

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XVI. No. 7

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1952

TWO ANNAS

DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTED LANDS

[Questions have been asked about the manner in which land received by Vinobaji by way of gift is distributed among landless peasants. Here is a brief statement of the principles followed in doing so. The information is taken from *Bhoodan-Yajna*,* a Hindi booklet, and a letter from Shri Vinoba in answer to an inquiry made by Shrimati Manibehn Patel. The subject will be considered in greater detail with friends at Sevapuri, in light of suggestions received from experts. — K. G. M.]

1. General

A Land-Gift-Committee has been appointed for each State for distributing the land received in the course of the tour. Generally it is distributed to local landless peasants. It is given only to such people, as have no other means of livelihood and who can do land labour.

The area to be given to each will depend upon the condition of each province. For instance, in Hyderabad a family of five is generally given one acre of wet or five acres of dry land. Very likely the same proportion will be fixed for U.P.

The members of the Committee will visit every village in which land is to be distributed, and distribute it to deserving persons in the presence of the villagers. The first preference will be given to those who have experience in agriculture and about whom the villagers feel confident that they would serve the land in a proper manner. The giving away of land like the giving away of a bride will be done in the presence of a gathering. The receiver shall not sell his land for ten years.

Attempts are being made to get the documentary formalities of the transactions carried out without stamp duty, registration charges etc. Governments will be approached to make necessary laws or rules for the purpose.

The work of distribution has already commenced in Hyderabad with the co-operation of the State Government, with the result that the Committee gets additional gifts in the villages which it visits.

2. Supplementary

There are three types of gifts :

1. Land which is cultivated by the donor himself. A good deal of such land has been received. It directly goes to landless peasants.

2. There are some lands which though cultivable are not under cultivation at present. Their owners are requested to gift away all such

* Published by Sasta Sahitya Mandal, New Delhi, price — four annas.

lands after breaking them with tractors or ploughs. Some donors have acceded to the request. In case a donor is unable to accede to the request, the land will have to be broken with the help of either the Government, or monetary donations, or the free labour of volunteers. We have received promises of some free labour, but it is not sufficient. It is possible to get more of it.

3. Regarding the gift of land which is under cultivation by tenants, the tenants who cultivate them might themselves be (a) large cultivators, — i.e. have sub-tenants ; or (b) small cultivators.

In the former case, the big tenants are requested to donate their tenancy rights ; in the latter case the small cultivators are made full owners.

Wherever zamindari is being abolished, and the zamindars are to receive compensation, we ask for the gift of the compensation. We have received some donations of this type. We do not receive the compensation money ourselves. But we shall inform the Government what part of the compensation or what land, for which compensation is due, has been donated to us, so that the Government can deduct the amount of the donated compensation, and use the saving to help landless peasants rehabilitated by us.

4. Small cultivators have also made land donations. They are a token of their love. We propose to make use of them for the benefit of the landless peasants in consultation with the village people. Some of these plots are as small as .05 or .10 acre. Attempt is made to find a rich man, who will take such plots and give in exchange a consolidated piece, which can be distributed to landless cultivators. Alternatively arrangement will be made to have such plots cultivated by the villagers, and the produce used for the benefit of the poor. If this too is not possible some other way will have to be found.

(Translated from Hindi)

Bhoodan Fortnight

I regret I learnt about the Bhoodan Fortnight too late to refer to it in *Harijan*. Needless to say I wholeheartedly support the resolution of the U.P. Congress Committee. Indeed, I think this is a programme which should be taken up by all political parties unitedly, and I hope workers of all shades of political opinion will join hands in making the fortnight a success.

Wardha, 5-4-'52

K. G. M.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

[Prayer Answered : From 1948 onwards I waited and prayed—waited for the advent of 'Bapu Raj', and prayed for light and strength to serve truly the Great Cause. As the days and months went by the pain of waiting grew more and more intense, and the fervour of my prayer went on increasing. At last, far away in the Himalayas, out of the divine silence of the Eternal Snows, came the long sought response to my prayer. Courage now filled my heart. I took up pen and paper and the following three articles are the result.

I have started by elucidating points Nos. 6 and 7 on Disarmament and Aircraft, as they are the ones most likely to be misunderstood, and the rest of the points I shall afterwards take up one by one. At the same time I propose to develop the whole matter in simple village Hindi, so as to reach the peasantry and I will myself make a direct contact with them by riding through the countryside with this message of Bapu's Ideals for Free India.

This message was once the message of the Congress, but today the whole picture has changed, and the Congress may even look upon me with disapproval. It should not—personally I regard myself as a true friend of the Congress—because I am striving for the great Ideals by which it once fought and conquered. The Congress should recognize that it was the Ideals that conquered, and it is those Ideals alone that can successfully overcome the difficulties and dangers which today surround us on all sides.—Mira.]

A Question and a Suggestion

A question continually haunts me. I have long hesitated to ask it, yet without asking it I can get no peace. It is this : "How many people in India, even amongst the Gandhian Group, really believe in the whole of Bapu's ideals for a free, self-sufficient, happy nation?"

Of course a counter-question immediately arises : "What do I consider these ideals to be?"

Let me enumerate them according to my belief. I put them down in the form of the first basic steps which should be taken if we sincerely want to get on the True Path.

In the first place the Constitution has to be scrapped, and we have to begin on an entirely new basis as follows :

1. The whole Government administrative machine to be ruthlessly simplified and reduced.
2. A new form of election to be planned, culminating in small Governing Bodies at the Centre, and in readjusted States.
3. Candidates for election to pass through stiff non-party training and tests before being eligible.
4. *Kisans* and *mazdoors* to be associated with Government in high places.
5. The Law to be simplified and decentralized in a manner harmonious with the spirit of India.
6. The Army and Navy to be disbanded, and simply a strong police force to be kept for maintenance of internal order, the officers and men of which to be trained up to a very high standard of morals and honour.
7. Air Services to be done away with.
8. Control and reduction of motor traffic, tractors etc.
9. Localized (regional) self-sufficiency to be developed to the full, both economically and ad-

ministratively, and the whole strength of the Nation to be concentrated on agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and village industries, which must be fully protected from foreign and internal competition.

10. All *vanaspati* biscuit and other fancy-food factories to be closed down, and all cloth, sugar, oil, rice and flour mills to be progressively done away with, a short time being allowed for setting up the village production of these articles. Likewise manufacture of all sorts of luxury goods to be strictly curtailed.

11. Balanced distribution of land and labour.

12. All grand buildings connected with Government and Government representatives to be given up, and every one to live in humble style befitting representatives of India's masses.

13. Foreign Embassies and Legations to be reduced to a minimum, and such as may remain to be run on the simplest possible lines.

14. All big development projects such as hydro-electric, irrigation, artificial manure and other schemes to be held in abeyance until they have been thoroughly investigated, the opinion of the *kisans* of the districts affected being taken fully into account. Where there is not strong opinion in favour of these projects, they should be closed down forthwith, and all efforts should be concentrated on small localized schemes which can be controlled by the *kisans* themselves, and which can give immediate results.

15. All foreign loans and gifts to be refunded as soon as possible, and future dependence on foreign countries to be avoided.

16. The present education system to be scrapped, and basic education of the Sevagram type to be introduced throughout India. Details regarding higher education can be worked out in due course, but the present colleges and schools to be closed down forthwith, and the students for the time being to be put on to useful development work.

17. Control of cinema, radio, literature, and advertising, specially with regard to luxury, vice and crime.

18. Encouragement of healthy art and literature, which will in fact, grow spontaneously out of the atmosphere created by the above.

This is merely an outline, and as I have said above, of the first fundamentals only. Far away in these vast mountains I have no one to consult but the Himalayan forests and Eternal Snows (for fundamentals indeed the best advisers), and naturally the points adumbrated here will undergo additions and embellishments when discussed and worked out in consultation with others.

Now for the suggestion— it is this :

Those of us, be we many, or ever so few, who have full faith of this kind, should join hands and

act—how? By getting into direct contact with the masses, particularly the peasantry, and acquainting them with the whole of this programme. They are really nearer to Babu than the intellectuals and the politicians, and yet what have we done up to now to enlighten them on many of these matters? Take for instance the question of disbandment of the Army. Have we done anything to educate the mass mind in this direction? Yet this is the very foundation stone on which any Gandhian Nation has to be built, and it is just because all Gandhian Schemes, put forward in these days, side-track this issue, that they have no bottom to them.

I know it is sometimes argued, saying, because after the attainment of Independence the Congress took to the use of all the orthodox methods of State for dealing with riots, wars and other problems, that Babu approved of it all. There could be no more cruelly unjust interpretation. Whenever Babu saw that people had no faith in a particular kind of action, he never tried to force them. During those last tragic days of his life, Babu watched the dropping of his ideals one after another. Not only the Army, but all the paraphernalia of Imperial State were taken over by the Congress as if to the manner born. I was with Babu in Delhi until the latter half of December 1947, and silently witnessed the suffering of his soul. Time and again Babu used sadly to say: "My word carries no weight in these days." In a silence-note he gave me on some Monday, in answer to a question, he wrote: "These are not old days. Now there are wheels within wheels. You can't do any useful service by seeing these military men except as friendly faces who will give you a warm welcome but nothing more. This is my reaction. The thing is beyond me except in my own way which has no vogue today."

We must also remember that, because Babu did not carry the message of disarmament to the masses, it is no reason for us to hold it back at this hour. We know full well that Babu never developed theories until they became a possible proposition. Academic questions he never put before the masses. So long as India was under foreign rule, disbandment of the Army was not a live question at all, and Babu concentrated the whole force of the country on attainment of Independence, leaving these freedom questions to follow in their natural sequence. That being so, does it not amount to a betrayal of Babu's cause to go on side-tracking this fundamental issue any longer? Now is the very moment, both in Indian and world history, when those of us who believe should concentrate with all our strength on the work of enlightening the masses regarding the full-fledged Gandhian Ideal, based on disarmament and the rest. If they respond to the idea, the leaders will ultimately bend to the popular demand. Our word has no influence on the Ministers and Government officials today, because we

are out of touch with the masses on these vital points. The people have been left to the mercy of the professional politicians, with their manifestos, plans and programmes, and have been completely confused and misguided by the continual use of Babu's name for boosting all sorts of different theories. Meanwhile we sit by wringing our hands because the people at the top won't listen to us! We must go to the people at the bottom and tell them of the real Babu. The people at the top will then begin to prick up their ears.

All this has nothing to do with the general elections as such. They will go their own way which certainly won't be Babu's way. Obviously preparation of the public mind on such lines as set forth above, cannot be achieved in weeks or months. How long it will take is in God's hands. But He will surely bless our efforts if we wholeheartedly throw ourselves into the sacred task, and the time required may not, after all, be so very great.

If faith can move mountains, how much more can it move the masses!

Gopal Ashram,
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U. P., 28-11-'51

MIRA

MIRABEHN'S ARTICLES

The reader will find in another column an article by Mirabehn captioned *Straight from the Heart*. It is to be followed by two more. The articles have been lying on my desk for a long time. In the meantime Mirabehn has already commenced her propaganda in parts of Uttar Pradesh. As will be seen, she has prefaced her articles with a note, titled *Prayer Answered*, and has called her activity a movement for "Babu Raj".

With some of the items of her programme all constructive workers will agree; in regard to some, though there may be disagreement, their present practicability might be doubted; there might be a few in regard to which there are likely to be differences of opinion. The suggestions are thus debatable. It may be regarded their merit; because they will set readers a-thinking.

But I wish—I appeal to every one of us—to place one important restraint upon ourselves: Let us not name our movements after Gandhiji.

Babu's was an evergrowing personality. It is difficult to say what type of Raj would have definitely satisfied him. It is quite conceivable that Babu might have ultimately come to the conclusion that he wanted no 'raj' at all. His ideal was *Swa-Raj*, i.e. every one's own *Raj*—liquidation of Government altogether. He went close to that ideal sometimes, and yet he also spoke and worked out plans in terms of various types of constituted and representative governments. It would be better not to speak of *Babu Raj* but to speak of our own conception of a proper system of Raj.

Wardha, 9-3-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

HARIJAN

April 12

1952

TRUSTFULNESS

It would seem we live in a world of fraud, bribery, profiteering, blackmarketing, dishonesty and every other manner of corruption. The people complain of profiteering and adulteration by traders; the traders, of bribery in Government offices; and ministers and high officials, of the various inducements held out by the people to their petty officials and servants in order to get their work done unlawfully or in precedence over others. Instances are cited to show how employers and superiors in commercial firms compel their subordinates to forge entries, prepare false books of accounts or otherwise fabricate papers, and how Government is defrauded of vast sums of money on account of income-tax and sales tax. Individuals can be named who had to leave off their work, trade or service, because they found it impossible to perform their duties or carry on any business in the prevailing circumstances with honesty.

The remedies universally suggested to fight these evils are deterrent and severe punishments to the offenders. Public flogging and even hanging have been demanded. A perfect network of spying and super-spying and trap-laying are also recommended.

There appears to be a general agreement among all political parties and the public about this. Indeed some of the political parties claim that if they had political power, they would put an end to all corruption immediately. They accuse the Congress and the Congress Ministries of having neither the capacity nor the will to deal with the situation with a firm hand. Thus the difference between them is not about the nature of the remedies; but about the severity to be used in enforcing the remedies.

The Congress will answer the charges as it may. I want to consider here the method of ending corruption.

In the first instance, it should be realized that the evil of corruption and disregard of social morals is not confined to this or that particular section of the society. It is not wholly true to say that the corruption is entirely due to dishonesty of Government servants, or businessmen, or the policy of controls. The general public is as much responsible for this sorry state as any of these. Congressmen, Government servants, traders and their agents, and lawyers and litigants are not a separate class from the rest of the public. The virtues and vices which they exhibit belong to all. The same family or an allied group may have among them a Congressman, a Socialist, a Communist, a trader, a Government official, a social and constructive worker and a person, who is just a simple man of the street. Therefore the responsibility for the evils which afflict our pub-

lic or personal life must be shared by the society as a whole, and may not be attributed to any particular section. The measure of purity in public life will correspond to the standard of high character and morals of the general public.

Modern trade and public administration is a huge and complicated affair and necessarily calls for a proper system of accountancy, checking and supervision. These are necessary even if a person were to manage himself his own affairs and there was no question of being answerable to any outside authority. In the latter case inspections, audits, checks etc. are obviously more necessary. But there is a limit to their scope and usefulness. Their primary object is not and should not be to set about the task with a presumption against the honesty of the subject but to detect errors which might be made through inadvertence or ignorance even by straightforward people in order to set them right and to teach the subject the right method and increase his efficiency. But we start with the presumption that every act must be deemed to be dishonest and unscrupulous, until honesty is established by proofs. Hence we feel that every caution should be observed in our dealings with one another; everybody should be properly and secretly watched by a supervisor; and the latter should also be under the surveillance of another; and every article should be kept under lock and key and guards; and the fear of punishment must be held out to ensure honest and efficient performance of every duty.

This is, in all conscience, a very distorted and frightful view of human nature to take; and yet unfortunately it underlies all our elaborate organizations and departments. A Sanskrit text from a treatise on practical ethics lays down, "A transaction involving payment of money or transfer of land should be set down in writing and attested by a witness, even if it is between father and son or close friends." The counsel to make a writing is appropriate for aiding the memory. But the prescription of the witness proceeds on the assumption that business prudence requires distrust even of sons and friends. In matters involving gain or loss of property, even sons and friends would practise fraud if proper precautions are not taken. This is the height of distrust. For if one must observe caution even in dealing with one's sons and friends, naturally one cannot proceed on trust with anybody in the world.

All our affairs of the world have been built up on the foundation of such distrust. The greater the amount of distrust and consequent precautionary measures,—crowned by an organization having terror for its sanction,—the more is the system regarded as based on practical wisdom. Diplomatic skill, political wisdom, shrewd businessmanship are but other names for the attitude of distrust in the integrity of man. Historians have severely criticized Aurangzeb for having followed the policy of distrust, but in practice the whole world acts on no better.

But all these precautions and fears have not stopped corruption, or even reduced it. On the contrary, I believe, it leads to ever increasing corruption. At any rate it certainly increases the volume of work, laxity, delay, and false show, typified by the word "red-tapism". There is no promptitude, no enthusiasm, no love for the entrusted work. They work perfunctorily without an urge to put in their best. Rather, they use their intelligence in devising methods of evading and defeating the system of surveillance under which they work. Work is mechanized, and talent, which should have been better employed, is fruitlessly spent on devising the machinery and methods of detecting dishonesty on the one hand, and defeating those methods on the other. The former is never able to overtake the latter; and so corruption always wins.

I therefore feel that punishments, however harsh, and spying, however vigilant, are not the right way to deal with this problem of eradicating corruption and promoting honest life. Rather than distrusting an honest man, we had better trust even a dacoit; that would be far more fruitful. An honest man ceases to have any respect for a society which does not trust him. He feels ill at ease and uncomfortable like a fish of fresh water put into the sea. On the other hand, when the dacoit finds that he is being trusted in spite of his notoriety, the moral element latent in him is awakened. He is put on his honour and tries to deserve the confidence reposed in him.

Very probably practical men of the world will discard this as too idealistic. But it is my strong conviction that so long as we do not learn to put trust in others in our dealings, there will be no end of the internal as well as international evils and conflicts of the world. Please do not ask me, "How far and how much trust should we put in others?" I would rather ask you, how far and how long will you go on working on the theory of distrust? Has any great work been and can any work be ever accomplished successfully unless you put implicit trust on at least one? It is trust and never distrust that achieves great works. Let us discard the methods of penalties, punishments, checks and counter-checks for the protection of social rectitude. The whole world is not going to be corrupt, dishonest and immoral for want of elaborate systems of punishing the evil or rewarding the good. Trust begets trust and puts every man on his honour.

Let Sarvodaya workers cultivate the attitude of placing trust in others in their dealings even at the risk of being occasionally deceived, and leave ordinary remedies of prosecutions and punishments to executives, courts and legislatures so long as they will. It is not the *sevak's* business to act as a volunteer of C. I. D. The work of the *sevak* is to strive to awaken nobler sentiments and good sense of the people instead of asking for severe laws and stronger action against offenders.

Wardha, 1-4-'52

K. G. MASHRUWALA

Contra

After my article on "Trustfulness" was written, my attention was drawn to the leading article of *The Bombay Sentinel* of 27th March, 1952, captioned "Serious Lapses". It forcefully brings out the opposite approach, as will be seen from the following extract. This attitude is very understandable and common, and will be regarded by many as very reasonable. Yet I have ventured to say the opposite.

"The Annual Report on the working of the Local Fund Audit Department, Uttar Pradesh, for the year 1950-51, reflects a persisting malady with which local bodies in this country are generally afflicted....The report discloses many serious irregularities, consisting of embezzlements, fraud, misappropriations, double payments, irregular and wasteful expenditure and excess payments....The audit report ruefully records that generally loose supervision and non-observance of rules have paved the way to the defaultions....Condign punishment commensurate with the enormity of the offence is rare.....*Deterrent punishment alone* to deliberate and grave offences can be expected to reduce delinquencies and enforce scrupulous compliance with appropriate rules. Undoubtedly, prompt and efficient superior supervision and administrative control must be tightened.....*There is no moral remedy to such a mortifying mischief.* Drastic and positive action is needed to enable the local bodies to straighten out their present sorry financial affairs." (Italics mine).

Wardha, 2-4-'52

K. G. M.

A POSER FOR THE CONGRESS

"It is after a long bitter struggle that Madras and Bombay States have total prohibition and the other States have their partial and experimental prohibition schemes. The ideal of total prohibition has found mention even in our Constitution. The disappearance of open liquor has saved millions of families, and even in the short period of total prohibition their lot has been considerably improved. Of course, secret drinking and illicit distillation do persist to an extent, but this is due to the fact that public opinion is not bestowed on it, and reliance is based solely on the Police to enforce prohibition.

"With the dawn of Independence the view about total prohibition is changing, and a strange move against it is now gaining momentum. From the beginning the Congress High Command has been for a 'go slow' policy. During the Bangalore session of the A. I. C. C. all mention about prohibition was deliberately given up in the Election Manifesto. There have always been gentlemen of standing speaking against it, and the Press also has cried down prohibition whenever it could. Now a candidate of the Madras Urban Constituency pleads for the introduction of drinking. Shri Kumaraswamy Raja explaining his defeat said that while the adult franchise was quite a success, prohibition was the cause of his defeat and that his voters supported his opponents who promised them open drink. An elected Communist member of the Legislature declares that his party will dispense with prohibition when it runs the government. When pressed by inquisitive pressmen the Premier of Madras said that prohibition will be enforced till at least 31st March of this year.

"A defeated candidate might have his own reasoning, and an elected legislator may require larger revenues for carrying out his pet schemes, but these do not disprove the economic and the moral efficacy of total prohibition. The economically poor and socially lower groups were the people who were

ruined by drink and these have been saved. They now lead human existence with better food, clothing and even better housing. This is a glaring fact and cannot be disproved. Greater peace dwells in the humbler homes. A sense of self-respect, and a consciousness of civic responsibility are slowly but surely spreading. When even the illicit drink is totally eliminated, we will have a prosperous people. Only such a people can appreciate and benefit by betterment schemes.

"But with a thousand schemes of betterment and social service all the politicians want to dispense with prohibition for the sole purpose of getting revenue. Open liquor did get the Government many crores and may now fetch many times more crores of money, but what will be the effect of the removal of prohibition on those for whom these betterment schemes are intended? The upper and the better placed do not drink, and the majority of drunkards have been the economically and the socially backward people. When openly allowed they will squander what they earn or come by on drink, and will descend to sub-human existence. With open drink all expenditure and effort to improve their lot should go to waste, as they will not be appreciated and the excise revenue will not suffice for the work. The excise revenue of the Government is but a moiety of the money of the poor spent on drink. The others knock away a greater slice of that money than the Government. Even if the excise revenue suffices, it is just like kicking one down and then lifting him up. If instead of dispensing with prohibition, even humble schemes of betterment are effected on the foundations of prohibition they will really effect great social good.

"Mahatma Gandhi never meant prohibition to be a mere weapon in our political struggle. To him it was an economic and social reform of great moral significance. There might have been some reason for a foreigner trying to make pigs of men, but for a free people to choose to become pigs and wallow in the mire is unthinkable. So the move against prohibition has to be checked and that immediately."

The above is a cry of an anguished heart from the South. The writer is pained at what is being undone in the field of prohibition in the South. He fears that Madras Government is fast going off from the cherished work of prohibition. The debacle, if it comes true, will be a calamity for the Congress as well as the State. The Congress, I fear, does not fully realize the gravity of such a situation. That for some State Governments today, like their predecessors the British, the temptation of the drink revenue is too irresistible is unhappily true. On the other hand, that prohibition is good and is necessary for our social and moral hygiene is equally unquestioned. That it is an undoubted and wholesome benefit to the poor is also unquestioned. As a matter of fact, the Constitution of India puts it down as its directive to all State Governments in the land. The Congress as an organization is wedded to this reform since 1920. What is wrong with us then? Unfortunately the Congress in Madras seems to be losing itself not only in the political field but also on this point of constructive activity as well. How otherwise can a Congress Committee in the State, as papers report, resolve to ask Government to repeal prohibition? I beg to submit that such a resolution on the part of a Congress Committee is

wholly out of order, according to the Congress Constitution. The State Provincial Congress Committee must pull up such an erring Committee. But is it itself firm on this issue? The whole position is very intriguing. The Madras friend according to me, raises a very fundamental issue in his letter quoted above. Till now the Congress was the main body through which the people were functioning for constructive activities like prohibition etc. The Congress Constitution continues to have them as its basis. But, as the writer complains, Congress Committees and even the A. I. C. C. seem to be getting cold over activities like prohibition etc. How to function then? For instance, those like the writer of the letter who feel keenly and are worried over this unhappy situation—how should they act? How should those in the Congress and outside who believe that prohibition must come to stay in our land as soon as possible function to achieve it? Is the Congress to continue to be their stronghold? Or is it allowing the banner to fall off its hands? This is a question for the Congress to answer. All wish that it should not succumb to the revenue-coveting governments of the day. Otherwise it will be giving up its solemn promise to the people and almost losing its soul for a mere gain of political power to achieve comparatively questionable ends.

4-4'52

M. P. DESAI

HIS TECHNIQUE AND ACHIEVEMENT

(By Pyarelal)

III—Re-orientation of the Congress THE SECOND PERIOD CONTINUED

To put into action this programme on a national scale, the Congress machine had to be reorganized. From an annual show, Gandhiji turned it into a serious, well-knit body that not only laid out programmes but also implemented them. This, in its turn, needed a net-work of organizations all over the country, a wide basis of primary membership and a body of workers who took up politics not as a game for leisure hours but as a whole-time occupation. And, in order that it might be worth the while of a man to give his whole time to it, politics had to be so conducted as to enable a man to realize the highest in life. It had to cease to be a 'dirty game' and become spiritualized. In other words, it had to be based upon truth, non-violence, honesty and personal purity. Without these it would not be possible to gain or retain the confidence and allegiance of the vast masses.

The complexion of politics underwent a complete change after that. Platform oratory, boosted up by the 'fiery element', went out of fashion. Rhetoric became an object of deep distrust. Sincerity, purity and the spirit of self-sacrifice became the criteria of real worth in a public worker. This is not to say that this ideal was fully realized or that insincerity, hypocrisy and fraud vanished at a stroke. There were

exceptions in plenty but the norms had changed. He found us a rabble, he left us a disciplined nation.

Ridiculed by the official world as "the most foolish of all foolish schemes" when it was first launched, the non-co-operation movement came "within an ace of succeeding". But then there was the proverbial slip "twixt the cup and the lip". The outbreak of brutal mob fury at Chauri Choura came as a warning bell. The ever watchful general ordered a strategic retreat. "The first thing one does when one discovers one has lost one's way is to retrace one's steps and get back to the point where he missed it. Then alone can one advance." He silenced the dissenters by saying, "Let them dub me a fool if they like, I cannot help it. It is the law of my being.... Better the abuse of the world than the judgment of God."

The author of the movement was tried and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. But morally the triumph was his; it was the British Power that was really put in the dock and stood self-condemned.

When he came out of prison, the face of things had changed. Various communal organizations, vested interests and reactionary bodies that had suffered eclipse upon the advent of non-co-operation had rallied their forces during the interval, not without secret sympathy, guidance and active encouragement from the powers that be. Some of his erstwhile colleagues had broken away from his programme of non-co-operation and formed a separate party to work out a programme of "non-co-operation" from within the legislatures. Under a different sky and in a different clime, this might have developed into a serious political split. Many a political movement and political organization had split and disintegrated under analogous circumstances. But the introduction of non-violence made all the difference. Instead of fighting the dissenters, Gandhiji handed over to them the Congress organization, liquidated the party that had been formed in support of his political programme during his absence in prison and brought into being the All India Spinners' Association under the auspices of the Congress, but as an autonomous body, to build up non-violent strength. He told those who professed belief in his principles to testify their faith by working out for all they were worth, the constructive programme chalked out by him. He thus constituted them into the other wing of the Congress, instead of making them its rival. A net-work of Ashrams and constructive work organizations sprang up all over the country between the years 1924 and 1928. Sap began to rise once more in the emaciated trunk. The Bardoli No-Tax Satyagraha of 1928 was a portent. It pointed the way to organic Swaraj. The country was ready for the 1930 movement.

The Simon Commission

In Satyagraha, we have not to wait upon events, events wait upon us. The appointment of the all-white Simon Commission in 1929 provided the opportunity. The dissenters, who had broken away from his programme but who, thanks to the alchemy of his love and non-violence, could not break away from his moral and spiritual leadership and above all from the leadership of his practical wisdom, again aligned themselves with him. 1930 provided a complete vindication of the 'surrender' by Gandhiji of the Congress organization to the dissenters in 1925 at Patna. They realized that they could not change a system by obstruction from within.

Six years of silent, solid, constructive work had rejuvenated the country beyond recognition. The spirit of the basic disciplines had permeated the rank and file of workers. The shock therapy of the Bardoli halt of 1922 after Chauri Choura had done its work. People had no longer any doubt in their minds as to Gandhiji's true meaning. They no longer thought in their heart of hearts, as some of them had at one time, that he said one thing and meant another, that he was secretly prepared to welcome violence, provided it could be successful, though he might openly condemn it. The 'lie in the soul' that had necessitated the Bardoli halt in 1922 had been purged out. The changed condition allowed a change in the technique of the fight to be introduced.

Salt Satyagraha

Gandhiji took the initiative and guidance of the 1930 Salt Satyagraha movement out of the hands of the Congress organization—which represented diverse elements, including those who did not believe in non-violence as a creed—and assumed sole charge of the movement, which he declared, would on no account be called off as before.

As before, the high officials laughed. But the last laugh was to be that of the author of the Salt Satyagraha. "Even if they make free salt for seven years, it won't make a dent upon our revenues," chuckled the high Government officials in New Delhi, when they heard of the inauguration of the Salt Satyagraha. But in the end Lord Irwin had to inform his superiors in London that the only alternative to truce was the "peace of the grave". He could not jail millions, he could not order lathi charges against women picketers, standing peacefully with placards round their necks and hands folded in entreaty before the foreign cloth shops and liquor shops, or against the *Varan Senas* and "Kittan Brigades" of boys and girls in their early teens with any show of decency. And, if the liquor vendors or foreign cloth dealers allowed that to take place, they were liable to find doors shut in their face by their own wives, when at evening they returned home! And so the insignificant pinch of salt picked up at the Dandi beach in the grey of the early dawn on April 6, 1930, became

the dynamite which shattered to smithereens the British prestige in India.

We have it on record that there was jubilation among the higher British officials, and glasses clinked on the dinner tables in the Viceroy's house, when the Gandhi-Irwin truce was signed. There was rejoicing because it was thought that the Congress had been forced to pare down its demands. Even some of our own people felt that the keys of the castle had been surrendered to save face. Pandit Nehru wept. But all that changed when it was realized that a vital principle had been conceded by the British power, when it negotiated a treaty with rebels on equal terms. The redoubtable Churchill could scarcely swallow his disgust at the "nauseating spectacle of the half-naked fakir, in his loincloth climbing up the stairs of the Viceregal Palace to parley on equal terms with His Majesty's representative."

"The Epic Fast"

As the implications of the truce began slowly to dawn upon the bureaucracy, they became more and more impatient to retrieve lost ground. In this they partially succeeded in 1932, when they forced a fight upon the Congress before it had had an opportunity to recoup from and clear away the debris of the last Satyagraha fight. But once again the wonder-working magician, with no other wizardry than that of his penance, turned a partial reverse into victory when all alone, from behind the prison walls, he made the British Cabinet to retrace its steps. The settled decision of the British Prime Minister in regard to the electoral arrangements for the Scheduled Castes, which would have resulted in the perpetuation of the 'bar sinister' and dismemberment of the Hindu society, was unsettled and the ages-old citadel of untouchability laid low. The full story of that epic is told in my book *The Epic Fast*, which those of you who feel interested, may read.

In April, 1934, diagnosing the symptoms like an expert physician, he once more called off civil disobedience, confining the freedom to re-launch it to himself alone. The message of non-violence had suffered adulteration in the process of being transmitted to the masses, owing to the imperfections of the human medium through which Gandhiji had been working: He conserved it in the germ for a future occasion.

The same year he retired from the Congress organization in order to "serve it the better from outside", and remained its unquestioned dictator till the end.

(To be continued)

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A B.C.G. Victim

[The following letter from Shri D. A. Phillips of Bhusawal to the Editor, the *National Standard* of March 14, 1952, speaks for itself. — V. G. D.]

'My son aged about 13 years, studying at Nagpur, was vaccinated without my permission with B. C. G. vaccine... He has never kept good health since then. The spot where the needle entered his flesh festered for more than a year and appeared like a bubble of flesh. It was painful to the touch.

'Today the boy has kept such indifferent health that I intend withdrawing him from school. Doctors... say he has evidently burst a small blood-vessel in his lungs, because he complained of general weakness and occasional spitting of blood.

'Will those authorities who foisted this forcible vaccination on my son now come to my aid and help me to cure my son of whatever he has contracted?'

GANDHIJI'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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