. He recalled with pride the days of the Khilafat and related the incident when the Ali Brothers wept tears of joy. Gandhiji was addressing a meeting of Hindus and said to them, 'If you want to save the cow, you must save the Khilafat, die for it if need be.' This brought tears of joy to the eyes of the Ali Brothers. What a sad change was there today! He longed for those days when Muslims and Hindus never did anything without consulting each other. What could he do to bring that state of affairs back again, was the question that was worrying him all the time. He made bold to say that for any Hindu or Mussalman to regard the other community as 'enemy' was not only disloyal but stupid too. He appealed to Englishmen too not to imagine that

they could keep them apart. If they did, they were disloyal to both India and Britain. Hindus and Muslims were all one of the same soil, blood-brothers who ate the same food, drank the same water and talked the same language. They have to live together. The Qaid-e-Azam says, all minorities will be safe in Pakistan. There is already Muslim *raj* in the Punjab and Bengal and Sindh. But does it augur well for future peace if things happen in these provinces as threatened? Does the Muslim League imagine they are going to keep Islam alive through the sword? If so, they are much mistaken. The very word Islam means peace. And Gandhiji maintained that no religion worthy of the name, could exist except on terms of peace.

#### GIVE THEM TIME

He was being asked, said Gandhiji in his message, which was read out at the evening prayer gathering yesterday (Monday), as to when the Salt Tax was going to be removed. Why had it not been removed so far? The question denoted impatience. The Cabinet had only been in office eight days. Its Finance Member had not yet taken charge of his office and for this question, his arrival must be awaited. The Cabinet could do nothing without due deliberation. If anyone had the right to show impatience, it should be he, for, he was the originator of the idea of the anti-Salt Tax campaign. He also knew how best it could be abolished with the least loss of revenue. But he knew too that people must not be impatient and they might not worry the Cabinet into doing things in haste. They were people's representatives, working according to the people's wishes. They must have faith that the Salt Tax would go and he who had faith, could afford to be patient. There were many other things that the Cabinet had to do for the people as quickly as possible. If they continue to give them support, the Ministers would surely, in good time, do all that should be done.

New Delhi, 10-9-'46

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