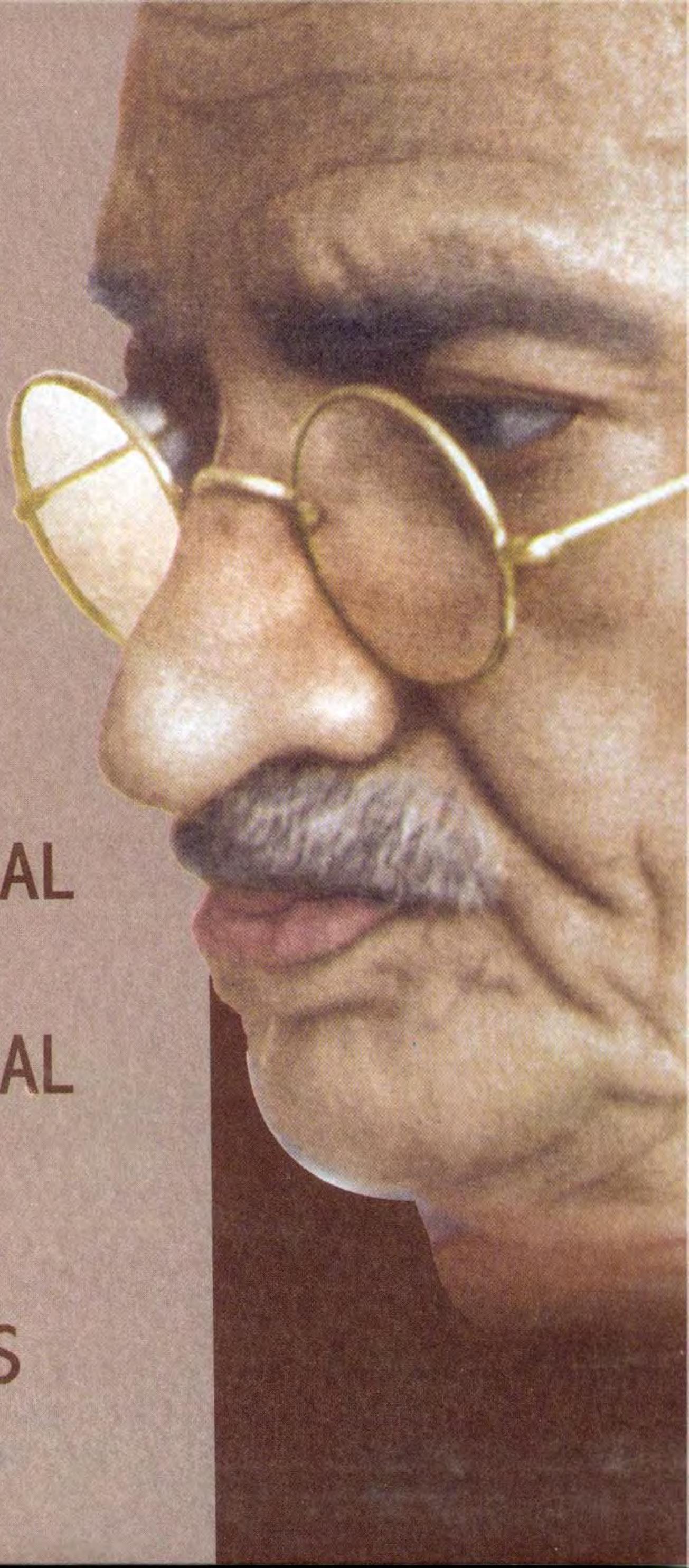


**M. K. GANDHI**

**POLITICAL  
AND  
NATIONAL  
LIFE  
AND  
AFFAIRS**

**Volume I**



# Political and National Life and Affairs

Volume I

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## INTRODUCTION

In a recent publication<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sasadhar Sinha has blamed Mahatma Gandhi for the partition of India and has alleged that he was "a dismal political failure". According to him, "religion and politics are basically incompatible disciplines"; Gandhiji approached politics from the point of view of religion; he scared the Muslims and led them to conclude that in a Free India they would be reduced to the position of second class citizens. This naturally drove them to insist on the partition of the country.

The indictment of Gandhiji by the author raises the following questions:

1. Are religion and politics incompatible disciplines?
2. Did Gandhiji approach politics from the point of view of religion?
3. Was Gandhiji's approach to politics responsible for the partition of India?
4. Was Gandhiji a dismal political failure as alleged?

It cannot be gainsaid that Gandhiji did approach politics from an ethical and a humanitarian point of view but this outlook must be distinguished from a denominational religious outlook. But was he the original author of this approach in Indian politics? That must, first of all, be examined. The remaining questions also cannot be answered without a critical study of the recent Indian history. I would clarify here that it is not my intention to give a detailed analysis of the genesis of Pakistan except insofar as it is, relevant to the theme of the present work.

### **The Idea of Spiritualizing Politics**

The idea of spiritualizing politics does not originate with Gandhiji. We owe it to Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Gokhale was the first to give concrete expression to it in the original preamble to the constitution of the Servants of India Society which he founded in 1905. Gokhale dominated the Indian political scene for two decades and inspired among others two great men – Mohammed Ali Jinnah

and Gandhiji who-were destined to play leading roles in shaping the history of India.

### **Gokhale—A True Liberal**

By temperament and training, Gokhale was a true liberal but unlike other Indian liberals of his time, he was imbued with a spirit of selfless service. Moreover, he was a man of the highest rectitude, integrity and character. Both Jinnah and Gandhiji cherished his ethics and virtue, but while Gokhale's liberalism appealed to Jinnah, his spirit of service captivated Gandhiji.

### **Jinnah and Gokhale**

Jinnah was born in December 1876<sup>2</sup>. He arrived in England to qualify for the Bar and remained there for four years. Towards the last two years of his stay, states Jinnah, "I happened to meet several important English liberals with whose help I came to understand the doctrine, of liberalism. The liberalism of Lord Morley was then in full sway. I grasped that liberalism which became part of my life and thrilled me very much."<sup>3</sup> There was little of the disciple in Jinnah and until he was thirty-six years old "he had never attached himself to any human being in love or friendship".<sup>4</sup> For the first time, in 1913, he emerged from his "chill armour" and became attached to Gokhale. There was a difference of eleven years between them. Though not exactly his *guru*, Gokhale was a patron and friend of Jinnah<sup>6</sup> and Jinnah said that it was his "one ambition to become the Muslim Gokhale".<sup>6</sup> The death of Gokhale in 1915 was a great blow to Jinnah for he was his only dear friend. Thereafter Jinnah launched on his own and became a maker of history.<sup>7</sup>

### **Gandhiji and Gokhale**

Gandhiji publicly declared himself as a disciple of Gokhale in the political field in 1896.<sup>8</sup> to Gandhiji, "Gokhale was as the Ganges. One could have a refreshing bath in the holy river... the Ganges invited one to its bosom. It was a joy to be on it with a boat and an oar".<sup>9</sup>

Gokhale inspired Gandhiji and taught him that the dream of every patriotic Indian should be to spiritualize the political life and institutions of the

country.<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to know how Gandhi construed the message of his *guru*. Said Gandhiji, "What is the meaning of spiritualizing the political life of the country? What is the meaning of spiritualizing myself? That question has come before me often and often and to you it may seem one thing, to me it may seem another thing; it may mean different things to the different members of the Servants of India Society.... I think political life must be an echo of private life and that there cannot be any divorce between the two."<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere Gandhiji observes that "this embraces everything"<sup>12</sup> and that all we want can grow from the better discharge of our duty and not by insisting on our rights. Moreover, he was in earnest in translating the message into action and "realizing its practice".<sup>13</sup>

### After Gokhale

Once the possibility of deducing different approaches and conclusions from Gokhale's message is conceded, it is easy to follow how the same message underwent a metamorphosis in the hands of his different followers. The members of the Servants of India Society followed the law laid down by the master, but lacking his originality and dynamism, they soon became fossilized and were eclipsed by more powerful and formidable adversaries. Jinnah was never a camp-follower. After Gokhale's death, he did not lend his allegiance to any person but became a lone wolf hunting on his own. Gandhiji was no doubt a disciple. But he was no ordinary disciple. Even while Gokhale was alive, Gandhiji, who always accepted the guidance of his *guru*, did so only after animated argument and discussion with his master. What is more, he never hesitated to put forward his differences boldly.

### Gokhale not a Religious Man

It is no doubt true that Gokhale was inspired by Justice Ranade and began his training for public life under that great man. To his association with Remade, he owed not only "habits of assiduous study and a firm grasp of public questions" but also "moral fervour, wide sympathies and liberal principles". But Gokhale was also a thorough believer in moral and social progress and the development of character as the foundation of national progress.<sup>14</sup> He was,

however, not religious by temperament. His "sentiments sometimes appeared to be those of an atheist".<sup>15</sup> He said once "I don't have Ranade's faith. How I should like to have it!"<sup>16</sup> The streak of agnosticism, if not atheism, in Gokhale<sup>17</sup> can be traced to the influence of the boldest, ablest and dedicated social reformer and educationalist, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. Gokhale was a colleague of Principal Agarkar on the staff of Fergusson College and was for some years a co-editor of an Anglo- Marathi Weekly of Poona named *Sudharak* or Reformer.<sup>18</sup> Though Gokhale had accepted the political discipleship of Ranade, in his social and religious views, it seems he was influenced by Agarkar. Gandhiji with his eclectic view, equated Gokhale's dedication to the cause of the country in a religious spirit with a religious bent of mind. However Gokhale cannot be said to be a "man of faith" or "religious piety" in the sense in which these expressions are generally understood. Dadabhai Naoroji had also come to realize at or about the time Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society, that it was necessary to organize ardent youths fired with the zeal of missionaries to propagate the gospel of freedom and to devote themselves to the cause of the motherland. The idea was put forward by him in a letter to Gokhale in 1905.<sup>19</sup> But would the use of words religious, connote that Dadabhai was religious by temperament? A reverent study of his life does not warrant such a conclusion.

### **Gokhale the Constitutionalist**

Gokhale was a constitutionalist to his finger tips and was committed to serving the cause he espoused "by all constitutional means".<sup>20</sup> In 1915, the year in which Gokhale passed away, Gandhiji was still a loyal subject of the British Empire and had not turned a rebel advocating non-co-operation with the Government. The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in 1919 marks a turning point in Gandhiji's career; for henceforward there was no question of sticking to the "constitutional means" which were always looked upon by Gandhiji as subordinate to the "constructive programme".

## The Ugly Duckling

The members of the Servants of India Society had possibly smelt the presence of an "ugly duckling" in their midst and were sharply divided over admitting Gandhiji as a member of the Society. Gandhiji also realized that he would "become a disturbing factor"<sup>21</sup> as a member of the Society and in the larger interest of the Society and out of loyalty to the master he withdrew his application for membership.<sup>22</sup> While doing so, in his letter dated 13th January, 1916 to V S. Srinivas Shastri, he observes, "The methods of the Society as such are so totally different from mine in many respects. Our common discipleship would constitute an indissoluble bond though we would be following out Mr. Gokhale's work from different viewpoints".<sup>23</sup>

We can conclude from the above facts that Gandhiji's relationship with Gokhale was essentially personal and did not imply total acceptance by Gandhiji of the programme and methods of Gokhale as understood by his followers in the Servants of India Society. And it was because of the introduction of, what appeared at that time, to be quaint, strange and radical ideas of non-cooperation in the body politic of the Congress, that a liberal like Jinnah dissociated from the Congress<sup>24</sup> and preferred to go into wilderness. Jinnah completely retired from politics in 1934-35 and settled down in London. He emerged from his seclusion after the reforms introduced under the Government of India Act, 1935, to lead the Muslims of India to the promised land of Pakistan which caused the division of the country.

## Gandhiji and Jinnah

Gandhiji and Jinnah could not have been more dissimilar; they differed in mind, temperament and in their methods of work. Gandhiji was a rare combination of saint and politician. His intuition and "inner voice" usually governed his actions. Jinnah "shunned sentimentality",<sup>25</sup> was proud and had a one-track mind. He was a "rationalist in politics"<sup>26</sup>. But Gokhale said of Jinnah: "He has true stuff in him, and that freedom from all sectarian prejudice which will make him the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity."<sup>27</sup> Jinnah Hall in Bombay is a standing monument to the Jinnah of the second decade in this century.

How is it that the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity became the prime architect of Pakistan? The truth is that Jinnah's pride was hurt when he found that he had no place in the Congress, and when his hand of friendship was spurned by the Congress in 1937. His frustration over years led to bitterness and culminated in the demand for Pakistan in 1940. In the early twenties Jinnah had many Hindu admirers; and Gandhi had many Muslim followers. But there was a rift later and the gulf became so wide that it could not be bridged. It was the incompatibility of nature, make-up and temperament of these two great men, Gandhi and Jinnah, the clash of their personalities, which finally split the country into two parts: Bharat and Pakistan.

### **Jinnah's Opposition to Gandhiji's Methods and Programme**

Support for the theory advanced here is found in one of Jinnah's letters to Gandhiji. In October 1920 following the passing of the resolution of non-cooperation at the Calcutta session of the Congress\* Jinnah resigned from the Home Rule League; because of his differences with Gandhiji. Gandhiji wrote and asked him to return to the body. Jinnah refused. He replied:

"I thank you for your kind suggestion offering me 'to take my share in the 'new life' that has opened up before the country'. If by 'new life' you mean your' methods and programme, I am afraid I cannot accept them, for I am fully convinced that it must lead to disaster . . . your methods have already caused split and division in almost every institution that you have approached hitherto . . . people generally are desperate all over the country and your extreme programme has for the moment struck the imagination, mostly of the inexperienced youth and the ignorant and the illiterate. All this means complete disorganization and chaos. What the consequences of this may be, I shudder to contemplate."<sup>28</sup>

Pakistan as a political reality owes its existence solely to the tactical leadership and driving force of Jinnah. It may be that Gandhiji underestimated the political strength of Jinnah, misjudged Jinnah's hold on Muslims and consequently committed a political blunder. But his decisions were always

bona fide and in the best interests of the country as he conceived them. His guides on Hindu-Muslim question were first Ansari and, after him, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.<sup>29</sup> His approach to the Hindu-Muslim question was never communal. His balance always tilted in favour of the Muslims. On the other hand, it must be confessed with grief that Jinnah the onetime ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, soured by his frustrations, became communal in his tendencies and outlook after 1937. The verdict of history is that the blame for partition cannot be laid entirely at the door of Gandhiji. Was it then his ideology which was responsible for creating the division? We will consider that when we study his views on religion in relation to politics.

It is a matter for speculation how the history of India would have shaped had Gokhale lived longer. It may be that he would have succeeded in harnessing both Gandhiji and Jinnah to the cause of freedom of India. It is however idle to pursue this line of thought.

### **Gokhale's Assessment of Gandhiji**

Before we finally part with the subject of Gokhale-Gandhi relationship, it will not be out of place to notice what Gokhale thought of Gandhiji. At the annual session of the Congress held at Lucknow in 1909, under the presidentship of Pandit Malaviya, Gokhale moved a resolution on South African affairs and paid a glowing tribute to Gandhiji. He observed:

"After the immortal part which Mr. Gandhi has played in the South African affair I must say it will not be possible for any Indian, at any time, here or in any other assembly of Indians, to mention his name without deep emotion or pride. Gentlemen, it is one of the privileges of my life that I know Mr. Gandhi intimately and I can tell you that a purer, a nobler, a braver and a more exalted spirit has never moved on this earth. Mr. Gandhi is one of those men, who living an austere simple life themselves, and devoted to all the highest principles of love to their fellow beings and to truth and justice, touch the eyes of their weaker brethren as with magic and give them a new vision. He is a man who may be well described as a man among men, a hero among heroes, a patriot

among patriots, and we may well say that in him Indian humanity in the present time has really reached its high watermark." <sup>30</sup>

It appears that the heights which his disciple would scale were clearly anticipated by Gokhale. Taking the message of his master Gandhiji imparted to it his own lustre and developed it further. Let us see how and in what way he did this.

### **On Introducing Religion into Politics**

Gandhiji had boldly declared that he had been experimenting with himself and his friends by introducing religion into politics.<sup>31</sup> He could not conceive politics as divorced from religion.<sup>32</sup> To him there was no politics without religion<sup>33</sup> as "religion is the basis on which all life structure has to be erected if life is to be real".<sup>34</sup> Politics without religion is 'a death trap which kills the soul. And man without religion is man without roots.'<sup>36</sup> Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.<sup>38</sup>

Here religion does not mean sectarianism;<sup>37</sup> it does not also mean sectional or sectarian belief.<sup>38</sup> Nor does it mean "the religion of the superstitious and the blind, religion that hates and fights".<sup>39</sup> It means a belief "in the ordered moral government of the universe"<sup>40</sup> and universal religion of toleration.<sup>41</sup> This religion transcends Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. "It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality".<sup>42</sup> It changes one's nature and binds one indissolubly to Truth and ever purifies. Public and political life would be much purer than it is if everything were to be done "in the name of the King of Kings and not "for self but for posterity".<sup>43</sup>

### **Religion and Morality Convertible Terms**

According to Gandhiji religion and morality are interchangeable or convertible terms. "Politics without morality is a thing to be avoided."<sup>44</sup> Politics must concern itself with internal growth but being of a universal nature it will react upon the external in a most effective manner.<sup>45</sup> It must be an integral part of one's search for truth, and, political work, to be worth the name, has to be looked upon "in terms of social and moral progress".<sup>46</sup> There ought not to be

any dichotomy between the private and public life of a politician. His public life must be an echo and extension of his private life. There is a tendency in modern public life to ignore the character of a public worker. It is said to be his private concern. Gandhiji was not able to appreciate this view and much less to adopt it. He held that a public worker without spotless character must fail in the end and damn forever the cause he espouses.<sup>47</sup>

### Is Politics not for *Sadhus*?

Gandhiji had joined issue with Lokamanya Tilak who thought that politics was not a game for *sadhus* or *sannyasins*.<sup>48</sup> "A *sannyasin* having attained Swaraj in his own person is the fittest to show us the way."<sup>49</sup> Like the *sannyasin* we must try to live in society and remain unaffected by its pitfalls.<sup>50</sup> If the *sannyasins* of old were indifferent to the political life around them, it was because society was differently constituted. Today politics, properly so-called, rules every aspect of our lives.<sup>51</sup> We come into contact in our everyday life with the State which affects our moral being. In a modern society, no department or part of life is untouched by politics. If politics were to be spiritualized, could one remain indifferent to the miserable lot of the untouchables, for example? "The very spiritualization of politics rests in the banishing root and branch of untouchability."<sup>62</sup> Gandhiji's fight against untouchability was a fight against the impure in humanity and was a part of his politics. Therefore, even a *sannyasin* "being a well-wisher and servant par excellence of society" must concern himself with matters political.<sup>53</sup>

Inquisition and torturing of heretics have been practised and crusades have been fought in the fair name of religion. Yet how did Gandhiji think that *sannyasins* could interfere with political matters to the benefit of mankind? To this the answer is that a *sannyasin* of Gandhiji's conception is a master of himself and free of all unworthy ambition. In his address to the Buddhist priests of Burma he recalled that history showed that the priesthood had not wielded temporal power for the good of humanity and in aspiring to lead the political movement they were "shouldering a tremendous responsibility". Therefore he urged them "to be pure beyond suspicion" and "to combine with stainless purity,

great wisdom and great ability".<sup>54</sup> Given these essential conditions politics will not only be benefited but, in fact, enriched by the participation of *sannyasins*.

### **Jesus and Politics**

In support of the view that religion and politics are incompatible disciplines the saying of Jesus that "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's"<sup>56</sup> is often quoted. Gandhiji countered it in following words:

" 'Render unto Caesar' was quoted against me before too. I have not read into the celebrated verse the meaning that my critics have sought to put into it. Jesus evaded the direct question put to him because it was a trap. He therefore asked to see the coin for taxes. And then said with withering scorn, 'How can you who traffic in Caesar's coins and thus receive what to you are benefits of Caesar's rule refuse to pay taxes?' Jesus' whole preaching and practice point unmistakably to non-co-operation, which necessarily includes non-payment of taxes."<sup>56</sup>

Gandhiji warned the reader against literal construction of religious maxims. The 'letter killeth', it is the spirit which 'giveth life'. It is vain to invoke the authority of Jesus for bolstering the popular view of the incompatibility of mixing religion and politics. "Jesus never recognized man's authority as against God's. He who disregarded the whole host of priesthood, which in those days was superior to Kinghood, would not have hesitated to defy the might of emperors had he found it necessary. And did he not treat with supreme disdain the whole of the farcical trial through which he was made to pass?"<sup>57</sup>

### **Religion a Personal Matter**

In a democracy, religion must remain a matter of personal concern between God and the individual. Every individual should be free to follow the form of religion which best suits him without any interference from the State, as long as its tenets do not offend the sense of enlightened public morality. There should be no quarrel on the ground of religion for there is so much in common between man and man. Any creed or dogma which coerces others into

following one particular way or uniform mode of worship is a religion only in name. A religion worth the name does not admit of coercion. Anything that is done under coercion cannot sustain long; it is bound to perish.<sup>58</sup>

### **Gandhiji as a Religious Man**

Gandhiji claimed that he was a religious man. A religious, man according to him is a seeker after God or, what is the same thing, Truth. As God is found more often in the lowliest of His creatures than in the high and mighty, a man of Truth loves the meanest of creation. He cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. He is concerned with the welfare of nations and politics concerns nations. No part of life in a modern State is untouched by politics. Therefore in politics too we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.

The whole of his activity, according to Gandhiji, was directed towards self-realization. By self-realization he meant seeing God face to face or, in other words, "the correspondence between the permanent element in human nature and its Maker." To see the "universal and pervading spirit of Truth" one has to love the meanest of creation as one-self, to realize identity with even the crawling things on earth as all life is essentially one. In essence, it means to love and serve one and all without exception.

### **The Service of Humanity**

The service of humanity begins with the service to the neighbour. And recognizing his humble limitations, a man of Truth will serve humanity through the service of his country. Patriotism or nationalism is not an exclusive thing and is not to be achieved at the expense or exploitation of others. Hatred of other nations or races is not essential for fostering nationalism for it will kill the real national spirit. It is not nationalism which is evil but "the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations".<sup>59</sup> The good of mankind in general is included in nationalism.

### **The Brotherhood of Man**

The mission of Gandhiji was to establish brotherhood of man. So his patriotism could not be exclusive and was not calculated to hurt any other nation. If

anything, it was to benefit all in the true sense of the word. His following declarations bear this out:

"My nationalism is fierce but not exclusive and devised to hurt any nation or individual."<sup>60</sup>

"India's freedom as conceived by me can never be a menace to the world."<sup>61</sup>

"The whole of my country may die so that the human race may live."<sup>62</sup>

Nationalism is a stage in the journey of humanity to the "land of eternal freedom". Internationalism, now a dream, will become a reality only when peoples of different countries realize the true spirit of nationalism and act as one man.

Gandhiji's concept of religion, its function in politics and its application to political life of the individual, nation and humanity is so lofty that to characterize his ideology in this regard as being responsible for the political division or ills of the country is a blasphemy and cannot stand the scrutiny of facts. Only one question then finally remains to be answered: Was Gandhiji a dismal political failure? It will be time to answer this question when we have dealt with all aspects of Gandhiji's comprehensive and all-embracing political tenets.

### **Organic Swaraj or Kingdom of Heaven upon Earth**

In his public work the whole effort of Gandhiji was concentrated on achievement of organic Swaraj or Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, Ramarajya, Dharmarajya or whatever you may call it. This was to be done while keeping intact the genius of India's civilization.<sup>63</sup> Such Rajya is responsive to public opinion and cares for the lowliest of the low.<sup>64</sup> Public opinion is a vital force in developing internal strength. When the public opinion is free and not artificial, it is truthful. The Rajya built on such public opinion is Ramarajya.<sup>65</sup>

In an ideal state there is no political power for there is no State. The ideal is never fully realized in practice. Hence the classical dictum of Thoreau that that Government is the best which governs the least. That is, when people come into possession of power, the interference with the freedom of the

people is reduced to a minimum. A nation which thus runs its affairs smoothly and effectively, is truly democratic. Where such a condition is absent, the form of government is democratic only in name.<sup>66</sup>

Swaraj or self-government means continuous effort to be free of Government control—foreign or national. It will be a sorry state of affairs if people were to look up to Government for the regulation of every detail of life.<sup>67</sup> People must outgrow the necessity for such control and render it unnecessary. They will cease to impute all their weaknesses to the Government or else they shall never shed them.<sup>68</sup>

The freedom for which 'such order stands is not for a certain number of individuals or for certain classes but for the whole masses. It aims at emancipation of one and all and not of any class, section or interest. It is impossible to have such freedom without dedicated and selfless workers.

#### **Four Freedoms**

Organic Swaraj comprises four freedoms: political, economic, social and moral. We can consider the latter three only in passing as we are not directly concerned with them here.

#### **Economic, Social and Moral Freedoms**

Economic freedom connotes entire freedom from the domination of capitalists. It stands for economic equality. The humblest must feel equal to the tallest and capital and labour must be partners in a joint venture.<sup>69</sup> The content of social freedom can be easily defined. It stands for abolition of all social distinctions based on birth, sex, caste, Creed or colour. No disability will attach to any individual on account of any of these factors and he should be free to pursue his vocation without interference or threats. Moral freedom according to Gandhiji is necessary so that the weakest member can rise to his fullest moral height. Such freedom is not possible in a country governed by the army. Dictatorship can at any time degenerate into an instrument of tyranny and masses would be the worst sufferers under such a dispensation. So Gandhiji said that the army of India of the future will not consist of hirelings to be

utilized for keeping India under subjection and depriving other nations of their liberty; but it would be largely cut down, will consist largely of volunteers and will be utilized for policing India.<sup>70</sup>

### **Alpha and Omega of Organic Swaraj**

All these freedoms in aggregate are for the realization of the Kingdom of Heaven here and now. Swaraj or self-government is a resultant of individual self-rule and is to be achieved by the same means as are required for individual self-rule. The full realization of its content will be circumscribed by the quality and strength of the efforts of individuals to realize these freedoms in their own selves. Internal reform on a national scale by organization and unity in which everybody can participate is the only answer to this challenge. Internal weaknesses frustrate such reform. So patient constructive labour is the alpha and omega of organic Swaraj. An Act of Parliament can give us constitutional Swaraj but it will profit us little if we are unable to remove the internal weaknesses.<sup>71</sup>

### **Constitutional Swaraj**

Constitutional Swaraj is a part of organic Swaraj. It is "government by the consent of the people ascertained by the vote of the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters".<sup>72</sup> It asserts the sovereignty of the people based on "purely moral authority".<sup>73</sup> Gandhiji wanted India to come into her own. That state could not be better defined by any word other than Swaraj.<sup>74</sup>

It is a word which is intelligible to the masses and was first used in the name of the nation by Dadabhai Naoroji. Swaraj is a word which has undergone evolution and consequently its content has varied with the action that the nation was able to put forth at a given moment. Even after the framing of the constitution by the Constituent Assembly for a free and independent India, the growth of its content has not ceased as will be evident to a student of current affairs.

### **Political Power not an End**

Political freedom or power is not an end in itself.<sup>75</sup> It is for the sake of effecting internal reform and developing internal strength. It is only one of the means for this purpose. Mere legislation cannot lead to internal reform. What is wanted is a consciousness in the average villager that he is the maker of his destiny. He is his own legislator through the chosen representatives.

### **Legislators and the People**

The legislators are not the guides of the people; they are mere servants. They are sent there to carry out loyally the popular will. The people are the real masters and the final arbiters of their destiny. Legislatures are a mere drop in the ocean of national life.<sup>76</sup> The functions of legislatures are twofold: to ensure that the government in power conducts the administration in a responsible and democratic manner and to bring in laws which promote public good and constructive activities.

### **The Lure of Legislatures and Ministerships**

The lure of legislatures for ambitious and self-seeking politicians is so overpowering that Gandhiji, ever since he assumed the mantle of leadership of the Congress, deprecated the scramble for power; he knew that it would mean the undoing of the Congress. Comparing the temptation of legislatures to that of liquor booths, he said, the former are liable to become the resort of self-seekers and job-hunters to grind their selfish axe.<sup>77</sup>

So he was at pains to discourage the Congressmen from entering them with the sordid object of self-aggrandizement or making a few rupees. It is wrong to think, he said, that a seat in the legislature carries with it any honour. The sentiment that to be selected as a candidate for the legislature is a mark of honour is harmful. If such a sentiment takes root, it will bring down the name of the Congress and prove its ruin.<sup>78</sup> It is a post of service for those who are fitted for the labour.<sup>79</sup> Congressmen will therefore enter the legislatures out of a sense of duty. Considerations of caste and community should not influence the selection of candidates. The nation will benefit only if true men, filled with

humility and love of the country, fearless and versed in the subjects they have to handle, go there.^ The larger body of men whose only ambition is to serve should not trouble about entering the portals of legislatures.<sup>81</sup>

### **The Duty of Voters**

What should the voters be like? The electorate will be impartial, independent, intelligent and vigilant. If voters are apathetic to national affairs and elect men out of selfish considerations, this can only harm the country.<sup>82</sup> If the voters wake up only to register their votes every three or five years and then relapse into sleep, their representatives, instead of becoming their servants, will become their masters.<sup>83</sup> Democracy can only represent the average. Therefore, all-round education of the humblest and the lowliest has to be attended to, to make them wise and industrious.<sup>84</sup> Without such education, a catastrophe is inevitable.

Candidates' character will weigh more with electors than their views. A man of character will make himself worthy of any position he may be given. Gandhiji was firm in his belief that it is impossible for a man without character to render national service. If voters do not find any candidate who is worthy of their vote, they need not register their votes; for abstention in such a case amounts to an exercise of one's vote.<sup>85</sup>

### **Finance for Elections**

A popular organization like the Congress (of pre-independence days) should not have to spend money on the elections. Its nominees should be elected without much effort. An organization which looks to money for everything can never serve the masses.<sup>86</sup>

### **Salaries and Allowances of Legislators**

The salary and allowances drawn by members of the legislatures are out of proportion to services they render to the country. The scales being fixed on the English pattern, are not at all compatible with the conditions of a poor country like India.<sup>87</sup> If a census were taken, it would be found that many members were not earning before their election what they get as members of the legislature.

It is a dangerous thing to look upon legislatures as a source of profit and self-advancement.<sup>88</sup> What is stated above applies *mutatis mutandis* to ministerships.

### **Village—The Nucleus of Swaraj**

A self-contained and self-sufficient village is the nucleus of such Swaraj for Freedom must begin at the bottom. The village republic will be managed by a Panchayat which will be a living political force and entity. Panchayats will be united in a free and voluntary association by "ever widening circle of village republics". It will not be an "apex sustained by the bottom" but an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual, always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages and so on, "sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are parts".<sup>89</sup> Gandhiji knew that many did not believe in decentralization of power with a village as the smallest unit. He was aware that many would have India to have a strong centre and build the whole structure round it. Therefore he desired that the villagers should come into their own and develop the power to express themselves as they should.

### **Futility of Constitutional Means when not Backed by Sanctions**

Though an Act of the British Parliament did confer Dominion Status on India in 1947, in the nineteen twenties such a thing could not be conceived at all as a possibility in the near future. Under the British rule, whatever may have been its benefits, the economic condition of the masses had progressively deteriorated.<sup>90</sup> Since 1885 the Indian National Congress had been petitioning to the British Parliament for redress of the grievances of the Indian people without much success.<sup>91</sup> The Parliament had failed the Indians. What then, was the duty of Indians? If they considered themselves worthy of being called a nation, could they sit idle for fear of anarchy or worse?<sup>92</sup> The liberals in the Congress were afraid of any direct action. The responsivists suggested the working of councils with obstruction if necessary. What chance had they of succeeding without any sanctions?<sup>93</sup>

Gandhiji came actively on the Indian political scene in 1919 and asserted boldly:

"In my opinion the time has arrived when we must cease to rely upon the petitions to Parliament for effective action. Petitions will have value, when the nation has behind it the power to enforce its will. What power then have we? When, we are firmly of the opinion that grave wrong has been done to us and when after an appeal to the highest authority we fail to secure redress, there must be some power available to us for undoing the wrong. It is true that in the vast majority of cases, it is the duty of a subject to submit to wrongs on failure of the usual procedure, so long as they do not affect his vital being.

But every nation and every individual has the right and it is their duty, to rise against an intolerable wrong."<sup>94</sup> To end the spoliation of the people Gandhiji advocated withdrawal of co-operation from Government and civil resistance to unjust laws. Non-co-operation and civil resistance are branches of satyagraha.

### **Satyagraha and Passive Resistance**

The expression "satyagraha" literally means holding on to Truth. Hence it is also called Truth Force or Soul Force. This term was coined by Gandhiji in South Africa with reference to the struggle carried on by the Indians in South Africa for their just rights in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of "passive resistance".<sup>96</sup>

Passive resistance has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not rule out the use of violence for the purpose of securing one's objective. Satyagraha is said to differ from passive resistance as the North Pole does from the South. Satyagraha is a weapon of the strong and prohibits the use of violence in any shape or form."<sup>96</sup>

### **Cowardice versus Violence**

Gandhiji discovered in the earliest stages of satyagraha in South Africa that pursuit of Truth does not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent.<sup>97</sup> Of course where the only choice is between cowardice and violence, violence is

to be preferred. So Gandhiji declared that he would rather have India resort to arms to defend her honour than she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless victim to her own dishonour;<sup>98</sup> that he would risk violence a hundred times than risk the emasculation of a whole race.<sup>99</sup>

Cowardice is impotence and is therefore worse than violence. A coward desires revenge but, being afraid of death, looks to others for his defence. A coward is less than a man and not worthy of being a member of society.<sup>100</sup> Though violence is not lawful, when it is offered in self-defence or for the defence of the defenceless, it is an act of bravery.<sup>101</sup> Retaliation or resistance unto death in such circumstances is far better than cowardly submission. Human dignity demands the courage to defend ourselves.<sup>102</sup> If we are men, we must at least be able to defend ourselves, our women and our places of worship.<sup>103</sup> Hence Gandhiji said that it would be a training in Swaraj if the people instead of looking to the Government to defend their lives, property and honour learnt to rely upon themselves for self-defence.<sup>104</sup> It is unmanly to ask or expect the Government to do so.<sup>105</sup>

### **Secrecy in Politics**

Gandhiji regarded secrecy as a sin especially in politics as he felt that the desire for secrecy had bred cowardice amongst the people.<sup>106</sup> He said, "I have grown up from youth to 76 years in abhorrence of secrecy."<sup>107</sup> As early as 1915 in his address to the Y.M.C.A., Madras, he advised the people to be fearless in their relations with their rulers. If the Government was doing what they regarded to be wrong, it was their duty to speak boldly even though it amounted to sedition. When people are ready to suffer the consequences of their action and not to hit below the belt, they have made good their right to have their advice heard even by the Government.<sup>108</sup>

### **Disagreement with the School of Violence**

According to Gandhiji, there was really no meeting ground between him and the school of violence for he held that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence.<sup>109</sup> Physical force is transitory even as the human body is transitory. But the power of the spirit is permanent, even as the

spirit is everlasting.<sup>110</sup> Whatever may have been true of other countries, a bloody revolution could not have succeeded in India.<sup>1</sup> In Europe where people had gained their freedom by the violent method, the people were trained in the use of arms and they won their freedom by being able to use greater force than the enthroned authority.<sup>112</sup> India was not like Turkey or Ireland or Russia.<sup>113</sup> Attainment of freedom through warfare, seemed to Gandhiji an impossibility for any length of time in the foreseeable future.<sup>114</sup> The reasons were obvious. India's millions had no tradition of the violent method. Villagers in India had never been known to have combined on any large scale to use the violent method. They had no definite idea of political freedom in terms of India as one country.<sup>115</sup> The masses, therefore, would not have responded.

A movement in which the masses have no active role could do no good to them. A successful bloody revolution could only mean further misery for the masses for it would still not be their rule.<sup>116</sup> Warfare may have given the people another rule in place of the English rule but never self-rule in terms of the masses.<sup>117</sup> Moreover, where the people became violent they lost ground, became demoralized and were cowed down by superior violence.<sup>118</sup> Violent activity had given rise to reprisals on the part of the Government and had done the people no good. Whenever murder had taken place, its effect on the masses had been doubly bad in that they had to bear the burden ultimately of additional expense and the indirect effect of Government wrath. Besides, it had in no way contributed to mass awakening.<sup>119</sup>

There is nothing heroic about a cold-blooded robbery accompanied by assassination of an innocent, charitable, wealthy merchant on his pilgrimage. There is equally none in the deliberate secret execution of an innocent Government officer discharging his duty.<sup>120</sup> It was futile to hark back to the past and invoke the names of Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji for such activity; for the conditions in the two periods separated by time differed so radically. Patriots like Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji knew their work, had the men, arms and the necessary atmosphere for their activity which was totally lacking today.<sup>121</sup> Under these circumstances, open warfare was an impossibility and

secret revolutionary activity was an exercise in utter futility. Hence it was that Gandhiji eschewed violence and advocated self-suffering and non-violence for winning India's political freedom.

### **Non-violence a Necessary Corollary**

It has been stated above that satyagraha excludes the use of violence in any shape or form. The adversary is to be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. Patience means self-suffering. Truth is to be vindicated not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but by self-suffering.<sup>122</sup> Honestly striving after truth is different in every case.<sup>123</sup> What appears to be truth to the one may appear to be an error to the others.<sup>124</sup> Hence it is that non-violence is a necessary corollary. Without it there would be confusion and worse.<sup>125</sup>

### **Nature of Non-violence**

Gandhiji's ahimsa was neither maimed nor weak. It was all powerful.<sup>126</sup> The non-violence that he taught was the active nonviolence of the strongest. But the weakest could participate in it and derive strength from it.<sup>127</sup> Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It is not cowardly meek submission to the will of the evil-doer but it means the pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant.<sup>128</sup>

To a non-violent person the whole world ought to be one family.<sup>129</sup> Yet no man can be actively non-violent without rising against social injustice, no matter where it occurs.<sup>130</sup> The use of non-violence with its inevitable companion, truth, removes the wrong and canalizes hatred into the proper channel.<sup>131</sup>

Non-violence, said Gandhiji, is infinitely superior to violence; forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. Abstaining from violence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it is of no value when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse is hardly non-violent to a cat when it allows itself to be torn to bits by her. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.<sup>132</sup>

## **We Must Make New History**

The world has been trying all these ages, said Gandhiji, to become strong in the wielding of brute force and it has miserably failed. History teaches us that those who have ousted the greedy by violence, have in their turn, become a prey to the disease of the conquered.<sup>133</sup> "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword."<sup>134</sup> Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute.<sup>135</sup> If humanity is to progress, we must not repeat history but make new history. We must add to the inheritance bequeathed to us by our ancestors. If we can make new discoveries and inventions in the world of matter, must we declare our bankruptcy in the spiritual domain? "Must man always be brute first and man after, if at all?"<sup>136</sup> The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.<sup>137</sup>

## **Effects of the Non-violent Method**

Before the politicians in India, Gandhiji placed non-violence not only on the higher ground of morality, but also on the lower ground of expediency,<sup>138</sup> for he discovered on the application of non-violence to conditions in India that he had been able to reach the mass-mind far more quickly than before.<sup>139</sup> In 1920, when nonviolence came to be accepted as part of the Congress policy and programme, the Congress was transformed as if by magic. Remote villages were stirred and mass awakening came no one knew how. The people became conscious of their power.<sup>140</sup>

Through the non-violent method alone the phenomenal mass consciousness had come into being.<sup>141</sup>

## **Non-violence not a Monopoly of Cloistered Monks and Nuns**

A reverent study of the scriptures, said Gandhiji, had led him to the belief that all religions register emphatic and unequivocal testimony in favour of non-violence being practised by all not merely singly but collectively as well.<sup>142</sup> The religion of non-violence is not meant only for *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well.<sup>143</sup> Hitherto out of sheer inertia we had taken for granted, that non-violence is possible only for those who take the vow of non-

possession and the allied abstinences. Really, if it is the law, it must hold good for all.<sup>144</sup> If non-violence could not affect vast masses of mankind, it is a sheer waste of time for individuals to cultivate it. Non-violence is the greatest gift of God to mankind. And all God's gifts are the common heritage of His creation and not a monopoly of cloistered monks and nuns.<sup>145</sup>

The argument that the Mahatma was a rare individual, and what little society in India had done in the matter of non-violence was due to his influence, and that it was sure to disappear with him was erroneous, observed Gandhiji. Yet during the evening of his life he frankly admitted, "My eyes have now been opened. I now see that what we practised during the fight with the British under the name of non-violence was not really non-violence. God had purposely sealed my eyes as He wanted me to accomplish His great purpose through me. That purpose being accomplished, He has restored to me my sight."<sup>146</sup>

### **Basic Condition for Non-violent Action**

The basic assumptions of successful non-violent action as laid down by Gandhiji are as follows:<sup>147</sup>

1. Complete unity of the people in their desire and demand;
2. Complete appreciation and assimilation of the doctrine of non-violence in all its implications by the people as a whole, with consequent control over one's natural instincts to resort to violence, either in revenge or, as a measure of self-defence; (this is the most important of all) and
3. Implicit belief that the sight of suffering on the part of multitudes of people will melt the heart of the aggressor and induce him to desist from his course of violence.

To the extent that the people of India fell short of measuring up to the above standards, the fruit of their endeavour was not as sweet and rich in its content as it otherwise would have been.

### **Non-violent Pilgrimage to Swaraj**

The pilgrimage to Swaraj by non-violent means is a painful climb.<sup>148</sup> It involves construction on a mass scale and attention to details. It requires vast organizing ability and penetration into villages solely for the service of the villagers. In other words, it means national education,—education of the masses. It means an awakening of national consciousness and a quickening of the national life.<sup>149</sup> It will not spring like the magician's mango tree. It will grow unperceived like a banyan tree.<sup>150</sup> Swaraj through nonviolence will not mean a bloody revolution but a progressively peaceful solution such that the transfer of power from a close corporation to the people's chosen representatives will be as natural as the dropping of a fully ripe fruit from a well nurtured tree.<sup>151</sup>

### **Offering Satyagraha**

Satyagraha can be offered against parents, one's wife or children, rulers, fellow-citizens and even against the whole world.<sup>152</sup> However, it cannot be offered in bravado or as a mere trial. It is a measure of the depth of one's feeling. It is, therefore, offered because the urge becomes irresistible, no price being too dear for the vindication of truth.<sup>153</sup>

### **Things Inconsistent with Satyagraha**

Military force is inconsistent with satyagraha. No less inconsistent are frightfulness, exploitation of the weak, and immoral gains. Insatiable pursuits after enjoyments of the flesh are also inconsistent therewith.<sup>154</sup>

### ***Sine qua non* for a Satyagrahi**

Satyagraha presupposes the living presence and guidance of God.<sup>155</sup> It is undertaken not from any belief in human aid but it is based upon an unquenchable faith in God and His justice.<sup>156</sup> A satyagrahi has no other stay but God<sup>157</sup> and He is his only rock. A satyagrahi must have a living faith in God.<sup>158</sup>

He depends not on his own strength but that of God and acts as the Voice within guides him.<sup>159</sup> Only in His strength is a satyagrahi strong. And only those who can cast their cares and their fears on that immeasurable Power have faith

in God. To bear all kinds of tortures without a murmur of resentment is impossible for a human being without the strength that comes from conviction that God is.<sup>160</sup> He who has any other stay or depends upon any other help may be a passive resister, non-co-operator and so on but not a true satyagrahi. And he cannot offer satyagraha.<sup>161</sup> Success very often comes to a satyagrahi when it is least expected. God is both gentle and hard. He tries him through and through to the last suffering point but He is so gentle as never to test him to the breaking point.<sup>162</sup> What is practical politics so-called is unrealistic to him as in the end his proves to be the most practical politics.<sup>163</sup>

### **Code of Conduct and Honour**

A satyagrahi has a code of conduct and honour which is as follows:

- 1) He must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed.
- 2) He must have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature.
- 3) He must lead a chaste life.
- 4) He must be willing to give up his life and possessions for the sake of the cause.<sup>164</sup>
- 5) He will harbour no anger.
- 6) He will suffer the anger of the opponent.
- 7) He will put up with assaults from the opponent and will not retaliate.
- 8) He will not submit, out of fear of punishment or the like, to any order given in anger.
- 9) He will not subject himself to any discipline or rules which are not in consonance with his self-respect.
- 10) He will protect an official from an insult or attack even at the risk of his life.<sup>165</sup>

To the list of the above rules there are the following further additions when Satyagrahis engage in collective action.<sup>166</sup>

- (1) There must be common honesty among Satyagrahis; and

- (2) They must render ungrudging discipline to their commander. There should be no mental reservation.

### **Main Divisions of Satyagraha**

There are two main divisions of satyagraha: constructive and cleansing.

#### **Constructive Satyagraha**

Constructive satyagraha is the positive part of any satyagraha movement. The constructive programme as enunciated by the Congress under Gandhiji's inspiration was of the nature of constructive satyagraha and was an attempt at the political education of the people.<sup>167</sup> To achieve Swaraj through non-violence, gradual but steady building up from the bottom upwards by constructive effort is the only way.<sup>168</sup> The struggle always goes on in some form or other till the goal is reached.<sup>169</sup> Constructive effort or programme is a vital and indispensable part of that struggle.

A satyagrahi is indifferent as to what form the struggle takes. As a disciplined soldier he is ever ready to carry out his duties. Satyagraha is not to be confused with merely breaking of laws and jail-going though they also have a place in satyagraha under certain circumstances and subject to certain conditions. When the programme of jail-going is on, there is room for hypocrisy, compulsion and violence. The constructive programme leaves no room for these nor for disappointment and despair.<sup>170</sup>

Jails are not gateways to liberty for the confirmed criminal. They are temples of liberty for the innocent. There is no warrant for supposing that Swaraj can be won by the imprisonment of thousands of nominally non-violent men with hatred, ill-will and violence in their breasts.<sup>171</sup> The ability to go to jail is of far less consequence than the ability and readiness to fulfil the constructive programme. Without it, going to jail is so much wasted effort. Self-purification is the main consideration in seeking the jail. Embarrassment of the Government is a secondary consideration.<sup>172</sup>

## Cleansing Satyagraha

Cleansing satyagraha is civil resistance where resistance becomes a duty to remove a persistent and degrading injustice.<sup>173</sup> It, among other things, mainly comprises non-co-operation and civil disobedience.

### Non-co-operation

Non-co-operation predominantly implies withdrawal of cooperation from the State which in the non-co-operators' view has become corrupt.<sup>174</sup> Possession of power and riches is a crime under an unjust Government.<sup>175</sup> Non-co-operation is a branch of satyagraha which includes all non-violent resistance for the vindication of truth but excludes civil disobedience of the fiercer type.<sup>176</sup> It is not a movement of brag, bluster and bluff. It tests the sincerity, challenges the honesty and capacity for national work, of the non-co-operator and requires solid and silent self-sacrifice for its success. Humility is the key to success.<sup>177</sup>

Non-co-operation can be safely practised by individuals as well as the masses. Even if one man non-co-operates, say, by resigning some office, he gains. That is its ethical or religious aspect. For its political result it naturally requires mass support.<sup>178</sup> It is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. No one is bound to cooperate in one's own undoing or slavery. Even the lowliest can feel the glow of freedom attained through non-violent non-cooperation.<sup>179</sup>

No disastrous result can ensue from non-co-operation save for an outbreak of violence on the part of the people under provocation or otherwise. Every powerful thing is liable to misuse. Useful and potent drugs like opium and arsenic also lend themselves to abuse. No one has for that reason suggested the stopping of their use. In many cases, the wise use of non-cooperation has proved efficacious. A thing has to be judged by its net effect. In India the net effect of non-violent non-cooperation had been for the good. Non-violent non-cooperation, though indifferently practised, had brought about an awakening which would have taken generations otherwise. It had prevented bloodshed and anarchy and on the whole had improved the relations between Britishers

and Indians.<sup>180</sup> But even otherwise, is the risk of violence not preferable to the greater risk of the emasculation of a whole race?

There is religious sanction for non-co-operation both in Hindu and Christian tradition. Prahlad dissociated himself from his father, Mirabai from her husband, Bibhishan from his brutal brother.<sup>181</sup> Jesus mixed with the publicans and sinners to serve and to convert them to a life of purity and truthfulness. But he wiped the dust off his feet of those places which did not listen to his message.<sup>182</sup> When justice demands the withdrawal of cooperation, it is cowardly not to do so. On the other hand, "enlightened non-co-operation is the expression of anguished love"<sup>183</sup> and is a duty which must be discharged without fear of its consequences.

### **Civil Disobedience**

Civil disobedience is the civil breach of unmoral statutory laws. The term 'civil disobedience' was coined by Thoreau to signify his own disobediences of the laws of a slave State. But he limited his resistance to the revenue law-payment of tax. He also did not insist on observance of non-violence.<sup>184</sup>

### **When Is Disobedience Civil?**

More value and importance must be given to the word "civil" rather than "disobedience". Disobedience without civility, discipline, discrimination, non-violence is certain destruction.<sup>185</sup> Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained and based upon some well-understood principle. It must not be capricious, defiant and must not have ill-will or hatred behind it.<sup>186</sup> It has to be absolutely non-violent, the underlying principle being the winning over the opponent by suffering - love.<sup>187</sup> Disobedience combined with love is the living water of life.<sup>188</sup>

Civil disobedience, if it is really civil, must appear so even to the opponent as justice must not only be done but also appear to be done. The opponent must feel that resistance is not intended to do him any harm.<sup>189</sup>

### **When Disobedience Is Criminal**

Breaking or scaling fences, etc. will not be civil disobedience. It will be essentially incivil and criminal.<sup>190</sup> Even a national government will be unable to carry on for a day if every citizen because he disapproves of all or some of its actions. Moreover, the evil resides not in bridges, communications and roads but in man. It is the latter who needs to be tackled and converted. Sabotage is place of one it seeks to end.<sup>191</sup> Satyagraha is self-suffering and not inflicting suffering on others, there is surely more violence in burning a man's property than doing him physical injury.<sup>192</sup>

### **Civil Disobedience—A Last Resort**

Civil disobedience postulates the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanction. "It can, therefore, be practised only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance."<sup>193</sup>

Those only can invoke civil disobedience who give willing obedience even to irksome laws imposed by the State so long as the laws do not hurt their conscience or religion and are prepared equally willingly to suffer the penalty.<sup>194</sup> Active non-violence is necessary for those who offer civil disobedience but the will and proper training are enough for the people to co-operate with those who are chosen for civil disobedience. The constructive work prescribed by the Congress is such proper training.<sup>195</sup>

### **Last Stage in Non-co-operation**

Civil non-payment of taxes is the last stage in non-cooperation and must not be resorted to until other forms of civil disobedience have been tried.<sup>196</sup> It is a privilege to be exercised only after rigorous training. And just as civil disobedience cannot be offered by a habitual offender against the laws of the State, so also civil non-payment of taxes cannot be offered by those who have been in the habit of withholding payment of taxes on the slightest pretext.<sup>197</sup>

### **Complete Civil Disobedience**

Complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion— refusal to obey every single State-made law.<sup>198</sup> Civil disobedience as practised in 1930-32

under Gandhiji's leadership covered breaches of statutory and unmoral laws in a non-violent manner. It signified the resister's outlawry for which he cheerfully suffered imprisonment.<sup>199</sup> The Quit India campaign of 1942 may be said to be a movement of complete civil disobedience. However, it took a wrong turn and was crushed by the Government with superior violence.

### **Civil Disobedience—Aggressive and Defensive**

Civil disobedience can be either aggressive, assertive and offensive or defensive.

Aggressive civil disobedience is non-violent wilful disobedience of the laws of the State whose breach does not involve moral turpitude and which is undertaken as a symbol of revolt against the State. Thus disregard of laws pertaining to revenue or regulation of personal conduct for the convenience of the State, although such laws in themselves inflict no hardship and do not require to be altered are instances of aggressive or assertive civil disobedience.<sup>200</sup>

Defensive civil disobedience is involuntary or reluctant nonviolent disobedience of such laws as are in themselves bad and obedience to which would be inconsistent with one's self-respect or human dignity. Formation of a volunteer corps for peaceful purposes, publication of an article not contemplating or inciting to violence, peaceful picketing with a view to wean people from things or institutions picketed, in spite of prohibitory orders are instances of defensive civil disobedience.<sup>201</sup>

### **Civil Disobedience—Individual and Mass**

Civil disobedience can be practised by individuals as well as masses of men. For individuals there always is the proper atmosphere except when their civil disobedience is certain to lead to bloodshed.<sup>202</sup> Mass civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It is to be tried only in a calm atmosphere.<sup>203</sup>

### **Strategy of Non-violent Warfare**

The type of civil disobedience to be launched, the timing thereof, tactics to be employed, etc. are matters of strategy which can be decided only by a

seasoned and veteran General of satyagraha like Gandhiji. He will be a stupid General, if he will begin to fight in spite of his knowledge that his resources are poor.<sup>204</sup>

In non-violent warfare there is no place for cant, humbug and falsehood. Consequently confession of error even by a General of a campaign is quite natural. "Confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leave the surface cleaner than before."<sup>205</sup> Twice Gandhiji is known to have relented and confessed his errors publicly. In 1919 when civil disobedience had been launched throughout India against the Rowlatt Bill, he owned his mistake of "Himalayan Magnitude"<sup>206</sup> and advised temporary suspension of civil disobedience when he saw that civil disobedience had been enveloped in clouds of violence as a result of insufficient training of the people in techniques of satyagraha. Again in 1922, he drastically reversed the aggressive programme of civil disobedience after the Chauri Chaura incident, even though his decision appeared to be politically unsound. Gandhiji was convinced that it was religiously sound. Hence he wrote:

"I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error. . . . It is million times better to appear untrue before the world than to be untrue to ourselves. . . . Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path. ... I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing."<sup>207</sup>

And the cause did prosper and it bore fruit in 1947 when the transfer of power was effected peacefully by the mightiest empire on earth, to the chosen representatives of Indian people.

### **Freedom of India through Partition**

Freedom, no doubt, came to India but it came through vivisection and not communal unity between Hindus and Muslims for which Gandhiji strove all his life. In the year in which the demand for Pakistan was first formulated by the Muslim League, Gandhiji said that India is a big country comprising different cultures, which are tending to blend with one another each complementing the

rest.<sup>208</sup> In 1919, he had first enunciated the proposition that there is no Swaraj without communal unity.<sup>209</sup> His mission, he claimed, was to work for Hindu-Muslim unity<sup>210</sup> and for the unity of all.<sup>211</sup> As a friend who had "faithfully served them in their hour of need",<sup>212</sup> he warned the Muslims to beware of the untruth that they were a separate nation and had nothing in common with the Hindus.

### **Hindu-Muslim Question and Partition**

The partition proposal had altered the face of Hindu-Muslim problem.<sup>213</sup> Gandhiji could not reconcile himself to the doctrine that Hinduism and Islam represented two antagonistic cultures, for to assent to it meant to him a denial of God.<sup>214</sup> He claimed to represent all cultures because his religion demanded the fulfilment of all cultures; and he looked upon all religions with the same respect with which he looked upon his own.<sup>215</sup> It meant the undoing of centuries of work done by numerous Hindus and Muslims to live together as one nation. So partition was a patent untruth to him.<sup>216</sup> There could be no compromise with Pakistan.<sup>217</sup> It could not come by honourable agreement.<sup>218</sup> What could be done under the threat of Pakistan? If it was not of threat but a worthy goal, why should it be prevented? On the other hand, if it was a subterfuge to get more for Muslims under its camouflage, any solution worked out in the circumstances would be an unjust solution.<sup>219</sup> At the same time, if 8 crores of Muslims desired it, no power on earth could prevent it, notwithstanding opposition— violent or non-violent,<sup>220</sup> Muslims were entitled to the same right of self-determination that the rest of India could claim. As a member of the joint family, they could claim a division.<sup>221</sup> However, if every component part of the nation claimed the right of self-determination, there would be no one nation as India. So he repeated again and again, that Pakistan was an untruth that could not stand. He fondly hoped that the Muslims really did not want to dismember India.<sup>222</sup>

As a man of non-violence, Gandhiji said, that he could not forcibly resist the proposed partition if the Muslims insisted on it.<sup>223</sup> Moreover, he knew no non-violent method of compelling obedience of a large minority such as the Muslims in India, however powerful a majority, the rest represented.<sup>224</sup> So wishing for

the best, he was willing to resign to the will of God, if he had to become a helpless victim to the undoing of his dream. After all, Pakistan could not be worse than foreign domination under which he had lived though unwillingly.<sup>225</sup> The reader is aware how unhappy and sad Gandhiji was at the fratricidal warfare that was going on around him when freedom came and how he died a martyr in the vindication of his faith.

### **Analysis of the Hindu-Muslim Question**

Gandhiji's analysis of the Hindu-Muslim question as it existed before partition is straightforward and simple and true to some extent even today. All the quarrels between Hindus and Muslims have arisen, observed he, because each wants to impose his will upon the other.<sup>226</sup> And instead of settling their differences peacefully they resort to violence. This was a wrong way; it was not a sign of strength but of weakness to wield the sword on the slightest pretext.<sup>227</sup>

Hindus, though they are in an overwhelming majority, feel physically as dwarfs before the Muslims.<sup>228</sup> Hindus, in Gandhiji's experience are, as a rule, cowards.<sup>229</sup> Gandhiji had noticed this in railway trains, on public roads and in the quarrels which he had settled.<sup>230</sup> In the majority of quarrels, Hindus had come out second best.<sup>231</sup> On the other hand, it was his experience that Musalmans as a class, are bullies.<sup>232</sup> Being heir to new traditions, they exhibit virility of a comparatively new system of life.<sup>233</sup>

The Hindus could not blame the Muslims for their cowardice. Where there are cowards, there will always be bullies.<sup>234</sup> "The bully is a portent and an answer to some existing circumstances, as for instance, cowardice."<sup>235</sup> Cowards have no sense of justice and yield only to threat or actual use of force. There is nothing to choose between the two for both are bad, with this difference that "the bully always follows the coward in point of time."<sup>236</sup> Hindus could never grow through legislatures<sup>237</sup> and non-violence could not be preached to cowards. Between violence and cowardly flight, only violence can be preferred.<sup>238</sup> The solution however lay in shedding fear. Courage is not a matter of muscle but of the heart.<sup>239</sup> Fearlessness or courage is a quality independent of violence or

non-violence. But a person could not be truly non-violent without being fearless. So Gandhiji advised Hindus to be truly non-violent. If they could not rise to these heights, the minimum that they had to do was to defend themselves with courage. They had to cease to be cowards.

To summarize, the Hindu-Muslim question had its origin in Hindu cowardice and its result, Musalman bullying. Hindus had to cease fearing the Musalman bully and the Muslims had to consider beneath their dignity to bully the Hindus. Both Hindus and Muslims had to give up coercion of each other before Hindu-Muslim unity could be achieved.<sup>240</sup> It had been suggested that the British Government were fomenting Hindu-Muslim dissensions. Assuming that they were, it was up to both Hindus and Muslims to neutralize such efforts by acting truly and faithfully towards each other.<sup>241</sup>

### **Generous Deal to Minorities**

To the minorities including Muslims, Gandhiji wanted to do justice with generosity for justice without generosity may easily become Shylock's justice.<sup>242</sup> Even as justice to be justice has to be generous, generosity to be so-called has to be strictly just.<sup>243</sup> Care must be taken to see that generosity is not done at the expense of any single interest<sup>244</sup> and of the very cause for which it is sought to be done.<sup>245</sup> Suspicion of any minority could be disarmed only by being generous.<sup>246</sup>

The majority had to realize that its weight could be as brutal as that of the bullets of a minority.<sup>247</sup> The rule of majority, if it were utilized to crush the minority, would be a barbarous imposition. What was wanted was not the approach of "might is right" but regulation of mutual relations on a basis of trust, creation of an atmosphere in which there will be variety of opinion and conduct in which the sanest will prevail.

To the minorities, Gandhiji said, that they should not ask what would become of them under Swaraj because no one but idiots would live on sufferance. Each individual would guard his liberty if the State encroached upon it. Unless people acquired that power of resistance, freedom that India obtained would be unreal.<sup>248</sup>

The protection of the rights of minorities really means the protection of the weak—the helpless and old men, children and women.<sup>249</sup> A society that will not protect the helpless and the weak is bound to perish.

### Provincialism

Gandhiji was equally aware during his life time of the threat of exclusive and narrow provincialism to national unity. When the Congress became an instrument of mass action in 1920, Provincial Committees of the Congress were organized on a linguistic basis to enable the masses to participate in the national struggle. Political power to a limited extent first came into the hands of the Congress when Provincial Autonomy was introduced under the Government of India Act, 1935. The tear in the national fabric then began to be visible. Gandhiji's warnings against harbouring any provincial feelings dates back to that time.

"Provincialism of a healthy type there is and always will be", wrote Gandhiji. "There is no meaning in having separate provinces, if there were no differences, though healthy, between them."<sup>250</sup> There was however no room for narrow or exclusive provincialism or for jealousy between province and province.<sup>251</sup> No Indian could be treated as a foreigner in any of the provinces of India as he may be treated in Pakistan of today and vice versa. But it was also obligatory on a citizen of India who settles in some province other than his own not to exploit it after the manner of our old masters, if difficulties and heartburning were to be avoided.<sup>252</sup> The bane of our life is exclusive provincialism.<sup>253</sup> The exclusive spirit had become uppermost with the advent of freedom.<sup>254</sup> If India were not to be dismembered and balkanized into warring countries, each living for itself and at the expense of the rest, every attempt at dividing the country into water-tight compartments had to be resisted.<sup>255</sup>

The Congress was ill-equipped today either to arbitrate between rival claimants or to impose its will upon recalcitrants.<sup>256</sup> Hope therefore lay in the people. The right national life has to begin with the individual. Individuals belonging to different provinces must bring their best fruit to the altar of the motherland.<sup>257</sup> In the interest of the country the virtue of "give and take" should be freely

recognized and all sectional interests should be subordinated to the national good which includes the good of all.<sup>258</sup> Gandhiji also warned the country against segregating the Dravidian South from the Aryan North, for India of today is a blend and amalgam of not only these two but of many other cultures.<sup>259</sup> This warning is a timely reminder today to those who naively take the national unity for granted or who are blissfully ignorant of how fragile the structure of national unity is.

### **Essential Qualities in Public Life**

Gandhiji stood for tolerance, honesty and discipline in public life.

#### **Tolerance**

Differences of opinion are inevitable but these should not lead to bitterness and fighting. Such differences do not really matter but it is the meanness behind the fights which is ugly.<sup>260</sup> Intolerance, discourtesy and harshness are taboo in all good society and are surely contrary to the spirit of democracy.<sup>261</sup> Swaraj posits mutual toleration of views, no matter how distasteful they appear to us.<sup>262</sup> "Let us honour," said Gandhiji, "our opponents for the same honesty of purpose and patriotic motive that we claim for ourselves."<sup>263</sup> An opponent is entitled to the same regard and tolerance for his principles which we expect from others for ours.<sup>264</sup> An opponent is not bad because he opposes. He may be as honourable as we claim to be and yet there may be vital differences. So while a truthful characterization of the opponent's act is permissible, villifying him is out of the question.<sup>265</sup>

A distinction must be made between what we regard as evil and a person representing evil. There should be no hostility to persons but to the evil system and acts of individuals which are subversive of morals or the good of society.<sup>266</sup> Gandhiji's condemnation of the British rule must not be mistaken for condemnation of Englishmen. Condemnation of Englishmen as individuals was against his principles and would have amounted to denial of God by him.<sup>267</sup>

Rowdyism and hooliganism in dealing with opponents betrays small-mindedness and intolerance. Rowdyism at meetings of opponents is unjustifiable. There is

no necessity to attend and swell the attendance at the meetings held by opponents. But if one must attend, perfect decorum must be observed. Dissent from the views expressed by the speaker can be expressed only at the end of the meeting. If the remarks of the speaker sound offensive to one's ears, he may stage a courteous walkout; but a noisy demonstration is in bad taste. It is a sign of weakness. A dignified withdrawal is a sign of one's strength.<sup>268</sup>

Hooliganism manifesting itself in violence, arson, loot, incendiarism, etc. cannot be too severely condemned. Such were the acts which Gandhiji witnessed during the visit of Prince of Wales in 1921, which he described as "Swaraj" which "stank in his nostrils".<sup>269</sup> No amount of provocation can justify such hooliganism against one's opponents.

### Public Funds

No worthy public cause ever suffers for want of money. If there are honest, true and selfless workers, the required money will come. Honesty and integrity especially in the matter of public funds and purses is absolutely necessary. All those working for a public cause are trustees of the moneys collected. Trustees ought to take greater care in spending public funds than they would of their own money.<sup>270</sup> Accounts should be accurately kept and frequently published.<sup>271</sup> Purses should not be utilized for personal needs. It would be a terrible thing if the trust reposed in a public worker were abused. Public service must be like Caesar's wife, above suspicion.<sup>72</sup> "If the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?"<sup>273</sup>

As a general rule Gandhiji never identified himself with any fund where he did not know those associated with it and where he was not satisfied with their honesty.<sup>274</sup> Absolute honesty of those in charge of funds is undoubtedly necessary. Safety of the fund, however, ultimately lies in an intelligent vigilance of the public rather than in the strict integrity of those in charge of the fund.<sup>275</sup> Where the public is inert and apathetic, its interests are always in jeopardy.

## Discipline and Leadership

Nations are not easily made. Nothing great and enduring can be achieved without voluntary acceptance of discipline. That discipline will not come by academic debates, appeal to reason and logic. It will come only when zealous intelligent young men will train themselves in responsible work without any shield and will learn what responsibility and discipline are. "And out of this army of candidate leaders will arise one leader, who will not have to plead for obedience and discipline but who will command it as a matter of course, because he will have been tried in many a skirmish and will have proved his right to undisputed leadership."<sup>276</sup> The nation will never develop the requisite qualities of leadership unless leaders shoulder responsibilities and even dare to commit mistakes in acting contrary to the advice of even an exalted and revered leader.<sup>277</sup> It is a thousand times better that the country is undone through such mistakes rather than they be avoided through the perpetual guidance of a man be he ever so wise;<sup>78</sup> for the leaders will wrong themselves and those whom they lead, if they suppress their own judgment.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, this is the road not to growth but to disaster and ruin. Who can deny that the virtues discussed above are more necessary today than ever in our national life to become a democracy in the true sense of the word?

## The Balance-Sheet

Having broadly covered the basic tenets of Gandhiji's political philosophy, the final question that now remains to be answered is—Was Gandhiji a dismal political failure? If we strike a balance-sheet of his positive achievements and failures in politics, it will be easy to answer this question.

Gandhiji's contribution to both national and international politics is immense. He was primarily responsible for creating conditions under which peaceful transfer of power from British into Indian hands became possible. Further it was because of his inspiration, guidance and labour that India became a broad-based democracy. He placed India on the map of the world and in the eyes of foreigners India became synonymous with Gandhiji. The freedom of India also paved the way of the liberation of other colonial populations. Finally, he gave a

message of hope, in satyagraha, to the unarmed peoples everywhere for peaceful realization of their legitimate rights.

No objective student of history can possibly deny that the credit in the Indian side is due largely to Gandhiji for the way freedom came to India. He converted the Congress into a mass organization with the village as the nucleus. Thus he carried political consciousness right down to the villages wherein real India according to him lived. He reoriented the outlook of the people and reminded them that their destiny lay in their own hands and not in the hands of the British Parliament. He removed the load off their backs and made them stand erect. He drew out women from their seclusion and enabled them to take their rightful place in the national life. He gave a knockout blow to untouchability and restored to one-fifth of the Hindu population their human rights. Like a magnet, he attracted the they be avoided through the perpetual guidance of a man be he ever so wise;<sup>278</sup> for the leaders will wrong themselves and those whom they lead, if they suppress their own judgment.<sup>279</sup> Moreover, this is the road not to growth but to disaster and ruin. Who can deny that the virtues discussed above are more necessary today than ever in our national life to become a democracy in the true sense of the word?

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There was much misunderstanding and ignorance abroad about the conditions in India. The West had been introduced to the wisdom of its ancient philosophy through the researches of Western scholars. Modern India was to them, however, a picture of a degenerate civilization. Gandhiji's non-violent warfare on a mass scale focused the attention of the West on resurgent India and attracted the sympathy of its liberal-minded section. The political struggle in India also inspired other subject peoples to throw off their yoke and the freedom of India released winds of change which are still blowing over Asia,

Africa and Latin America. The map of the world is fast changing and will change further in years to come.

Satyagraha or soul force with non-violence as its pivot is a special contribution of Gandhiji to politics. The example of Gandhiji has inspired Martin Luther King of the United States of America to lead the struggle of Negroes for their civil rights. Nonviolence has particular relevance and significance for the world in this age of atom bomb and space research. If humanity is to be saved from destruction, peaceful ways of resolving international conflicts will have to be devised. The United Nations' Organization which has just celebrated twenty years of its existence is a step in this direction. But much more will have to be done before the world can be said to be safe from the destructive tendencies of man. Unless total disarmament with effective checks and controls is voluntarily accepted by the major military powers, ruin will continue to stare humanity in the face.

This is the positive side of the balance-sheet of Gandhiji. The negative side may now be stated. The major failure of Gandhiji was his inability to win the allegiance of Muslims in India and to preserve the unity of India. The genesis of Pakistan has already been discussed earlier. Gandhiji's failure was not however as much his as that of Indian Muslims. A noted Islamic scholar A. A. A. Fyzee has recently observed about Indian Muslims:

"For centuries they have not been integrated in this country. The fault is not easy to determine in terms of history. The Muslim has two personalities, an international personality (umma) and an Indian personality. The two have not made the necessary adjustments to constitute a healthy unit."<sup>280</sup>

A similar note was also struck in his recent utterances by another distinguished Muslim—M. C. Chagla, Union Minister for Education. In secular India of today, one man in every ten is a Muslim. He has another chance to make good. Will he? The future will tell its own story.

Another deficiency looking at Gandhiji as a politician is his lack of historical perspective and outlook. "He abstracted in true Indian tradition, the element of eternity from time, sought for religious truth and not historical significance."<sup>281</sup>

During his incarceration at Yeravda Central Prison in 1922-'24, he took the opportunity of reading among other books the classical works of Gibbon. Referring to these in his jail diary the conclusion he reaches is that the dividing line between fact and fiction is very thin and facts are after all opinions as they have at least two sides.<sup>282</sup> He observes: "I believe in the saying that a nation is happy that has no history. It is my pet theory that our Hindu ancestors solved the question for us by ignoring history as it is understood today and by building on slight events their philosophical structure. . . . That which is permanent and therefore necessary eludes the historian of events. Truth transcends history"<sup>283</sup>. As a result of Gandhiji's unawareness of the "reality of historical development" and "*time* as a substantial dimension", Reincourt opines that the progress of Indian nationalism was a "jerky, spasmodic and unpredictable movement."<sup>284</sup>

Subject India was protected from the menace of external aggression by the strength of British arms. It did not then matter much, if the leadership of the Indian national movement was not imbued with the philosophy of history. However, when India became free, and was dramatically exposed to the realities of international power politics during the Chinese invasion in 1962, the necessity of a historical perspective at once became apparant. The sad plight of India was a direct outcome of ignoring the famous dictum of Whitehead, underlying the philosophy of history—, that life is an offensive against the repetitive mechanism of the universe. In contrast, the handling of Cuban crisis by President Kennedy, at about the same time as the Chinese invasion of India, showed how a historical perspective can help in the solution of national problems.

Notwithstanding the lack of historical outlook, Gandhiji was *not* "a dismal political failure". In a political sense, victory was ultimately Gandhiji's. His is one of the greatest stories of success. His puny mortal frame will not be witnessed again. Great as he was in his life, he was greater in his death. As Pandit Nehru said, "The light that has illumined this country for these many years, will illumine this country for many more years and a thousand years later

that light will be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts."<sup>285</sup>

Gandhiji initiated the task of realizing the four freedoms which is left for us to complete. He also lighted the torch of freedom and peace that we have to carry forward, amidst turmoil and storms, clearing our way with intelligence, understanding, firmness and strength. Without these qualities the sands of time will run out under our very feet and we will be left where we are, without any future.

Bombay,

15 September, 1965

V B. Kher

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*A popular State can never act in advance of public opinion. If it goes against it, it will be destroyed. Democracy disciplined and enlightened is the finest thing in the world. A democracy prejudiced, ignorant, superstitious will land itself in chaos and may be self-destroyed. — M. K. Gandhi*

*Young India, 30-7-'31, p. 199*

**VOLUME 1: KINGDOM OF HEAVEN UPON EARTH**

## TO THE READER

I would like to say to the diligent reader of my writings and to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth I have discarded many, ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject.

M. K. GANDHI

*Harijan*, 29-4-1933, p. 2

**SECTION ONE:**

**POLITICS—NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL**

**1**

**IS POLITICS A GAME OF WORLDLY PEOPLE?**

(Originally appeared under the title L. Tilak's Letter)

To,

The Editor, *Young India*,

Ahmedabad

Dear Sir,

I am sorry to see that in your article on "Reform Resolution"1 in the last issue, you have represented me as holding that I considered 'everything fair in politics'. I write this to you to say that my view is not correctly represented herein. Politics is a game of worldly people and not of *sadhus*, and instead of the maxim 'अक्कोधेन जिने क्कोधं' preached by Buddha, I prefer to rely on the maxim of Sri Krishna 'ये यथामां प्रपंचते तां स्तथैव भजाम्यहम्'. That explains the whole difference and also the meaning of my phrase , 'responsive co-operation'. Both methods are equally honest and righteous but the one is more suited to this world than the other. Any further explanation about the difference will be found in my *Gita-Rahasya*.

Yours etc.,

B. G. Tilak

Poona City,

18-1-1920

I naturally feel the greatest diffidence about joining issue with the Lokamanya in matters involving questions of I interpretations of religious works. But there are things in or about which instinct transcends even interpretation. For me

there is no conflict between the two texts quoted by the Lokamanya. The Buddhist text lays down an eternal principle. The text from the Bhagavad Gita shows to me how the principle of conquering hate | by love, untruth by truth, can and must be applied. If it be true | that God metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to others, it follows that if we would escape condign punishment we | may not return anger for anger but gentleness even against anger. And this is the law not for the unworldly but essentially for the worldly. With deference to the Lokamanya I venture to say that it betrays mental laziness to think that the world is not for *sadhus*.

The epitome of all religions is to promote *Purushartha*, and *Purushartha* is nothing but a desperate attempt to become *sadhu* i.e. to become a gentleman in every sense of the term.

Finally, when I wrote the sentence about 'everything being fair in politics' according to the Lokamanya's creed, I had in mind his oft-repeated quotation शठं प्रति शाठ्यम्. To me it enunciates bad law. And I shall not despair of the Lokamanya with all his acumen agreeably surprising India one day with a philosophical dissertation proving the falsity of the doctrine. In any case I pit the experience of a third of a century against the doctrine underlying शठं प्रति शाठ्यम्. The true law is शठं प्रत्यपि सत्यं.

Young India, 28-1-'20, p. 3

1. At the Congress session held at Amritsar from 26th December, 1919, an official resolution on Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms was tabled. Gandhiji wanted to move an amendment to the resolution and press it to division if necessary. However Lokamanya agreed to the incorporation of the substance of the amendment in the resolution and the resolution with the amended amendment was passed. Later on Mrs. Beasant alleged that Tilak wanted to use Gandhiji as his tool as he had tried to use her three years earlier. In the article, "The Reforms Resolution in the Congress" which appeared in *Young India* of 14-1-'20, it was observed:

"We are unable to associate ourselves with the suggestion that L. Tilak in accepting the amendment wanted to use Messrs. Malaviya and Gandhi as his tools, and if they

allowed themselves to be so used it would not be the Lokamanya who would be to blame, but Messrs. Malaviya and Gandhi would be clearly held blameworthy for their simplicity. For as party formation progresses, we suppose it would be considered quite the proper thing for party leaders to use others as tools so long as there are any to be used. Care will therefore have to be taken rather to purify our politics, than for fear of being used as tools to hesitate to take the right course. L. Tilak represents a definite school of thought of which he makes no secret. He considers that everything is fair in politics. We have joined issue with him in that conception of political life. We consider that political life of the country will become thoroughly corrupt if we import Western tactics and methods. We believe that nothing but the strictest adherence to honesty, fair play and charity can advance the true interests of the country. But we refuse, because of the essential difference just pointed out, to believe that in accepting the amendment L. Tilak was guided by any motive other than that of meeting his opponents' views so far as it was possible."

## 2

### IS POLITICS NOT FOR A SANNYASIN?

(Originally appeared in "Notes" under the title "A Correspondent's Dilemma")

"I have been a student for some time past of your writings and speeches expressed through the pages of *Young India* or otherwise. So far as my feeble understanding goes, I find one great inconsistency in your views. On the one hand you place before man the ideal of a *sannyasin* which necessarily implies the renunciation of worldly things and devotion to God. On the other hand you are striving to win Swaraj for India which is not at all necessary for a *sannyasin*. I cannot understand how these two ideals are to be reconciled. Why should a *sannyasin* care for the political condition of his country? On the contrary, if he fixes his mind on such a low end, as even Swaraj should be for a *sannyasin*, he is no true *sannyasin* inasmuch as he has not lost attachment for worldly gains. For a *sannyasin* personally, therefore, Swaraj is not necessary. Secondly, if he were to achieve it for others, even then he errs because their minds are not fully developed. What is the good of leading people to a false goal?"

Thus writes a correspondent. I am not aware of having 'placed before man the ideal of a *sannyasin*'. On the contrary I have constantly kept before India the ideal of Swaraj. In doing so, I have preached simplicity no doubt. I have also preached Godliness. But Godliness, simplicity and kindred qualities are not the exclusive property or privilege of *sannyasins*. Moreover, I do not for one moment grant that a *sannyasin* need be a recluse caring not for the world. A *sannyasin* is one who cares not for himself but cares all his time for others. He has renounced all selfishness. But he is full of selfless activity even as God is full of sleepless and selfless activity. A *sannyasin*, therefore, to be true to his creed of renunciation must care for Swaraj, not for his own sake (he has it), but for the sake of others. He has no worldly ambition for himself. That does not mean that he may not help others to understand their place in the world. If the *sannyasins* of old did not seem to bother their heads about the political life of society, it was because society was differently constructed. But politics properly so-called rule every detail of our lives today. We come in touch, that is to say, with the State on hundreds of occasions whether we will or no. The State affects our moral being. A *sannyasin*, therefore, being well-wisher and servant *par excellence* of society, must concern himself with the relations of the people with the State, that is to say, he must show the way to the people to attain Swaraj. Thus conceived, Swaraj is not a false goal for any one. The Lokamanya never gave the country a greater truth than when he taught the meanest of us to say "Swaraj is my birthright". A *sannyasin* having attained Swaraj in his own person is the fittest to show us the way. A *sannyasin* is in the world, but he is not of the world. In all the most important functions of life he does exactly as we the common people do. Only his outlook upon them is different. He does without attachment the things we do with attachment. It is given to every one of us to cultivate detachment. It is a worthy aspiration surely for all.

*Young India*, 21-5-'25, p. 179

3

**SPIRITUALIZING THE POLITICAL LIFE**

(The following extracts are taken from a speech delivered by Gandhiji at Bangalore on unveiling a portrait of Mr. G. K. Gokhale in May, 1915.)

My dear countrymen,—Before I perform this ceremony to which you have called me, I wish to say this to you that you have given me a great opportunity or rather a privilege on this great occasion.... I have declared myself a disciple in the political field of one whose portrait you have asked me to unveil this morning and I have him as my *rajaguru*. It was in 1896 that I made this declaration, and I do not regret having made the choice.

Mr. Gokhale taught me that the dream of every Indian who claims to love his country, should be not to glorify in language but to spiritualize the political life of the country and the political institutions of the country. He inspired my life and is still inspiring; and in that I wish to purify myself and spiritualize myself. I have dedicated myself to that ideal. I may fail, and to what extent I may fail, I call myself to that extent an unworthy disciple of my master.

What is the meaning of spiritualizing the political life of the country? What is the meaning of spiritualizing myself? The question has come before me often and often and to you it may seem one thing, to me it may seem another thing; it may mean different things to the different members of the Servants of India Society itself. It shows much difficulty and it shows the difficulties, of all those who want to love their country, who want to serve their country and who want to honour their country. I think the political life must be an echo of private life and that there cannot be any divorce between the two.

\* \* \*

I was by the side of that saintly politician to the end of his life and I found no ego in him. I ask you, members of the Social Service League, if there is no ego in you. If he wanted to shine, if he wanted to shine in the political field of his country, he did so not in order that he might gain public applause, but in order

that his country may gain. He developed every particular faculty in him, not in order to win the praise of the world for himself, but in order that his country might gain. He did not seek public applause, but it was showered upon him, it was thrust upon him; he wanted that his country might gain and that was his great inspiration.

\* \* \*

You ask me to unveil this portrait today, and I will do so in all sincerity.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, G. A. Natesan & Co., 4th Edn., p. 1009

## 4

### SPIRITUALIZE YOUR POLITICS

(The Ceylon National Congress received Gandhiji at the Public Hall on 22nd November, 1927. In reply to the President's welcome Gandhiji made a speech which was published in *Young India* under the title "Message to Ceylon Congress". Some excerpts from the speech are given below.)

I belong to that body of political thought which was dominated by Gokhale. I have called him my political *guru*: nod that everything that he said or did I accepted or accept today, bud just because the moving force of his life (as I who came in the closest touch with him came to understand) was his intense desire to 'spiritualize polities'. This was his own expression in the preamble to the prospectus of the Servants of India Society, of which he was the founder and the first president. He makes the deliberate statement that he founded that Society in order to introduce spirituality into politics. He had studied the politics of] all the countries of the world and having been keenly disappointed to see a complete divorce between politics and] spirituality, he endeavoured to the best of his ability, and not] without some success—I was almost going to say not without] considerable success—to introduce that element into politics. And so it was that he adopted the name of the Servants of India for his Society, which is now serving India in a variety of ways. I do not know whether what I am saying commends itself to you or not, but if I am to show my gratitude for

all the kindness that you have lavishly showered upon me during my brief visit to this] beautiful country, if I am to show it in truth, I can only tell you] what I feel and not what will probably please you or tickle you. You know that this particular thing—truth—is an integral part of our Congress creed. And we have therefore in the creed the attainment of Swaraj by legitimate and non-violent means.

You will find that I have not been tired of insisting upon truth at any cost, and non-violence at any cost. Given these two conditions in my humble opinion, you can hurl defiance at the mightiest power on earth—and still come away not only yourselves unscathed but you will leave your so-called adversary also uninjured and unhurt. For the time being he may misunderstand the non-violent blows that you deal, he may misrepresent you also, but you don't need to consult his feelings or opinions so long as you are fulfilling these two absolute conditions. Then it is well with you, and you can march forward with greater speed than otherwise. The way may appear to be long, but if you take my experience extending over a period of 30 years uninterruptedly, without exception, I give you my assurance that it is the shortest cut to success. I have known no shorter road. I know that it very often requires great faith and immense patience, but if this one thing is fixed on our minds, then there is no other way open to a politician, if he is to serve not himself, but the whole nation. If once that determination is made, then comes faith and with that faith comes also patience, because you know that there is no better or shorter road.

*Young India*, 1-12-'27, p. 402 at p. 403

5

**POLITICS AND RELIGION**

I

(From "May God Help")

For me there is no politics without religion—not the religion of the superstitious and the blind, religion that hates and fights, but the universal Religion of Toleration. Politics without morality is a thing to be avoided. "Then," says the critic, "I must retire from all public activity." Such however is not my experience. I must try to Jive in society and yet remain untouched by its pitfalls.

*Young India, 27-11-'24, p. 390*

II

(From Gandhiji's reply to an address from the public at Pannampet in Coorg—a gist of which appeared in "Weekly Letter—No. 16" by C. S.)

The whole of my life is saturated with the religious spirit. I could not live for a single second without religion. Many of my political friends despair of me, because they say that even my politics are derived from my religion. And they are right. My politics and all other activities of mine, are derived from my religion. I go farther and say that every activity of a man of religion must be derived from his religion, because religion means i being bound to God, that is to say, God rules your every breath. If: you recognize that truth, naturally God regulates every activity of i yours.

*Harijan, 2-3-'34, p. 18 at p. 23*

### III

(From "Question Box")

Q. In your *Autobiography* you have said that you cannot; think of politics apart from religion. Do you still hold that view? If so, how is it that in a country of many diverse religions like i India you expect a common political policy to be adopted?

A. Yes, I still hold the view that I cannot conceive politics as divorced from religion. Indeed religion should pervade every one of our actions. Mere religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in ordered moral government of the universe. It is not less real because it is unseen. This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.

*Harijan*, 10-2-'40, p. 445

### 6

#### POLITICS AND PRIESTHOOD

(From the summary of Gandhiji's speech at Shwe Dagon in Rangoon before a meeting of Burmese *foongis* and the laity which appeared in the article by M. D. "With Gandhiji in Burma")

I was glad to find you telling me that the *foongis* were leading the political movement in Burma but you have a very serious responsibility upon your shoulders when you undertake to lead' the political battle. History shows that the priesthood has not always interfered with political matters to the benefit of mankind. Very often unworthy ambition has moved the priesthood of the world as it has moved unscrupulous men to take part in politics, and if now you *foongis* aspire to lead the political movement of this, one of the fairest lands on the face of the earth, you are shouldering a tremendous responsibility. I would ask you not only to be pure beyond suspicion, but I would ask you to combine with stainless purity, great wisdom and great ability. This very essential condition being granted you will find that the whole of Burma will be

at your beck and call and will respond to your lead. May the spirit of the great Lord Buddha under whose shadow we are now seated guide every one connected with the movement.

*Young India*, 28-3-'29, p. 97 at p. 99

## 7

### **POLITICS OF THE MASSES**

(From "The Realities")

The Congress must progressively represent the masses. They are as yet untouched by politics. They have no political consciousness of the type our politicians desire. Their politics are confined to bread and salt—I dare not say butter, for millions do not know the taste of ghee or even oil. Their politics are confined to communal adjustments. It is right however to say that we the politicians do represent the masses in opposition to the Government. But if we begin to use them before they are ready, we shall cease to represent them. We must first come in living touch with them by working for them and in their midst. We must share their sorrows, understand their difficulties and anticipate their wants. With the pariahs we must be pariahs and see how we feel to clean the closets of the upper classes and have the remains of their table thrown at us. We must see how we like being in the boxes, miscalled houses, of the labourers of Bombay. We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their clothes and pots and in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call.

*Young India*, 11-9-'24, p. 300

8

MY POLITICS AND PATRIOTISM

I

(From "To the Members of the All-India Home Rule League")

I believe that it is possible to introduce uncompromising truth and honesty in the political life of the country. Whilst I would not expect the League<sup>1</sup> to follow me in my civil disobedience methods, I would strain every nerve to make truth and non-violence accepted in all our national activities. Then we shall cease to fear or distrust Governments and their measures. I do not wish however to develop the theme any further. I would rather let time solve the many questions that must arise from the bald statement I have made.

*Young India*, 28-4-'20, p. 1

II

(From "Neither a Saint Nor a Politician")

The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and if I seem to take part in politics, it is because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish therefore to wrestle with the snake, as I have been doing with more or less success consciously since 1894, unconsciously, as I have now discovered, ever since reaching years of discretion. Quite selfishly, as I wish to live in peace in the midst of a bellowing storm howling round me, I have been experimenting with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics. Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and whichever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul

utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.

*Young India*, 12-5-'20, p. 2

### III

(From "For the Readers Past and Present of *Young India*")

I live for India's freedom and would die for it, because it is part of Truth. Only a free India can worship the true God. I work for India's freedom because my Swadeshi teaches me that being born in it and having inherited her culture, I am fittest to serve *her* and *she* has a prior claim to my service. But my patriotism is not exclusive; it is calculated not only not to hurt any other nation but to benefit all in the true sense of the word. India's freedom as conceived by me can never be a menace to the world.

But if it is not to be such a menace, the means adopted for gaining it must be strictly non-violent. My interest in India's freedom will cease if she adopts violent means for their fruit will be not freedom but slavery in disguise.

*Young India*, 3-4-'24, p. 109

### IV

(From "My Mission")

I do not consider myself worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with the race of prophets. I am a humble seeker after Truth. I am impatient to realize myself, to attain *Moksha* in this very existence. My national service is part of nay training for freeing my soul from the bondage of flesh. Thus considered, my service may be regarded as purely selfish. I have no desire for the perishable kingdom of earth. I am striving for the Kingdom of Heaven which is *Moksha*. To attain my end it is not necessary for me to seek the shelter of a cave. I carry one about me, if I would but know it. A cave-dweller can build castles in the air whereas a dweller in a palace like Janak has no castles to build. The cave-

dweller who hovers round the world on the wings of thought has no peace. A Janak though living in the midst of "pomp and circumstance" may have peace that passeth understanding. For me the road to salvation lies through incessant toil in the service of my country and there through of humanity. I want to identify myself with everything that lives. In the language of the Gita I want to live at peace with both friend and foe. Though therefore] a Mussalman or a Christian or a Hindu may despise me and hate me, I want to love him and serve him even as I would love my wife or son though they hate me. So my patriotism is for me a stage in my journey to the land of eternal freedom and peace. Thus it will be seen that for me there are no politics devoid of religion. They subserve religion. Politics bereft of religion are a death-trap because they kill the soul.

*Young India*, 3-4-'24, p. 113

## V

(From comments which originally appeared in "Notes" under the title "A Bad Comparison")

I lay claim to nothing exclusively divine in me. I do not claim prophetship. I am but a humble seeker after Truth and bent upon finding It. I count no sacrifice too great for the sake of seeing God face to face. The whole of my activity whether it may be called social, political, humanitarian and ethical is directed to that end. And as I know that God is found more often in the lowliest of His creatures than in the high and mighty, I am struggling to reach the status of these. I cannot do so without their service. Hence my passion for the service of the suppressed classes. And as I cannot render this service without entering politics, I find myself in them. Thus I am no master. I am but a struggling, erring, humble servant of India and there through of humanity.

*Young India*, 1-9-'24, p. 297 at p. 298

## VI

(From "With Gandhiji in Bengal—IV" by M. D.)

For me, politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words a seeker after God and Truth. For me, God and Truth are convertible terms and if any one told me that God was a god of untruth or a god of torture I would decline to worship him. Therefore in politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.

*Young India*, 18-6-'25, p. 214

## VII

(From "To American Friends")

I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity.

*Young India*, 17-8-'25, p. 320

## VIII

(From Autobiography, Part V, "Farewell")

My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth. . . . The little fleeting glimpses . . . that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable lustre of Truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes. In fact what I have caught is only the faintest glimmer of that mighty effulgence. But this much I can say with assurance, as a result of all my experiments that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa.

To see the universal and all pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after

that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.

## IX

(One of the questions and answer thereto from an article titled "A Student's Questions" are reproduced below.)

Q. What are you doing in India just now? Have you given up political leadership and politics?

A. At the present moment I am enjoying what may be called well-earned rest, and at the same time trying to develop the working of the All-India Spinners' Association which is at present the only all-India activity that engages my attention. My political leadership technically ended with the closing of the year for which I was President of the Congress, but in reality it ended with my incarceration. But I have not given up politics in my sense of the term. I never was a politician in any other sense. My politics concern themselves with internal growth but being of a universal nature they react upon the external in a most effective manner.

*Young India, 25-2-'26, p. 77*

## X

(The following paragraph is taken from an article which originally appeared under the title "A Candid Critic".)

To clothe me with sainthood is too early, even if it is possible. I myself do not feel a saint in any shape or form. But I do feel I am a votary of Truth in spite of all my errors of unconscious omission and commission. The correspondent has judged rightly that I am not 'a statesman in the garb of a saint'. But since Truth is the highest wisdom, sometimes my acts appear to be consistent with the

highest statesmanship. But I hope I have no policy in me save the policy of Truth and Ahimsa. I will not sacrifice Truth and Ahimsa even for the deliverance of my country or religion. This is as much as to say that neither can be so delivered.

*Young India*, 20-1-'27, p. 21

## XI

(From a paragraph in "Notes" which appeared under the title "In Justice to Her Memory")

I introduced Sister Nivedita, Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Devendranath and others in the story,<sup>2</sup> simply to illustrate my desperate search, and to illustrate the point that even then my political work was an integral part of that search which was never once subordinated to the political work.

*Young India*, 30-6-'27, p. 214

## XII

(An extract from Gandhiji's reply to the Rangoon citizens' address is reproduced from the text of the speech which was originally published under the title "My Conception of Patriotism".)

My mission is not merely brotherhood of Indian humanity. My mission is not merely freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and the whole of my time. But through realization of freedom of India I hope to realize and carry on the mission of brotherhood of man. My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all-embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or the exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism is nothing if it is not always in every case without exception consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large. Not only that but my religion and my patriotism derived from my religion embrace all life. I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with the

beings called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such beings as crawl upon earth. I want, if I don't give you a shock to realize identity with even the crawling things on earth, because we claim common descent from the same God, and that being so, all life in whatever form it appears must be essentially one. I can, therefore, safely claim all the credit that you may choose to give me in describing my mission of brotherhood of man.

*Young India*, 4-4-'29, p. 107

### XIII

I am quite sure that no one would have cared for my politics if I was not pledged to truth and non-violence. Truth was instinctive with me, non-violence came later. ... I should not be a votary of principles which depended for their existence on politics or anything else. I am their votary because they are omnipotent. Why do I regard truth and non-violence as synonymous with God? It is because I can make no one else or thing my God even as I have made no one my *guru*. They are priceless things and one has to purchase them with one's life.

*Harijan*, 1-5-'37, p. 88

### XIV

(From "Weekly Letter" by Pyarelal)

An American journalist asked Gandhiji:

"Is it possible that your activities may some day be removed from the political field?"

"Perhaps you do not know" replied Gandhiji, "that I felt compelled to come into the political field because I found that I could not do even social work without touching politics. I feel that political work must be looked upon in terms of social and moral progress. In democracy, no part of life is untouched by politics. Under the British you cannot escape politics in the good sense. It

embraces the whole life. All who breathe must pay a tax. That is British rule in India. Take the Salt Tax for instance. It concerns everybody. The Collector of revenue and the policeman are the only symbols by which millions in India's villages know British rule. One cannot sit still while the people are being ravaged."

"Then your job will never be finished," remarked the friend.

"It will be finished only with my death. I must be watchful, whether it is the foreign government that is in power or indigenous, if I am a social reformer in the true sense of the term. This is applicable to all."

*Harijan*, 6-10-'46, p. 341

## XV

(From "Notes")

A question was put to Gandhiji whether he would leave politics after the 15th of August 1947 when India would be free.

The reply of Gandhiji was as follows:

In the first instance, there is no freedom approaching the Kingdom of God. We seem to be as far from it as ever. And in any case the life of the millions is my politics from which I dare not free myself without denying my life-work and God. That my politics may take a different turn is quite possible. But that will be determined by circumstances.

*Harijan*, 17-8-'47, p. 281

1 The All-India Home Rule League of which Gandhiji had accepted the Presidentship.

2 i.e. The Story of *My Experiments with Truth* as the Autobiography is called.

### **PATRIOTISM SAME AS HUMANITY**

(Originally appeared in "Notes" under the title "Humanity v. Patriotism")

A dear friend had drawn my attention to what he considers is an unfortunate appeal to patriotism rather than humanity in my letter to the Sikhs. The portion objected to is this: "The purest way of seeking justice against the murderers is not to seek it. The perpetrators, whether they are Sikhs, Pathans or Hindus are our countrymen. Their punishment cannot recall the dead to life. I would ask those whose hearts are lacerated to forgive them, not out of their weakness – for they are able in every way to have them punished– but out of their immeasurable strength. Only the strong can forgive." I have read the foregoing again and again. I feel that if I had to rewrite the letter, I should not alter a single word in it. My appeal in that letter is to the Sikhs as Indians. And it was enough for me to confine my appeal to the point that could be easily appreciated and reached by those whom I was addressing. The main reasoning would be the same for all, and at all times. My letter as addressed to the Sikhs would have lost its force somewhat if I had broadened the appeal as from patriotism to humanity. A Sikh who will want to punish a non- Sikh criminal but would forgive a Sikh may be told that to him Sikh and Indian must mean the same thing in matters such as the incident covers. The appeal to an Indian as against an Englishman will be to his humanity rather than to his patriotism.

But I am free to confess that in the present state of feeling, an Englishman may easily misinterpret the motive of the letter. For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. It is not exclusive. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India. Imperialism has no place in my scheme of life. The law of a patriot is not different from that of the patriarch. And a patriot is so much the less a patriot if he is a lukewarm humanitarian. There is no conflict between private and political law. A non-co-operator, for

instance would act exactly in the same manner towards his father or brother as he is today acting towards the Government.

*Young India*, March 16, 1921, p. 81

## 10

### **PATRIOTISM SUBORDINATE TO LOYALTY TO GOD**

(From "Notes")

Q. Should loyal to ones motherland be conditional, and if so how?

A Loyalty to the country is always subordinate to loyalty to God.

*Young India*, 20-10-1921, p. 329 at p. 333

## 11

### **UNIVERSAL INTER-DEPENDENCE RATHER THAN INDEPENDENCE**

(From "Presidential Address" by Gandhiji at the 39th Indian National Congress, Belgaum)

I would . . . strive for Swaraj within the Empire, but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people. The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather than independence.

*Young India*, 26-12-'24, p. 419 at p. 425

12

**MY IDEA OF NATIONALISM**

(From "Race-hatred and Nationalism")

Hatred is not essential for nationalism. Race-hatred will kill the real national spirit. Let us understand what nationalism is. We want freedom for our country, but not at the expense or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other countries. For my own part I do not want the freedom of India if it means the extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love therefore of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human races may live. There is no room for race-hatred there. Let that be our nationalism.

*Young India*, 10-9-'25, p. 314

13

**WHEN IS NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE NO MENACE?**

(From "Difficulty of Practice")

National independence is not fiction. It is as necessary as individual independence. But neither, if it is based on non-violence, may ever be a menace to the equal independence of the nation or the individual, as the case may be. As with individual and national independence, so with the international. The legal maxim is equally moral: *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas*. It has been well said that the universe is compressed in the atom. There is not one law for the atom and another for the universe.

*Young India*, 30-1-'30, p. 37

14

**MY NATIONALISM**

(From "The Giant and the Dwarf")

My notion of *Purna* Swaraj is not isolated independence but healthy and dignified independence. My nationalism, fierce though it is, is not exclusive, is not devised to harm any nation or individual. Legal maxims are not so legal as they are moral. I believe in the eternal truth of '*sic utere tuo ut alienum noru laedas*'.<sup>1</sup>

*Young India*, 26-3-'31, p. 50 at p. 51

1 Meaning: Use thy own property so as not to injure thy neighbour's.

15

**NATIONALISM v. INTERNATIONALISM**

(From "Notes")

A gentleman met me in Darjeeling and related to me the story of a nurse who preferred not to serve her nation to the injury of others. The story was, I could see at once, related for my edification. I gently explained to the friend that evidently that he had not followed my writings or doings, though he claimed to have done so. I told him, too, that my patriotism was not; narrow, and that, it included not merely the welfare of India but the whole world. I told him further, that being a humble man knowing my own limitations, I was satisfied with the service of my own country, taking care at the same time that I did nothing with the intention of injuring another country. In my opinion, it is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when, nationalism becomes a fact, i.e. when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on, the ruin of the other. Indian nationalism has, I hope, struck a different path. It wants to organize itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large. Anyway, there is no uncertainty about my patriotism or nationalism. God having cast my lot in the midst of the people of India, I should be untrue to my Maker if I failed to serve them. I shall never know how to serve humanity. And I cannot possibly go wrong so long as I do not harm other nations in the act of serving my country.

*Young India*, 18-6-'25, p. 210 at p. 211

16

**WORLD FEDERATION**

(From "Question Box")

Q. Instead of striving for India's freedom why would you not strive for a far greater and nobler end—world federation? Surely that will automatically include India's freedom as the greater includes the less.

A There is an obvious fallacy in this question. Federation is undoubtedly a greater and nobler end for free nations. It is greater and nobler end for them to strive to promote federation than be self-centred, seeking only to preserve their own freedom. They are finding it difficult if not impossible for individuals to retain freedom without a combination. It has become a necessity while the war lasts and it will be good if they voluntarily pledge themselves now, to remain united even after the war. Defeat of any one member should make no difference. The survivors will not rest content till the defeated member is avenged. Still this won't be a world federation. It would be a mere defensive alliance between a certain combinations. The very first step to a world federation is to recognize the freedom of conquered and exploited nations. Thus, India and Africa have to be freed. The second step would be to announce and assure the aggressor powers, in the present instance, the Axis powers, that immediately the war ends, they will be recognized as members of the world federation in the same sense as the Allies. This presupposes an agreement among the members of the world federation as to the irreducible fundamentals. If this is not forthcoming, the federation will fall to pieces under the slightest strain. Therefore it has to come about voluntarily. I suggest that non-violence is the basis of voluntariness. It is because of all the nations of the world India is the one nation which has a message, however limited and crude it may be, in that direction that it must have immediate freedom to enable it to play its part. You may not quote against me Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I know that they do not hold the view I hold on non-violence. When India gets her freedom the probability is that I shall no longer

be wanted by any party and everybody would be war-mad. Nevertheless there will be, I am quite sure, a respectable number of votaries of no violence who will make their contribution. But this subject is not germane to the question. Moreover, I am discussing that aspect more fully elsewhere. I hope you will agree with me that India, in seeking first to be free, is not retarding federation. It wants her, freedom for the sake of the nations in distress, especially China and Russia and for the whole of humanity—in your language world federation. You will also, I hope, see that no universal federation is possible without India becoming free now. It would be an earnest too of the Allied declarations.

*Harijan*, 9-8-1942, p. 265

## SECTION TWO : ORGANIC SWARAJ

17

### MY SWARAJ

(From "To the Members of the All India Congress Committee")

My Swaraj is to keep intact the genius of our civilization. I want to write many new things but they must be all written on the Indian Slate. I would gladly borrow from the West when I can return the amount with decent interest.

*Young India*, 26-6-'24, p. 209 at p. 210

18

### RAMA RAJYA

(From an English translation of Gandhiji's presidential address at the 3rd Kathiawad Political Conference held at Bhavnagar on 8-1-1925 which was published under the heading "Kathiawad Political Conference".)

My ideal of Indian States is that of Ramarajya. Rama taking his cue from a washerman's remark and in order to satisfy his subjects abandoned Sita who was dear to him as life itself and was a very incarnation of pity. Rama did justice even to a dog. By abandoning his kingdom and living in the forest for the sake of truth Rama gave to all kings of the world an object lesson in noble conduct. By his strict monogamy he showed that a life of perfect self-restraint could be led by a royal house holder. He lent splendour to his throne by his popular administration and proved that Ramarajya was the acme of Swaraj. Rama did not need the very imperfect modern instrument of ascertaining public opinion by counting votes. He had captivated the hearts of the people. He knew public opinion by intuition as it were. The subjects of Rama were supremely happy.

Such Ramarajya is possible even today. The race of Rama is not extinct. In modern times, the first Caliphs may be said to have established Ramarajya. Abubaker and Hazrat Umar collected revenue running into crores and yet personally they were as good as *fakirs*. They received not a pie from the public treasury. They were ever watchful to see that the people got justice. It was their principle that one may not play false even with the enemy but must deal justly with him.

*Young India*, 3-1-'25, p. 9 at p. 13

## 19

### SELF-GOVERNMENT AND THE STATE

(From "Teachers' Condition")

Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life.

*Young India*, 6-8-'25, p. 275 at p. 276

## 20

### SWARAJ AS FRUIT OF DUTY PERFORMED

(From "Swaraj or Death")

The correspondent reminds me of a statement made by me at Belgaum that probably at the end of the year if there is not much headway made, I would find a way whereby we could make our final choice and say 'Death or Swaraj'. He has evidently in mind some strange upheaval in which all distinction between violence and non-violence will be abolished. Such confusion as will most assuredly lead to self-indulgence is not self-rule. Self-indulgence is anarchy, and though anarchy is every-time better than slavery or suppression of self it is a state which I would not only have no hand in consciously bringing

into being but which I am by nature unfitted to bring about. Any method of 'Death or Swaraj' that I may suggest will always avoid confusion and anarchy. My Swaraj will be therefore not a result of murder of others but a voluntary act of continuous self-sacrifice. My Swaraj will not be a bloody usurpation of rights but the acquisition of power will be a beautiful and natural fruit of duty well and truly performed. It will, therefore, provide amplest excitement of the Chaitanya type not of the Nero type. I have no formula at the present moment but with my correspondent I share the belief that it will be a divine guidance. I am awaiting the sign. It can come, often does come when the horizon is the blackest. But I know that it will be preceded by the rise of a class of young men and women who will find full excitement in work, work and nothing but work for the nation.

*Young India*, 27-8-'25, p. 296 at p. 297

## 21

### THE FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT

(From "Swaraj or Death")

The correspondent's mistake lies in his misconception of the function of government. He evidently thinks that an ideal government is that which orders everything for us so that we need not think for ourselves. Whereas, in truth a government that is ideal governs the least. It is no self-government that leaves nothing for the people to do. That is pupilage— our present state. My correspondent is evidently unable as yet to rise superior to that state. But if we are to attain Swaraj, a large number of us must outgrow enforced nonage and feel our adolescence. We must govern ourselves at least where there is no deadly opposition from armed authority. . . . If we impute all our weaknesses to the present government, we shall never shed them.

*Young India*, 27-8-1925, p. 296 at p. 297

## 22

### SWARAJ OF THE MASSES

(From a paragraph in "Notes" which appeared under the title "Not Despondent")

He who runs may see that though non-co-operation has not brought us Swaraj in the tangible sense that the people understand, it has revolutionized our political aspect; has brought into being mass consciousness which in my opinion nothing else could have done. And there is no doubt about it that whenever freedom comes, it will come through some application of non-cooperation including civil disobedience. For, in spite of whatever may be said to the contrary, the method of violence has no following worth the name especially among the masses, and no method for the attainment of Swaraj can possibly succeed unless the masses also adopt it. If the definition of Swaraj includes the freedom not of a certain number of individuals or certain classes but of the whole of the masses of India, only non-co-operation and all that it means can regulate that mass consciousness which is absolutely necessary for democratic Swaraj. Only non-violent, and therefore constructive methods, will weld the masses together and fire them with a national purpose and give them the desire and ability to achieve and defend national freedom.

*Young India*, 18-3-'26, p. 104

## 23

### MEANING OF SELF-GOVERNMENT

(The Ceylon National Congress received Gandhiji at the Public Hall on 22nd November, 1927. In reply to the welcome address of the President, Gandhiji made a speech which was originally published in *Young India* under the title "Message to Ceylon Congress". An extract therefrom is given below.)

But I have also come to the conclusion that self-expression and self-government are not things which may be either taken from us by anybody or which can be

given us by anybody. It is quite true that if those who happen to hold our destinies, or seem to hold our destinies in their hands are favourably disposed, are sympathetic, understand our aspirations, no doubt it is then easier for us to expand. But after all self-government depends entirely upon our own internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it is not worth the name. I have therefore endeavoured to show both in word and in deed, that political self-government—that is self-government for a large number of men and women—is no better than individual self-government, and therefore it is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule, and so as you know also, I have striven in India to place this ideal before the people in season and out of season, very often much to the disgust of those who are politically minded merely.

*Young India*, 1-12-'27, p. 402

## 24

### ALPHA AND OMEGA OF ORGANIC SWARAJ

(Some extracts from an address by Gandhiji to the volunteers of Bardoli Taluka delivered on 12th August, 1928 which appeared under the title "Work As You Have Fought")

#### **The Acid Test**

Although the battle is fought and won, may I remind you that your task has only just begun? The pledge, that you took in 1922 under this very tree<sup>1</sup> after a searching cross-examination and which you have reiterated times without number since then, still hangs on your head, and so long as it remains unfulfilled, you dare not put off your uniforms. The work which you will have now to do will constitute your acid test.

### **Fighting not the only Work**

You are labouring under a great delusion if you think that fighting by itself will bring Swaraj. Let me tell you that even veteran warriors, men of the sword do not make fighting the sole concern of their lives. Garibaldi was a great Italian General, but he drove the plough and tilled the soil just like an ordinary peasant whenever he could get respite from fighting. Again what was Botha, the South African General? A farmer among the farmers like any in Bardoli. A great keeper of sheep as he was, his flock numbered forty thousand. As a judge of sheep he could hold his own against any expert and even won a diploma for sheep keeping. Although he won laurels as a general, fighting occupied only a small part of his life which was mostly devoted to 'peaceful constructive pursuits. He thus showed constructive talent of no mean order. And General Smuts? He was not merely distinguished General but a lawyer by profession, being at one time the Attorney General of South Africa, and an excellent farmer to boot. He has an extensive farm near Pretoria and his fruit orchard is among the finest in South Africa. All these are instances of men who though they made their mark in the world as generals were none the less keenly alive to the value and importance of steady constructive work.

South Africa was not from very first the rich prosperous country that it is today. When the colonists arrived there, they found before-them an undeveloped country. They cleared the waste and established a prosperous colony on it. Do you think they did it by mere dint of fighting? No. The development was the result of patient constructive labour. Will you follow Vallabhbhai's lead in his constructive campaign just as you did when he led you against the Government, will you take up the burden of constructive work, or will you hang back? Remember, if you fail in this, all the fruits of your victory will be lost and the peasants' last state will be worse than their first in spite of one lakh of enhanced assessment that they might save as a result of this struggle.

### **Repair and Reconstruction**

Look at the condition of the roads in your Taluka. The local volunteers can clean them up and set them in proper order by a couple of days' effort if they

like. And once they are set in order, it should not need more than half an hour's instruction daily to teach the villagers how to keep them in a fit condition. You may doubt, but you may take it from me that there is a very close connection between this sort of work and Swaraj. Driving out the English will not by itself establish Swaraj in India. Of course we must fight when our liberty is interfered with. But what next? Do we want the Swaraj of barbarism, freedom to live like pigs in a pigsty, without let or hindrance from anybody? Or do we want the Swaraj of orderliness in which every man and everything is in his or its proper place? Only yesterday I had to motor from Vankaner to Bardoli, the journey well nigh finished me. The road was so wretched. This reminds me of a similar incident that once happened in Champaran. The road was bad, but the volunteers there put their shoulders to the wheel and forthwith made the necessary repairs without waiting for anybody's help. It is no use saying that this is the duty of the Government and not yours. The Government has no doubt many a grievous sin to answer for. Let us not impute our sins also to the Government or use the latter's lapses to justify ours. Enough unto the day is the evil thereof. Surely the Government cannot prevent us from repairing our roads if we want to.

### **Village Sanitation**

Then, may I ask you what you have done to popularize the principles of sanitation and hygiene in the villages? It involves no complications as in untouchability. It only puts to the test our sincerity and depth of feeling towards those amongst whom we live. We shall be unfit for Swaraj if we are unconcerned about our neighbour's insanitation and are content merely to keep our own surroundings clean. With the wonderful awakening and the spirit of co-operation that has come over the men and women of Bardoli, you should be able to convert it into a model Taluka. By a general cleanup of the village surroundings, you should be able completely to eliminate the danger of scorpions and poisonous reptiles that infest this Taluka. And I want to burn the lesson deep on your mind that all this will constitute a distinct step towards Swaraj.

\* \* \*

## Organic Swaraj

An act of Parliament might give you constitutional Swaraj. But it will be a mere chimera that will profit us but little, if we are unable to solve these internal problems.<sup>1</sup> In fact, ability to solve these problems, is the alpha and omega of real Swaraj, the Swaraj of the masses that we all want.

*Young India*, 13-9-'28, p. 310

1 The internal problems besides bad roads, village sanitation referred to by Gandhiji in his speech were, temperance, communal unity, Khadi, removal of untouchability, and evils of child marriage, marriage of young girls with aged men and inhuman treatment accorded to widows.

## 25

### REFORMS IN NATIONAL LIFE FOR ATTAINING SWARAJ

(An extract from an article published under the heading "A National Defect" is reproduced below.)

There is, I know, the custom of saying that these reforms must not be permitted to take the nation's attention away from the work of Swaraj. I venture to submit that conservation of national sanitation is Swaraj work and may not be postponed for a single day on any consideration whatsoever. Indeed if Swaraj is to be had by peaceful methods it will only be attained by attention to every little detail of national life. Such work will promote cohesion among workers and create an indissoluble bond between them and the people—a bond necessary for the final overthrow of the existing system of Government. The system depends for its existence upon the weaknesses of the nation. If there are no weaknesses to exist, it will automatically cease to exist. A foreign government is like a foreign body in a diseased system. And even as for eradication of a foreign body the system has to be made healthy from within, so also for the removal of a foreign government, it is necessary to remove all

the internal causes of disease. Corporate insanitation is not the least of such diseases.

*Young India*, 25-4-'29, p. 132

## 26

### FREEDOM TO THE FREE

(From "Notes")

Whilst we are cutting one another's throats in the name of religion and some of us running to the Statutory Commission in the vain hope of getting freedom, a friend sends me the following from James Allen to remind us that even in the land of so-called freedom, the real freedom has still to come. Here is the passage:

"All outward oppression is but the shadow and effect of the real oppression within. For ages the oppressed have cried for liberty, and a thousand man-made statutes have failed to give it to them. They can give it only to themselves; they shall find it only in obedience to the Divine Statutes which are inscribed upon their hearts. Let them resort to the inward freedom, and the shadow of oppression shall no more darken the earth. Let men cease to oppress themselves, and no man shall oppress his brother. Men legislate for an outward freedom, yet continue to render such freedom impossible of achievement by fostering an inward condition of enslavement. They thus pursue a shadow without, and ignore the substance within. All outward forms of bondage and oppression will cease to be when man ceases to be the willing bond-slave of passion, error and ignorance."

The outward freedom therefore that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is the correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated upon achieving reform from within. In this much needed work all who will can take; an equal share. We need neither to be lawyers, nor

legislators to be able to take part in the great effort. When this reform takes place on a national scale no outside power can stop our onward march.

*Young India*, 1-11-'28, p. 363

## 27

### INDEPENDENCE NOT AN END IN ITSELF

(From "My Inconsistencies")

Boycott of legislatures is wholly consistent with the demand for the reforms suggested in the eleven points.<sup>1</sup> I would myself sit if need be in a legislature in which the passage of the reforms is assured. But the existing legislatures are powerless to pass most of those measures if any at all. I have not said that the struggle for independence is to cease the moment eleven points are gained. What I have said is, that if they are gained, the Congress will lift the ban on the conference and that civil disobedience will be suspended. The points were mentioned in order to prevent the misconception that the Viceroy's speech had given rise to. Even the independence constitution is not an end in itself. Independence is wanted in order to remove the grievous defects of the present rule. Independence means at least those eleven points, if it means anything at all to the masses, the man in the street. Mere withdrawal of the English is not independence. It means the consciousness in the average villager that he is the maker of his own destiny, he is his own legislator through his chosen representatives. The eleven points are some of the vital tests of the villagers' authority. The very letter of the Bezwada barrister shows how necessary it was to clear the issue. By mentioning the eleven points I have given a body in part to the elusive word independence. I should be prepared to reconsider my attitude towards the legislatures if the legislators can accomplish the things covered by the eleven points. And if they are covered, I should have no hesitation in advising Congress representation at the Conference where independence could be made the basis. For I do conceive the possibility of a Conference even for discussing an Independence Constitution.

*Young India*, 13-2-'30, p. 52

1. Total prohibition, 2. Reduction in the ratio to 1s. 4d., 3. Reduction of the land revenue to be at least 50% and making it subject to legislative control, 4. Abolition of the salt tax, 5. Reduction of the military expenditure to at least 50% to begin with, 6. Reduction of the salaries of the higher grade service to one-half or less so as to suit the reduced revenue, 7. Protective tariff on foreign cloth, 8. The passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill, 9. Discharge of all political prisoners save those condemned for murder or the attempt threat by the ordinary judicial tribunal, withdrawal of all political prosecutions, abrogation of Section, 124A, the Regulation of 1818 and the like, and permission to all the Indian exiles to return, 10. Abolition of C.I.D. or its popular control, 11. Issue of licences to use fire arms for self-defence subject to popular control.

*Young India*, 30-1-'30, p. 36

## 28

### SWARAJ IS EMANCIPATION

(An extract from an English translation of Gandhiji's reply to an address presented by the Bombay Municipal Corporation is given below from "Weekly Letter" by M. D.)

I claim to live for the semi-starved paupers of India and Swaraj means the emancipation of these millions of skeletons. Purna Swaraj denotes a condition of things when the dumb and the lame millions will speak and walk. That Swaraj cannot be achieved by force, but by organization and unity. Your address I take it is a token of your sympathy for Daridranarayan.

*Young India*, 23-4-1931, p. 80 at p. 81

**POWER NOT AN END**

I

Sjt. Satyamurti writes :

"I write to you about the article "Substance and Shadow" by you, in the *Young India*, of the 18th June ....

"... the sentence which causes me grave anxiety is that which ends as follows: 'We can gain our end without political power and by directly acting upon the powers that be.' I would add the following sentences also from your article in order to make my doubts clear to you.

'One form of direct action is adult suffrage; a second and more potent form is satyagraha. It can easily be shown that whatever is needful and can be gained by political power can perhaps be more quickly and certainly, gained by satyagraha.' I venture to join issue with you. I was always and am today under the impression that what the Congress wants is political power more than anything else. And, concretely speaking prohibition can be more easily brought about by State action than by peaceful picketing, and the necessary reforms embodied in the Karachi resolution on Fundamental Rights can be enforced only by a Swaraj Government.

"In any case, I do not see why the Nation should not concentrate all its energies today upon the gaining of political power.

"You say further in the course of the article: 'The Congress wants the substance not the shadow. It can, therefore wait for the shadow of power, it cannot wait for the substance of freedom which the dumb millions so need and can understand.' Frankly I do not appreciate the distinction. To me, political power is the substance, and all ether reforms can and ought to wait. If, today we are engaged in various Congress activities, I feel that we do so only, with a view to get real political power.

"In view of these doubts, I shall be highly obliged if you will kindly let me have your usually frank and full answer, at your earliest convenience."

I am thankful for this letter. It enables me more clearly than I have been able to explain my position.

\* \* \*

Now for Sjt. Satyamurti's . . . difficulty. To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation is necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state therefore there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that Government is best which governs the least.

If then I want political power it is for the sake of the reforms for which the Congress stands. Therefore when the energy to be spent in gaining the power means so much loss of energy required for the reforms, as threatens to be the case if the country is to engage in a duel with the Musalmans or Sikhs, I would decidedly advise the country to let the Musalmans and Sikhs take all the power and would go on with developing the reforms.

If we were to analyse the activities of the Congress during the past twelve years, we would discover that the capacity of the Congress to take political power has increased in exact proportion to its ability to achieve success in the constructive effort. That is to me the substance of political power. Actual taking over the government machinery is but a shadow, an emblem. And it would easily be a burden if it came as a gift from without, the people having made no effort to deserve it.

It is now perhaps easy to realize the truth of my statement that the needful can be gained more quickly and more certainly by satyagraha than by political

power'. Legislation in advance of public opinion has often been demonstrated to be futile. Legal prohibition of theft in a country in which the vast majority are thieves would be futile. Picketing and the other popular activities are therefore the real thing. If political power was a thing apart from these reforms, we would have to suspend latter and concentrate on the former. But we have followed the contrary course. We have everywhere emphasized the necessity of carrying on the constructive activities as being the means of attaining Swaraj. I am convinced that whenever legal prohibition of drinks, drugs and foreign cloth comes, it will come because public opinion had demanded it. It may be said that public opinion demands it today but the foreign Government does not respond. This is only partly right. Public opinion in this country is only now becoming a vital force and developing the real sanction which is satyagraha.

*Young India*, 2-7-'31, p. 161

II

(Some relevant extracts from an article which originally appeared under the title "Further Clearance" are given below.)

Having read my reply to him in *Young India* Sjt. Satyamurti thus returns to the charge:

"Your insistence on the statement that political power is not an end itself disturbs me seriously. Even if tomorrow we get all the reforms we want, I would still resist British rule in this country. I am also convinced that very few of the reforms we want can be fully or effectively achieved, unless we get political power.

"You must recognize that the ideal of political anarchy, with which I entirely agree is not of practical politics in the world today. If the Musalmans and the Sikhs, therefore, get all the power, the majority community in the country will have to be perpetual civil resisters, leading to civil war.

"I agree that political power can easily become a burden, if it came as a gift from without, the people having made no effort to deserve it. But I claim that the nation has already shown, and will show increasingly in the next few years, that it fully deserves political power.

"Public opinion, I agree should support legislation. Legislation in advance of public opinion is often futile. But public opinion, without legislative sanction, is often very largely impotent. I feel that political power is the thing, and that these reforms must follow. After all, the freedom of a nation and the liberty of the individual are priceless political privileges; and each nation must be free to decide what is good for itself. Once, therefore, we get political power, we can and ought to decide what is good for us. And if I understand my countrymen aright, the largest public opinion in India today is in favour of getting political power.

"If you think this letter deserves a further answer from you, I shall be glad to have it. But may I again express the hope that you may reconsider your position in the light of what I have stated above?"

There seems to me to be a question of emphasis between Sjt. Satyamurti and myself. His emphasis is on political power in itself, mine on political power as a weapon for enabling the reformer to achieve the reforms in the quickest manner possible. To me therefore all depends upon the way political power is attained. If it cannot be attained without the combined exertion of all the communities, I would wait. After all a strenuous exertion itself is a getting. In that sense political power is daily | coming to the nation. A constitution will merely be a symbol of | the full achievement. But it may also be a mirage, if it is not consciously a fruition of a nation's endeavour. Thus supposing by some accident England collapsed all of a sudden and therefore India imagined that she had all she wanted, she would be wholly wrong. Virtue therefore lies in our getting political power as a result of our strength, not as a result of the foreign ruler's weakness. But I must not labour the point any further. It is enough that just at present, though I may have a different outlook from that of many others, we are all striving for the same thing in the same way.

I do not share the fear that, if Musalmans and Sikhs got all the power, the 'majority community', i.e. Hindus would have to be 'perpetual civil resisters'. In the first instance this deduction ignores the assumption that *Hindus* willingly surrendered their right to power and in the second it ignores the law of civil resistance that it is never needed to be applied perpetually to a cause. Its sovereign efficacy lies in the fact that it secures redress within a measurable though previously unascertainable period.

*Young India*, 6-8-'31, p. 200

### 30

#### A DEMOCRATIC STATE

(An extract from an article called "A Fatal Fallacy" is reproduced below.)

Referring to a question of the correspondent who asked whether any great reform was possible without winning political freedom, Gandhiji observed as follows:

"I have often heard this argument advanced as an excuse for failure to do many things. I admit that there are certain things which cannot be done without political power, but there are numerous other things which do not at all depend upon political power. That is why a thinker like Thoreau said that 'that government is the best which governs the least'. This means that when people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of people is reduced to a minimum. In other words a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much State interference is truly democratic. Where such a condition is absent, the form of government is democratic in name."

Discussing further the activities in which lack of political power made no difference, he proceeded to write: "No, I am afraid the correspondent's question betrays his laziness and despair and the depression that has overtaken many of us. I can confidently claim that I yield to none in my passion for freedom. No fatigue or depression has seized me. Many years' experience has

convinced me that the activities that absorb my energies and attention are calculated to achieve the nation's freedom, that therein lies the secret of non-violent freedom, That is why I invite everyone, men and women, young and old, to contribute his or her share to the great sacrifice.

*Harijan, 11-1-'36, p. 380*

## 31

### THE SQUARE OF SWARAJ

(From a speech at the opening of a Khadi exhibition which appeared under the title "A Restatement of Faith")

Let there be no mistake about my conception of Swaraj. It is complete independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence, at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social, the corresponding end is Dharma, i.e. religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all. You may recognize it by the name of Truth, not the honesty of expedience but the living Truth that prevades everything and will survive all destruction and all transformation. Moral and social uplift may be recognized by the term we are used to, i.e. non-violence. Let us call this the square of Swaraj, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue. In the language of the Congress cannot achieve this political and economic freedom without truth and non-violence, in concrete terms without a living faith in God and hence moral and social elevation.

By political independence I do not mean an imitation of the British House of Commons, or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule of Italy or the Nazi rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours. What that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as Ramarajya, i.e. sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority....

Then take economic independence. It is not a induct of industrialization of the modern or the Western type Indian economic independence means to me the

economic uplift of every individual male and female by his or her own conscious effort. Under that system all men and women will have enough clothing—not the mere loin cloth, but what we understand by the term necessary articles of clothing—and enough food eluding milk and butter which are today denied to millions.

*Harijan*, 2-1-'37, p. 374

## 32

### HOW TO BRING HEAVEN UPON EARTH

(From "Fasting in Non-violent Action")

To practise non-violence in mundane matters is to know its true value. It is to bring heaven upon earth. There is no such thing as the other world. All worlds are one. There is no 'here' and no 'there'. As Jeans has demonstrated, the whole universe including the most distant stars, invisible even through the most powerful telescope in the world, is compressed in an atom. I hold it therefore to be wrong to limit the use of non-violence to cave dwellers and for acquiring merit for a favoured position in the other world. All virtue ceases to have use if it serves no purpose in every walk of life. I would therefore plead with the purely political minded people to study non-violence with sympathy and understanding.

Sevagram, 20-7-'42

*Harijan*, 26-7-'42, p. 248

### SECTION THREE: CONSTITUTIONAL SWARAJ

#### 33

#### IDEAS OF THE CONGRESS ABOUT SWARAJ IN 1920-21

"Swaraj means a state, such that we can maintain our separate existence without the presence of the English. If it is to be a partnership, it must be a partnership at will. There can be no Swaraj without our feeling and being the equals of Englishmen."

*Young India*, 22-9-'20, p. 1

"What I am doing today is that I am giving the country a practicable programme, not of the abolition of law-courts, posts, telegraphs and of railways, but for the attainment of Parliamentary Swaraj."

Calcutta Speech, 13-12-1920

"Swaraj according to the Congress means Swaraj that the people of India want, not what the British Government may condescend to give. In so far as I can see, Swaraj will be a Parliament chosen by the people with the fullest power over the finance, the police, the military, the navy, the courts and educational institutions."

*Young India*, 8-12-'20, p. 1

To a representative of the *Madras Mail* who asked, 'What is your Swaraj and where does the Government come in there?' he replied:

"My Swaraj is the Parliamentary Government of India, in the modern sense of the term, for the time being and that Government would be secured to us either through the friendly offices of the British people or without them."

(This interview which took place about the 25th December 1920, was published as an A.P.I. telegram in the papers.)

"Today my corporate activity is undoubtedly devoted to the attainment of Parliamentary Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India."

*Young India*, 26-1-'21, p. 27.

34

**CONSTITUTIONAL SWARAJ OF MY CONCEPTION**

(From "Interrogatories Answered")

Q. What do you mean by Swaraj and what are its limitations, if any?

A By Swaraj I mean the Government of India by the consent of the people ascertained by the vote of the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. This government should be quite consistent with the British connection on absolutely honourable and equal terms. Personally I have not despaired of the substitution for the present servile condition of equal partnership or association. But I would not for one moment hesitate to countenance or bring about complete severance if it became necessary, i.e. if the connection impeded India's full growth.

*Young India, 29-1-'25, p. 40*

35

**INDEPENDENCE v. SWARAJ**

(Some extracts from an article which appeared under the above title are reproduced below.)

Let us . . . understand what we mean by independence, England, Russia, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Chilli, Bhutan have all their independence. Which independence do we want? I must not be accused of begging the question. For if I were told that it is Indian independence that is desired, it is possible to show that no two persons will give the same definition. The fact of the matter is that we do not know our distant goal. It will be determined not by our definitions but by our acts, voluntary and involuntary. If we are wise, we will take care of the present

and the future will take care of itself. God has given us only a limited sphere of action and a limited vision. Sufficient unto the day is the good thereof.

I submit that Swaraj is an all satisfying goal for all time. We the English-educated Indians often unconsciously make the terrible mistake of thinking that the microscopic minority of English-speaking Indians is the whole of India. I defy anyone to give for independence a common Indian word intelligible to the masses. Our goal at any rate may be known by an indigenous word understood of the three hundred millions. And we have such a word in Swaraj first used in the name of the nation by Dadabhai Naoroji. It is infinitely greater than and includes independence. It is a vital word. It has been sanctified by the noble sacrifices of thousands of Indians. It is a word which, if it has not penetrated the remotest corner of India, has at least got the largest currency of any similar word. It is a sacrilege to displace that word by a foreign importation of doubtful value.

Personally I crave not for 'independence' which I do not understand, but I long for freedom from the English yoke. I would pay any price for it. I would accept chaos in exchange for it. For the English peace is the peace of the grave. Anything would be better than this living death of a whole people. This satanic rule has well-nigh ruined this fair land materially, morally and spiritually. I daily see its law-courts denying justice and murdering truth. I have just come from terrorized Orissa. This rule is using my own countrymen for its sinful sustenance. I have a number of affidavits swearing that in the district of Khurda acknowledgements of enhancement of revenue are being forced from the people practically at the point of the bayonet. The unparalleled extravagance of this rule has demented the Rajas and the Maharajas who, unmindful of consequences, ape it and grind their subject to dust. In order to protect its immoral commerce this rule regards no means too mean, and in order to keep three hundred millions under the heels of a hundred thousand it carries a military expenditure which is keeping millions in a state of semi-starvation and polluting thousands of mouths with intoxicating liquor.

But my creed is non-violence under all circumstances. My method is conversion, not coercion; it is self-suffering, not the suffering of the tyrant. I know that method to be infallible. I know that a whole people can adopt it without accepting it as its creed and without understanding its philosophy. People generally do not understand the philosophy of all their acts. My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of Western exploitation in which England is the greatest partner. If India converts, as it can convert, Englishmen, it can become the predominant partner in a world commonwealth of which England can have the privilege of becoming a partner if she chooses. India has the right, if she only knew, of becoming the predominant partner by reason of her numbers, geographical; position and culture inherited for ages. This is a big talk I know. For a fallen India to aspire to move the world and protect weaker races is seemingly an impertinence. But in explaining my strong opposition to this cry for independence, I can no longer hide the light under a bushel. Mine is an ambition worth living for and worth dying for. In no case do I want to reconcile myself to a state lower than the best for fear of consequences. It is therefore not out of expedience that I oppose independence as my goal. I want India to come to her own and that state cannot be better defined by any single word than Swaraj. Its content will vary with the action that the nation is able to put forth at a given moment. India's coming to her own will mean every nation doing likewise.

*Young India*, 12-1-'28, p. 12

### 36

#### CHAOS v. MISRULE

An esteemed friend writes:

"It is not often that I intrude upon your expressions of political opinion. But a sentence of yours in a recent editorial, repeating a heresy uttered by you long ago, compels me to ask you whether you have measured your

words with the care that one expects of an expounder of moral issues. You declare that you would accept chaos in exchange for freedom from the English yoke. That an Indian should desire and work for freedom from any foreign yoke is perfectly natural, normal and healthy. That anyone in his senses should exchange any kind of orderly government for chaos is simply incomprehensible, for the one implies some sort of discipline, whether imposed or stimulated, whereas the latter is the very negation of self-discipline. Chaos is a word that may find a place in the vocabulary of the Deity. In the mouth of a human being it is meaningless, and is just as] much a dangerous exaggeration and hallucination as is the] word 'independence', against which you properly gird. Moreover, it seems to me and you yourself have recognized it 1 so often that wisdom lies in refraining from acts and words 1 calculated (though not intended) to mislead the ignorant, who will undoubtedly give it a connotation that you have not contemplated. Every wild man will emphasize the term without reference to your condition of non-violence. If non-violence be, as you claim it to be, creative, purposeful, and divine in its nature, then chaos cannot be its consequence or characteristic. If you have used the term with deliberation, then I should comment that you have rendered no service to mankind, who need rather a reminder, that they should acquire the cosmic vision, rather than the chaotic one, to which they are already prone. If you have fallen into a mere looseness of language under the urge of a deep and noble emotion, I hope, upon reflection, you will find a way to make clear your real meaning."

There is no mistaking the real earnestness running through the letter. And I have so much regard for the friend's views, that if I could have suited mine to his, I would gladly have done so.

But I must say that my choice was deliberate. Chaos means no rule, no order. Rule or order can come, does Come out of no I rule or no order, but never directly out of misrule or disorder masquerading under the sacred name of rule or order. My friend's difficulty arises, I presume, out of his assumption that the

present Government of India represents 'some sort of discipline 1 whether imposed or stimulated'. It is likely that our estimates of the existing system differ. My own estimate of it is that it is an unmitigated evil. No good can therefore come out of this evil. I hold misrule to be worse than no rule.

Nor need my words cause any confusion in the minds of the ignorant or the violent. For I admit my correspondent's contention that chaos can be the result only of violence. Have I not often said in these pages that if I were compelled to choose I between this rule and violence I would give my vote for the latter though I will not, could not, assist a fight based on violence? It would be a matter for me of Hobson's choice. The seeming quiescence of today is a dangerous form of violence kept under suppression by greater violence or rather readiness for it. Is it not better than those, who, out of a cowardly fear of death or dispossession, whilst harbouring violence refrain from it, should do it and win freedom from bondage or die gloriously in the attempt to vindicate their birthright?

My non-violence is not an academic principle to be enunciated on favourable occasions. It is a principle which I am seeking to enforce every moment of my life in every field of activity. In my attempt, often frustrated through my own weakness or ignorance, to enforce non-violence, I am driven for the sake of the creed itself to countenance violence by way of giving mental approval to it. In 1921 I told the villagers near Bettiah that they had acted like cowards in that they had instead of resisting the evil-minded *amlas* left their wives and homes on their approach. On another occasion I expressed myself ashamed of a priest who said he had quietly slipped away and saved himself when a ruffian band had entered his temple to loot it and break the idol. I told him that if he could not die at his post defending his charge non-violently, he should have defended it by offering violent resistance. Similarly do I hold that-, if India has no faith in non-violence, nor patience for it to work its way, then it is better for her to attain her freedom from the present misrule even by violence than that she should helplessly submit to a continuing rape of her belongings and her honour.

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My own position and belief are clear and unequivocal. I neither want the existing rule nor chaos. I want true order established without having to go through the travail of chaos. I want this disorder to be destroyed by non-violence, i.e. I want to convert the evil-doers. My life is dedicated to that task. And what I have written in the previous paragraphs directly flows from my knowledge of the working of non-violence which is the greatest force known to mankind. My belief in its efficacy is unshakable, so is my belief unshakable in the power of India to gain her freedom through non-violent means and no other. But this power of hers cannot be evoked by suppressing truth or facts however ugly they may for the moment appear to be. God forbid that India should have to engage in a sanguinary duel before she learns the lesson of non-violence in its fullness. But if that intermediate stage, often found to be necessary, is to be her lot, it will have to be faced as a stage inevitable in her march towards freedom and certainly preferable to the existing order which is only so-called but which is like a whited sepulchre hiding undiluted violence underneath.

*Young India*, 1-3-'28, p. 68

## 37

### THE NEHRU REPORT

Pandit Motilal Nehru and his colleagues deserve the highest congratulations for the very able and practically unanimous report they have been able to bring out on the question that has vexed all parties for the past long months. The report is well got up, accessible in book form and printed in bold type. No public man can afford to be without it. It is signed by Pandit Motilal Nehru, Sir A. H. Imam, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sjt. M. S. Aney, Sardar Mangal Singh, M. Shuaib Qureshi, Sjt. Subhash Chandra Bose and Sjt. G. R. Pradhan. About Mr. Shuaib Qureshi's signature however there is the following note at the end of the report:

"Mr. Shuaib Qureshi was unfortunately unable to be present at the last meeting of the Committee when the draft report was considered. The

draft however was sent to him and he has informed us that in regard to the recommendations contained in Chapter III he is of opinion that one-third seats in the Central Legislature should be reserved for Muslims. Further he says: 'I agree with the resolution adopted at the informal Conference of July 7th but do not subscribe to all the figures and arguments produced in its support.' "

The report covers 133 pages, appendices 19 pages. The report is divided into ten chapters of which four deal with the communal aspect, reservation of seats, redistribution of provinces and Indian States. The seventh chapter contains the final recommendations of the Committee. I must not attempt to summarize the report, if only because it has come into my hands at the moment of sending the last articles for *Young India*. I have not even the time to study the report in full beyond having a cursory glance through it. But the great merit of it is that All Parties Conference Committee has at last been able to produce a unanimous report bearing weighty representative signatures. In the matter of the constitution the main thing was not to present perfect recommendations but to secure unanimity for the recommendations that might in the circumstances be considered the best possible. And if the practical unanimity arrived at after strenuous labours by the Committee is sealed by the Conference about to meet at Lucknow, a tremendous step will have been taken in the direction of constitutional Swaraj as distinguished from what might be termed organic Swaraj. For if the country arrives at a workable unanimity about the questions that have been agitating it for years, the next thing would be to work the acceptance of our demands. And we have arrived at such a step in the country's history in our evolution that if we can secure real unanimity about any reasonable proposal, there should be no difficulty in securing acceptance. I hope therefore that the Conference will meet at Lucknow with a fixed determination to see the thing through and that the members who will be there will not engage in a critical examination of the report with a view to tear it to pieces but with the determination of arriving at a proper settlement. And if they will approach the report in that spirit, they will endorse the recommendations, except for valid reasons which would appeal to any sane

persons. In thus commending this report to the public, I tender my congratulations to Pandit Motilal Nehru without whose efforts there would have been no committee and there would have been no report.

*Young India*, 16-8-'28, p. 276

## 38

### AFTER LUCKNOW

The most brilliant victory achieved at Lucknow following as it does closely on the heels of Bardoli makes a happy conjunction of events. Pandit Motilalji is today the proudest man in India and has every reason to be so. But even he could have done nothing if everyone had not conspired to make the proceedings a success. It would have been easy for the Hindus or the Musalmans to block the way. The Sikhs could have done likewise. But no one had the heart to destroy the patient labours of the Nehru Committee. Little wonder that Pandit Malaviyaji the irrepressible optimist said that Swaraj would be attained in 1930.

The honour for the happy result must however be shared with Pandit Nehru by Dr. Ansari. His invisible help was much greater than his visible and tactful guidance of the proceedings at Lucknow. He was ever at the beck and call of the Nehru Committee. He used all his unrivalled influence with the Musalmans in disarming their opposition. Hindus could not resist his transparent honesty and equally transparent nationalism. The Liberals led by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru lent a weight to the Conference which it would otherwise have lacked. I join Dr. Besant in her wish that they would re-renter the National organization. They need not lose their identity even as the Hindus and Musalman organisations do not lose theirs.

The mention of the Liberals brings us to the future work. There is still much diplomatic work to be done. But more than the diplomatic work is that of forging the sanction. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru truly observed that whether it was Dominion Status or Independence, a proper sanction would be necessary if the national demand was to be enforced. Bardoli has shown the way, if the

sanction has to be non-violent. The Congress creed has non-violence as its integral part. There is no denying the fact that non-violence had receded in the background before Bardoli. But even as the Nehru report has made a unanimous demand possible, Bardoli has brought back the vanishing faith in nonviolence.

If then we are sure of the sanction, we need not worry whether Swaraj is otherwise spelt Dominion Status or Independence. Dominion Status can easily become more than Independence, if we have sanction to back it. Independence can easily become a farce, if it lacks sanction. What is in a name if we have the reality? A rose smells just as sweet whether you know it by that name or any other. Let us therefore make up our minds as to whether it is to be non-violence or violence and let the rank and file work for the sanction in real earnest even as the diplomats must work at constitution making.

*Young India*, 6-9-'28, p. 300

### 39

#### WHAT IS IN A NAME?

At the time of writing this (forenoon, 29th December) it is too early to give my impressions of the Congress. The events are moving and changing so fast that the impressions of the morning are nullified by those of the evening. Meanwhile, therefore, it may be well to understand the controversy raging round Dominion Status and Independence. The more I hear the arguments of those who have forced the issue, the more clearly do I see the harm that is being done by it. Up to a certain point it was perhaps health giving and necessary. It was certainly good to appreciate the fact that nothing short of independence could possibly be the goal of the nation and that therefore every advance should be interpreted in terms of independence. It follows therefore that every political change of reform that may impede the nation's march towards independence should be rejected.

But what is the meaning of this independence? For me its meaning is Swaraj. Independence is a word employed for European consumption. And those whose

eyes are turned outward whether it be towards West or East, North or South, are thinking of anything but India's independence. For finding India's independence we must look to India and her sons and daughters, her needs and capacity. It is obvious that the contents of her independence must therefore vary with her varying needs and increasing capacity. India's independence therefore need not have the meaning current in the West. Italian independence is different from that of England, Sweden's differs from both.

One thing that we need is undoubtedly freedom from British *control in any shape or form*. But freedom from such control of any other power is equally our need in terms of independence. The Nehru report points the way to such freedom and it prescribes the remedy that India can assimilate today. It is a worthless document if it means anything less. Its acceptance is wholly compatible with the national goal and I venture to think that the fiercest champion of national independence can and should safely work for its full fruition. The report is not an end in itself. It simply gives us the formula according to which we should work. It presumes concentrated ceaseless work by all the different parties before it can bear fruit.

Great confusion has been created by tearing the much abused expression 'Dominion Status' from its context. It is not an elixir of life to be imported from Westminster to put life into us. The expression has been used by the distinguished authors of the report to show by analogy what in their opinion is needed for India's political growth. The scheme of Government adumbrated in the report, whether it is known by the expression Dominion Status or any other, whilst it may fully answer our needs today, may easily fall short of them tomorrow. But it contains its own corrective. For it is a scheme worked out by the nation, not one to be imposed upon or thrown at her by Britain. If it fructifies, it *contains all we need* for future growth; hence I call it the charter of our independence.

After all if the Nehru report is consigned to oblivion, we shall still need a charter. It may be known as the charter of India's independence and may still conceivably be much less than the Dominion Status of the Nehru report.

If what we want therefore cannot be sufficiently described by the Swadeshi word Swaraj, it cannot be described by any other word that can be coined. All that the man in the street should know is that he wants the scheme of Government framed by the nation's representatives without the change of a comma and that he can say with the greatest confidence, 'What is in a name?'

That the Nehru scheme requires endorsement by the British Parliament is no defect in it. Since we are connected with Britain, we shall in every case need some sort of endorsement from her Parliament whether the scheme is to be transmutation of the present bondage into an absolutely equal partnership to be destroyed at will or whether it is to end 'every sort of connection with Britain. I shall always maintain that the transmutation, complete conversion, is any day a higher status than destruction. But of this later. Enough for us to learn by heart for the moment that any scheme to take us towards Swaraj or if you will, independence, must be framed by us and must be accepted without a single alteration dictated by the British Parliament.

*Young India, 3-1-1929, p. 4*

## 40

### INDEPENDENCE DAY

It was easy enough to pass the Independence Resolution at Lahore. It is difficult enough to achieve it even by 'peaceful and legitimate means'. The first essential is to let the masses know, understand and appreciate the message of the Congress. They must know what Independence means and what it is likely to cost. And so the Working Committee whose business is to make the Congress live in the daily life of the people has fixed Sunday the 26th instant as Purna Swaraj (Complete Independence) Day when a declaration approved by the Working Committee will be made by those present. It is intended to be complete by itself. No speeches are therefore necessary. They are inadvisable, because the idea is abroad that people may indulge in loose talk when independence is in the air. These should understand that loose irresponsible

talk is not independence, it is license; it is not energy generated by love of freedom, it is froth to be thrown away as useless and harmful, whereas 26th instant is intended to be one of complete discipline, restraint, reserve, dignity and real strength. It would be good, if the declaration is made by whole cities, whole villages even as happened on that ever memorable 6th of April 1919. It would be well if all the meetings were held at the identical minute in all the places. In order that these meetings may be numerously attended, there should be house to house visits, there may be also leaflets circulated among the people. The villages may follow the customary method of advertising the time by the drumbeat. Those who are religiously minded may as before begin the day by ablutions and concentrating on the task before the country and the means for its fulfilment. They will therefore pass the day in doing some constructive work, whether it is spinning, or service of 'untouchables' or reunion of Hindus and Musalmans, or prohibition work, or even all these together, which is not impossible. Thus a Hindu may get hold of an 'untouchable' and invite a Musalman, a Parsi, a Christian, a Sikh to join in a spinning competition for a stated time, and then they may all go together for say one hour to hawk Khadi which they can together buy to resell and then devote an hour to visit the neighbouring liquor shop and speak to the keeper about the evil of gaining a livelihood or making money by such means. They may also speak to the visitors to such places and wind up the day by attending the celebration. It should be remembered that Sunday is also the flag hoisting day. The day may be well begun by attending the flag hoisting ceremony.

If the Congress Committee and Congress workers are serious about the resolution, I hope they have already begun enlisting new members and inviting old ones to pay their subscription for the current year. In doing so, they, the old and the new ones, should be informed of the change in the creed and its implications. And if Congress Committees begin methodical work, they will materially help in re-organizing the Congress on a solid foundation, and the people who may then attend the celebration on the 26th will be not merely curiosity-mongers or idlers, but men and women gathered together with a fairly full knowledge of what they are about and determined to fulfil their common

purpose. It ought to be possible to make the demonstration universal and yet ensure perfect orderliness throughout the whole length and breadth of India. Nothing untoward or unintended should happen on this Independence Day. In order to enable the Central office to gauge the strength of the movement and the Congress organization, it is as necessary to send an absolutely accurate account of the day's doings in each village or locality as it is to have the celebration itself. A full and faithful record of the day's happenings will enable the Working Committee that is to meet on the 14th February to shape its future course.

And this work requires whole-timers, in other words, permanent paid volunteers. Part-time workers are good and valuable only when and where there is at least one whole-time worker.

I have already suggested that there should be a permanent Provincial Service Board formed for the U.R which should draw up a workable constitution and immediately set about enlisting recruits. Let us hope that there will be no time lost in bringing into being this very desirable organization. If it works efficiently and honestly it will serve as a model for the rest of the provinces.

*Young India*, 16-1-'30, p. 20

## 41

### WHY 'PURNA' SWARAJ?

A fair friend writes:

"We are out to win independence by non-violent means. I wonder how we are going to do it. Non-violence means solid preparation without violence. Where is that preparation? And we are incapable of organizing a violent revolution. The prospect is as dark as ever. And how does the substitution of the word 'independence' for 'Swaraj' help us any further? To make matters worse the word 'independence' has been translated to mean 'Purna Swaraj'. Frankly this vernacular word stinks in my nostrils. What was there wanting about the beautifully perfect word 'Swaraj'?"

which connotes something more than the word 'independence' can ever do? The prefixing of the adjective '*Purna*' is nothing short of violence on the word Swaraj. Two years ago in an article entitled "Independence v. Swaraj" you yourself said: 'I defy anyone to give for independence- a common Indian word intelligible to the masses. Our goal at any rate may be known by an indigenous word understood of the three hundred millions. And we have such a word in Swaraj first used in the name of the nation by Dadabhai Naoroji'. That I believe clinches the matter. We should not have disturbed the sacred word 'Swaraj', sacred both because of its vast implications and wonderful associations, a word which was used by Dadabhai Naoroji and clung to as a rich legacy by Lokamanya, Deshabandhu and yourself."

This letter raises two questions. I shall take the last first. To qualify 'Swaraj' is no doubt doing violence to art. The writer's logic is also irresistible. But very often in national and similar complex matters logic and art have apparently to be sacrificed. In substance that which carries out a good intention is both true logic and true art. 'Swaraj' in the Congress constitution was given a double meaning; it could be within the Empire if possible, without if necessary. A word or an expression had therefore to be found in order to connote the last meaning only. We could not do without the word 'Swaraj'. Hence the expedience of '*Purna Swaraj*'. I admit that it does not sound well to the ear. But if it] carries out the nation's meaning as it does, it will presently found well. We would not have managed with a dubious word.

The second question is more difficult to dispose of. But attainment of 'Swaraj' means conquest over all difficulties. Non-violence or rather non-violent men are on their trial. They have to find out the best method of offering battle in spite of the; violent atmosphere surrounding them. Non-violence is not off much consequence if it can flourish only in a congenial] atmosphere. It is not then non-violence. It may easily be fear of being hurt. But my reading of the national temper is somewhat different from the friend's. Dissensions and squabbles do not: affect those who have ultimately to take part in the struggle.

The' latter will instinctively react to active non-violence. But whether they do or not, the party of non-violence must now use up all its resources. There can be no more waiting without the creed being laughed at or itself being thoroughly and rightly discredited. If it cannot act, it must own its incapacity and retire from the field of battle.

*Young India*, 6-2-'30, p. 45 42

42

### PURNA SWARAJ

(From "The Settlement and Its Meaning—A Catechism"; three questions and Gandhiji's answers are reproduced herein below from the Catechism.)

**Q.** You say that complete independence is an indifferent rendering for *Purna* Swaraj. What then is the real meaning of *Purna* Swaraj?

**A.** Proper translation I cannot give you. I do not know any word or phrase to answer it in the English language - I can, therefore, only give an explanation. The root meaning of Swaraj is self-rule. "Swaraj" may, therefore, be rendered as disciplined rule from within and '*Purna*' means 'complete'. 'Independence' may mean licence to do as you like. Swaraj is positive. Independence is negative. *Purna* Swaraj does not exclude association with any nation, much less with England. But it can only mean association for mutual benefit and at will. Thus, there are countries which are said to be independent but which have no *Purna* Swaraj, e.g. Nepal. The word Swaraj is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which 'independence' often means.

**Q.** What is your idea of *Purna* Swaraj? Would it be possible within the British Empire?

**A.** It would be possible but on terms of absolute equality. Complete independence may mean separation and popular imagination does understand it in that light. But, if we remain part of the Commonwealth on terms of absolute equality, instead of Downing Street being the centre of the Empire, Delhi

should be the centre. India has a population of 300 million and that is a factor that cannot be ignored. Friends suggest that England will never be able to reconcile itself to that position. But I do not despair.

The British are a practical people and as they love liberty for themselves, it is only a step further to desire the same liberty for others.

I know if the time comes to concede equality to India, they will say that that was what they had all along meant. The British people have a faculty of self-delusion as no other people have. Yes, to my mind equality means the right to secede.

Q. Would you like to have *Purna Swaraj* under the British flag?

A. There may be a common flag or each party may have its own.

*Young India*, 19-3-'31, p. 38

## 43

### MY CONCEPTION OF POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

(From the speech at the opening of the Exhibition at the Faizpur Session of the Indian National Congress on 25th December 1936 which appeared under the title "A Restatement of Faith".)

By political independence I do not mean an imitation of the British House of Commons, or the Soviet Rule of Russia or the Fascist Rule of Italy or the Nazi Rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours. What that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as *Ramarajya*, i.e. sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority.

*Harijan*, 2-1-'37, p. 374

**INDEPENDENCE DOES NOT EXCLUDE VOLUNTARY PARTNERSHIP**

(From "Weekly Letter" by M. D.)

Capt. Strunk, representative of the official daily newspaper ' in Germany and a member of Hitler's staff, also visited Segaon "with a view to investigate conditions in India". He wanted to know the content of independence and how far people of India seriously meant it. To him Gandhiji said: "What we mean by independence is that we will not live on the sufferance of any; people on earth and that there is a big party in India which will die in vindicating this position. But we will not die killing, though we might be killed. It is a novel experiment I know. Herr Hitler, I know, does not accept the position of human dignity being maintained without the use of force. Many of us feel that it is possible to achieve independence by non-violent means. It would be a bad day for the whole world if we had to wade through blood. If India gains her freedom through a clash of arms, it will indefinitely postpone the day of real peace for the world. History is a record of perpetual wars, but we are trying to make new history, and I say this as I represent the national mind so far as non-violence is concerned. I have reasoned out the doctrine of the sword, I have worked out its possibilities and come to the conclusion that man's destiny is to replace the law of the jungle with the law of conscious love. The aspiration for independence is the aspiration that fires all nations in Europe. But that independence does not exclude voluntary partnership. Imperialistic ambition is inconsistent with partnership."

*Harijan*, 3-7-'37, p. 164 at p. 165

## PANCHAYATS

Panchayat has an ancient flavour; it is a good word. It literally means an assembly of five elected by villagers. It represents the system by which the innumerable village republics of India were governed. But the British Government, by its ruthlessly thorough method of revenue collection, almost destroyed these ancient republics, which could not stand the shock of this revenue collection. Congressmen are now making a crude attempt to revive the system by giving village elders civil and criminal jurisdiction. The attempt was first made in 1921. It failed. It is being made again, and it will fail if it is not systematically and decently, I will not say, scientifically tried.

It was reported to me in Nainital, that in certain places in the U.P even criminal cases like rape were tried by the so-called Panchayats. I heard of some fantastic judgments pronounced by ignorant or interested Panchayats. This is what comes to me from far off Assam.

"It has been ascertained that the Congress Committee at Chaparmukh has set up a sort of rival administrative machinery there for the trial and disposal of civil and criminal cases. There are a few branch offices in the neighbourhood of Chaparmukh which dispose of similar business. At Chaparmukh office registers are being maintained for civil and criminal cases. It is understood, that fines are imposed in criminal cases, and decrees are passed in civil suits, and that in a few cases attachment of property have been made or attempted in execution of decrees."

This is all bad if it is true. Irregular Panchayats are bound to fall to pieces under their own unsupportable weight. I suggest therefore the following rules for the guidance of village workers:

1. No Panchayat should be set up without the written sanction of Provincial Congress Committee;

2. A Panchayat should in the first instance be elected by a public meeting called for the purpose by beat of drum;
3. It should be recommended by the Tehsil Committee;
4. Such Panchayat should have no criminal jurisdiction;
5. It may try civil suits if the parties to them refer their disputes to the Panchayat;
6. No one should be compelled to refer any matter to the Panchayat;
7. No Panchayat should have any authority to impose fines, the only sanction behind this civil decrees being its moral authority, strict impartiality and the willing obedience of the parties concerned;
8. There should be no social or other boycott for the time being;
9. Every Panchayat will be expected to attend to:
  - (a) The education of boys and girls in its village,
  - (b) Its sanitation,
  - (c) Its medical needs,
  - (d) The upkeep and cleanliness of village wells or ponds,
  - (e) The uplift of and the daily wants of the so-called untouchables;
10. A Panchayat, that fails without just cause to attend to the requirements mentioned in clause 9 within six months of its election, or fails otherwise to retain the goodwill of the villagers, or stands self-condemned for any other cause, appearing sufficient to the Provincial Congress Committee, may be disbanded and another elected in its place.

The disability to impose fines or social boycott is a necessity of the case in the initial stages. Social boycott in villages has been found to be a dangerous weapon in the hands of ignorant or unscrupulous men. Imposition of fines too may lead to mischief and may defeat the very end in view. Where a Panchayat is really popular and increases its popularity by the constructive work of the kind suggested in clause 9, it will find its judgments and authority respected by

reason of its moral prestige. And that surely is the greatest sanction any one can possess and of which one cannot be deprived.

*Young India*, 28-5-'31, p. 123

46

**VILLAGE SWARAJ**

(From "Question Box")

**Q.** In view of the situation that may arise at any moment in India, would you give an outline or skeleton of a Village Swaraj Committee, which could function in all village matters in the absence of, and without relying upon an over-head Government or other organization? In particular, how would you ensure that the Committee should be fully representative and that it would act impartially, efficiently and without favour or fear? What should be the scope of authority and the machinery to enforce its commands? And what should be the manner in which a Committee or an individual member of it could be removed for corruption, inefficiency or other unfitness?

**A.** My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will *grow useful* money crops, thus excluding *ganja*, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no castes such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-cooperation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of the village guards who will be selected by rotation from

the register maintained by the village. The Government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Any village can become such a republic today without much interference, even from the present Government whose sole effective connection with the villages is the exaction of the village revenue. I have not examined here the question of relations with the neighbouring villages and the centre if any. My purpose is to present an outline of village government. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour.

The reader may well ask me, as I am asking myself while penning these lines, as to why I have not been able to model Sevagram after the picture here drawn. My answer is, I am making the attempt. I can see dim traces of success though I can show nothing visible. But there is nothing inherently impossible in the picture drawn here. To model such a village may be the work of a life-time. Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he will find good results. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicine man and school-master all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning.

Sevagram, 18-7-'42

*Harijan*, 26-7-'42, p. 238

### IMPLICATIONS OF 'QUIT INDIA'

In terms of non-violence 'Quit India' is a healthy, potent cry of the soul. It is not a slogan. It means the end, through means purely truthful and non-violent, of foreign rule and domination. It does not mean the foreigner's destruction but his willing conversion to Indian life. In this scheme there is no room for hatred of the foreigner. He is a man, even as we are. It is fear of him that gives rise to hatred. Fear gone, there can be no hatred.

Thus his conversion implies our conversion too. If we cease to be inferiors, he cannot be our superior. His arsenals and his weapons, typified in their extreme in the atom bomb, should have no terror for us. It follows that we may not covet them. We often make the mistake of thinking that we must first have things before we cease to covet them. This tempting argument leads to the prolongation of the agony. Must I do all the evil I can, before I learn to shun it? Is it not enough to know the evil to shun it? If not, we should be sincere enough to admit that we love evil too well to give it up.

Let us assume that foreign rule is ended. What should the foreigner do? He could hardly be considered free when he was protected by British arms. As a free man, he will discover that it was wrong to possess privileges which the millions of India could not enjoy. He will live doing his duty as behoves a son of India. He will no longer live at India's expense. On the contrary, he will give India all his talents and by his services render himself indispensable to the land of his adoption.

If this is true of the European, how much more true must it be for those Anglo-Indians and others who have adopted European manners and customs in order to be classed as Europeans demanding preferential treatment? All such people will find themselves ill at ease, if they expect continuation of the favoured treatment hitherto enjoyed by them. They should rather feel thankful that they

will be disburdened of preferential treatment to which they had no right by any known canon of reasoning and which was derogatory to their dignity.

We have all—rulers and ruled—been living so long in a stifling unnatural atmosphere that we might well feel in the beginning that we have lost the lungs for breathing the invigorating ozone of freedom. If the reality comes in an orderly, that is a non-violent manner because the parties feel that it is right, it will be a revealing lesson for the world.

Uruli, 29-3-'46

*Harijan*, 7-4-'46, p. 70

48

## INDEPENDENCE

I

Q. You have said in your article in the *Harijan* of July 15, under the caption "The Real Danger", that Congressmen in general certainly do not know the kind of Independence they want. Would you kindly give them a broad but comprehensive picture of the Independent India of your own conception?

A. I do not know that I have not, from time to time, given my idea of Indian Independence. Since however, this question is a part of a series, it is better to answer it even at the risk of repetition.

Independence of India should mean the independence of the whole of India, including what is called India of the States and the other foreign Powers, French and Portuguese, who are there, I presume, by British sufferance. Independence must mean that of the people of India, not of those who are today ruling over them. The rulers should depend on the will of those who are under their heels. Thus, they have to be servants of the people, ready to do their will.

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or Panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to

be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

This society must naturally be based on truth and non-violence which, in my opinion, are not possible without a living belief in God meaning a self-existent, all-knowing living Force which inheres every other force known to the world and which depends on none and which will live when all other forces may conceivably perish or cease to act. I am unable to account for my life without relief in this all-embracing living light.

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give a strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village

in India, then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, no one is to be the first and none the last.

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest wind cannot move it.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be. I have thought of Singer's sewing machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture.

Q. Do you believe that the proposed Constituent Assembly could be used for the realization of your picture?

A. The Constituent Assembly has all the possibilities for the realization of my picture. Yet I cannot hope for much, not because the State Paper holds no such possibilities but because the document, being wholly of a voluntary nature, requires the common consent of the many parties to it. These have no common goal. Congressmen themselves are not of one mind even on the contents of Independence. I do not know how many swear by non-violence or the Charkha or, believing in decentralization, regard the village as the nucleus. I know on the contrary that many would have India become a first-class military power and wish for India to have a strong centre and build the whole structure round it. In the medley of these conflicts I know that if India is to be leader in clean action based on clean thought, God will confound the wisdom of these big men and will provide the villages with the power to express themselves as they should.

Q. If the Constituent Assembly fizzles out because of the "danger from within", as you have remarked in the above- mentioned article, would you advise the Congress to accept the alternative of a general country-wide strike and capture of power, either non-violently or with the use of necessary force? What is your alternative in that eventuality if the above is not approved by you?

A. I must not contemplate darkness before it stares me in the face. And in no case can I be party, irrespective of nonviolence, to a universal strike and capture of power. Though, therefore, I do not know what I should do in the case of a breakdown, I know that the actuality will find me ready with an alternative. My sole reliance being on the living Power which we call God, He will put the alternative in my hand when the time has come, not a minute sooner.

Panchgani, 21-7-'46

*Harijan*, 28-7-'46, p. 236

II

Friends have repeatedly challenged me to define independence. At the risk of repetition, I must say that the independence of my dream means Ramarajya, i.e. the Kingdom of God on Earth. I do not know what it will be like in Heaven. I have no desire to know the distant scene. If the present is attractive enough, the future cannot be very unlike.

In concrete terms, then, the independence should be political, economic and moral.

'Political' necessarily means the removal of the control of the British army in every shape and form.

'Economic' means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. In other words, the humblest must feel equal to the tallest. This can take place only by capital or capitalists sharing their skill and capital with the lowliest and the least.

'Moral' means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of Ramarajya excludes replacement of the British army by a national army of occupation. A country that is governed by even its national army can never be morally free and, therefore, its so-called weakest member can never rise to his full moral height.

Though Mr. Churchill is claimed to have won the war for the British, he has in his Aberdeen speech uttered words of wisdom from the stand-point of a radical non-violent reformer. He knows, if any panoplied warrior knows, what havoc the two wars of our generation have wrought. In another column<sup>1</sup> I reproduce summary of his speech as reported in the public press. Only I must warn the public against the pessimistic note underlying the speech. Nothing will be found to have gone wrong if mankind recoils from the horrors of war. The bloodletting that men have undergone to the point of whiteness will not have been in vain, if it has taught us that we must freely give our own blood in the place of taking other peoples' blood, be the cause ever so noble or ignoble.

If the Cabinet Mission 'delivers the goods', India will have to decide whether attempting to become a military power she would be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth rate power in the world without a message in answer to the pessimism described above, or whether she will by further refining and continuing her non-violent policy prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using her hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory.

New Delhi, 29-4-'46

*Harijan*, 5-5-'46, p. 116

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced at the end of this article.

#### **PRESS SUMMARY OF MR. CHURCHILL'S SPEECH**

The world is very ill. This is the time when hatred is rife in the world and when mighty branches of the human family, victors or vanquished, innocent or guilty, are plunged in bewilderment, distress or ruin. Two fearful wars in our lifetime have torn the heart out of its grace and culture.

Measureless injury has been done too much that the 19th century would have called "Christian civilization", for all the leading nations have been racked by stresses which have blunted their sensibilities and have destroyed their agreeable modes of social intercourse.

Only science has rolled forward, whipped by the fierce winds of mortal war, and science has placed in the hands of men agencies of destruction far beyond any development of their commonsense or virtue.

In a world where over-production of food was formerly from time to time a problem, famine has laid its gaunt fingers upon the peoples of many lands and scarcity upon all.

The psychic energies of mankind have been exhausted by the tribulations through which they have passed and are still passing. It is not only bloodletting that has weakened and whitened us.

The vital springs of human inspiration are, for the moment, drained. There must be a period of recovery. Mankind cannot, in its present plight bear new shocks and quarrels without taking to altogether cruder and primordial forms.

Yet we do not know that the hatreds and confusion which are found will not confront us with even harder trial than those we have so narrowly and painfully survived.

In many countries, where even united efforts would fall short of what is needed party strife and faction is fomented or machine-made and skeleton fanatics rave at each other about their rival ideologies.

All the while the ordinary folk of every country show themselves kindly and brave and serviceable to their fellow-men. Yet, they are driven against one another by forces and organizations and doctrines as wantonly and remorselessly as they ever were in the ages of absolute emperors and kings.

There never was a time when breathing space was more needed, a blessed convalescence, a truce of God and man.

*Statesman, 29-4-'46*

## SECTION FOUR: LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

49

### TO THE ASPIRANTS AFTER MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCILS

Under the heading "A Humble Suggestion", Mr. Gandhi has contributed to the columns of *Navajivan* an article whose free rendering we give below. Mr. Gandhi says:

I observe that many candidates have come forward for the choice of the would-be electors for the reformed councils. It must be granted that it is possible to render some service to the State by entering these councils. But it is my firm belief that many can serve the country better by remaining outside. The late Mr. Keir Hardie used to say that it was practically impossible for a true Christian to remain in the British Parliament. Carlyle called it the talking shop. When there are many candidates, those who have accepted service of the land as an article of faith would do well to stand outside the lists, and they will find that they will be better occupied by educating the electorate and keeping the elected members to their promises at the polls. Even in England one sees the most effective service rendered by those who keep themselves outside the House of Commons. The real affairs of the English nation are conducted not by the seven hundred odd M.Ps but by the larger body who really control them. I would therefore venture to suggest to the larger body of those whose only ambition is to serve India, not to trouble about entering the councils. To the aspirants after membership of councils I would respectfully urge: "Pray avoid the councils if it is any axe of your own which you want to grind there, for it can be ground elsewhere. In a chamber where only national interests are supposed to be conserved and where a stiff fight has to be put up against strong vested interests, how can you think of serving your own little interest? Surely, you will not wish to injure the national cause by mixing your own with it." I do not know who are the aspirants. But I draw my inference from what happens over municipal council elections. We shall benefit by our people entering the

councils if they are true men filled with humility and love of the country, courageous, fearless and versed in the subjects they have to handle.

The Reforms Act is full of defects which must be remedied. But even as a razor with the keenest edge is useless in incompetent hands, so may a most perfect constitution be rendered nugatory if it is handled by selfish or ignorant councillors. The most expeditious manner of reforming the Reforms Act would be to send to the councils only those who wish to serve the nation. In their hands, even a defective constitution may be utilized for the good of the nation, even as an able artisan effectively manages indifferent tools and even makes them better.

*Young India*, 19-5-'20, p. 5

## 50

### WHAT SHOULD THE VOTERS DO?

Mr. Gandhi has devoted his second article on the forthcoming elections to the choice of the voters in the columns of *Navajivan*. We give below the substance:

Many who had hitherto no concern with council elections will be shortly called upon to vote for the reformed councils. The powers too of elected members will be found to have increased. This adds to the voters' responsibility. In all our cities the citizens have been exercising the municipal franchise. And of these elections it cannot be said that the electors have always acquitted themselves in a wise manner. Electors' private relations with the candidates have often weighed with them more than the candidates' qualifications. It would be well if we set up a better standard for the elections to the legislative councils. Only thus shall we be able to make the best use of the councils. I suggest also that voters should not identify themselves with any party or its quarrels. They should consider candidates' views and not their party. Their character should weigh more even than their views. A man of character will make himself worthy of any position he is given. Even his mistakes will not matter much. I consider it impossible for a man without character to do higher

national service so that if I were a voter from among the list, I would first select men of character and then I would understand their views. . .

. . . My attempt is to point out that we need an electorate which is impartial, independent and intelligent. If the electors do not interest themselves in national affairs and remain unconcerned with what goes on in their midst, and if they elect men with whom they have private relations or whose aid they need for themselves, this state of things can do no good to the country, on the contrary, it will be harmful.

Now it remains to be considered what the electors should do if they do not receive satisfactory answers to their questions or if they cannot find men of character. It is an established custom with regard to elections that electors, if they do not find any candidate to their liking, they need not register their votes. In such a case abstention amounts to an exercise of one's votes. Exception was taken to this procedure, that if good electors refuse to make their choice bad electors would make the worst choice. This is to a certain extent true. But suppose in a certain place all candidates being drunkards the better portion of the electorate abstain from voting and the candidates manage to secure votes from their kind, can they exercise any influence in the councils? No doubt their vote has its numerical value, but their views and speeches cannot influence the council. Moreover, an intelligent abstention has its own effect. The electors having once failed to find a proper candidate will next time take steps to find out a suitable man and elect him, and by so doing they will raise the level of their own place. In a growing nation people are able to understand the national affairs and they are expected to purify the political atmosphere they live in and to maintain its purity. All enlightened and thoughtful voters will find that occasionally situations must arise when they will have to purposely refuse to register their votes. I earnestly hope that on such occasions our electors will have courage to do so. I hope that when they do exercise the vote they will give it to the best man no matter to which party he belongs.

*Young India*, 9-6-'20, p. 7

### PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAMME

(From a speech at the opening of a Khadi Exhibition which appeared under the title "A Restatement of Faith")

The parliamentary programme is in the air. It has come to stay and rightly. But it cannot bring us independence. Its function is strictly limited though quite necessary. Its success will prevent the Government from claiming that ordinance rule or any measure restricting our progress to the goal was sanctioned by popular representatives. Hence the necessity for voters voting for the Congress candidates who dare not vote for unpopular measures without being liable to Congress discipline. The success of that programme may also bring some relief in individual cases such as the release of Shri Subhash Bose or the detenus. But that is not independence, political or economic.

Then look at it in another way. Only a limited number of men and women can become members of legislatures, say 1500. How many from this audience can become legislators? And just now no more than 3½ crores can vote for these 1,500 members. What about the remaining 3½ crores? In our conception of Swaraj they are the real masters and the 3½ crores are the former's servants who in their turn are masters of the 1,500. Thus the latter are doubly servants, if they will be true to their trust.

But the 3½ crores have also a trust to discharge towards themselves and the nation of which they as individuals are but tiny parts. And if they remain lazy, know nothing of Swaraj and how to win it, they will themselves become slaves to the 1500 legislators. For my argument the 3½ crores of voters here belong to the same category as the 3½ crores. For if they do not become industrious and wise, they will be so many pawns in the hands of 1,500 players, it is of little consequence whether they are Congressmen or otherwise. If the voters wake up only to register their votes every three years or more and then go off to sleep, their servants will become their masters.

The only way I know to prevent such a catastrophe is for the 35 crores to be industrious and wise.

*Harijan*, 2-1-'37, p. 374 at p. 375

## 52

### MY ATTITUDE TO LEGISLATURES

(The following is the summary of Gandhiji's speech delivered at the Gandhi Seva Sangh Conference at Hudli which originally appeared in under the title "Gandhi Seva Sangh and Legislatures".)

The boycott of the legislatures, let me tell you, is not an eternal principle like that of truth or non-violence. My opposition to them has considerably lessened, but that does not mean that I am *going* back on my former position. The question is purely one of strategy, and I can only say what is most needed at a particular moment. Am I the non-co-operator I was in 1920? Yes, I am the same non-co-operator. But it is forgotten that I was a co-operator too in the sense that I non-co-operated for co-operation, and even then I said that if I could carry the country forward by cooperation I should co-operate. I have now advised going to the legislatures not to offer co-operation but to demand co-operation.

If what Premabehn said was seriously meant, I must tell her that my experience is quite to the contrary. I am quite sure that no one would have cared for my politics if I was not pledged to truth and non-violence. Truth was instinctive with me, nonviolence came later. At school I was a dunce and I began my legal career as a second-rate lawyer. My clients in South Africa were not at all impressed with my legal talent, but when they saw that I would not under any circumstances swerve from truth, they clung to me. When I came to India and began taking an active part in the affairs of the country, it was neither my politics nor my intellect that appealed to the country. In Champaran people did not know the name of the Congress and neither my colleagues Rajendra Babu and Brijkishor Babu nor I ever took the name of the Congress before them.

Premabehn says people in Saswad where she works do not understand truth and non-violence but they understand Swaraj. I join issue there and say in spite of her that they do not know what is Swaraj. They understand untouchability, they understand the spinning wheel, but not pure politics. I am quite sure they do not care for the legislatures either. What they are concerned with is whether you can get them bread or a bushel of wheat. In Champaran you could indeed get thousands to vote for the Congress because of the work that was done there without bothering them with politics or the name of the Congress.

If any of you here share her view that truth and non-violence are meaningless apart from politics, I tell you that truth and nonviolence are all-mighty entities independent of ephemeral things like politics. Those politics are nothing worth divorced from truth and non-violence. Truth and non-violence are synonymous with God, and whatever we do is nothing worth apart from them. Our little doings and our little systems will disappear, but truth and non-violence endure forever. Any power that I possess, any influence that I wield is derived from my fifty years' devotion to I truth and non-violence. They give me new inspiration and new power everyday, so much so that if I was completely saturated with them, I would not even need to argue with you.

I should not be a votary of principles which depended for their existence on politics or anything else. I am their votary because they are omnipotent. Why do I regard truth and non-« violence as synonymous with God? It is because I can make no I one else or thing my God even as I have made no one my *guru*. They are priceless things and one has to purchase them with one's life.

Holding then fast as I do to truth, can I advise going to the legislatures? What Jamnalalji said seemed to come strangely from his lips. If fighting for the legislatures meant a sacrifice of truth and non-violence, democracy would not be worth a moment's I purchase. The voice of the people is the voice of God, and it is the voice of 300 million that we have to represent. Is it not possible to do so with truth and non-violence? The voice of those who are not the representatives of the people, who are not the servants of the people will be different, but not of those who claim to be the servants of the 300 millions.

A vast number of our people have secured the right to vote –nearly one-third of these who can vote. The elections gave us an opportunity of carrying the whole Congress programme to them. If that was so, were the members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh to stand aloof? We are pledged to the constructive programme no doubt, but are we not then bound to see that those who go there in our name also carry out the constructive programme? Remember that no political programme can stand without the constructive programme. The whole of that programme is a symbol of truth and non-violence, and it is the prime function of the members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh to see that it does not suffer in any way.

Gangadharrao Deshpande reminded me of what I said at I Faizpur, viz., that I was one of the 3½ crores who had no right to vote. But that has no relevance to the point at issue today. What was our duty as members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh? Could we well have asked the people to refrain from voting? The Gandhi Seva Sangh is a voluntary organization formed to carry out the Congress programme. The Sardar enlisted every one of his workers in Gujarat, including the members of the Sangh, to throw themselves heart and soul in the elections. Could he do otherwise? Should we have won the elections otherwise? Where else was he to find his election workers from? Was he to keep aloof and say: 'No, I have nothing to do with the elections, I am pledged to the constructive programme?' Rajagopalachari decided to stand for the Assembly. When after the event we had a moment to ourselves he asked me about it. I told him he was free to do what he liked. He was no less a votary of truth and non-violence than I. In the Madras Presidency at least we had such sweeping victories because of the constructive work that was done there.

How was I to ask friends not to go to the legislatures? Was the Sardar, who went on sending people to the assemblies, to be asked to resign the membership of the Sangh? Jamnalalji helped the cause with his funds and otherwise. Was he to be asked to resign?

No. That could not be. We could not form ourselves into a narrow coterie and remain aloof. That would be ruining the constructive work of the Congress. And what is the Congress apart from its votaries?

Mind it is not that I am asking you to permit your members to go to the legislatures as a necessary evil. It may be a duty. The legislatures are today WE the representatives of the people. We have to carry out our truth and non-violence there. I have withdrawn from the Congress for reasons special to me and in order to help the Congress all the more. All my time and energy are dedicated to it so long as it swears by the programme of 1920 based on truth and non-violence.

But how, it is asked, may we go to institutions to which we have been opposed? The legislatures of today are different from the old. We do not want to destroy them; we want to destroy the system which they are created to work.

We go there, if we do, not to sacrifice truth and non-violence but in order to vindicate them. Today the Congress has had to spend a few lakhs on elections. When we have become an irresistible power in the land we should have to spend not a single pie. But the fact is that we generally only talk of the Constructive programme. What have we really achieved until now? How many experts in Khadi science have we got today? If we had carried out the constructive programme to the full, there would have been no other party but the Congress party in any province.

But let me tell you that all that I have said does not mean that all of you should now begin thinking of the legislatures. Not only not all, but no one of the Sangh will attempt to go to the legislatures. What I mean to say is no one will shirk it, should an occasion arise. It does not need legal acumen to be able to go there. Bravery and steadfast faith in the constructive programme, are all that is needed. If you went there I should expect you to ply your *taklis* there, to work for prohibition and for the constructive programme. But there should be no scramble for power. That will mean our undoing. Only those will go as are asked by the Gandhi M Seva Sangh to go. I do not deny that legislatures are a great temptation, almost like liquor booths. They hold out opportunities to self-

seekers and job hunters. But no Congressman, no member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh can go with that sordid object. The Congress leader will compel attention to the programme and will not permit the slightest tampering with it. Men thus pledged will go there out of a sense of duty and not as a necessary evil. We have, if we can, to fill all the eleven assemblies with such men | true as steel and pledged to serve and with no axes to grind.

As regards the oath of allegiance I should ask no one to go there who has a conscientious objection to the oath. It is not a religious oath, as far as I understand the Constitution, and it is wholly consistent with the demand for immediate and concrete independence.

*Harijan*, 1-5-'37, p. 89

## 53

### RELIGIOUS OATH AND NON-RELIGIOUS

Shri Shivaprasad Gupta, the great philanthropist of Benares, writes:

"After hearing the *Harijan* of May 1st read to me, I have been pondering over the note "Gandhi Seva Sangh and Legislatures". I re-read it today, I also read the Weekly Letter, but I could not give rest to the surging thought rising in my mind.

"The last paragraph of the note reads: 'It is not a religious oath and so far as I understand the Constitution, it is wholly consistent with the demand for immediate and concrete independence.' The following are the questions that arise in my mind:

1. Are oaths of several and different kinds?
2. Can an oath taken in the name of God, or in the alternative form where one has to affirm solemnly, be classed in two categories, 'religious oath and non-religious oath'?
3. What is the governing idea behind a non-religious oath?

4. How can an oath of allegiance to the person of a king be consistent with 'the demand for immediate and concrete independence'? This demand, at least to me, means depriving the same sovereign of his sovereignty.

"I would very much like your answer to these pertinent questions."

My answer to the first and the second questions is 'Yes'. The answer to the other two questions may be gathered from what follows:

An oath may be taken in the name of God and yet may not be styled religious. An oath that witness takes in a court of law is a legal not a religious oath, breach of which would carry legal consequences. An oath taken by members of Parliament may be called a constitutional not a religious oath, breach of which may involve mundane consequences. Breach of a religious oath carries no legal consequences, but in the opinion of the taker does carry divine punishment. This does not mean that any of the three varieties of oaths is less binding than the others on a conscientious man. A conscientious witness will tell the truth, not for fear of the legal consequence, but he will do so in every case. The legislator's oath has an interpretation in terms of the Constitution which prescribes the oath. The interpretation may be given in the Constitution itself or may grow up by usage. So far as I understand the British Constitution, the oath of allegiance simply means that the legislator will in pushing forward his policy or point conform to the Constitution. I hold that it is open to the legislator consistently with his oath under the British Constitution to adopt measures in the legislature for complete independence. That to my mind is the saving grace of the British Constitution. I fancy that the members of the Union Parliament of South Africa take substantially the same oath as the members in India, but it is open to that Parliament today to declare complete independence without any violation of the oath of allegiance. It is because I have profound conviction that the British Constitution *in theory* permits of the fulfilment of the highest ambition of an individual or the nation of which he is a member that I advised the Working Committee to accept my formula for office acceptance. And it is in the same conviction that I am struggling to get the

British Government to respond to it. I am painfully conscious that they would prolong the agony to the breaking point. But I know that if we have faith and grit we shall win at every point and reach our goal without shedding a drop of blood. The British people apply the same laws to the game of politics that they apply to the game of football which I believe is their invention. They give no quarter to the opponent and ask for none. The fundamental difference in our case is that we have abjured the use of arms. This has confounded them. They do not believe our protestations. They do not mind our agitation for complete independence so long as we keep it within the constitutional limit. What else can the legislators do or are they to do inside their assemblies? They may not take their pistols in their pockets. That would be a flagrant breach of the oath and also the law. Shri Shivaprasad Gupta need not worry himself over the propriety of the oath by Congressmen. If the agitation for complete independence was inconsistent with the oath, surely the British Government themselves would have raised that preliminary objection even to the candidature of Congressmen.

*Harijan, 22-5-'37, p. 116*

## 54

### ARE THERE DIFFERENT OATHS?

On reading my article on "Religious Oath and Non-religious" a Quaker friend wrote to a common friend who has passed on the letter to me. I copy the letter below:

"I have been reading the Mahatma's article on "Religious Oath and Non-religious" with the natural interest of a Quaker, who belongs to a body that for several hundred years has refused *all oaths*.

"It appears to me that Mr. Gandhi is dealing with two quite distinct questions in this article. I wholly agree with his answer to one of them as, with due respect, I wholly disagreed with the other.

"1. In the House of Commons there are some members who are Republicans, there are others who are Communists, etc. They all take the oath or make the equivalent affirmation of allegiance to the Crown. This has always been taken to mean that having been elected to the Legislature for the purpose of effecting needed legislation they will not, whilst legislators, misuse that position by trying to use it (the legislative position) for purposes outside the actual constitution.

"One must presume that every Congressman seeking election to a legislature did so with an honourable purpose, accepting the *de facto* constitution for the time being as the means for effecting immediate legislation. The oath is not a *personal oath to the King*. The King, or the Crown, is merely the symbol of the existing State. Mr. Gandhi's references to South Africa appear to me to be perfectly correct. I do not see that any other position under the Statute of Westminster, relative to these legislature oaths, is possible. I agree wholly with him that a Congressman need not worry over the propriety of the oath.

"2. But the Mahatma's subtle mind is too much for me when he draws distinctions between religious and non-religious oaths. At any rate we simple Quakers look at it thus: Religion is man's search for God, and his reference of all life to the life of God. An affirmation, or promise, to tell the truth and do the truth, is a reference of the self-back to the life of God, for Truth is a part of God's essential nature. Therefore all *such promises are religious acts*. The Quakers object to oaths, because they claim to be religious people, that is, people who fear God, and intend to observe the truth without swearing in the name of God. As you know, after a long struggle and much suffering they obtained the right to affirm instead of swearing. But affirmation or oath, both are for us religious acts; unless by religion one means something apart from the most part of life. I should not agree that a Court of Law or a Parliament was something apart from religion for a religious man.

"Indeed the Mahatma's argument does not carry my consent of spirit. If there is divine punishment for sin as he suggests, all untruth and breaking of promises without just and higher cause, are equally sin, and worthy of this same divine

punishment. He cannot mean that only when the oath is 'religious' its disregard merits divine punishment.

"This of course raises a much bigger question, viz., what exactly he means by the term 'religious'. We Quakers, you see, are clear that all life is religious for the religious man, and have no particular use for a segregated 'religion'. So you see again I am left wondering where exactly I am with constitutional truth that is not religious truth.

"If it be said that all men are not religious, religion means nothing to them,— then I reply, how then can they honestly take any oath at all in the name of God? Of course I mean the name of God in no narrow or merely Christian sense."

Cuttings from two Indian newspapers criticizing the article have also been sent to me.

What I find after reading the letter and the cuttings is that it is very difficult for me to make myself fully intelligible especially when I write on anything out of the way. The only thing for me is to endeavour to elucidate my point so long as there is anything to elucidate.

I can see no subtlety about my argument. But I can see the clearest possible distinction between the oath or affirmation that a person takes before a court of law, a legislature, and before his God perhaps daily at the time of rising and retiring. They have different functions, different incidences.

The Quaker friend in my opinion surrenders the whole position when he agrees with me in my interpretation of the legislative or constitutional oath. His quarrel is purely over my designation of oaths. If my designation is faulty, I would accept any other which succinctly shows the distinction I have pointed out and which the friend accepts by implication.

The mere linguistic meaning of the legislative oath is wholly different from the meaning that the law and tradition have given to it. One not knowing the law and the tradition will certainly have the objection that Shri Shivaprasad Gupta has raised. Mere grammatical or linguistic meaning of a sentence divorced from

its context and history has often been found erroneous and sometimes positively mischievous. Therefore, knowing the context of the legislative oath, I had no hesitation in saying that there was not the slightest strain or violation of truth when I suggested that a Congressman could consistently with his creed of complete independence and his resolution of wrecking the Constitution Act, take the oath required by law shortly described by me as legislative.

And here again my statement must be interpreted in its context and historical perspective. A Congressman entering the legislature will strive for gaining complete independence working within the law, and so will he try to wreck the Act working within the law. If he can work for its amendment, he can quite properly work for its repeal, i.e. wrecking. Indeed his deadlocks also will be within the law. And he won't be frightened or hang his head low if his opponent twits him by saying that he is after all working the constitution. He will not, must not, care so long as he knows his mind, hides nothing and is downright honest in all his dealings.

Of course I agree with the Quaker friend that for a religiously or spiritually minded man religion or rather religious attitude pervades all his thoughts, words and deeds.

But having said this I must adhere to my statement that for the multitudinous purposes of life we find it necessary to distinguish our activities as social, political, mercantile, religious, etc. These divisions can be extended almost to infinity. But the seeker of God will apply his godly attitude even to his sports if he finds time for them.

*Harijan, 26-6-'37 p. 156*

### MEANING OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL OATH

Shri Kishorelal Mashruwala writes:

"I am afraid that Gandhiji's position with regard to the Constitutional oath has not been properly understood. Of course one ought not to make a distinction between a legal oath and a moral oath. But there can be a distinction between a legal oath and a religious oath. By the latter, Gandhiji appears to mean an oath, taken in the name of God, and framed by himself or his religious teachers or scriptures. If it is framed by himself, he knows the exact implications of that oath, and he is bound by his own interpretation of it only, and not of anyone else. Whether he has fulfilled it or not is a question between himself and his conscience or God. If it has been framed by his religious teachers or scriptures, he is expected to have accepted their interpretation of its implications and is fully discharged if they exonerate him. If a person, who does not accept those teachers or scriptures, avers on a mere reading of the language of that oath that the oath has been broken, his opinion does not count.

"A legal oath is one which is framed not by himself but by the Legislature to which he is, *de facto* subject. The exact implication of that oath is no more than what the Legislature has decided to give it. In case of doubt as to its exact meaning, the proper authorities to adjudicate upon the meaning are the Legislature itself, the Court of Law having jurisdiction in the matter, and subject to appeal to them by eminent lawyers. A person who perfectly fulfils the oath in the light of such interpretation is discharged not only legally but also morally.

"A good deal of confusion seems to have arisen by importing into the oath of allegiance implications assigned to it not by the framer or their authorized interpreters but by the layman. Perhaps the layman's interpretation is not without its history. Nevertheless it cannot be accepted as authoritative. The layman's meaning of the oath of allegiance appears to be an attitude of

devotional attachment to the person of the King to such a high pitch that the pledger would be willing to die for him. He seems also to hold that the oath once taken becomes binding upon him for life. According to eminent constitutional lawyers, I am given to understand, both these assumptions are wrong. According to them the oath simply means that as long as the pledger is subject to the oath. (i.e. is a member of the 1 institution which has framed the oath), he shall not rise in arms against the King, or be a party to his death, except through constitutional process. Through constitutional process, even that is allowable. Through constitutional process, it is open to the proper legislature to amend or repeal the oath altogether, it is possible to dethrone the King and even to order his execution. But if the legislature does not agree to it, no legislator who has taken the oath can resort to violence against the King, except after ceasing to be a member of that body.

"A person pledged to Truth and Non-violence (as a member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh) is assumed not to harbour any violent intention to the King under any circumstances. There is, therefore, no moral difficulty in his case to take the oath of allegiance as interpreted above. There is nothing to prevent him from aiming at complete independence, if he means to achieve it—as long as he is in the legislature—through constitutional means, and in case he means to resort to other means, to do so after resigning his seat. His oath is not intended to bind him to it, when he ceases to be a member. There is nothing, again, according to lawyers, requiring a member not to harbour intentions of bringing about a constitutional revolution, even violent, if the legislature will agree. These means are not open to the members of the Sangh, not because they are members of the legislature but because of their membership of the Sangh. Thus there is no conflict between the legal and moral aspect as assumed."

I heartily endorse this presentation of my meaning of the distinction drawn by me between legal and religious oaths. But a friend who saw the foregoing note is not yet satisfied. He says, whatever be the meaning the authors of an oath may give to it, the taker of it should be the final judge of its meaning, and must therefore be at liberty to take or not to take the oath. Whilst he is at

liberty to do what he likes, the arbitrary meaning he may give contrary to the meaning given to it by its very author will be held utterly indefensible.

*Harijan*, 10-7-'37, p. 172

## 56

### NOT A PRIZE

I have been receiving several letters from different provinces against the exclusion of their or their friends' names from ministerships and asking me to intervene. I do not think there is a single province from which such complaints have not been received. In some such letters dire results including communal riots have been threatened, if the excluded persons' claims are not considered.

In the first instance let me say that I have not intervened in any single case in the selection of ministers. I have no right, having completely withdrawn from the Congress, to intervene in such matters, even if I had the wish which I have not. My participation in Congress affairs is confined to tendering advice on the issues involved in office acceptance and on the policies to be pursued in the prosecution of our march to the goal of complete independence.

But it seems to me that my numerous correspondents who have been writing voluminously think that ministerships are prizes for past services and that certain Congressmen can demand their inclusion. I venture to suggest to them that ministerships are avenues to service which those who are called to it should render cheerfully and to the best of their ability. There can therefore never be a scramble for these offices. It would be decidedly wrong to create ministerships for the sake of conciliating interests. If I were a Prime Minister and I was pestered with such claims, I should tell my electors to choose: another leader. These offices have to be held lightly, not tightly. They are or should be crowns of thorns, never of renown. Offices have been taken in order to see if they enable us to quicken the pace at which we are moving towards our goal. It would be tragic if self-seekers or misguided zealots, were allowed to impede the progress by imposing themselves on Prime Ministers. If it was

necessary to have assurances from those who have ultimately to clothe ministers with authority, it is doubly necessary to have assurances of understanding, of loyalty beyond suspicion and of willing obedience to discipline. The grim fight in which the country is engaged cannot be won if Congressmen do not show in their conduct a sufficient measure of selflessness, discipline, and faith in the means enunciated by the Congress for the attainment of the goal.

Thanks to the Karachi resolution, ministerships under the Congress aegis have no pecuniary attraction. I must say in parenthesis that considering Rs. 500 as if it was the minimum instead of the maximum was a mistake. Rs. 500 was the last limit. Had we not got used to the excessive scale of salaries imposed upon the country, we would have regarded Rs. 500 to be excessive. The Congress scale has been generally, for the past seventeen years at least, Rs. 75 per month. In its three great constructive all-India departments, national education, Khadi and village industries, the authorized scale has been Rs. 75. These departments contain men who are good enough, so far as ability is concerned, any day to be ministers. They have distinguished educationists, lawyers, chemists and merchants, who if they were so minded, could easily command over

Rs. 500 per month. Why should the fact of becoming a minister make the great difference we see? But the die is perhaps cast. My remarks represent my personal opinion. I have too high a regard for the Prime Ministers to question their judgment and wisdom. No doubt they thought that this was the best in the circumstances facing them. The point I wish to make, in answer to my correspondents, is that these offices have not been taken in view of the emoluments they offer.

And then they have to be given to those only in the party who are best able to discharge the duty to which they are called.

And, lastly, the acid test is that the choice must commend itself to the members of the party to whom the Prime Ministers owe their nomination. No Prime Minister can for one moment impose a man or woman of his choice on

the party. He is Chief because he enjoys the full confidence of his party as to ability, knowledge of persons, and the other qualities that mark out one for leadership.

*Harijan, 7-8-'37, p. 204*

## 57

### "SUFFICIENTLY ACQUAINTED"

A professor writes:

"You have suggested that even if an M.L.A. can express himself in English it is open to him to declare that he is not 'Sufficiently' acquainted with it and thus enable the Speaker, who is of course not expected to question his bonafides, to allow him to speak in Hindustani. I have read your remarks with the greatest care but have not been able to see how a person having a scrupulous regard for truth can take this course, much less how you can suggest it. Section 85 obviously refers to persons who find themselves unable to express their meaning in English well enough to make it intelligible to those who know English and not to those who do not know it. There can be no question of 'sufficient' acquaintance with English for making oneself intelligible to the latter. The wording is too clear to permit any other interpretation, and in face of it for anybody to declare himself insufficiently acquainted with English simply because there are some fellow members who do not understand English, looks like mere casuistry. In U.P they have got out of the difficulty by interpreting the words 'unacquainted' or 'not sufficiently acquainted with the English language' to mean less acquainted with the English language than with Hindi. But I think the question of comparative acquaintance is also ruled out by the context. I agree that the section is highly obnoxious and must go. If you suggested that it should be deliberately disobeyed it would be a perfectly straightforward course and there could be no objection at least of the conscientious type. As it is, however, you must have some justification for the course you have suggested, which I have been unable to see. There must be

others in the same position and we shall all benefit if you elucidate the point in the *Harijan*." "Sufficient" can only have a relative meaning, not absolute. Even an M.A. may not have "sufficient acquaintance" with English for the purpose before him. Thus an M.A. from U.P will surely not have sufficient knowledge to make himself understood by Hindustani-speaking matriculates. My teachers had often to speak in Gujarati to make themselves understood to the class they were teaching. The reason was that they, most of them graduates, had to struggle through their English to make themselves intelligible to their class. Speaking in Gujarati, they became fluent, and our eyes sparkled as we drank the wisdom they distilled into us. If I was speaker of an Assembly, I would certainly allow a most polished speaker in English to speak in Hindustani if he believed that he did not know sufficient English for the audience before him. It is not a question of grammar or fluency. It is a question of intelligibility. To give any other meaning to the Section would be to frustrate its very object. An ungrammatical English speech would amount to sufficient acquaintance with English if the audience could only understand English and no other language. Such things have often happened during my numerous tours in India. The meaning given in these columns is an honest attempt to deal with a difficult situation. My well-known partiality for the Indian languages for India had nothing to do with the interpretation. If I could not have honestly subscribed to the interpretation which Mahadev Desai's ingenious brain conceived, I would certainly not have allowed it to go in and would have gladly advised a battle with the Government for a just and workable interpretation of the phrase "Sufficiently acquainted". No doubt the proper course is to have the Section amended as the Punjab Premier has already suggested.

*Harijan*, 28-8-'37, p. 231

### SPEAKERS AND POLITICS

Some controversy has raged round the propriety of the Speakers of the various Provincial Assemblies taking an active part in politics. There has been the Speaker's ruling and a full debate and a resolution in the U.P Assembly to the effect that the Speaker can consistently with the due discharge of the obligations of office take an active part in politics. Shri Sambamurti was with me for a few days and exhaustively discussed the question with me. He read to me copious extracts from authoritative treatises dealing with the Speaker's duties in the Parliaments of the world. And there has appeared an article in *Harijan* by Shri Satyamurti. I had a long discussion on the question with Shri Purushottamdas Tandon during his recent visit to Wardha.

After all these discussions and study of the subject I seem to hold a view perhaps different from those I have heard and read. Mine is derived from my conception of the acceptance of office by Congressmen. When I advised the Working Committee to authorize acceptance of office, the idea was that whilst the letter of the Government of India Act should not be transgressed its interpretation should be stretched to the farthest limit so as to widen the liberty of the people and to strengthen the Congress. The Act was not to be worked in the manner conceived by its authors, but while it lasted should be fully used for the advancement of the Congress goal and therefore in a manner least expected by its authors. Such being my conception of office acceptance, British and foreign precedents are of little use to me. Moreover, in the nature of things, they can help us but little for the simple reason that unlike ours the constitutions of the world's Parliaments are not imposed on the respective peoples but are their own creation.

A Congressman who is a member of an Assembly, no matter what office he occupies there, is subject to the discipline of the Congress and has to carry out its instructions from time to time. Therefore, so long as the Government of India Act does not in so many words prohibit it, the Congress may, if it thinks

it necessary, require Speakers in the Congress Provinces to take an active part in the politics of the country.

But the Congress, as far as I know, has not considered the question. In my opinion Congressmen who are members of Assemblies, whether as mere members or ministers or Speakers, have in every act of theirs to bear in mind the fact that they have, in virtue of the Congress constitution, to conform to truth and non-violence. Thus the conduct of a Congressman in an Assembly would have to be that of strictest honesty and courtesy in dealing with his opponents. He will not resort to shady politics, will not hit below the belt, will never take a mean advantage of his adversary. The greater his position in the Assembly, the greater is his responsibility in these matters. A member in the Assembly no doubt represents his constituency and his party but he also represents the whole of his province. A minister no doubt advances his own party but never at the expense of the nation as a whole. Indeed he advances the Congress only so far as he advances the nation. For he knows that if he has no sword to give battle to the foreign ruler, he has it not to give battle to the adversary inside the nation itself. And since the Assembly is the place where all communities meet together willy-nilly, it is the place where by winning over his opponents he expects to forge sanction which can be made irresistible. All the problems that affect the body politic including communal unity can be solved if the Assembly is regarded not merely in terms of the Government of India Act but as an instrument to be used for solving questions which representatives of different communities composing the nation can be expected to solve if they had unrestricted powers. And the Government of India Act does not prevent the use of the Assemblies for solving the many problems which are outside its scope but which are necessary for national progress.

Looked at from the point of view here suggested, the Speaker's position assumes very high importance, greater than that of the Prime Minister. For he has to discharge the functions of a judge while he occupies the chair. He has to give impartial and just rulings. He has to enforce decorum and laws of courtesy between members. He has to be calm in the midst of storms. He has

opportunities of winning over opponents which no other member of the House can possibly have.

Now if a Speaker outside the House ceases to be impartial and indulges in party polemics, he cannot possibly carry the weight he would if he observed impartiality and calmness everywhere. I claim that if a Speaker cultivates the habit of uniform impartiality outside his own very limited sphere, he will enhance the Congress prestige. He can, if he realizes the unique opportunity his office gives him, pave the way for the solution of the Hindu-Muslim tangle as also many others. Thus in my opinion the Speaker, if he has to be that not only inside but outside the House, must be a first class Congressman. As a man to be he has to have a character without reproach. He must be able, fearless, naturally just, and above all truthful and non-violent in thought, word and deed. Then he may stand on any platform he likes.

*Harijan*, 16-7-'38, p. 184

## 59

### TWISTING OR INTERPRETING

(From "Notes")

A friend writes a long letter with reference to my article on "Speakers and Politics". What is discussed in the letter can be put thus in the form of a question: "When you say that the language of the Government of India Act should be stretched to the farthest limit, so as to give the greatest strength to the movement for Independence, do you imply that the Speaker should, or can, knowingly twist any section of the Act so as to give it the desired meaning?"

I should be surprised if such an implication could be extracted from my article. It will amount to encouraging untruth. A Speaker who knowingly gives an interpretation contrary to the plain meaning of a text, renders himself unfit for the high office and discredits the Congress cause. He must, at all cost, preserve the Congress credit for honesty and integrity. What, however, I have meant is that where a section is manifestly capable of two meanings or more, he is

bound to give that which favours the national cause. And when a section bears only one meaning which is manifestly restrictive of the people's liberty, he must unhesitatingly give that meaning. I have no doubt that such impartiality on the part of a Speaker will enhance his reputation and to that extent increase the moral prestige of the Congress. Having discarded violence, the strength of the Congress depends wholly upon the moral fibre and fearlessness of individual Congressmen.

*Harijan, 13-8-'38, p. 216*

## 60

### REMUNERATION TO M.L.A.S

(Originally appeared under the title "Congress M.L.A.s and Remuneration")

An M.L.A. from U.E writes a letter which I abridge as follows: "In U.E we are getting Rs. 75 a month. During the two and half years in which the Congress was in power the Assembly sessions were sometimes concluded in six days, at others they lasted for some months. In addition, there were meetings of select, special and regular committees. Some of these are still working and constitute a heavy demand on our time. Moreover no one knows when the Assembly may be summoned again. Touring in our constituencies entails an expenditure of Rs. 200 a year. There are cases in which the constituencies are more than 200 miles away from Lucknow. Taking an average of three tours in a year, a member has to spend six weeks for this purpose. While at Lucknow, every member has to entertain people from his constituency. He also pays Rs. 4 per month to the Congress Legislature Party and the Provincial Congress Committee. In these circumstances business or professional life has to be sacrificed, and it is clear that unless a member has private means he is totally unable to give whole time work without some remuneration. This question has come up many times

before the U.P M.L.A.S Many of us feel that either the allowance should be raised or the poor among us will have to go out, leaving the field to the rich. You were pained to know that some of the Assembly members were using the allowance for their own use; but I have put before you another side of the picture so that you may guide us. It must also be remembered that many of us borrowed money to fight elections under order of the Congress.

"The second point to which I wanted to draw your attention is the question of corruption in the Congress ranks. Along with other causes, the lure of M.L.A. - ship is a very strong one for the average Congress worker and often leads to underhand methods in the attempt to displace the sitting member. It would be a good thing if it were understood that members who have acquitted themselves well will be renominated. Such a policy would ensure a trained body of workers for legislative work. Members will further realize that constructive work outside the legislatures is also required of them.

"The third point on which I will humbly request you to enlighten us is the strong trend, even among important Congressmen towards Western modes of living, thought and culture. In spite of putting on Khadi many of them are absolutely strangers to their own culture, and to them all light comes from the West."

The letter leaves me unconvinced, so far as the remuneration is concerned. Of course there will be hard cases everywhere. But hard cases make bad law. It should be remembered that the Assemblies are not Congress monopolies. Many parties are represented on them. The Congress convenience cannot be the sole consideration. My correspondent assumes that every member devotes his whole time-to the national service with special regard to legislative activity. This means that the legislators become professional politicians and the legislatures become their special preserves. If I had my way, I would manage these things through the parties. I know that the question bristles with difficulties and requires a thorough and quiet discussion. But the point I have raised is quite small. Why should the members draw anything while the Assemblies are in virtual suspension? If a census were taken, it would be found that many

members were not earning before what they are earning as legislators. It is a dangerous thing to make legislatures a means of earning more than one's market price. Let the responsible men in the provinces put their heads together and come to a decision worthy of the Congress and the cause they represent.

The question raised by the correspondent as to making the present members permanent incumbents is beyond me. I have no experience in this matter. It is one for the Working Committee to probe.

As to the habit of looking to the West for light, I can give little guidance if the whole of my life has not provided any. Light used to go out from the East. If the Eastern reservoir has become empty, naturally the East will have to borrow from the West. I wonder if light, if it is light and not a miasma, can ever be exhausted. As a boy I learnt that it grew with a giving. Anyway I have acted in that belief and have, therefore traded on the ancestral capital. It has never failed me. This, however, does not mean that I must act like a frog in the well. There is nothing to prevent me from profiting by the light that may come from the West. Only I must take care that I am not overpowered by the glamour of the West. I must not mistake the glamour for true light. The latter gives life, the former brings death.

*Harijan, 13-1-'40, p. 414*

## 61

### CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

(From "Question Box")

**Q.** Your Constituent Assembly will be elected by a vast majority of illiterate and ignorant voters who would vote for one side or another because that side is led by persons who cry slogans palatable to them. In such circumstances would not the decision of the Assembly be a farce, a tyranny of numbers? Why cannot you settle by a discussion in the press, or on the platform or in a private conference?

A. There is risk always in every big experiment, but in my opinion it is the least in the proposed method. Underlying the proposal is the faith that the majority of candidates will be enlightened and selfless workers. In that case the elections will be concentrated political education on a stupendous scale. There is no question of tyranny of numbers. There is undoubtedly the risk of ignorant voters being betrayed into a wrong choice. Nevertheless the decision will be the verdict of the people. Discussion in the press and on the platform cannot replace the elective method. The decision of a private conference will represent only those who comprise it. What is wanted is not necessarily a wise but a representative decision. Today many societies claim to speak in the name of the masses. When the Constituent Assembly comes into being, it will silence all voices and be the sole instrument voicing the opinion of the nation.

*Harijan, 3-2-'40, p. 433*

## 62

### THE LURE OF LEGISLATURES

I believe that some Congressmen ought to seek election in the legislatures or other elected bodies. In the past I did not hold this view. I had hoped that the boycott of legislatures would be complete. That was not to be. Moreover, times have changed. Swaraj seems to be near. Under the circumstances it is necessary that: Congress should contest every seat in the legislatures. The attraction should never be the honour that a seat in a legislature is said to give. The desire and opportunity for service can be the only incentive for a Congressman. Congress should have, and has, such prestige that a Congress candidate is irresistible even where a particular seat is contested. Moreover, those that are not selected by the Board should not feel hurt. On the contrary they should feel happy that they are left free to render more useful service. But the painful fact is that those who are not selected by the Board do feel hurt.

The Congress should not have to spend money on the elections. Nominees of a popular organization should be elected without any effort on the latter's part.

Conveyance arrangements for poor voters should be made by their well-to-do neighbours. For instance, if the voters from X have to go to Y, the railway fare from X to Y for the poor voters should be paid by the well-to-do people of X. That is the distinguishing feature of a well-organized, non-violent, popular organization. An organization which looks to money for everything can never serve the masses. If money could bring success in a popular contest, the British Government which can and does spend most lavishly should be the most popular body in India. The facts are that even Government servants drawing fat salaries do not, in their heart of hearts, want the British Government.

Let us examine the utility value of legislatures. The legislatures can expose the Government, but that is the least service. He who can tell the people why they become victims of the Government in spite of knowing its faults and can teach them how to stand up against Government wrong renders a real service. The members cannot do this essential service, for their business is to make people look to them for the redress of wrongs!

The other use of legislatures is to prevent undesirable legislation and bring in laws which are useful for the public, so that as much help as possible can be given to the constructive programme.

Legislatures are supposed to carry out the popular will. For the moment eloquence may be of some use in these bodies! Ultimately that will not be the need. Experts with practical knowledge and those who can give to these few their support will be required. In an organization which exists for the sake of service and which has boycotted titles and other such paltry things, the sentiment that to be selected as candidates for the legislatures is a mark of honour is harmful. If such a sentiment takes root, it will bring down the name of the Congress and finally prove its ruin.

If Congressmen are to be reduced to such degradation, who will put flesh and blood into India's millions of skeletons? On whom will India and the world rely?

On way to Sevagram, 5-2-'46

*Harijan*, 17-2-'46, p. 13

**WHAT ABOUT WOMEN?**

(From *Harijanbandhu*)

"I am glad to read your reply to the complaint that enough women have not been put up for elections or selected for official posts. You reply that merit should be the only criterion in the choice of candidates. Your dictum is perfectly correct and every thinking man and woman will agree with it. There is a saying that 'neither age nor sex but merit alone should be the object of adoration.' The reality is however far from the truth. You are not unaware that the maxim is everywhere observed in the breach. Neither in the ministries and legislatures, nor in local bodies is merit given first consideration in the matter of selection of candidates. Considerations of caste, community and province come into the picture and are the determining factors. The argument preferred in favour of such action is that none of these interests can be ignored. If the argument holds, what about the interests of women? In view of the maxim does not the basis of selection need clarification?" The above is from the letter of an esteemed sister. The sister's argument boils down to this, that where everything is on a wrong basis another wrong will not matter. But if we go on thus, the evil will grow and we shall be hopelessly caught in a vicious circle. My appeal to women, therefore, is that they should intelligently become the personification of renunciation and thereby not only adorn but also raise the status of their sex and the nation.

So long as considerations of caste and community continue to, weigh with us and rule our choice, women will be well advised to remain aloof and thereby build up their prestige. The question is as to how best this can be done. Today few women take part in politics and most of these do not do independent thinking. They are content to carry out their, parents' or their husbands' behests. Realizing their dependence they cry out for women's rights. Instead of doing this, however, women workers should enroll women as voters, impart or have imparted to them practical education, teach them to think independently,

release them from the chains of caste that bind them so as to bring about a change in them which will compel men to realize woman's strength and capacity for sacrifice and give her places of honour. If they will do this they will purify the present unclean atmosphere. So much for women.

As to men, they should consider it their duty to come out of the impure atmosphere wherever it exists. They will not be guided by considerations of caste and community if these are banished from their own minds. The best and easiest way to achieve this is for both men and women to stoop to conquer by becoming *Harijans* and that too of the last class, i.e. *bhangis* or *mehtars*.

Where capable women have been left out men should make amends. It is their duty to give such encouragement to women as will enable them to outshine men. If both parties act as suggested the atmosphere will soon become pure. Whether men do so or not, women's duty is, to my mind, clear.

New Delhi, 12-4-'46  
*Harijan*, 21-4-'46, p. 96

## 64

### NEITHER LEGISLATORS NOR LEGISLATURES GUIDES OF PEOPLE

(From *Harijansevak*; originally appeared under the title "Why Not?")

"You say that if Kasturba Agents are also members of the legislatures, it will be setting a bad example to the villagers. I can understand this being applicable to the present Assembly, but when we have Swaraj the position, will be changed. Will it, therefore, not be an advantage for us to be there? Will not such work as we want done be done in one session of the legislature, whereas ordinarily it would take years to do so?"

So writes a sister. But there seems to be three flaws in her line of argument.

Firstly, I have not made any distinction between the present and the future Assembly under Swaraj. It is unnecessary for my argument.

Secondly, it is an illusion to think that M.L.A.S are the guides of the voters. Voters do not send representatives to the Assemblies in order to be guided by

them. On the contrary, they are sent there loyally to carry out the people's wishes. The people are, therefore, the guides, not the M.L.A.S. The latter are servants, the former masters. The illusion is due to the present system of government. When the illusion disappears, the existing unseemly competition to get into the legislatures will also be much less. There will be a few whose duty it" will be to go there, and they will go to do the people's will. Today they go to the Assembly in order to fight there for Swaraj, but it has now dawned on most people that they cannot achieve much there even in this line.

## 65.

### CASTE CORROSION

Soil corrosion eats up good soil. It is bad enough. Caste corrosion is worse, it eats up men and divides men from men. Letters continue to come from Christians, Parsis, naturally from Scheduled castes and women. They require representation in the ministry. Provincial competition is already there. The makers of ministries are not free from the taint and even when they do not favour it, they will lose caste if they dare to do the right thing and restrict their choice to merit only. Democracy can only represent the average, if not less than the average. Therefore, democratic institution to be pure has to attend to the all-round education of the humblest and the lowliest. It must take in its sweep all superstition and social abuse. In such a society there will be no Christian and non-Christian, there will be no distinction of sex. If best persons are women all ministers will belong to that sex, if Parsis they will be all Parsis. That good day may be far off. What is to be done in the meanwhile? Those who feel that they are left out should have patience and rise by dint of service and merit. Those who happen to be ministers should mete out even justice which must include extra effort to raise the neglected and down-trodden. They should make all feel at every step that they are servants, not masters of the nation.

New Delhi, 29-4-'46

*Harijan*, 5-5-'46, p. 124

66.

**SALARY OF M.L.A.S**

Q. The monthly salary of an M.L.A. is Rs. 200/-. He is a mofussil member and, as such, is entitled to a daily allowance of Rs. 15/- when the Assembly is in session. Besides that, he may draw a conveyance of Rs. 2/8/- for any day on which he attends the meeting of the Assembly. Moreover, he is entitled to 'travelling allowance' for his journey from the usual place of residence to the city at the rate of one and a half times first class fare but he cannot draw 'travelling allowance' and 'daily allowance' for the same day.

1. (a) Should such a person as a representative and servant of the poor draw the salary?  
(b) Would he be absolved from the wrong if he gave the whole amount to the local Congress Committee or the institution under which he is working for constructive work?  
(c) If so, would it not mean that the end justifies the means?
2. He will have to live in the city when the Assembly is in session and has to incur some other expenditure for discharging his duties and responsibilities as an M.L.A.  
(a) In the circumstances, may he, consistently with his ideal, draw the daily allowance to meet the expenses?  
(b) If so, and if it be not permissible to draw a part of it, should he draw the whole of it and give the balance to the institution under which he is working?  
(c) In that case, may he, consistently with his ideal, spend the balance or part thereof for his family, which will have otherwise to depend upon the charity of friends to make the two ends meet?
3. (a) Should he draw the conveyance allowance (meant for his conveyance inside the city for attending meetings) when the daily allowance will be more than sufficient to cover all his expenses including the conveyance?

(b) Should he avail of costly conveyance for attending meetings, if he usually travels in tramcars and buses?

4. If such a member travels third class on principle, what should he do regarding drawing 'mileage allowance' if it is not permissible to draw at lower rate than one and a half first class fares?

A. In my opinion, the salary and allowances drawn by the gentlemen of various Assemblies are out of all proportion to the services they render to the country. The scales fixed are on the English pattern, not at all compatible with the income of this country—the poorest in the world. Therefore, the answer I suggest is that the Ministers should, with the consent of the Assemblies, reduce the whole scale in accordance with requirements and, in the meantime, either the amount taken should be handed to the party to which the member belongs, drawing what the party has fixed or, if that be not possible, drawing what his conscience thinks just for himself and his family and devoting the balance to some item of the constructive programme or some such public activity. The money allowed has to be drawn but nobody is obliged to use it for oneself except to the extent needed. No question here arises of end justifying the means.

New Delhi, 25-5-'46

*Harijan*, 2-7-'46, p. 157

## 67

### MINISTERIAL SALARIES

I have to pay heavily for the caution with which I wrote the other day the paragraph in *Harijan* in regard to increase in ministerial salaries. I have to go through long letters bemoaning my caution and arguing with me to revise my view. How can Ministers make large increases in their own original fat salaries when the poor *chaprasis* and clerks get an increase which hardly meets the occasion? I have re-read my note and I claim that the short note includes all

that the various correspondents desire. But, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, I expand my meaning.

I have been twitted for not referring to the Karachi Resolution. The lower scale of Ministers' salaries rests on much higher ground than the authority of a resolution. In any event, so far as I am aware, the Congress has never varied that resolution. It is as binding today as it was when it was passed.

I do not know that the increase in the salaries is justified. But I must not offhand condemn the increase without knowing the case of the Ministers. Critics should know that I have no authority over them or anyone else except myself. Nor am I present at all the meetings of the Working Committee. I attend only when required by the President. I can only give my opinion for what it is worth. And, if it is to have any weight, it must be well-conceived and based on ascertained facts.

The question of the hideous inequality between the rich and the poor and the lower services and the higher is a separate subject requiring drastic and well thought out method and could not be merely incidental to the lowering of the salaries of a few Ministers and their secretaries. Both subjects require to be dealt with on merit. The question of salaries could and should be easily disposed of by the Ministers concerned. The other is a much vaster subject requiring a thorough overhauling. I would any day agree that the Ministers should tackle the subject in their own; provinces without delay and the lower ranks should before everything else have their salaries fully reconsidered and increased wherever necessary.

Mussoorie, 31-5-'46

*Harijan*, 9-6-'46, p. 176

### A TRAGIC PHENOMENON

My post contains so many letters from persons who want to be in the Constituent Assembly that it frightens me into the suspicion that, if these letters are an indication of general feeling, the intelligentsia is more anxious about personal aggrandizement than about India's independence. And if I, though I have no connection with the applications of candidates for elections, receive so many letters, how many more must the members of the Working Committee be receiving? These correspondents should know that I take no interest in these elections, I do not attend meetings at which these applications are considered and that I often know only from newspapers who have been elected. It is on rare occasions that my advice is sought as to the choice to be made. But I write this more to draw attention to the disease of which these applications are a sign than to warn my correspondents against building any expectation of my intervention. It is wrong to think communally in such elections, it is wrong to think that anyone is good enough for the Constituent Assembly, it is altogether wrong to think that the election carries any honour with it, it is a post of service if one is fitted for the labours and, lastly, it is wrong to regard the post as one for making a few rupees while the Assembly lasts. The Constituent Assembly should have such members only who know something about constitutions all the world over, above all, about the constitution that India's genius demands. It is debasing to think that true service consists in getting a seat in the Assembly. True service lies outside. The field of service outside is limitless. In the fight for independence, the Constituent Assembly, like the one in course of formation, has a place. Nevertheless it is a very small place and that too if we use it wisely and well; certainly not, if there is a scramble for a seat in it. The scramble warrants the fear that it may become a hunting ground for place-seekers. I am free to confess that a Constituent Assembly is the logical outcome of parliamentary activity. The labours of the late Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru

opened my eyes to the fact that the parliamentary programme had a place in the national activity for independence. I strove hard against it. It is certainly inconsistent with pure non-co-operation. But pure non-co-operation never held the field. What came into being also waned. Had there been universal non-co-operation of the non-violent type in the Congress ranks, there would have been no parliamentary programme. Non-violent non-co-operation with evil means co-operation with all that is good. Therefore, non-violent non-co-operation with a foreign government necessarily means an indigenous government based on non-violence. Had there been such complete non-co-operation, there would be Swaraj today based on non-violence. But this never happened. In the circumstances it would have been vain to struggle against what the nation had been familiar with and from which it could not be completely weaned. The parliamentary step having been taken, it would have been improper to boycott the present effort. But that does not, can never mean that there should be indecent competition for filling the seats in it. Let us recognize the limitations.

Panchgani, 18-7-'46

*Harijan*, 28-7-'46, p. 237

## SECTION FIVE: THE STATE AND THE PEOPLE

69

### JAIPRAKASH'S PICTURE

The following draft resolution was sent to me by Shri Jai- prakash Narain. He asked me, if I accepted his picture, to put it before the Working Committee at Ramgarh.

"The Congress and the country are on the eve of a great national upheaval. The final battle for freedom is soon to be fought. This will happen when the whole world is being shaken by mighty forces of change. Out of the catastrophe of the European War, thoughtful minds everywhere are anxious to create a new world—a world based on the co-operative goodwill of nations and men. At such a time the Congress considers it necessary to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stands and for which it is soon to invite the Indian people to undergo the uttermost sufferings.

"The free Indian nation shall work for peace between nations and total rejection of armaments and for the method of peaceful settlement of national disputes through some international authority freely established. It will endeavour particularly to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours whether they be great powers or small nations, and shall covet no foreign territory.

"The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and concurrence of the people.

"The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly.

"The State shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation. Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating either from inherited social status or the State.

"The political and economic organization of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While this organization shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small scale production carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control, and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalizing heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralized.

"The life of the villages shall be reorganized and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other.

"The State shall protect the interests of the classes, but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and down-trodden, it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

"In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises the workers shall be represented in the management through their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government.

"In the Indian States, there shall be complete democratic government established and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social

distinction and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the States in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs.

"This is the order which the Congress envisages and which it shall work to establish. The Congress firm believes that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation."

I liked it and read his letter and the draft to the Working; Committee. The Committee, however, thought that the idea on having only one resolution for the Ramgarh Congress should be] strictly adhered to, and that the original, as framed at Patna, should not be tampered with. The reasoning of the Committed was unexceptionable, and the draft resolution was dropped without any discussion on merits. I informed Shri Jaiprakash of the result of my effort. He wrote back suggesting that he would be satisfied if I could do the next best thing, namely publish it] with full concurrence or such as I could give it. I have no difficulty in complying with Shri Jaiprakash's wishes. As an ideal to be reduced to practice as soon as possible after India come into her own, I endorse in general all except one of the propositions enunciated by Shri Jaiprakash.

I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred Unfortunately Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the leas and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrong suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation! No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slaver Freedom received through the efforts of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest

can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation.

It therefore gladdens me to find Shri Jaiprakash accepting as I read his draft, non-violence for the purpose of establishing the order envisaged by him. I am quite sure that non-violent non-co-operation can secure what violence never can, and this by ultimate conversion of the wrong-doers. We in India have never given non-violence the trial it has deserved. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence.

Shri Jaiprakash's propositions about land may appear frightful. In reality they are not. No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?

But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education both of the haves and have-nots. The former should be assured that there never will be force used against them. The have-nots must be educated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e. self-suffering. If the end in view is to be achieved, the education I have adumbrated has to be commenced now. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust has to be established as the preliminary step. There can then be no violent conflict between the classes and the masses.

Whilst, therefore, I have no difficulty in generally endorsing Shri Jaiprakash's proposition in terms of non-violence, I cannot endorse his proposition about the Princes. In law they are independent. It is true that their independence is not worth much, for it is guaranteed by a stronger party. But as against us they are able to assert their independence. If we come into our own by nonviolent means, as is implied in Shri Jaiprakash's draft proposals, I do not imagine a settlement in which the Princes will have effaced themselves. Whatever settlement is arrived at, the nation will have to carry out in full. I can therefore only conceive a settlement in which the big States will retain their

status. In one way this will be far superior to what it is today; but in another it will be limited so as to give the people of the States the same right of self-government within their States as the people of the other parts of India will enjoy. They will have freedom of speech, a free press and pure justice guaranteed to them. Perhaps Shri Jaiprakash has no faith in the Princes automatically surrendering their autocracy. I have. First because they are just as good human beings as we are and secondly because of my belief in the potency of genuine non-violence. Let me conclude, therefore, by saying that the Princes and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, if we have it, and to the nation. At present we are half-hearted. The way to freedom will never be found through half-heartedness. Non-violence begins and ends by; turning the searchlight inward.

Sevagram, 14-4-'40

*Harijan*, 20-4-'40, p. 96

## 70.

### A WEAK GOVERNMENT

(From "Worthy of Reflection")

The Swaraj Government is bound to proceed with firmness and courage. A Government which is weak or which allows itself to be led into courses which its reason does not approve of, is not fit to rule. It ought to step aside and make way for a better one. To say or to believe that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel have weakened under my influence is to betray gross ignorance of their character. And if my influence has really the enervating effect imputed to it by my correspondent, it is a thing for me to be ashamed of and for the country to deplore as detrimental to its very existence.

*Harijan*, 1-2-'48, p. 5 at p. 6

71

### REAL SOCIALISM

(From a speech at the opening of a Khadi exhibition which appeared under the title "A Restatement of Faith")

Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught:

"All land belongs to Gopal, where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it."<sup>1</sup> Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e. the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.

I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence.

*Harijan, 2-1-'37, p. 374 at p. 375*

सभी भौम गोपालकी, वामें अटक कहाँ?  
जाके मनमें खटक रही, सोही अटक रहा ।

72

### SOCIALISM

I

("Who Is a Socialist?")

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high,

that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are sub-divisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our lives we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawklike seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeroes will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

New Delhi, 6-7-'47  
*Harijan*, 13-7-1947, p. 232

II

(Originally appeared under tile title "Socialism")

Truth and ahimsa must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and ahimsa is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence have I said that truth is God. This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship, which tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The socialism of such takes them nowhere, what to say of the society in which they live.

If such be the case, does it mean that no socialist believes in God? If there be any, why have they not made any visible progress? Then again, many Godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a socialistic State?

It is difficult completely to silence these two doubts. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialism and belief in God. It is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended socialism to the masses. Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism itself untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway.

The fact is that it has always been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities. My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

New Delhi, 13-7-'47  
*Harijan*, 20-7-'47, p. 240

73

**FOR SOCIALISM TO BECOME A PERMANENT WAY OF LIFE**

(An extract from an article by A. K. under the title "How Gandhiji Feels and Acts" is given below.)

Replying to a French friend, Gandhiji said he felt that a socialistic State was bound to come into being in India. He hoped that Indian socialism would not be an arm-chair, but a practical, socialism. The goal must be clear and perfect or else they would be sailing on an unchartered sea and might founder. He himself naturally clung to the hope that future society in India would be built on non-violence. And only in that case would socialism become a permanent way of life.

*Harijan, 18-5-'47, p. 149*

74

**CAN THE POLICE OR THE MILITARY BE SUPPLANTED ?**

I

(Originally appeared under the title "My So-called Inconsistencies")

During my student days improperly so-called (for they- properly began after the period of examinations and are not yet over for me) I learnt a saying of Emerson's which I never forgot. "Foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds", said the sage. I cannot be a little mind, for foolish consistency has never- been my hobgoblin. My critics are shocked over my recent remarks on picketing. They think that in describing as a species of violence the formation of a living wall of pickets in order to prevent the entry of persons into picketed places, I have contradicted my sayings and doings during the civil disobedience campaign. If such is really the case, my recent writing must be held as cancelling my comparatively remote sayings and doings. Though my body is deteriorating through age, no such law of deterioration, I hope, operates

against wisdom which I trust is not only not deteriorating but even growing. Whether it is or not, my mind is clear on the opinion I have given on picketing. If it does not appeal to Congressmen, they may reject it, and if they do they may violate the laws of peaceful picketing. But there is no discrepancy between my past practice and the present statement. When civil disobedience was first organized by me in South Africa, my companions discussed with me the question of picketing. The registration office had to be picketed in Johannesburg, and the suggestion made was that we should form there a living wall of pickets. I at once rejected the idea as violent. And pickets were posted in marked positions in a big public square so that no one could elude the eagle eyes of the pickets and yet every one could go to the registration office, if he liked, without touching any one. Reliance was put upon the force of public opprobrium which would be evoked by the publication of the name of 'black legs'. This method was copied by me here when liquor shops were to be picketed. The work was specially entrusted to the women as better representatives of non-violence than men. Thus there was no question of the formation of a living wall. Many unauthorized things were no doubt done during those days as they are now. But I cannot recall a single instance in which I countenanced the kind of picketing condemned by the article that has come in for sharp criticism. And is there really any difficulty about regarding a living wall of pickets as naked violence? What is the difference between force used against a man wanting to do a particular thing, and force exercised by interposing yourself between him and the deed? When, during the non-cooperation days, the students in Benares blocked the passage to the University gates I had to send a peremptory message and, if my recollection serves me right, I strongly condemned their action in the columns of *Young India*. Of course I have no argument against those who hold different views from mine regarding violence and non-violence.

The other inconsistency imputed to me has reference to my advice to factory-owners to invoke the assistance of the police to defend themselves against what I have described as violent picketing. Having condemned the ministries for calling in the aid of the police and even the military for suppressing riots, how

could I advise employers of labour to ask for, and ministers to supply, police assistance, ask my critics.

This is what I wrote in *Harijan* about the ministerial action in UP:

"It has been suggested that when we have our independence riots and the like will not occur. This seems to me to be an empty hope, if in the course of the struggle for freedom we do not understand and use the technique of nonviolent action in every conceivable circumstance. To the extent that the Congress ministers have been obliged to make use of the police and the military, to that extent, in my opinion, we must admit our failure. That the ministers could not have done otherwise is unfortunately only too true. I should like every Congressman, I should like the Working Committee, to ask themselves why we have failed, if they think with me that we have."

Surely here there is no condemnation of the Ministers' action. I have deplored the necessity for it as I would deplore such necessity in the matter of picketing. But till the Congress has developed a peaceful method of dealing with violent crimes, its ministers must use the police and, I fear, even the military if they are to undertake the administration of the affairs of the country in the present stage of its career. But it will bode ill for them and the country if they do not devise methods of dispensing with the use both of the police and the military or at least of visibly reducing] their use to such an extent that he who runs may notice the reduction. There certainly is a way. I have ventured to give a faint; indication of it. But it may be that the Congress organization is not really fitted for the great task. Without a living faith in non-violence, neither the military nor the police can be supplanted.

Cries come in from many quarters of growing insubordination indiscipline and even open violence among Congressmen. I hope that the charge is untrue of the majority of Congressmen.

*Harijan*, 27-8-'38, p. 234

II

(From "Congressmen Beware")

I have been inundated with letters and wires complaining of what the senders have regarded as the Madras Premier's terrible deeds. I pick out two which have been the subject of adverse comment in many quarters in India. They are . . . and his employment of the criminal Law Amendment Act for abating the picketing nuisance.

And the picketing? It is insufferable that youngsters or even grown-up people should assail homes and offices and howl unmentionable imprecations against those who are shouldering their burden amid the greatest difficulty. Until we have found the correct remedy in terms of satyagraha the ministers must be permitted to deal with such offences in the manner they consider best. If they are not, the freedom that is possible under Congress Raj will soon degenerate into goondalism pure and undefiled. That is the way not to salvation but it is the easiest road to perdition. And the minister who is worth his salt will resolutely refuse to be a cause of the country's perdition.

Lastly, the Criminal Law Amendment Act. We may not make a fetish of Congress resolutions. The Congress has objection not to the name but to the contents of an Act going under that name, and then, too, not to every word or section of the Act. I have never studied it, but I see from Rajaji's public declarations that it contains a few sections which suit the new situation that the Congress is facing. If such is the case, Rajaji will be foolish if he does not make use of them. But he will be equally foolish, if not something worse, if he does not summarily repeat the obnoxious clauses of the Act without delay. It is a monster created by the fertile brain of the repressor of the country's liberty. It was used as such against the satyagrahis. The sooner, therefore, those clauses go the better for Rajaji and the country. But let Congressmen beware of hanging their trusted servants before they are tried and found wanting.

*Harijan*, 10-9-'38, p. 250

### WHEN CAN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT BE A REALITY?

(From "Working of Non-violence")

I have purposely refrained from dealing with the nature of Government in a society based on non-violence. All society is held together by non-violence, even as the earth is held in her position by gravitation. But when the law of gravitation was discovered the discovery yielded results of which our ancestors had no knowledge. Even when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But I cannot say in advance what the government based wholly on non-violence will be like.

What is happening today is disregard of the law of non-violence and enthronement of violence as if it were an eternal law. The democracies, therefore, that we see at work in England, America and France are only so-called, because they are no less based on violence than Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy or even Soviet Russia. The only difference is that the violence of the last three is much better organized than that of the three democratic powers. Nevertheless we see today a mad race for outdoing one another in the matter of armaments. And if when the clash comes, as it is bound to come one day the democracies win, they will do so only because they will have the backing of their peoples who imagine that they have a voice in their own government whereas in the other three cases the peoples might rebel against their own dictatorship.

Holding the view that without the recognition of non-\* violence on a national scale there is no such thing as a constitutional or democratic government, I devote my energy to the propagation of non-violence as the law of our life,— individual, social, political, national and international. I fancy that I have seen the light, though dimly. I write cautiously, for I do not profess to know the

whole of the law. If I know the successes of my experiments, I know also my failures. But the successes are enough to fill me with undying hope.

I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end, will take care of itself. Non-violence is the means, the end for every nation is complete independence. There will be an international! League only when all the nations, big or small, composing it are] fully independent. The nature of that independence will correspond to the extent of non-violence assimilated by the nations concerned. One thing is certain. In a society based on non-violence, the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest. The idea of superiority and inferiority will be wholly obliterated.

Thus the conclusion is irresistible that for one like men wedded to non-violence, constitutional or democratic government is a distant dream so long as non-violence is not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy. While I prate about universal non-violence, my experiment is confined to India. If it succeeds, the world will accept it without effort. There is, however, a bit BUT. The pause does not worry me. My faith is brightest in the midst of impenetrable darkness.

*Harijan*, 11-2-'39, p. 7 at p. 8

## 76

### IS INDIA A MILITARY OR PEACE-LOVING COUNTRY?

(Originally appeared under the title "Is India a Military Country?")

In the interesting broadcast delivered by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces in India on the 5th instant there occurs this passage.

"India is a military country and I am a soldier. It will, therefore, perhaps not be amiss if I give you some personal impressions of what the effect of modernization will be on the personnel of the future Army in India. They are not just guess-work but based on what has already been done. With new scientific weapons and with modern vehicles, there will inevitably

come new ideas and a new outlook. Modernization is likely to give increased impetus to the already high rate of education in the Indian Army; and when nearly every soldier on discharge returns to his home with a knowledge of motor cars and machinery, there may well be a perceptible effect upon the age-old methods of agriculture and ways of living. Modernization in the Army may therefore have a considerable indirect effect upon the life of India. Many of those who hear me will regret the passing of the horse. No one regrets it more than myself. But as a soldier who knows the fate which awaits the horse in modern warfare, I rejoice for its sake, that one of the greatest and best friends of man is in future to be spared the horrors of war."

I must wholly, though respectfully, dissent from the view that India is a military country. And I thank God that it is not. It may be that the Commandar-in-Chief has a special meaning for the term which I do not know. Or is it that his India is composed of only the Defence Forces under his command? For me the Defence Forces are of the least importance in the make-up of the nation. I need not be reminded that life would be in constant peril if the forces were withdrawn. The forces notwithstanding, life is not free from peril. There are riots, there are murders, there are decoities, there are raids. The Defence forces avail little in all these perils. They generally act after the mischief is done. But the gallant Commander-in-Chief looks at things as a soldier. I and, with me, the millions are untouched by the military spirit. From ages past India has had a military caste in numbers wholly insignificant. That caste has had little to do with the millions. This, however, is not the occasion for examining its contribution to the making of India. All want to state, with the utmost emphasis at my command, is that the description of India as a military country is wrong. Of all the countries in the world India is the least military. Though I have failed with the Working Committee in persuading them, at this supreme moment to declare their undying faith in non-violence as the only sovereign remedy for saving mankind from destruction I have not lost the hope that the masses will refuse to bow to the Moloch of war but will rely upon their capacity for suffering to save the country's honour. How has the undoubted' military valour of Poland

saved her against the superior forces of Germany and Russia? Would Poland unarmed have fared worse if it had met the challenge of these combined forces with the resolution to face death without retaliation? Would the invading forces have taken a heavier toll from an infinitely more valorous Poland? It is highly probable that their essential nature would have made them desist from a wholesale slaughter of innocents.

Of all the organizations of the world the Congress is the best fitted to show it the better way, indeed the only way, to the true life. Its non-violent experiment will have been in vain if, when India wakes up from the present fear, she does not show to the world the way of deliverance from the blood bath. The criminal waste of life and wealth that is now going on will not be the last if India does not play her natural part by showing that human dignity is best preserved not by developing the capacity to deal destruction but by refusing to retaliate. I have no manner of doubt that if it is possible] to train millions in the black art of violence which is the law of the beast, it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of regenerate man. Anyway if the Commander-in-Chief will look beyond the Defence Forces, he will discover that the real India is not military but peace loving.

Nor do I contemplate without uneasiness the prospect of Indian soldiers, trained after the modern manner, taking the motor spirit to their homes. Speed is not the end of life. Man sees more and lives more truly by walking to his duty.

*Harijan*, 30-9-'39, p. 285

## DEMOCRACY AND NON-VIOLENCE

(From "Question Box")

Q. Why do you say, "Democracy can only be saved through non-violence?" (The questioner is an American friend).

A. Because democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence cannot provide for or protect the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regards for the weak. The weakest, you say, go to the wall. Take your own case. Your land is owned by a few capitalist owners. The same is true of South Africa. These large holdings cannot be sustained except by violence, veiled if not open. Western democracy, as it functions today, is diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism. Why is there the war today, if it is not for the satisfaction of the desire to share the spoils? It was not through democratic methods that Britain bagged India. What is the meaning of South African democracy? Its very constitution has been drawn to protect the white man against the coloured man, the natural occupant. Your own history is perhaps blacker still, in spite of what the Northern States did for the abolition of slavery. The way you have treated the negro presents a discreditable record. And it is to save such democracies that the war is being fought! There is something very hypocritical about it. I am thinking just now in terms of non-violence and trying to expose violence in its nakedness.

India is trying to evolve true democracy, i.e. without violence. Our weapons are those of satyagraha expressed through the Charkha, the village industries, primary education through handicrafts, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, prohibition, and non-violent organization of labour as in Ahmedabad. These mean mass effort and mass education. We have big agencies for

conducting these activities. They are purely voluntary, and their only sanction is service of the lowliest.

This is the permanent part of the non-violent effort. From this effort is created the capacity to offer non-violent resistance called non-co-operation and civil disobedience which may culminate in mass refusal to pay rent and taxes. As you know, we have tried non-co-operation and civil disobedience on a fairly large scale and fairly successfully. The experiment has in its promise of a brilliant future. As yet our resistance has been that of the weak. The aim is to develop the resistance of the strong. Your wars will never ensure safety for democracy. India's experiment can and will, if the people come up to the mark or, to put it another way, if God gives me the necessary wisdom and strength to bring the experiment to fruition.

*Harijan, 18-5-'40, p. 129*

## 78

### MY IDEA OF A POLICE FORGE

(Translated from Gujarati)

A friend writes as follows:

"The English sister, whom you recently quoted, rightly says that efforts should always be made to stem external aggression by non-violent means, and that present circumstances offer a peculiarly suitable opportunity for demonstrating that it is possible to secure better results through non-violence than through armed force. But ahimsa as a weapon to counter internal disorders presents difficulties. In our country there can be three types of internal disturbances, viz. communal, industrial, and dacoities. The root causes of these are mutual distrust, social injustice and grinding poverty due to economic exploitation and unemployment. So long as these causes exist, the threefold disturbances

will take place in spite of armed forces. Your constructive programme is the only means of removing these root causes. But it will take time. What is to be done in the meantime? Can non-violence solve the difficulties?

"Can we envisage an order of society in which we will not have to resort to *himsa* in any form whatsoever? Suppose for argument's sake that there exists a society where the majority does not possess goods that would excite envy and where everyone has the wherewithal to live contentedly. Even then it does not seem possible that there will be no disputes over proprietorship of land, lending and borrowing of money, and other business dealings. For these, therefore, we must provide the means of justice and see that the decision of the courts or arbitration boards are carried out. For this it will be essential to have a police force. You have yielded this point. But I should like to know what restrictions you would place on the police force. If there were a non-violent Government in power today, would it use the police force for quelling internal disorders? And are you willing to maintain it for all time or only temporarily? My mind refuses to go so far as to envisage a time when a police force will be a superfluity. There seems to me to be no escape from placing this limitation, as it were, on ahimsa." The questions asked in this letter are of the utmost importance and deserve notice. If true ahimsa had come into being within us, and if our so-called satyagraha movements had been truly non-violent, these questions would not have arisen because they would have been solved.

For one who has never seen the arctic regions an imaginary description of them, however elaborate, can convey but an inadequate idea of the reality. Even so is it with ahimsa. If all Congressmen had been true to their creed, we would not be vacillating between violence and non-violence as we are today. The fruits of ahimsa would be in evidence everywhere. There would be communal harmony, the demon of untouchability would have been cast out, and, generally speaking, we should have evolved an ordered society. But the

reverse is the case just now. There is even definite hostility to the Congress in certain quarters. The word of Congressmen is not always relied on. The Muslim League and most of the Princes have no faith in the Congress and are in fact inimical to it. If Congressmen had true ahimsa in them, there would be none of this distrust. In fact the Congress would be the beloved of all.

Therefore I can only place an imaginary picture before the votaries of ahimsa.

So long as we are not saturated with pure ahimsa we cannot possibly win Swaraj through non-violence. We can come into power only when we are in a majority or, in other words, when the large majority of people are willing to abide by the law of ahimsa. When this happy state prevails the spirit of violence will have all but vanished and internal disorder will have come under control.

Nevertheless I have conceded that even in a non-violent State a police force may be necessary. This, I admit, is a sign of my imperfect ahimsa. I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force as I have in respect of an army. Of course I can and do envisage a State where the police will not be necessary; but whether we shall succeed in realizing it, the future alone will show.

The police of my conception, will however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present-day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal; with the ever-decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined primarily to robbers and dacoits. Quarrels between labour and capital and strikes will be few and far between in a non-violent State, because the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society. Similarly there will be no room for communal disturbances. Then we must remember that when such a Congress Government comes into power the large majority of men and women of 21 years and over will have been

enfranchized. The rigid and cramped constitution of today has of course no place in this picture.

Sevagram, 20-8-'40

*Harijan*, 1-9-'40, p. 265

## 79

### WHAT ABOUT NON-VIOLENCE?

Q. But what about your non-violence? To what extent will you carry out your policy after freedom is gained?

A. The question hardly arises. I am using the first personal' pronoun for brevity, but I am trying to represent the spirit of India as I conceive it. It is and will be a mixture. What policy the National Government will adopt I cannot say. I may not even survive it much as I would love to. If I do, I would advise the adoption of non-violence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order. I expect that with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character. I shall certainly hope that all the effort for the last twenty-two years to show the efficacy of non-violence as a political force will not have gone in vain and a strong party representing true non-violence will exist in the country. In every case a free India in alliance with the allied powers must be of great help to their cause, whereas India held in bondage as she is today must be a drag upon the war-chariot and may prove a source of real danger at the most critical moment.

*Harijan*, 21-6-'42, p. 197

### CERTAIN QUESTIONS

A London friend has put seven questions on the working of non-violence. Though similar questions have been dealt with in *Young India* or *Harijan*, it is profitable to answer them in a single article, if perchance the answers may prove helpful.

Q. 1. Is it possible for a modern State (which is essentially based on force) to offer non-violent resistance for countering internal as well as external forces of disorder? Or is it necessary that people wanting to offer non-violent resistance should first of all divest themselves of State-authority and place themselves *vis-a-vis* the opponent entirely in a private capacity?

A. It is not possible for a modern State based on force, non-violently to resist forces of disorder whether external or internal. A man cannot serve God and Mammon, nor be 'temperate and furious' at the same time. It is claimed that a State can be based on non-violence, i.e. it can offer non-violent resistance against a world combination based on armed force. Such a State was Ashoka's. The example can be repeated. But the case does not become weak even if it be shown that Ashoka's State was not based on non-violence. It has to be examined on its merits.

Q. 2. Do you think that it would be possible for a Congress Government to deal with foreign aggression or internal riots in an entirely non-violent manner?

A. It is certainly possible for a Congress government to deal with "foreign aggression or internal riots" in a non-violent manner. That the Congress may not share my belief is quite possible. If the Congress changes its course, the change will prove nothing save that the non-violence hitherto offered was of the weak and that the Congress has no faith in State non-violence.

Q. 3. Does not the knowledge that the opponent is wedded to non-violence often encourage the bully?

A. The bully has his opportunity when he has to face nonviolence of the weak. Non-violence of the strong is any day stronger than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host.

Q. 4. What policy would you advocate if a section of the Indian people tries to enforce by sword a selfish measure which is not only repugnant to others but also basically unjust? While it is possible for an unofficial organization to offer non-violent resistance in such; a case, is it also possible for the government of the day to do so?

A. The question assumes a case which can never exist. A non-violent State must be broad-based on the will of an intelligent people, well able to know its mind and act up to it. In such a State the assumed section can only be negligible. It can never stand against the deliberate will of the overwhelming majority represented by the State. The government of the day is not outside the people. It is the will of the overwhelming majority. If it is expressed non-violently, it cannot be a majority of one but nearer 99 against 1 in a hundred.

Q. 5. Is not non-violent resistance by the militarily strong<sup>1</sup> more effective than that by the militarily weak?

A. This is a contradiction in terms. There can be no non-violence offered by the militarily strong. Thus, Russia in order to express non-violence has to discard all her power of doing violence. What is true is that if those, who were at one time strong in armed might, change their mind, they will be better able to demonstrate their non-violence to the world and, therefore, also to their opponents. Those who are strong in non-violence will not mind whether they are opposed by the militarily weak people or the strongest.

Q. 6. What should be the training and discipline for a non-violent army? Should not certain aspects of conventional military training form a part of the syllabus?

A. A very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag hoisting, signalling and the like. Even this is not absolutely necessary and the basis is different. The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is

an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army.

**Q. 7.** Is it not better under existing circumstances that countries like India and England should maintain full military efficiency while resolving to give non-violent resistance a reasonable trial before taking any military step?

**A.** The foregoing answers should make it clear that under no circumstance can India and England give non-violent resistance a reasonable chance whilst they are both maintaining full military efficiency. At the same time it is perfectly true that all military powers carry on negotiations for peaceful adjustment of rival disputes. But here we are not discussing preliminary peace parleys before appealing to the arbitrament of war. We are discussing a final substitute for armed conflict called war, in naked terms, mass murder.

Simla, 2-5-'46

*Harijan*, 12-5-'46, p. 128

## 81

### EXCESSIVE PRAISE

Thus an army officer to a friend:

“. . . And what a pity it is that, in all democratic countries, politicians are so ignorant of and uninterested in the array. The army could teach them much. Is it not at least worthy of deep thought as to why it is, that the army has held the loyalty and affection of the man serving in it to a far greater degree than any other Government service? And held it moreover under conditions of danger and discomfort and trial far exceeding those of any other service. You have a fine army and it will be finer still when your best men come forth in large numbers to officer it. Find the right officers and you need have no fears about it. It will be second to none. But put in the wrong officers or get it mixed up with politics and you will have a heavy bill to pay. India is bound to have many

troubled years ahead, but I am convinced that the one thing which can pull you through them most quickly and with the minimum bloodshed is your present army, provided you find officers for it and keep politics and religious differences out of it." It is not a matter for pity if it is true that in all democratic countries politicians are uninterested in the army. The pity of it is that they are wrongly interested in it. The democracies regard army men as their saviours. They bring wealth and subjugate, other countries and sustain authority in times of civil disturbance. What is, therefore, to be wished is that democracy to be true, should cease to rely upon the army for anything whatsoever.

What has the army done for India? It is for that army that the writer pleads. I fear that in no sense has it served India's interest. It has kept millions of inoffensive and disarmed people under subjection. It has impoverished them. It is an army of; which the sooner the British part is sent away and better employed, the better for both India and England, and the world. The sooner the Indian part is turned away from its destructive purpose and its talent employed for constructive purposes, the better it will be for democracy in India. It will be a poor democracy that depends for its existence on military assistance! Military force interferes with the free growth of the mind. It smothers the soul of man. Thanks to years of foreign dominion brought about by the "highly efficient" army, India, in spite of the efforts of the Mission, might have to pull through a long or shorn civil war which, I shall hope, will bring to an end all infatuation for armed forces. They are a brutalizing process after you have isolated discipline which should be common for any social order. If Free India has to sustain the present military expenditure, it will bring no relief to the famishing minions.

Mussoorie, 30-5-'46

*Harijan*, 9-6-'46, p. 169

### THE CENTRAL POINT MISSED

(The following question was put by a British Officer who read with great interest the article by Gandhiji in the *Harijan* of July 28, 1946, on "Independence". The Officer was a military engineer, widely travelled in America and Europe, and had seen with his own eyes the horrors of the war in Germany. The question along with Gandhiji's answer thereto is given below.)

Q. In this ideal State (there is no doubt that it is ideal) how can one be sure that outside aggression can be avoided? If the State has no modern army with modern weapons which are the product of the machine age, an invading army with modern weapons could overrun the country and subject the inhabitants to slavery.

A. The questioner, who claims to have read and re-read my article carefully and says he has liked it and is a military man, has evidently missed the central point of my article, viz. that however small a nation or even a group may be, it is able, even as the individual, provided that it has one mind as also the will and the grit to defend its honour and self-respect against a whole world in arms. Therein consists the matchless strength and beauty of the unarmed. That is non-violent defence which neither knows nor accepts defeat at any stage. Therefore, a nation or a group which has made non-violence its final policy, cannot be subjected to slavery even by the atom bomb.

*Harijan*, 18-8-'46, p. 265

### CONGRESS MINISTERS AND NON-VIOLENCE

Shri Shankerrao 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 the 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 sometime, 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 judgment 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, Musalmans 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

*Harijan*, 15-9-'46, p. 309

## 84

### DO WE HAVE THE NECESSARY SELFLESS WORKERS?

(The following note was added by Gandhiji to an article of Shri J. C. Kumarappa, appearing under the title "His Majesty's Opposition" which pleaded for training a force of constructive workers who would act as a corrective force to perform the functions of an "Opposition" in an economy based on co-operation and not competition.)

This is very attractive. But it has to be confessed that we have not the requisite number of selfless workers capable of giving a good account of themselves.

*Harijan*, 1-2-'48, p. 9

### THE STATE AND RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY

(Originally appeared under the caption "Under Swaraj")

A Brahmin correspondent from Madras writes:

"During his tour Sjt. Sengupta said that Swaraj Government would pass legislation to crush Brahmins and also referred to resolutions of the Karachi Congress. On account of that the Brahmin minority has begun to be highly restless and it has also created a sense of fear in the minds of the orthodox Hindus. Therefore please let me know what exactly you and the Congress mean by –

"1. The words of the resolution dealing with untouchability.

"2. What exactly you and the Congress mean by saying therein that under the Swaraj Government the Government will observe religious neutrality.

"You know clearly that in South India a large portion of the Hindu masses and the Brahmins have absolute faith in *Vedas* and *shastras*. Therefore there should not be any obstacle to any section of people observing them.

"If there should be any legislation interfering with the long established religious observances of the Brahmins, let it; be remembered that we, the Brahmins, have learnt the lessons of satyagraha movement and we could also utilize it: for establishing our observances unmolested. Certainly no one is against giving the untouchables government appointments in the future or giving them lands to cultivate or whatever political and economic rights equally with others or exclusively for them. There is absolutely no objection to give them any manner of right provided it does not infringe the long established religious observances of others. Even now the untouchables enjoy the use of public roads, wells and schools. There is no objection to give them access to these places. I request you to fix up the meaning once for all so that there may be a straightforward meaning, not capable of any mischievous twisting or quibbling."

I do not believe Sjt. Sengupta said that Swaraj Government would crush the Brahmins'. The Congress resolution is clear. The correspondent is unnecessarily nervous about the future which lies as much in his hands as in Mr. Sengupta's or mine. Let it also, be remembered that the Congress resolution is not yet a part of the constitution. When it is, its interpretation will not rest with me or any single individual. It will rest with the courts duly established by law.

But I gladly give my opinion as to what is likely to be the interpretation of the Congress resolution on religious neutrality and untouchability. It is bound to be a part of any future constitution as there is no difference of opinion on it. Indeed, even the correspondent seems to concede as much as the Congress wants. Religious neutrality will mean that the State will have no State religion nor a system of favouritism. There will be no untouchability. The 'untouchables' will have the same rights as any other. But a Brahmin will not be made to touch anybody. He will be free to make himself untouchable and have his own well, his own temple, his own school and whatever else he can afford, so long as he uses these things without being a nuisance to his neighbours. But he will not be able as some do now, to punish untouchables for daring to walk on public streets or using public wells. There will be under Swaraj no such scandal as that of the use of public temples being denied to untouchables when it is allowed to all other Hindus. The authority of the *Vedas* and the other *shastras* will not be denied but their interpretation will not rest with individuals but will depend upon the courts of law insofar as these religious books will be used to regulate public conduct. Conscientious scruples will be respected, but not at the expense of public morals or the rights of others. Those who will have extraordinary scruples will have themselves to suffer inconvenience and pay for the luxury. The law will not tolerate any arrogation of superiority by any person or class whether in the name of custom or religion. But all this is my dream. I am not the Congress. Those who would have the Congress to do otherwise, had better make haste to join it and make others of their opinion join it. The Congress represents or it has a constitution wide enough to represent popular will.

*Young India*, 11-6-'31, p. 143

## STATE AND RELIGION

### I

(From "Weekly Letter" by Pyarelal)

"If I were a dictator, religion and State would be separate. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The State has nothing to do with it" remarked Gandhiji sometime<sup>1</sup> back in answer to a question by a missionary friend who asked whether in Free India there would be complete religious freedom and whether religion would be separate from the State. "The State would look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on, but not' your or my religion. That is everybody's personal concern."

*Harijan*, 22-9-'46, p. 321

### II

(From "Gandhiji's Post-prayer Speeches")

Freedom without equality for all irrespective of race or religion, was not worth having for the Congress. In other words, the Congress and any government representative of the Congress must remain a purely democratic, popular body leaving every individual to follow that form of religion which best appealed to him without any interference from the State. There was so much in common between man and man that it was a marvel that there could be any quarrel on the ground of religion. Any creed or dogma which coerced others into following one uniform practice was a religion only in name, for a religion worth the name did not admit of any coercion. Anything that was done under coercion- had only a short lease of life. It was bound to die. It must be a matter of pride to them whether they were four anna Congress members or not that they had in their midst an institution without a rival which disdained to become a theocratic State and which always believed and lived up to the belief that the State of

their conception must be a secular, democratic State having perfect harmony between the different units composing the State.

*Harijan*, 23-11-'47, p. 421 at p. 423

## 87

### RULERS AND RULED

(From an English translation of Gandhiji's presidential address at the 3rd Kathiawad Political Conference held at Bhavnagar on 8-1-1925 which was published under the heading "Kathiawad Political Conference")

My duty lies in discovering and employing means by which the nation may evolve the strength to enforce its will. When once the nation is conscious of its strength it will find its own way or make it. That prince is acceptable to me who becomes a Prince among his people's servants. The subjects are the real master. But what is the servant to do if the master goes to sleep? Every thing, therefore, is included in trying for a true national awakening.

Such being my ideal there is room for Indian States in Swaraj as conceived by me and there is full protection guaranteed to the subjects for their rights. The true source of rights is duty. I have therefore spoken only about duties of Princes as well as the peoples. If we all discharge our duty, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The more we pursue them the farther they will fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: 'Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone.' Action is duty; fruit is the right.

*Young India*, 8-1-'25, p. 9 at p. 15

88

### MY ATTITUDE TO INDIAN STATES

(From "A Student's Questions")

Q. What is your attitude towards the Indian States and their rulers?

A. My attitude towards the Indian States and their rulers is that of perfect friendship. I desire a radical reform in their constitution. The condition in many States is most deplorable, but reform has to come from within and it is a matter for adjustment between the rulers and the subjects, save for such pressure as is bound to be exerted upon them by the expression of enlightened public opinion in their neighbourhood.

*Young India, 25-2-26, p. 77*

89

### AUNDH REFORMS

(From "Notes")

I congratulate both the Rajasaheb and the people of Aundh on the grant of responsible government. This small State has always been progressive. The ruler of Aundh has but anticipated the wants of his people and has even been in advance of them in social matters. The declaration of full responsibility was the natural result of the past acts of the ruler. I hope that the rights conferred by the proclamation will not in any way be whittled down in drawing up the constitution. I would suggest that the Privy purse should on no account exceed rupees thirty-six thousand. There should be a definition of fundamental rights, i.e. equality of all in the eye of the law, abolition of untouchability and liberty of speech. The last para of the proclamation is appealing. It truly says that "self-government implies self-control and self-sacrifice", and adds "in the new era that is coming to Aundh, and we hope to the whole of our country, the

strong will serve the weak, the wealthy will serve the poor, the learned will serve the illiterate."

It is to be hoped, that the noble example of Aundh will be copied by the other States and that its people will by their conduct prove themselves in every way worthy of the responsibility that is to devolve on them. The fact that in the heir to the *gadi* they have one, who, from all accounts I have received, is a true servant of the people, must be a great help at the time of the inauguration of responsible government. The Western education received by him has not spoiled him. He is reported to be a votary of truth and ahimsa. He himself takes part in village uplift, does road cleaning himself in common with other volunteers and handles the spade and the basket with as much ease as they. He wields the pen. He takes pride in doing scavenging work including the removal of night soil.

*Harijan*, 12-11-'38, p. 329

## 90

### AUNDH CONSTITUTION

(From "Notes")

There are several startling things in the Aundh constitution. For the moment I am concerned with only two things— the qualification for the vote and the courts of justice.

I have myself hitherto sworn by simple adult franchise as well for the illiterate as the literate. My observations of the Working of the Congress constitution has altered my opinion. I have come round to the view that a literacy test is necessary for two ^reasons. The vote should be regarded as a privilege and therefore carry some qualification. The simplest qualification is a literacy test. And if the ministry appointed under the literacy franchise is sincere and solicitous about the disqualified illiterates, the much desired literacy would come in no time. The Aundh constitution has made primary education free and compulsory. I have been assured by Appasaheb that he will see that illiteracy is

driven out from Aundh State inside of six months. I hope, therefore, that there will be no opposition in Aundh to the literacy test.

The second important departure from the ordinary practice is the making of justice in the lower court free and incredibly simple. What would, however, displease critics is not the freeness or the simplicity as such but the abolition of intermediate courts and the fate of litigants and persons charged with offences being made to depend on a High Court presided over by one person. In a population of 75,000 a multiplicity of judges would be both unnecessary and impossible. And if the right type of person is chosen as the Chief Judge, he is as likely to deal out unadulterated justice as a bench of highly paid judges. This simplification contemplates abolition of the cumbrous procedure and the use of tomes of law books including hundreds of law reports used in British law courts.

*Harijan*, 14-1-'39, p. 422

## 91

### THE DOCTRINE OF MERGER

Merger, as used here, has no legal significance. People of, some States in the Deccan Union are reported to have expressed an intense desire for the extinction of their princely houses and their absorption in their provinces. This has been described as merging in British India (as it was called during British rule), as] distinguished from Princely India or States.

In a society based on non-violence, there should be no impatient destruction compassed by man of another, for, every evil-doer, unless he mends his ways, is bound to destroy himself. Evil can never be self-existent. Therefore, the Congress policy has always been to mend princely rule, not to end it, and to induce the princes to become trustees and servants in reality of their people. In pursuance of that policy the Congress Government has tried and in the main succeeded in inducing the States to accede to the Union instead of planning the destruction of princely rule and absorption of their States as an integral part of the Union provinces concerned. Therefore, merger can take place only under

two conditions, viz. if the misrule of a particular prince is self-evident and is irremediable, the people will have the right, as it will be their duty, to seek absorption or merger in their province. The second condition would be when a prince and the people of his State both desire merger. It is suggested that any one State or its people, whether powerful or insignificant, should not seek merger unless all the States or the majority desire it. I do not think so. Misrule cannot wait to be ended before there is equal misrule in other States. Nor can a prince, who does not wish for, any princely power be expected or be made to wait till the other princes are ready. Each case will have to be decided on its merits by the Central Government.

New Delhi, 13-12-'47

*Harijan*, 21-12-'47, p. 476

92

### HARIJAN AS THE FIRST PRESIDENT

(By S. N.)

In one of his post-prayer speeches Gandhiji explained who in his opinion should be the first President of the Indian Republic. In a letter to an Ashramite after Shri Chakrayya's death he wrote:

"If all that Lilavati has told me is true, then he certainly did deserve to be the First President of the Indian Republic. I have no doubt in my mind that he who is a devotee of God, who is brave, and who is a servant of the nation can become the first President of free India. A similar idea was expressed by me as President of the G. P Conference at Godhra years ago. I said then that I won't be happy till the President of the Congress came from the 'lowest class' of the Harijans."

In the speech he narrated how Queen Victoria became the Queen at the age of 17 and the old Premier bowed before this young girl and carried on the Government in her name. "If I have my way I would put a suitable Harijan girl in the presidential chair. In a free India knowledge of English won't be necessary

for the President. She need not have knowledge of high politics. All the learned statesmen of the country would help her to carry on the Government."

And who was this Chakrayya whom Gandhiji considered as a fit person to be the first President of India's Republic to be? He was a Harijan from Andhra. He came as a youngster. He became a good tailor, good spinner and weaver and learnt Hindustani. Unlike the average educated Harijan who wants to settle in a city, Chakrayya's ambition was to serve the Harijans in his own village. Suddenly in about 1940 he started getting what looked like epileptic fits. He was a believer in Nature Cure. He went to a Nature Cure Sanatorium in Andhra and was reported to have got over the fits. The fits, however, recurred every now and then and they were connected by him with some irregularity in his diet. About a month ago he came back to the Ashram complaining of failing vision and headache. Examination revealed signs of increased intra-cranial pressure. It was a case of brain tumour. He was sent to a hospital at Bombay where an operation which was considered dangerous was recommended. He sought Gandhiji's advice. A confirmed believer in Nature Cure that Gandhiji is, he saw that Nature Cure could not help a case of brain tumour and advised in favour of the operation. The operation proved fatal. Here is an extract from his letter to Gandhiji, written two or three days before the operation, received after his death. "I am not afraid of death. But if you will permit me, I would like to try Nature Cure for a period of four months. If I get better, well and good. If not, I would much rather lay down my life for naturopathy than for allopathy. But I leave the final decision to you."

To an Ashramite he wrote half an hour before going to the operation theatre. "I was very despondent, but now my despondency has gone. One feels happy to go to see the earthly father. How much happier one should feel at the thought of going to see the Father in Heaven? My fear of death is gone. I am prepared to meet it with joy in my heart." No wonder, Gandhiji considered him a fit person to be the First President of the Indian! Republic.

New Delhi, 5-6-'47

*Harijan*, 15-6-'47, p. 191

### AN INDIAN GOVERNOR

In construing the word India here it includes both Hindustan and Pakistan. Hindustan may mean the country of the Hindus strictly so-called, Pakistan may mean the country of the Muslims. Both the uses are, in my opinion, irregular. Hence, I have purposely used the word Hindustan.

The Khilafat-Swaraj-Non-co-operation Resolution of 1920 passed in Calcutta at the Special Session of the Congress, which has brought freedom from the British yoke, was for both the Hindus and the Muslims, designed to induce self-purification so as to bring about non-co-operation between forces of evil and those of good. Hence,

1. An Indian Governor should, in his own person and in his surroundings, be a teetotaler. Without this, prohibition of the fiery liquid is well-nigh inconceivable.
2. He and his surroundings should represent hand-spinning as a visible token of identification with the dumb millions of India, a token of the necessity of 'bread labour' and organized non-violence as against organized violence on which the society of today seems to be based.
3. He must dwell in a cottage accessible to all, though easily shielded from gaze, if he is to do efficient work. The British Governor naturally represented British might. For him and his was erected a fortified residence—a palace to be occupied by him and his numerous vassals who sustained his Empire. The Indian prototype may keep somewhat pretentious buildings for receiving princes and ambassadors of the world. For these, being guests of the Governor should constitute an education in what "Even Unto This Last"—equality of all—should mean in concrete terms. For him no expensive furniture, foreign or indigenous. Plain living and high thinking must be his motto, not to adorn his entrance but to be exemplified in daily life.

4. For him there can be no untouchability in any form whatsoever, no caste or creed or colour distinction. He must represent the best of all religions and all things Eastern or Western. Being a citizen of India, he must be a citizen of the world. Thus simply, one reads, did the Khalif Omar, with millions of treasure at his feet, live; thus lived Janaka of ancient times; thus lived as I saw him, the Master of Eton in his residence in the midst of, and surrounded by, the sons of the Lords and Nabobs of the British Isles. Will the Governors of India of the famished millions do less?

5. He will speak the language of the province of which he is the Governor and Hindustani, the lingua franca of India written in the Nagari or Urdu script. This is neither Sanskritized Hindi nor Persianized Urdu. Hindustani is emphatically the language which is spoken by the millions north of the Vindhya Range.

This does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of the virtues that an Indian Governor should represent. It is merely illustrative.

One would expect that the Britishers who have been chosen by Indian representatives as Governors and who have taken the oath of fealty to India and her millions would endeavour as far as possible to live the life an Indian Governor is expected to live.

They will represent the best that their country has to give to India and the world.

Calcutta, 17-8-'47

*Harijan*, 24-8-'47, p. 285

94

### HIGH PUBLIC OFFICES FOR KISANS

(From "Gandhiji's Post-Prayer Speeches")

Gandhiji then spoke about peasants. If he had his say, our Governor-General and our Premier would be drawn from the *kisans*. In his childhood he had learnt in the school books that the *kisans* were heirs to the kingdom of the earth. This applied to those who laboured on the land and ate from what they produced. Such *kisans* to be worthy of high offices might be illiterates provided they had robust common sense, great personal bravery, unimpeachable integrity and patriotism above suspicion. As real producers of wealth, they were verily the masters while we had enslaved them. It had been suggested to Gandhiji that the higher secretariat posts should also be manned by *kisans*. He would endorse this suggestion provided they were suitable and had knowledge of the work expected of them. When *kisans* of this type were forthcoming, he would publicly ask ministers and others to- make room for them.

*Harijan*, 8-2-'48, p. 20 at p. 21

95

### REAL INDIA

If my frequent wanderings throughout India of the villages have not deceived me, it can be confidently asserted that the 700,000 villages get and want no police protection. The solitary Patel to a village is a terrorist lording it over the villages and is designed for helping the petty revenue collector to collect revenue due to the *Ma-Bap*. I am not aware of the policeman having aided the villagers. In protecting their goods or cattle against depredations of man and beast. The Police Patel is not to be blamed for what he is. He has been chosen for his task which he does well. He has not been taught to regard himself as the servant of the people. He represents his master the Viceroy. The change at the

top has not yet permeated the most distant village. How can it? It has not come from the bottom. The Viceroy still retains regal and military powers to remove and even to imprison his ministers. The latter have no power, legal or other, to imprison the Viceroy. Even the Civil Service is still under his control. It is not suggested that the Viceroy does not mean to shed all power nor that he does not wish the most distant village to realize that he is determined under instructions from Whitehall to shed every vestige of British control in the quickest time possible.

The relevance of all the writing is for showing that we do not yet learn from the village in which India lives that every Indian, man or woman, is his or her own policeman. This he or she can only do when neither harbours mischief against his or her neighbour, no matter what religion he professes or denies. If unfortunately the politically minded will not or cannot go as far as suggested here, he must at least shed all fear and resolutely deny himself all protection whether from the military or the police. I am positive that India will not come into her own unless every home becomes its own castle not in the sense of the ages known as dark but in the very ancient true sense that everyone has learnt the art of dying without ill will, or even wishing that since he cannot someone else will do away with the would-be assassin. How nice, therefore it would be if everyone of us had this lesson burnt into us. There is much proof in support of the lesson, if we will take the trouble to examine the proof.

New Delhi, 12-10-'46

*Harijan*, 20-10-'46, p. 364

96

### POSTS UNDER SWARAJ

(Originally appeared in "Notes")

Mr. Ali Hassan of Patna takes exception to my suggestion that Swaraj service should be filled on the sole ground of merit and not according to communal proportion. He cites the general statement that most of the best posts are today monopolized by the Hindus. I have not the statistics before me so as to enable me to test the proposition. But my opinion would remain unaffected even if the proposition was proved. The existing Government whose chief concern is about its own stability ensures its safety by conciliating the most claimant party. We can deduce nothing from the state of affairs found under it. The only way of doing justice is to grant special facilities to educationally backward communities for receiving education. It is the duty of the State to level up those of its citizens who may be backward and it is equally its duty to make efficiency and character the only test in the matter of making appointments. The greatest impartiality should certainly be ensured in making them, but there can be no hard and fast rule as to the communal percentages in the matter.

*Young India*, 10-7-'24, p. 225 at p. 230

97

### FAVOURITISM AND JUSTICE

(From "Notes")

I note that the Chief Executive Officer of the Calcutta Corporation has come in for a good deal of hostile criticism because of his having given 25 out of 33 appointments to Mussalmans. I have not read the comments themselves. But I have read the statement made by the Chief Executive Officer. In my humble opinion it is a creditable performance. I have no doubt that appointments have

not till now been made with impartiality whether by Europeans or Indians. There is no doubt too that in many cases Hindus have influenced decisions in their favour. It ill becomes them to quarrel against many posts having now gone to Mussalmans. If the charge be true that the appointments have a party purpose behind them there is nothing immoral or reprehensible in the fact itself if they are otherwise justifiable. In England such appointments are certainly made in party interests, though as a rule care is exercised not to sacrifice efficiency! Personally I would like appointments to go to the best men irrespective of parties, and should therefore be made by a permanent non-party board. But if Hindus wish to see India free, they must be ready and willing to sacrifice in favour of their Mussalman and other brethren. I can heartily endorse the remark of the Chief Executive Officer when he says:

"With thousands of educated young men out of employment and on the verge of starvation and with a very limited number of vacancies it is not possible for any human being to do anything which will please all. Whatever I may do, I am sure to leave the major portion of the unemployed as discontented as before. The only solution of this problem is the provision of technical education and in this matter the Corporation can, in my opinion, do much."

We must learn to do without these appointments. Only a microscopic minority can get them. Education must cease to be merely clerical. Why may not a graduate be an artisan or a hawker of vegetables or Khaddar?

*Young India*, 31-7-'24, p. 253

**FIVE HUNDRED RUPEE LIMIT**

No item of the Fundamental Rights resolution passed by the Congress at Karachi has come in for so much notice as the resolution limiting the salary of Government servants to not more than Rs. 500 per month or Rs. 6000/- per year. Had we not been accustomed by this foreign government to high salaries for servants in the public department, the limit of Rs. 500 would not have produced any shock. There is no sanctity about the high ruling salaries. All the 46 Congress Presidents and the 46 Congresses have mourned over the ever-growing public expenditure, both military and civil. Many Presidents have laid special emphasis on the high salaries. The Karachi Congress gave concrete shape to the half-century old complaint. The way to examine the justness of the Congress conclusion is to find the proportion between the salaries and the average income of India's millions, and secondly to compare both with the salaries and the average income of other countries. I have been trying to secure the figures for the principal countries of the world. The readers of *Young India* have had the average income of the principal countries but not the salaries. I have now before me some figures about the Japanese Public Service, both superior and subordinate. Its Governor-General gets less than Rs. 1000 per month, that is to say, anything between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 10,700 per year, a Governor less than Rs. 600 or Rs. 800 per month, the secretariat staff anything between Rs. 150 and Rs. 500 per month, presideia of the Supreme Court less than Rs. 1000 per month, other Judges anything between Rs. 150 to Rs. 700 per month, Chief of Police slightly over Rs. 700 per month, subordinate services Rs. 250 to slightly over Rs. 300 per month, a police constable from Rs. 60 to Rs. 80 per month, a police sergeant from Rs. 70 to Rs. 80. The average daily income of the Japanese per head is about foia annas. Compared then with the Japan figures, the Rs. 500 limit put by the Congress is over-generous.

But we have been told that the Japanese service is neither so incorruptible nor so efficient as the Indian. I came across, the other day, a speech of Mr. Arno

Pearse on the working of Japanese mills. These mills are gigantic public corporations. What is] therefore true of them is likely to be true of the other Japanese departments. Here is what Mr. Pearse has to say about Japanese business morality:

"Do not believe the old saying that the word of the Chinese is his bond, but not so that of the Japanese. The] modern Japanese will drive a bargain but he will stick to it much more than the modern Chinese."

As to the excellence of Japanese organization, inventiveness technical skill and industry Mr. Arno Pearse is most enthusiastic and he claims to speak from personal experience. The suggestion therefore that there is a necessary connection between efficiency or morality and high salaries is pure superstition. What is true is, that neither morality nor efficiency can be sustained, if less than a living wage is paid to employees. And no doubt the scale a living wage will differ to a certain extent with the mode of life of the class to which a person belongs. But the mode of life is not an abstract term. It is relative, and a man, who has surrounded himself with artificial wants and created conditions out of all proportion to the natural surroundings in which the people of his country live, can claim no exceptional consideration because of his artificial mode of life. Such people unfortunately we have our midst. They will naturally feel the pinch during the transition stage, but they will soon accommodate themselves to the new and a natural condition when the maximum of Rs. 500 per month will cease to appear ludicrous as it does today. Among the many disservices of the foreign rule will be counted the great disservice the foreign rulers have done by reason of their having imported for this country wholly unnatural mode of life, and more or less imposed it on their immediate surroundings. This importation and imposition have rendered the task of solvent administration more difficult, and we are finding it difficult today to adopt ourselves to the depression that has overtaken the world. Had we not had a top-heavy administration, we would have been, owing to our geographical position, a country least affected by the universal depression, as today we are perhaps the most affected.

And it was because I felt in Nainital the seriousness of the artificial condition created for us, that I made an appeal to the businessmen and professional classes, that they should anticipate the future and remodel their lives so as to make it easy for all, when the burden of administration is taken over by the people, to take, to the new life. It would be wrong to entertain the idea, that whilst the public services would be paid in accordance with the natural condition of the country, professional and businessmen would continue a mode of life out of all correspondence with their surroundings. They must voluntarily lead the way and set the example.

*Young India*, 30-7'31, p. 192

99

**GROSS DISPARITY IN SALARIES**

(Shri T. K. Bang wrote an article under the title "Lest We Copy the British" in which he compared the salaries paid to high public dignitaries in advanced countries and examined the question from the angle of national per capita income in these countries and urged that India could not labour under the illusion that it would become a rich and prosperous nation overnight so that it could afford high salaries for gubernatorial positions. Gandhiji's note to the said article is reproduced below.)

Whilst I cannot vouch for the figures given by Prof. Bang, there is no hesitation in endorsing his remarks about the high salaries he refers to and, the gross disparity between the highest and the lowest salaries paid to their servants by our governments.

*Harijan*, 9-11-'47, p. 397

### TO THE PEOPLE

(From an English translation of Gandhiji's presidential address at the 3rd Kathiawad Political Conference held at Bhavnagar on 8-1-1925 which was published under the title "Kathiawad Political Conference")

A word now to the people. The popular saying, as is the King, so are the people, is only a half truth. That is to say it is not more true than its converse, as are the people so is the prince. Where the subjects are watchful a prince is entirely dependent upon them for his status. Where the subjects are overtaken by sleepy indifference, there is every possibility that the prince will cease to function as a protector and become an oppressor instead. Those who are not wide awake have no right to blame their prince. The prince as well as the people are mostly creatures of circumstances. Enterprising princes and people mould circumstances for their own benefit. Manliness consists in making circumstances subservient to ourselves. Those who will not heed themselves perish. To understand this principle is not to be impatient, not to reproach fate, not to blame others. He who understands the doctrine of self-help blames himself for failure. It is on this ground that I object to violence. If we blame others where we should blame ourselves and wish for or bring about their destruction, that does not remove the root cause of the disease which on the contrary sinks all the deeper for the ignorance thereof.

*Young India*, 8-1-'25, p. 9 at p. 13

101

**TO THE RULED**

(From a summary of Gandhiji's concluding speech at the Kathiawad Political Conference which appeared under the title "Rulers and Ruled")

No people have risen who have thought only of rights. Only those did so who thought of duties. Out of the performance of duties flow rights, and those that knew and performed their duties came naturally by the rights. The *shastras* inculcate reverence to parents. It means implicit obedience to them, and why do we willingly obey like that? We know that an angry look from his mother was sufficient to make the giant like Shaukat Ali cower before her. What is the secret of this willing obedience? It is that the obedience carries with it enjoyment of a right—the right to inheritance. At the back of obedience is a consciousness of a right to be enjoyed, and yet woe to the man who obeys with an eye to the right to inheritance. It is the *shastras* again that inculcate obedience without an eye to the fruit thereof. He who thinks not of the right gets it, and he who thinks of it loses it. That is the rule of conduct I would like to place before you. If you follow it I have no doubt that you will create a disciplined army of workers for Swaraj. After you have succeeded in raising such an army, no ruler dare ignore you.

*Young India*, 15-1-'25, p. 17 at p. 18

102

**UNDER RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT**

(From a translation of the second appeal to the people by Gandhiji which appeared under the title "To the People of Rajkot—II")

In Swaraj based on ahimsa people need not know their rights, but it is necessary for them to know their duties. There is no duty but creates a corresponding right, and those only are true rights which flow from a due

performance of one's duties. Hence rights of true citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them. Everyone possesses the right to tell lies or resort to *goondaism*. But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and society. But to him who observes truth and nonviolence comes prestige and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves. Swaraj of a people mean the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals. And such Swaraj comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it no one thinks of his rights. They come, when they are needed, for better performance of duty.

Under responsible government everyone, from the king to the poorest citizen must prosper. Under Swaraj based on non-violence nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write/ and their knowledge keeps growing from day-to-day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum. No one is a pauper and labour can always find employment. There is no place under such a government for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class- hatred. The rich will use their riches wisely and usefully, and not squander them in increasing their pomp and worldly pleasures. It should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jewelled palaces and the millions in miserable hovels devoid of sunlight or ventilation.

*Harijan, 25-3-'39, p. 64*

### WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE

(The following paragraphs are taken from an article under the above title which lists, the things that should be attended to at once to face the food crisis which was confronting India then.)

Given hearty co-operation by Government servants and the general public, I have not the slightest doubt that the country can tide over the difficulty. Just as panic is the surest way to defeat, so also will be the case when there is widespread distress impending, and prompt action is not taken. Let us not think of the causes of the distress. Whatever the cause, the fact is that if the Government and the public do not approach the crisis patiently and courageously, disaster is a certainty. We must fight this foreign Government on all other fronts except this one, and even on this we shall fight them if they betray callousness or contempt for reasoned public opinion. In this connection, I invite the public to share my opinion that we should accept Government professions at their face value and believe that Swaraj is within sight inside of a few months.

Above all, black-marketing and dishonesty should disappear altogether and willing co-operation between all parties should be the order of the day in so far as this crisis is concerned.

Sevagram, 14-2-'46

*Harijan*, 24-2-'46, p. 19

104

### INDIVIDUAL WELFARE IN A WELL-REGULATED STATE

(From "Insanity")

In a well-regulated State, individual inconvenience is as much a 'high matter of State' as any other, except when individual welfare demonstrably requires to be sacrificed to corporate welfare.

*Young India*, 26-5-'19, p. 1

105

### IS IT VOLUNTARY?

(From "Question Box")

Q. The local officials have been collecting money from the people in aid of the war fund. But the way in which they have been raising money, though it is supposed to be voluntary giving, seems to be practical coercion. They arranged for a drama, but under instructions from the officials the village teachers (some of whom get about 12 or 15 rupees per month), the village Munsiff, bazaar keepers, all had to buy tickets varying in price from one to fifteen rupees each. A petty shop-keeper whose income is only about Rs. 15 had to pay Rs. 5 for a ticket though the man never attended the drama. He told me he paid the money because the local Sub-collector, Tahsildar, Circle Inspector of Police were all there in person to collect the money. I am told Rs. 3,500 were raised in one night in my village. Will you advise what to do?

A If what you say is true, it is naked coercion. There is nothing voluntary in the people's action. I can only hope that the higher authorities do not know anything about such highhanded procedure. Your duty is clear. You must tell the people that they ought not to submit to coercion. They are as free to refuse to buy tickets as they are free to buy them. You and they should run the risk involved, you in instructing the people, and they in refusing to pay.

*Harijan*, 9-3-'40, p. 29

106

### ILLEGAL LEVY?

(Originally explained in "Notes" under the above title)

"A problem has arisen at Alibag, the headquarters of] the Kolaba District near Bombay, and I am afraid it exists in many other districts. I place the facts in detail and seek your advice.

"Motor buses run from Alibag in three directions. There is no other means of travel. Each service is organized and conducted by a union of the bus-owners. The fare charged was and even today is less than what would be levied under the Government schedule.

"Sometime in the third week of August the District Superintendent of Police, Kolaba, wrote a letter to all the bus-owners in the district. In this letter he intimated to them the decision of the District War Gift Committee to affix half annas War Gift stamp to every ticket issued to a bus passenger. He further asked them whether they were willing to do the same. In this connection it may be noted that the District Superintendent of Police is neither the chairman nor any office-bearer of the War Committee. Presumably he wrote this letter to bring pressure on the bus-owners who are under the control of the Police Department in every respect.

"Since 1st September the unions increased the fare by half an anna per passenger irrespective of distance. They at times attribute this to the rise in the price of petrol. But in fact this half anna they have to credit to the War Gift Fund» In order to see that full amount is credited, the union account books are to be checked by the Police Office and account struck. Such are the facts. What could and should be done to resist this forcible levy exacted from every passenger? What should bus passengers who don't want to a pay the extra levy do?"

This is a typical letter. In some shape or other things go on like this. I call it an illegal levy. Any passenger who will take the trouble can decline to pay the levy and tender the scheduled fare and demand a seat in the bus. If he is rejected, he has a cause of action. So far as I know, it is not the Government policy to compel people to give donations. There is legal compulsion enough for the purposes of the war. Even that is being carried too far and is causing resentment. But it becomes intense when to this legal levy is added the illegal one mis-called donations. It is indecent to legalize arbitrary exactions. It is doubly indecent to connive at illegalities. I can only hope that these will be stopped altogether. There should be no engineering of war contributions. If they are to be spontaneous, let the people send what they like to the appointed depots. This will be a true test of the strength of voluntary effort.

Simla, 29-9-40

*Harijan*, 6-10-'40, p. 315 at p. 316

## 107

### FOREIGN POLICY

(From "Notes")

The draft resolution on foreign policy approved and circulated by the Working Committee has created a mild sensation. That some people are surprised at the Working Committee seriously discussing the question shows that in their opinion India is not ripe for Swaraj. I have endeavoured to show before now, that everybody and every nation is always ripe for Swaraj, or to put it in another way no nation needs to undergo tutelage at the hands of another. Indeed whilst we are maturing our plans for establishing Swaraj, we are bound to consider and define our foreign policy. Surely we are bound authoritatively to tell the world what relations we wish to cultivate with it. If we do not fear our neighbours, or if although feeling strong we have no designs upon them, we must say so. We are equally bound to tell the world whether we want to send

our sepoys to the battlefields of France or Mesopotamia. We must not be afraid to speak our minds on all that concerns the nation.

A correspondent from Ludhiana has sent me a string of questions, showing how the public mind is agitated. He begins:

(1) Shall India's foreign policy be governed by any other consideration but that of its population?

Naturally the interest of India must be given preference over all others.

(2) Should Indian men or money be used for fighting the battles of England, etc.?

Yes, if India has entered into treaty obligations to fight for other nations.

(3) Shall the law of the land be subordinate to the special interest of any sect, league or society?

Certainly not. But the law may be such as to provide assistance to friendly neighbours as we would, if we were free today, be assisting the Turks with men and money to the best of our ability.

*Young India*, 20-10-'21, p. 329 at p. 332

## 108

### INDIA'S GREATEST GLORY

(Originally appeared under the title "Independence")

India's greatest glory will consist not in regarding Englishmen as her implacable enemies fit only to be turned out of India at the first available opportunity but in turning them into friends and partners in a new commonwealth of nations in the place of an Empire based upon exploitation of the weaker or undeveloped nations and races of the earth and therefore finally upon force.

Let us see clearly what Swaraj together with the British connection means. It means undoubtedly India's ability to declare her independence if she wishes. Swaraj therefore will not be a free gift of the British Parliament. It will be a

declaration of India's full self-expression. That it will be expressed through an Act of Parliament is true. But it will be merely a courteous ratification of the declared wish of the people of India even as it was in the case of the Union of South Africa.

Not an unnecessary adverb in the Union scheme could be altered by the House of Commons. The ratification in our case will be of a treaty to which Britain will be a party.

Such Swaraj may not come this year, may not come within our generation. But I have contemplated nothing less. The British Parliament, when the settlement comes, will ratify the wishes of the people of India as expressed not through the bureaucracy but through her freely chosen representatives.

Swaraj can never be a free gift by one nation to another. It is a treasure to be purchased with a nation's best blood. It will cease to be a gift when we have paid dearly for it. ... The fact is that Swaraj will be a fruit of incessant labour, suffering beyond measure.

*Young India*, 5-1-'22, p. 4

## 109

### A PEEP INTO THE FUTURE

From my American post I pick up the following typical letter from Vancouver.

"I cannot truthfully say that I am an advocate of your 'India for Indians' policy, but I have read your article in *Liberty* magazine and followed newspaper accounts of your illustrious life. I say 'illustrious' not in the sense of the mighty heads of Europe but of a man who is truly attempting to better his own people, not to perpetrate his personal fancies. I knew, of course, that your principles constitute a return of India to village industry and more international economic co-operation and good-will towards men, but I should like to know just what stand your new democracy would take in world politics. The small countries of Europe

thought that they would keep their finger out of the pie, as the saying goes, but look where they are now. I should like to know from the pen of the spiritual leader of India himself what the Government's attitude, towards resident Britons would be and if British and other foreign trading firms would be allowed. Would the new Government of India follow the policies of Japan until Admiral Perry and the United States fleet entered the harbour of Yokohama in 1853? That is, would foreigners and foreign trade be excluded?

"I hope that you will pardon the intrusion of a young Canadian who wishes to more fully understand the problem of your country."

Denuded of the courtesies, the writer's straight question is, "Will there be room for Britishers and foreigners in free India?" The question should have nothing to do with my spirituality supposed or real. It does not arise for free America or free Britain. And it will not arise when India becomes really free. For, India will then be free to do what she likes, without let or hindrance from anybody. But it is pleasing to speculate what India would do if she becomes free, as she must sooner or later. If I have any influence over her policies, foreigners will be welcome, provided their presence is beneficial to the country. They will never be allowed to exploit and impoverish the country as they have done hitherto.

What free India will otherwise look like remains to be seen. She has nothing to fear from the contemplation of the helplessness of the small nations of Europe, if she continues to tread the non-violent course she has done with more or less perfection and with more or less success. For a non-violent State bigness is wholly unnecessary for its protection against aggression. Such a State will need spend nothing for protection<sup>1</sup> against aggression from without. Whether such a State will ever come into being is a fair question to ask. Reason suggests no flaw in the theoretical conception of it. Whether human nature will respond to what has been called an exactious call is another question. It has been known in individual cases to rise to unimaginable heights. There is nothing to prevent its multiplication by patient endeavour. Anyway I am not going to lose my faith and abandon the attempt because I can show no, visible sign of such a

response from India. One might as well<sup>1</sup> abandon all hope, as some have done, for the attainment of India's unadulterated freedom. For they say, it will take centuries for India, which is largely and wholly unarmed, to become a military nation. I refuse to be prey to such despair. In the ringing words of Lokamanya, "Freedom is India's birthright, and she will have it cost what it may." Glory lies in the attempt to reach one's goal and not in reaching it. I passionately believe in the possibility of attainment through the perfection of the non-violent technique whose hidden resources no one has fathomed. We have only found a foothold. Perseverance opens up treasures which bring perennial joy. If the toil is great, so is the fruit thereof.

On the way to Delhi, 26-3-'42

*Harijan*, 5-4-'42, p. 104

## 110

### SHOULD FOREIGNERS BE WELCOME?

(Originally appeared in "Question Box"; from the original in Gujarati)

Q. You say that Independent India will not fear foreigners who decide to live here as Indians. But has this happened in any country? Where nationalism has been predominant, will you not admit that a certain amount of racial arrogance will remain? Can even an Independent India escape from it?

A. My faith that we need have no fear is unshakable. I can give strong evidence in support of it, but I do not think there is any need here for me to do so. This much only must be remembered that all foreigners will be welcome to stay here, only if they look upon themselves as one with the people. India cannot tolerate foreigners who wish to remain here with safeguards for their rights. This would mean that they want to live here as superior persons and such a position must lead to friction. It is inconceivable that the present friction between Britain and India should exist, if India became free. There is no freedom for India while the friction subsists.

New Delhi, 19-9-'46

*Harijan*, 29-9-'46, p. 332

## SECTION SIX: CIVIL LIBERTY

111

### LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

One by one the pretensions of the Government that the reforms represent more liberty and more concession to popular feeling are dropping out under the stress of circumstances. The pretensions can be justified only if they can stand the test under a severe strain. Liberty of speech means that it is unassailed even when the speech hurts; liberty of the Press can be said to be truly respected only when the Press can comment in the severest terms upon and even misrepresent matters, protection against misrepresentation or violence being secured not by an administrative gagging order, not by closing down the press but by punishing the real offender, leaving the Press itself unrestricted. Freedom of association is truly respected when assemblies of people can discuss even revolutionary projects, the State relying upon the force of public opinion and the civil police, not the savage military at its disposal, to crush any actual outbreak of revolution that is designed to confound public opinion and the State representing it.

The Government of India is now seeking to crush the three powerful vehicles of expressing and cultivating public opinion and is thus once more, but happily for the last time, proving its totally arbitrary and despotic character. The fight for Swaraj, the Khilafat, the Punjab means a fight for this threefold freedom before all else.

The *Independent* is no longer a printed sheet. The *Democrat* is no more. And now the sword has descended upon the *Pratap* and the *Kesari* of Lahore. The *Bande Mataram*, Lalaji's child, has warded off the blow by depositing Rs. 2,000 security. The other two have had their first security forfeited and are now given ten days' notice to deposit Rs. 10,000 each or close down. I hope that the security of Rs. 10,000 will be refused.

I presume that what is happening in the United Provinces and the Punjab will happen in the others in due course unless the infection is prevented from spreading by some action on the part of the public.

In the first place I would urge the editors of the papers in question to copy the method of the *Independent* and publish their views in writing. I believe that an editor who has anything worth saying and who commands a clientele cannot be easily hushed so long as his body is left free. He has delivered his finished message as soon as he is put under duress. The Lokamanya spoke more eloquently from the Mandalay fortress than through the columns of the printed *Kesari*. His influence was multiplied a thousand fold by his incarceration and his speech and his pen had acquired much greater power after he was discharged than before his imprisonment. By his death he is editing his paper without pen and speech through the sacred resolution of the people to realize his life's dream. He could not possibly have done more if he were today in the flesh preaching his *Mantra*. Critics like me would perhaps be still finding fault with this expression of his or that. Today all criticism is hushed and his *Mantra* alone rules millions of hearts which are determined to raise a permanent living memorial by the fulfilment of his *Mantra* in their lives.

Therefore let us first break the idol of machinery and leaden type. The pen is our foundry and the hands of willing copyists our printing machine. Idolatry is permissible in Hinduism when it sub-serves an ideal. It becomes a sinful fetish when the idol itself becomes the ideal. Let us use the machine and the type whilst we can, to give unfettered expression to our thoughts. But let us not feel helpless when they are taken away from us by a 'paternal' Government watching and controlling every combination of types and every movement of the printing machine.

But the handwritten newspaper is, I admit, a heroic remedy meant for heroic times. By being indifferent to the aid of the printing room and the compositor's stick we ensure their free retention or restoration for all time.

We must do something more. We must apply civil disobedience for the restoration of that right before we think of what we call larger things. The

restoration of free speech, free association and free Press is almost the whole Swaraj. I would therefore respectfully urge the conference that is meeting on Saturday next at the instance of Pandit Malaviyaji and other distinguished sons of India to concentrate upon the removal of these obstacles on which all can heartily join than upon the Khilafat, the Punjab and Swaraj. Let us take care of these precious pennies and that pound will take care of itself.

*Young India*, 12-1-'22, p. 29

## 112

### NAVAKAL PROSECUTION

(From "Notes")

The case against Sjt. Khadilkar of *Navakal* I have headed prosecution. In truth it is persecution. But under a Government run in the teeth of popular opposition, especially when as in our case much of it is suppressed, persecution must be as it is the lot of every plain-spoken journalist. Sjt. Khadilkar has always believed in calling a spade a spade. And he is an effective popular writer. He has paid the price of popularity based on plain speech. I tender him my congratulations. I know that he is a philosopher. He once told me that he often wrote plays to pay the fines he had at times to pay for his journalistic adventures. He was content to run this paper and through it educate public opinion according to his lights, so long as he could do so without running into debts for paying fines. The unconcern with which he was describing his adventures enhanced the respect I always felt for his ability and constancy of purpose and sacrifice for the sake of the country. I wish that he had not thrown away good money in counsel's fees. Law courts like every other Government institution are designed to protect the Government in time of need. We have had practical experience of this times without number. They are necessarily so. Only we do not realize it, when popular liberty and Government run in the same direction. When however popular liberty has to be defended in spite of Government opposition, law

courts are poor guardians thereof. The less we have to do with them the better for us.

*Young India*, 4-4-'29, p. 108 at p. 109

## 113

### A BRILLIANT CAREER

*Forward* a creation of Deshabandhu fully lived up to its name and the aspirations of its distinguished founder. By its dash, enterprise, resourcefulness and above all fearlessness it proved a thorn in the side of the Government. It was, therefore, marked out for destruction by means fair or foul. It has had several prosecutions launched against it for daring to speak out the nation's mind by calling a spade a spade. But it outlived all the prosecutions. It rather thrived upon them and the imprisonment of its editor and printer. But it was impossible for a moneyless newspaper to survive vindictive damages. The Judge's verdict may be right though his leanings one can read in his judgment. But the Government action and which is the same thing, the railway company's action was wrong. If the article of the *Forward* was an overstatement, surely neither of the parties attacked could suffer pecuniary damage, for they were too powerful. And no damage exacted by them could possibly recoup them if they did suffer material damage at all. If it was a question of moral damage, I suggest that neither the Government nor the Company had any reputation to keep in such matters as were the subject matter of criticism by the *Forward*. In any case their *amour propre* should have been satisfied by the obtaining of the precious verdict.

But the application for compulsory liquidation shows that the object of the action was not compensation for the plaintiffs but it was destruction of the defendant. Well, they have had their satisfaction. They are welcome to it. Only they are riding for a fall. The *Forward* so vindictively crushed will live in the lives of the people. The fire lighted by it will rage with redoubled fury in the

breasts of thousands as it will no longer be able to find legitimate vent through the columns of their favourite paper. Though during my tour in the villages of Andhra I cannot follow the events in their proper sequence, I observe that a mean attempt is being made even to prevent the publication of the *New Forward*. The legal resourcefulness of the brains that are backing the national movement in Bengal against tremendous odds may circumvent the Government. But even if they cannot cope with the legal and extra-legal powers possessed and unscrupulously used by the Government, they will still have deserved the gratitude of the country for bravely and fearlessly engaging in an unequal fight with the Government. A spirit has been awakened and cannot be crushed by any power on earth. *Forward* is dead, long live *Forward*.

*Young India*, 9-5-'29, p. 145

## 114

### CIVIL LIBERTY

Gurudev has given the poetry of civil liberty. It bears reproduction in a weekly journal like *Harijan* although the statement has gone round the world. The reader will find it in another column.<sup>1</sup> It is a paraphrase of "Work out Thine Own Salvation", or "Man Is His Own Enemy and His Own Friend".

Civil liberty is not criminal liberty. When law and order are under popular control, the ministers in charge of the department cannot hold the portfolio for a day, if they act against the popular will. It is true that the Assemblies are not sufficiently representative of the whole people. Nevertheless the suffrage is wide enough to make it representative of the nation in matters of law and order. In seven provinces the Congress rules. It seems to be assumed by some persons that, in these provinces at least, individuals can say and do what they like. But so far as I know the Congress mind, it will not tolerate any such licence. Civil liberty means the fullest liberty to say and do what one likes within the ordinary law of the land. The word 'ordinary' has been purposely used here. The Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code, not to speak of

the Special Powers Legislation, contains provisions which the foreign rulers have enacted for their own safety. These provisions can be easily identified, and must be ruled out of operation. The real test, however, is the interpretation by the Working Committee of the power of the Ministers of Law and Order. Subject, therefore, to the general instructions laid down by the Working Committee for the guidance of Congress Ministers, the statutory powers limited in the manner indicated by me, must be exercised by the ministers against those who, in the name of civil liberty, preach lawlessness in the popular sense of the term.

It has been suggested that Congress ministers who are pledged to non-violence cannot resort to legal processes involving punishments. Such is not my view of the non-violence accepted by the Congress. I have, personally, not found a way out of punishments and punitive restrictions in all conceivable cases. No doubt punishments have to be non-violent, if such an expression is permissible in this connexion. Just as violence has its own technique, known by the military science, which has invented means of destruction unheard of before, non-violence has its own science and technique. Non-violence in politics is a new weapon in the process of evolution. Its vast possibilities are yet unexplored. The exploration can take place only if it is practised on a big scale and in various fields; Congress ministers, if they have faith in non-violence, will undertake the explorations. But whilst they are doing this, or whether they do so or not, there is no doubt that they cannot ignore incitements to violence and manifestly violent speech, even though they may themselves run the risk of being styled violent. When they are not wanted, the public will only have to signify its disapproval, through its representatives. In the absence of definite instructions from the Congress, it would be proper for the ministers to report, what they consider is violent behaviour of any member of the public, to their own Provincial Congress Committee, or the Working Committee, and seek instructions. If the superior authority does not approve of their recommendations, they may offer to resign. They may not allow things to drift so far as to have to summon the aid of the military. In my opinion, it would amount to political bankruptcy, when any minister is obliged to fall back on the

military, which does not belong to the people, and which, in any scheme of non-violence, must be ruled out of count for the observance of internal peace.

One interpretation I put upon the India Act is that it is an unconscious challenge to Congressmen to demonstrate the virtue of non-violence and the sincerity of their conviction about it. If the Congress can give such a demonstration, most of the safeguards fall into desuetude, and the Congress can achieve its goal without a violent struggle, and also without civil disobedience. If the Congress has not impregnated the people with the non-violent spirit, it has to become a minority, and remain in opposition, unless it will alter its creed.

*Harijan*, 23-10-'37, p. 308

#### THE POET ON CIVIL LIBERTY

(The following is the text of the message which was sent by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore to the London Conference on Civil Liberty in India held on October 17th, and which has been referred to by Gandhiji in the foregoing article.)

Liberty is a privilege which the individual has to defend daily for himself; for even the most democratic Government tend to be oppressive if its tyranny is tempted by the indifference or cowardice of its subjects. Hence the need for a Civil Liberties Union in any system of Government, and hence the need for such unions to realize that they cannot safeguard liberty for the individual if they do not teach him to defend it for himself by his continual readiness to pay for it by sacrifice. The problem is one, not of external organization so much, as of inducing the appropriate moral qualities in the individual, of creating in him an awareness of his innate worth as an individual. Otherwise, if the individual is made to care for liberty as a means of attaining mere material satisfaction, then the State will easily tempt him to part with it by holding out to him the bait of better satisfactions; which is what is actually happening in party dictatorships—Red, Black or Brown.

The English people too, though they are traditionally supposed to cherish liberty for its own sake, have allowed other peoples to be robbed of it without any scruple whatsoever, simply because their greed for material satisfactions

has been effectively appeased thereby. Perhaps my English friends will not agree with me there, but when the rivalry for colonial exploitation would become still more acute, the British citizens will find it necessary to arm their Government at home with extraordinary powers to defend their possessions abroad. Then they will suddenly wake up to find that, without meaning it, they have forfeited their own liberty and drifted into a Fascist grip, and may be, then they will realize that liberty has a true foundation only in the moral worth of the individuals who compose the State.

1 Reproduced at the end of this article.

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### DR. LOHIA'S CHALLENGE

It would appear from newspaper reports that Dr. Lohia went to Goa at the invitation of Goans and was served with an order to refrain from making speeches. According to Dr. Lohia's statement, for 188 years now, the people of Goa have been robbed of the right to hold meetings and form organizations. Naturally he defied the order. He has thereby rendered a service to the cause of civil liberty and especially to the Goans. The little Portuguese Settlement which merely exists on the sufferance of the British Government can ill afford to ape at its bad manners. In Free India Goa cannot be allowed to exist separate entity in opposition to the laws of the free State. Without a shot being fired, the people of Goa will be able to claim and receive the rights of citizenship of the free State. The present Portuguese Government will no longer be able to rely upon the protection of British arms to isolate and keep under subjection the inhabitants of Goa against their will. I would venture to advise the Portuguese Government of Goa to recognize the signs of the times and come to honourable terms with its inhabitants rather than function on any treaty that might exist between them and the British Government.

To the inhabitants of Goa I will say that they should shed fear of the Portuguese Government as the people of other parts of India have shed fear of the mighty

British Government and assert their fundamental right of civil liberty and all it means. The differences of religion among the inhabitants of Goa should be no bar to common civil life. Religion is for each individual, himself or herself to live. It should never become a bone of contention or quarrel between religious sects.

New Delhi, 26-6-'46

*Harijan*, 30-6-'46, p. 208

## SECTION SEVEN: PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

116

### CONGRESS MINISTRIES

Since the Working Committee and other Congressmen have allowed themselves to be influenced by my opinion on the office issue, it is perhaps due to the public for me to explain my conception of office acceptance and what is possible to do in terms of the Congress election manifesto. I need offer no apology for crossing the self-imposed limits in the conduct of *Harijan*. The reason is obvious. The Government of India Act is universally regarded as wholly unsatisfactory for achieving India's freedom. But it is possible to construe it as an attempt, however limited and feeble, to replace the rule of the sword by the rule of the majority. The creation of the big electorate of three crores of men and women and the placing of wide powers in their hands cannot be described by any other name. Underlying it is the hope that what has been imposed upon us we shall get to like, i.e. we shall really regard our exploitation as a blessing in the end. The hope may be frustrated if the representatives of the thirty million voters have a faith of their own and are intelligent enough to use the powers (including the holding of offices) placed in their hands for the purpose of thwarting the assumed intention of the framers of the Act. And this can be easily done by lawfully using the Act in a manner not expected by them and by refraining from using it in the way intended by them.

Thus the ministries may enforce immediate prohibition by making education self-supporting instead of paying for it from the liquor revenue. This may appear a startling proposition but I hold it perfectly feasible and eminently reasonable. The jails may be turned into reformatories and workshops. They should be self-supporting and educational instead of being spending and punitive departments. In accordance with the Irwin-Gandhi pact, of which only the Salt Clause remains still alive, salt should be free for the poor man, but it is not; it can now be free in Congress Provinces at least. All purchase of cloth should be in Khadi. The attention should now be devoted more to the villages

and the peasantry than to the cities. These are but illustrations taken at random. They are perfectly lawful, and not yet one of them has as yet even been attempted.

Then the personal behaviour of ministers. How will Congress ministers discharge themselves? Their Chief, the President of the Congress, travels third class. Will they travel first? The President is satisfied with a coarse Khadi dhoti, kurta and waistcoat. Will the ministers require the Western style and expenditure on the Western scale? Congressmen have for the past seventeen years disciplined themselves in rigorous simplicity. The nation will expect the ministers to introduce that simplicity in the administration of their provinces. They will not be ashamed of it, they will be proud of it. We are the poorest nation on earth, many millions living in semi-starvation. Its representatives dare not live in a style and manner out of all correspondence with their electors. The Englishmen coming as conquerors and, rulers set up a standard of living which took no account whatsoever of the helpless conquered. If the ministers will simply refrain from copying the Governors and the secured Civil Service, they will have shown the marked contrast that exists between the Congress mentality and theirs. Truly there can be no partnership between them and us even as there can be none between a giant and a dwarf.

Lest Congressmen should think that they have a monopoly of simplicity and that they erred in 1920 in doing away with the trousers and the chair, let me cite the examples of Aboobaker and Omar. Rama and Krishna are prehistoric names. I may not use these names as examples. History tells us of Pratap and Shivaji living in uttermost simplicity. But opinion may be divided as to what they did when they had power. There is no division of opinion about the Prophet, Aboobaker and Omar. They had the riches of the world at their feet. It will be difficult to find a historical parallel to match their rigorous life. Omar would not brook the idea of his lieutenants in distant provinces using anything but coarse cloth and coarse flour. The Congress ministers, if they will retain the simplicity and economy they have inherited since 1920, will save thousands of rupees, will give hope to the poor and probably change the tone of the

Services. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that simplicity does not mean shoddiness. There is a beauty and an art in simplicity which he who runs may see. It does not require money to be neat, clean and dignified. Pomp and pageantry are often synonymous with vulgarity.

This unostentatious work must be the prelude to demonstrating the utter insufficiency of the Act to meet the wishes of the people and the determination to end it.

The English Press has been at pains to divide India into Hindu and Muslim. The Congress majority provinces have been dubbed Hindu, the other five Muslim. That this is demonstrably false has not worried them. My great hope is that the ministers in the six provinces will so manage them as to disarm all suspicion. They will show their Muslim colleagues that they know no distinction between Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Sikh or Parsi. Nor will they know any distinction between high caste and low caste Hindu. They will demonstrate in every action of theirs that with them all are the sons of the soil among whom there is no one low and no one high. Poverty and climate are common to all without distinction. The major problems are identical for all of them. And whilst, so far as we can judge from actions the goal of the English system is wholly different from ours, the men and women representing the two goals belong to the same human family. They will now be thrown together as they never have been before. If the human reading I have given to the Act is correct, the two parties meet together, each with its own history, background and goal, to convert one another. Corporations are wooden and soulless but not those who work them or use them. If the Englishmen or Anglicized Indians can but see the Indian which is the Congress viewpoint, the battle is won by the Congress and complete independence will come to us without shedding a drop of blood. This is what I call the non-violent approach. It may be foolish, visionary, impractical; nevertheless it is best that Congressmen, other Indians and Englishmen should know it. This office acceptance is not intended to work the Act anyhow. In the prosecution by the Congress of its goal of complete independence, it is a serious attempt on the one hand to avoid a bloody revolution and on the other

to avoid mass civil disobedience on a scale hitherto not attempted. May God bless it.

*Harijan, 17-7-'37, p. 180*

## 117

### THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE

It is necessary to contemplate for a moment the fundamental difference between the old and the new order. In order to fully realize it we must try to forget for the moment the crushing limitations of the Act. Seeing that the Congress has gone to the farthest limit and has accepted office, let every Congressman note the power it has taken. Whereas formerly the Ministers were amenable to the control of the Governors, now they are under the control of the Congress. They are responsible to the Congress. They owe their status to the Congress. The Governors and the Civil Service though irremovable are yet answerable to the Ministers. The Ministers have effective control over them up to a point. That point enables them to consolidate the power of the Congress, i.e. the people. The Ministers have the whip hand so long as they act within the four corners of the Act, no matter how distasteful their actions may be to the Governors. It will be found upon examination that so long as the people remain non-violent, the Congress Ministers have enough freedom of action for national growth.

For effective use of this power, the people have to give hearty co-operation to the Congress and their Ministers. If the latter do wrong or they neglect their duty, it is open to any person to complain to the Secretary of the A.I.C.C. and seek redress. But no one may take the law into his own hands.

Congressmen should also realize that there is no other political party in the field to question the authority of the Congress. For the other parties have never penetrated the villages. And that is not a work which can be done in a day. So far, therefore, as I can see a vast opportunity is at the disposal of the Ministers in terms of the Congress objective of complete independence, if only they are

honest, selfless, industrious, vigilant, and solicitous for the true welfare of the starving millions. No doubt there is great validity in the argument that the Act has left the Ministers no money to spend for the nation-building departments. But this is largely an illusion. I believe with Sir Daniel Hamilton that labour, and not metal, is real money. Labour backed by paper is as good as, if not better than, paper backed by labour. Here are the sentiments of an English financier who has held high office in India: "The worst legacy we have left to India is a high-grade service. What has been done cannot be undone. I should now start something independent. Whatever is being done today with 'money motive' should in future be based on 'service motive'. Why should teachers and doctors be paid high salaries? Why cannot most of the work be done on a co-operative basis? Why should you worry about capital when there are seven hundred million hands to toil? If things are done on a co-operative basis, which in other words is modified socialism, money would not be needed, at least not in large quantity." I find this verified in little Segaoon. The four hundred adults of Segaoon can easily put ten thousand rupees annually into their pockets if only they would work as I ask them. But they won't. They lack co-operation, they do not know the art of intelligent labour, they refuse to learn anything new. Untouchability blocks the way. If someone presented them with one lac of rupees, they would not turn it to account. They are not responsible for this state of affairs. We the middle class are. What is true of Segaoon is true of other villages. They will respond by patient effort as they are responding in Segaoon though ever so slowly. The State, however, can do much in this direction without having to spend a single pie extra. The State officials can be utilized for serving the people instead of harassing them. The villagers may not be coerced into doing anything. They can be educated to do things which enrich them morally, mentally, physically and economically.

*Harijan, 24-7-'37, p. 188*

### CRITICISM ANSWERED

My article on "Congress Ministries" has attracted attention and evoked criticism. The latter demands an answer.

#### Prohibition

How can total prohibition be brought about immediately if at all? By 'immediately' I mean an immediate planned declaration bringing about total prohibition not later than three years from 14th July 1937, the date of the taking of office by the first Congress Ministry. I imagine that it is quite possible to bring it about in two years. But not being aware of administrative difficulties I put down three years. I count loss of this revenue as of no account whatsoever. Prohibition will remain a far cry, if the Congress is to count the cost in a matter of first class national importance.

Let it be remembered that this drink and drugs revenue is a form of extremely degrading taxation. All taxation to be healthy must return tenfold to the tax-payer in the form of necessary services. Excise makes people pay for their own corruption, moral, mental and physical. It falls like a dead weight on those who are least able to bear it. The revenue is largely derived, I believe, from industrial labour which together with field labour the Congress almost exclusively represents.

The loss of revenue is only apparent. Removal of this degrading tax enables the drinker, i.e. the tax-payer to earn and spend better. Apart, therefore, from the tremendous gain, it means a substantial economic gain, to the nation.

I put this prohibition in the forefront because its result is immediate; Congressmen and especially women have bled for it; national prestige will rise in a manner it cannot by any single act that I can conceive, and the other five provinces are highly likely to follow the six. The Musalman non-Congress Prime Ministers are equally interested in seeing India sober rather than drunk.

The cry of great expenditure in preventing illicit distillation is thoughtless where it is not hypocritical. India is not America. The American example is a hindrance rather than a help to us. In America drinking carries no shame with it. It is the fashion there to drink. It reflects the greatest credit on the determined minority in America that by sheer force of its moral weight it was able to carry through the prohibition measure however short-lived it was. I do not regard that experiment to have been a failure. I do not despair of America once more returning to it with still greater fervour and better experience in dealing with it. It may be that if India carries out prohibition it will hasten the advent of prohibition in America. In no part of the world is prohibition as easy to carry out as in India for with us it is only a minority that drinks. Drinking is generally considered disrespectful. And there are millions, I believe, who have never known what drink is.

But why should prevention of illicit distillation cost any more than prevention of other crimes? I should make illicit distillation heavily punishable and think no more about it. Some of it will go on perhaps till doomsday as thieving will. I would not set up a special agency to pry into illicit distilleries. But I would punish anyone found drunk though not disorderly (in the legal sense) in streets or other public places with a substantial fine or alternatively with indeterminate imprisonment to end when the erring one has earned his or her keep.

This, however, is the negative part. Voluntary organizations especially manned by women will work in the labour areas. They will visit those who are addicted to drink and try to wean them from the habit. Employers of labour will be expected by law to provide cheap, healthy refreshment, reading and entertainment rooms where the working men can go and find shelter, knowledge, health-giving food and drink and innocent fun.

Thus prohibition means a type of adult education of the nation and not merely a closing down of grog shops.

Prohibition should begin by preventing any new shop from being licensed and closing some that are in danger of becoming a nuisance to the public. How far

the latter is possible without having to pay heavy compensation I do not know. In any case, generally, licences that lapse should not be renewed. No new shops should be opened on any account. Whatever immediately is possible in law should be done without a moment's thought as far as the revenue is concerned.

But what is the meaning or extent of total prohibition? Total prohibition is prohibition against sales of intoxicating drinks and drugs, except under medical prescription by a practitioner licensed for the purpose and to be purchasable only at Government depots maintained therefor. Foreign liquors in prescribed quantity may be imported for the use of Europeans who cannot or will not do without their drink. These also will be sold in bottles in select areas and under authorized certificates. Hotels and restaurants will cease to sell intoxicating drinks.

### **The Peasantry**

But what about relief to the peasantry which is oppressed by excessive taxation, rack-renting, illegal exactions, indebtedness which can never be fully discharged, illiteracy, superstition and disease, peculiarly due to pauperism? Of course it comes first in terms of numbers and economic distress. But the relief of the peasantry is an elaborate programme and does not admit of wholesale treatment. And no Congress ministry that does not handle this universal problem can exist for ten days. Every Congressman is instinctively interested, if largely academically, in this problem. He has inherited the legacy from the birth of the Congress. The distress of the peasantry may be said to be *raison d'etre* of the Congress. There was and is no fear of this subject being neglected. I fear the same cannot be said of prohibition. It became an integral part of the Congress programme only in 1920. In my opinion the Congress now that it is in power, will put itself morally right only by once for all courageously and drastically dealing with this devastating evil.

### **Education**

How to solve the problem of education is the problem unfortunately mixed up with the disappearance of the drink revenues. No doubt there are ways and

means of raising fresh taxation. Professors Shah and Khambatta have shown that even this poor country is capable of raising fresh taxation. Riches have not yet been sufficiently taxed. In this of all countries in the world, possession of inordinate wealth by individuals should be held as a crime against Indian humanity. Therefore the maximum limit of taxation of riches beyond a certain margin can never be reached. In England, I understand, they have already gone as far as 70% of the earnings beyond a prescribed figure. There is no reason why India should not go to a much higher figure. .Why should there not be death duties? Those sons of millionaires who are of age and yet inherit their parents' wealth, are losers for the very inheritance. The nation thus becomes a double loser. For the inheritance should rightly belong to the nation. And the nation loses again in that the full faculties of the heirs are not drawn out, being crushed under the load of riches. That death duties cannot be imposed by Provincial Governments does not affect my argument.

But as a nation we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfil our obligations to the nation in this respect in a given time during this generation, if the programme is to depend on money. I have therefore made bold, even at the risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability, to suggest that education should be self-supporting. By education I mean an all- round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools.

I hold that the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process. I am not writing this without some confidence, because it has the backing of experience. This method is being

adopted more or less completely wherever spinning is being taught to workers. I have myself taught sandal making and even spinning on these lines with good results. This method does not exclude a knowledge of history and geography. But I find that this is best taught by transmitting such general information by word of mouth. One imparts ten times as much in this manner as by reading and writing. The signs of the alphabet may be taught later when the pupil has learnt to distinguish wheat from chaff and when he has somewhat developed his or her tastes. This is a revolutionary proposal but it saves immense labour and enables a student to acquire in one year what he may take much longer to learn. This means all-round economy. Of course the pupil learns mathematics whilst he is learning his handicraft.

I attach the greatest importance to primary education which according to my conception should be equal to the present matriculation less English. If all the collegians were all of a sudden to forget their knowledge, the loss sustained by the sudden lapse of the memory of say a few lacs of collegians would be as nothing compared to the loss that the nation has sustained and is sustaining through the ocean of darkness that surrounds three hundred millions. The measure of illiteracy is no adequate measure of the prevailing ignorance among the millions of villagers.

I would revolutionize college education and relate it to national necessities. There would be degrees for mechanical and other engineers. They would be attached to the different industries which should pay for the training of the graduates they need. Thus the Tatas would be expected to run a college for training engineers under the supervision of the State, the mill associates would run among them a college for training graduates whom they need. Similarly for the other industries that may be named. Commerce will have its college. There remains arts, medicine and agriculture. Several private arts colleges are today self-supporting. The State would, therefore, cease to run its own. Medical Colleges would be attached to certified hospitals. As they are popular among moneyed men they may be expected by voluntary contributions to support medical colleges. And agricultural colleges to be worthy of the name must be

self-supporting. I have a painful experience of some agricultural graduates. Their knowledge is superficial. They lack practical experience. But if they had their apprenticeship on farms which are self-sustained and answer the requirements of the country, they would not have to gain experience after getting their degrees and at the expense of their employers.

This is not a fanciful picture. If we would but shed our mental laziness, it would appear to be an eminently reasonable and practical solution of the problem of education that faces the Congress Ministers and therefore the Congress. If the declarations recently made on behalf of the British Government mean what they sound to the ear, the Ministers have the organizing and organized ability of the Civil Service at their disposal to execute their policy. The Services have learnt the art of reducing to practice the policies laid down for them even by capricious Governors and Viceroys. Let the Ministers lay down a well-conceived but determined policy, and let the Services redeem the promise made on their behalf and prove worthy of the salt they eat.

There remains the question of teachers. I like Prof. K. T. Shah's idea expressed in his article elsewhere of conscription being applied to men and women of learning. They may be conscripted to give a number of years, say five, to the teaching for which they may be qualified, on a salary not exceeding their maintenance on a scale in keeping with the economic level of the country. The very high salaries that the teachers and professors in the higher branches demand must go. The village teacher, has to be replaced by more competent ones.

### **The Jails**

My suggestion to turn jails into reformatories to make them self-supporting has not excited much criticism. Only one remark I have noticed. If they turn out marketable goods, I am told, they will unfairly compete with the open market. There is no substance in the remark. But I anticipated it in 1922 when I was a prisoner in Yeravda. I discussed my plan with the then Home Member, the then Inspector General of Prisons, and two Superintendents who were in charge of the prison in succession. Not one of them cavilled at my suggestion. The then

Home Member was even enthusiastic about it and wanted me to put my scheme in writing, if he could obtain the permission from the Governor. But His Excellency would not hear of a prisoner making suggestions regarding jail administration! And so my scheme never saw the light of the day. But the author believes in its soundness today just as much as when he first made it. This was the plan: All industries that were not paying should be stopped. All the jails should be turned into hand-spinning and hand-weaving institutions. They should include (wherever possible) cotton-growing to producing the finest cloth. I suggest that almost every facility for this purpose already exists in the prisons. Only the will has to be there. Prisoners must be treated as defectives, not criminals to be looked down upon. Warders should cease to be the terrors of the prisoners, but the jail officials should be their friends and instructors. The one indispensable condition is that the State should buy all the Khadi that may be turned out by the prisons at cost price. And if there is a surplus the public may get it at a trifling higher price to cover the expense of running a sales depot. If my suggestion is adopted, the jails will be linked to the villages and they will spread to them the message of Khadi and discharged prisoners may become model citizens of the State.

### **Salt**

I am reminded that salt being a Central subject, the poor Ministers cannot do anything. I should be painfully surprised if they cannot. The Central Government has to operate in provincial territories. Provincial Governments are bound to protect people within their jurisdiction against being dealt with unjustly even by the Centre. And the Governors are bound to back the protests of their Ministers against unjust dealings with the people of their respective provinces. If the Ministers are on the alert there should be no difficulty in the poor villagers helping themselves to the salt without undue interference on behalf of the Central authority. I have no fear of such undue interference.

In conclusion I should like to add that whatever I have said about Prohibition, Education and Jails is presently merely for the consideration of the Congress Ministers and the interested public. I may not withhold from the public the

views which— however strange, visionary or unpractical they may appear to critics—I have held tenaciously for long.

*Harijan, 31-7-'37, p. 196*

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### NOT INSTRUMENT OF INSTRUCTIONS

(From "Notes")

What I have been recently writing in connection with the constructive programme before the Congress ministries has been described by some newspapers as 'Instrument of Instructions'. No one but the President of the Congress and the Working Committee has any power to issue instructions to the Congress ministries. Mine is a very humble note. I can only advise on matters about which I may claim special knowledge or experience. My articles have a value only to the extent that they appeal to the reason of those to whom they are addressed. Though I enjoy the confidence of the Working Committee, the views I may express here need not be taken to represent its views or even those of any of its groups. Indeed the public should know that in several matters I do not represent the views of many individual members. Therefore whatever I may say in these columns should be taken to be purely personal to me and in no way representative of the Working Committee.

But in matters relating to the struggle for Swaraj through non-violent action, I do claim special qualifications. For me office acceptance has a special meaning even in terms of the Congress manifesto and resolutions. It would be wrong if I did not put before the Ministers and the public my meaning of office acceptance. But it may not always be the official Congress view, it may not be the view of Congressmen in general. My position and limitations being made clear, there need be no embarrassment to the Ministers or me. I should feel cramped if my writing were presumed to bear the imprimatur of the official or even the non- official Congress view.

*Harijan, 21-8-'37, p. 220*

### MY MEANING OF OFFICE ACCEPTANCE

Shri Shankerrao Deo writes:

"In your note 'Not Instrument of Instructions' in the last *Harijan*, you say in the second paragraph, 'For me office acceptance has a special meaning even in the terms of the Congress manifesto and resolutions. It would be wrong if I did not put before the Ministers and the public my meaning of office acceptance.' As I have understood you, you are for office acceptance for serving the masses and consolidating the Congress position through constructive programme. But I think you should explain in greater detail your meaning of office acceptance." -

Rightly or wrongly, since 1920 the Congress-minded millions have firmly held the view that the British domination of India has been on the whole a curse. It has been as much sustained by British arms as it has been through the legislatures, distribution of titles, the law courts, the educational institutions, the financial policy and the like. The Congress came to the conclusion that the guns should not be feared, but that the organized violence, of which the British guns were a naked emblem, should be met by the organized non-violence of the people, and the legislatures and the rest by non-co-operating with them. There was a strong and effective positive side to the foregoing plan of non-co-operation, which became known as the constructive programme. The nation succeeded to the exact extent of its success in the programme of action laid down in 1920.

Now this policy has never changed; not even the terms have been revoked by the Congress. In my opinion all the resolutions since passed by the Congress are not a repudiation but a fulfilment of the original, so long as the mentality behind all of them remains the same as in 1920.

The corner-stone of the policy of 1920 was organized national non-violence. The British system was wooden, even satanic; not so the men and women

behind the system. Our nonviolence, therefore, meant that we were out to convert the administrators of the system, not to destroy them; the conversion may or may not be willing. If, notwithstanding their desire to the contrary, they saw that their guns and everything they had created for the consolidation of their authority were useless because of our non-use of them, they would not do otherwise than bow to the inevitable and either retire from the scene, or remain on our terms, i.e. as friends to co-operate with us, not as rulers to impose their will upon us.

If Congressmen have entered the legislatures and have accepted office with that mentality, and if the British administrators tolerate Congress ministries indefinitely, the Congress will be on a fair way to wreck the Act and to achieve complete independence. For an indefinite prolongation of the ministries on the terms mentioned by me means an ever-increasing power of the Congress till it becomes irresistible and is able to have its "way all along the line. The first indispensable condition of the attainment of such a consummation means willing exercise of non-violence by the whole mass of the people. That means perfect communal co-operation and friendship, the eradication of untouchability, willing restraint of the addicts to the drink and opium habits, the social enfranchisement of women, the progressive amelioration of the toiling millions in the villages, free and compulsory primary education—not in name as it is today, but in reality, as I have ventured to adumbrate—the gradual eradication of superstition of proved harmfulness, through adult mass education, a complete overhauling of the system of higher education so as to answer the wants of the millions instead of the few middle class people, a radical change in the legal machinery so as to make justice pure and inexpensive, conversion of jails into reformatories in which detention would be not a course of punishment but a complete course of the education of those miscalled convicts but who are in fact temporarily deranged.

This is not conceived as a terribly long plan of action. Every one of the items suggested by me can be put into motion today, without let or hindrance, if we have the will.

I had not studied the Act when I advised office acceptance. I have since been studying Provincial Autonomy by Prof. K. T. Shah. It is an energetic but true indictment of the Act from the orthodox standpoint. But the three months' self-denial of the Congress has changed the atmosphere. I see nothing in the Act to prevent the Congress Ministers from undertaking the programme suggested by me. The special powers and safeguards come into play only when there is violence in the country, or a clash between minorities and the so-called majority community, which is another word for violence.

I detect in the Act a profound distrust of the nation's capacity to rule itself, running through every section, and an inevitable desire to perpetuate British rule, but at the same time a bold experiment of wooing the masses to the British side, and, failing that, a resignation to their will to reject British domination. The Congress has gone in to convert these missionaries. And I have not a shadow of doubt that if the Congress is true to the spirit of nonviolence, non-co-operation and self-purification, it will succeed in its mission.

*Harijan*, 4-9-'37, p. 236

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### GIVE MINISTERS A CHANCE

This is the gist of the conversation of a visitor:

"You may not know what Ministers have to go through just now. Congressmen, having abjured office for seventeen years, suddenly find that their own chosen representatives are in possession of powers which they had voluntarily surrendered before. They do not know what to do with these representatives. They smother them with addresses and entertainments and, as often as not, they demand interviews with them as a matter of right and present them with all kinds of suggestions and sometimes even ask for petty favours."

This is the best way to disable the Ministers from doing real service to the country. They are new to their Work. A conscientious Minister has no time for

receiving addresses and honours, or for making speeches in return for fulsome or deserved praise. Nor have they time for interviewers whom they do not invite, or who they think are not going to help them in their work. In theory, a leader of democracy holds himself at the beck and call of the public. It is but right that he should do so. But he dare not do so at the sacrifice of the duty imposed upon him by the public. Ministers will cut a sorry figure if they do not master, or are not allowed by the public to master the work entrusted to them. An Education Minister has to have all his wits about him if he is to evolve a policy in keeping with the requirements of the country. An Excise Minister will prove a disastrous failure if he does not attend to the constructive side of prohibition. And so will a Finance Minister who, in spite of the handicap created for him by the India Act and in spite of the voluntary surrender of the Excise Revenue, will not balance his budget. It requires a juggler in figures to be able to do so. These are but illustrations. Every ministerial office requires almost the same vigilance, care and study as the three I have mentioned.

It would have been easy for them, if they had simply to read and sign papers put before them by the permanent Service. But it is not easy to study every document and think out and originate new policies. Their gesture of simplicity necessary as it was as a preliminary, will avail them nothing if they will not show requisite industry, ability, integrity, impartiality, and an infinite capacity for mastering details. It would be well, therefore, if the public will exercise self-restraint in the matter of giving addresses, seeking interviews or writing to them long epistles.

*Harijan, 9-10-'37, p. 290*

### WIDE OF THE MARK

(Extracts from an article which appeared under the title "The A.I.C.C." are reproduced below.)

Congress Ministers have a four-fold responsibility. As an individual a Minister is primarily responsible to his constituents. If he is satisfied that he no longer enjoys their confidence or that he has changed the views for which he was elected, he resigns. Collectively the Ministers are responsible to the majority of the legislators who, by a no-confidence vote or similar means, may any moment drive them out of office. But a Congress Minister owes his position and responsibility to the Provincial Congress Committee and the A.I.C.C. also. So long as all these four bodies act in co-ordination, Ministers have smooth sailing in the discharge of their duty.

The recent meeting of the A.I.C.C. showed, however, that some of the members were not at all in accord with the Congress ministries, specially that of C. Rajagopalachari, the Prime Minister of Madras. Healthy, well-informed, balanced criticism is the ozone of public life. A most democratic Minister is likely to go wrong without ceaseless watch from the public. But the resolution moved in the A.I.C.C. criticizing the Congress ministries, and still more the speeches, were wide of the mark. The critics had not cared to study the facts. They had not before them C. Rajagopalachari's reply. They knew that he was most eager to come and answer his critics. But severe illness prevented him from coming. The critics owed it to their representatives that they should postpone the consideration of the resolution. Let them study and take to heart what Jawaharlal Nehru has said in his elaborate statement on the matter. I am convinced that in their action the critics departed from truth and non-violence. If they had carried the A.I.C.C. with them, the Madras Ministers at least would have resigned, although they seemingly enjoy the full confidence of the majority of the legislators. Surely, that would not have been a desirable result.

*Harijan*, 13-11-'37, p. 332

### MARTIAL v. MORAL

(A few paragraphs from the above article are reproduced herein- below.)

It is often forgotten that the Congress has only moral authority to back it. The ruling power has the martial, though it often dilutes the martial with the moral. This vital difference has come to the fore since the assumption of office by the Congress in seven provinces. This office holding is either a step towards greater prestige or its total loss. If it is not to be a total loss, the ministers and the legislators have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion in everything. They may not make private gains either for themselves or for their relatives or friends. If the relatives or friends get any appointment, it must be only because they are the best among the candidates, and their market value is always greater than what they get under the Government. The ministers and the legislators of the Congress ticket have to be fearless in the performance of their duty. They must always be ready to risk the loss of their seats or offices. Offices and seats in the legislatures have no merit outside their ability to raise the prestige and power of the Congress. And since both depend wholly upon the possession of morals, both public and private, any moral lapse means a blow to the Congress. This is the necessary implication of non-violence. If the Congress nonviolence is merely confined to abstention from causing physical hurt to the British officials and their dependents, such nonviolence can never bring us independence. It is bound to be worsted in the final heat. Indeed we shall find it to be worthless, if not positively harmful, long before the final heat is reached.

There is considerable force in the argument of those who have conceived Congress non-violence in that narrow light when they say that it is a broken reed.

If on the other hand non-violence, with all the implications, is the Congress policy let every Congressman examine and reconstruct himself accordingly. Let

them not wait for instructions from the Working Committee. After all the Working Committee can act only in so far as it interprets the public mind. And non-violence is not a quality to be evolved or expressed to order. It is an inward growth depending for sustenance upon intense individual effort.

*Harijan, 23-4-'38, p. 88*

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### C. E MINISTERIAL CRISIS

(Originally appeared under the title "Functions of the Working Committee")

Press cuttings on the ministerial crisis in C.E make most instructive reading. That the resolution of the Working Committee condemning the action of a veteran leader like Dr. Khare would come in for some severe criticism was a foregone conclusion. But I was not prepared for the ignorance betrayed by the critics of the functions of the Working Committee.

Dr. Khare was not only guilty of gross indiscipline in flouting the warnings of the Parliamentary Board, but he betrayed incompetence as a leader by allowing himself to be fooled by the Governor, or not knowing that by his precipitate action he was compromising the Congress. He heightened the measure of indiscipline by refusing the advice of the Working Committee to make a frank confession of his guilt and withdraw from leadership. The Working Committee would have been guilty of gross neglect of duty if it had failed to condemn Dr. Khare's action and adjudged his incompetence. I write these lines in sorrow. It was no pleasure for me to advise the Working Committee to pass the resolution it did. Dr. Khare is a friend. He has run to my aid as a physician when quick medical assistance was needed. He has often come to me for advice and guidance and has expressed himself to be in need of my blessings. I banked on this friendship when, on the 25th ultimo, I appealed to him bravely to stand down and work as a camp-follower. He himself seemed to be willing but he was badly advised, and not only declined to accept the Working Committee's advice but sent a letter instead, questioning the propriety of the whole of the action

of the Working Committee in connection with his ill-advised and hasty resignation of office and equally hasty formation of a new Cabinet. I hope that on mature reflection he would have seen the error of his conduct and taken the action of the Working Committee in a sportsmanlike spirit. There is no moral turpitude involved in his action. He is a good fighter. He is free with his purse in helping friends. These are qualities of which anyone may be proud. But these qualities need not make the possessor a good Prime Minister or administrator. I would urge him as a friend to work for the time being as a camp-follower and give the Congress the benefit of the admitted qualities I have recited.

If Dr. Khare was impatient of his recalcitrant colleagues he should have rushed, not to the Governor, but to the Working Committee and tendered his resignation. If he felt aggrieved by its decision, he could have gone to the A.I.C.C. But in no case could any minister take internal quarrels to the Governor and seek relief through him without the previous consent of the Working Committee. If the Congress machinery is slow moving it can be made to move faster. If the men at the helm are self-seekers or worthless, the A.I.C.C. is there to remove them. Dr. Khare erred grievously in ignoring or, what is worse, not knowing this simple remedy and rushing to the Governor on the eve of the meeting of the Working Committee to end his agony.

It is suggested that the men who succeed him are self-seekers and incapable, and can make no approach to Dr. Khare in character. If they are as they have been portrayed by their critics, they are bound to fail in the discharge of the onerous responsibility they have undertaken. But here again the Working Committee has to work within the limits prescribed for it. It cannot impose ministers on a province. After all they are elected members, and if the party that has the power to elect them chooses to do so, the Working Committee has no authority to interfere so long as they remain under discipline and are not known to be persons unworthy of public confidence. But the crisis should surely put the ministers on their mettle. It is up to them to show by their conduct that the charges levelled against them are baseless, and that they are capable of discharging their trust ably and selflessly.

It speaks well for the impartiality of the Indian Press in that several journals found it necessary to condemn the action of the Working Committee in pronouncing the opinion it did on the part H.E. the Governor of C.R played during the unfortunate crisis. I am not in the habit of hastily judging opponents. The criticism of the resolution has left me unconvinced of any 'injustice done to the Governor by it. In estimating his action, time is of the essence. In accepting the resignations of Dr. Khare and his two colleagues, in demanding resignations from the other three ministers, in expecting an immediate answer, in summarily rejecting their explanation and dismissing them, and for this purpose keeping himself, his staff and the poor ministers awake almost the whole night, the Governor betrayed a haste which I can only call indecent. Nothing would have been lost if instead of accepting Dr. Khare's resignation there and then, he had awaited the meeting of the Working Committee which was to meet two days after the strange drama. In dealing with a similar crisis the Bengal Governor acted differently from the C.P Governor.

Of course, the Governor's action conformed to the letter of the law, but it killed the spirit of the tacit compact between the British Government and the Congress. Let the critics of the Working Committee's action read the Viceroy's carefully prepared declaration which, among other declarations, induced the Working Committee to try the office experiment, and ask themselves whether the Governor was not bound to take official notice of what was going on between the Working Committee and Dr. Khare and his colleagues. These indisputable facts lead one to the irresistible conclusion that the Governor, in his eagerness to discredit the Congress, kept a vigil and brought about a situation which he knew was to be uncomfortable for the Congress. The unwritten compact between the British Government and the Congress is a gentleman's agreement in which both are expected to play the game.

The resolution therefore gives English administrators more credit than evidently the critics would give. Englishmen are sportsmen. They have ample sense of humour. They can hit hard and take a beating also in good grace. I have no doubt that the Governor will take the Congress resolution in good part.

But whether he does so or not, the Working Committee was bound to express what it felt about the Governor's action. It wishes to avoid a fight if it can; it will take it up, if it must. If the fight is to be avoided, the Governor must recognize the Congress as the one national organization that is bound some day or other to replace the British Government. The U.P, the Bihar and the Orissa Governors waited for the Congress lead when a crisis faced them. No doubt, in the three cases, it was obviously to their interest to do so. Is it to be said that in C.P it was obviously to the British interest to precipitate the crisis in order to discomfit the Congress? The Working Committee resolution is a friendly warning to the British Government that if they wish to avoid an open rupture with the Congress, the powers that be should not allow a repetition of what happened at Nagpur on the night of 20th July.

Let us understand the functions of the Congress. For internal growth and administration, it is as good a democratic organization as any to be found in the world. But this democratic organization has been brought into being to fight the greatest imperialist power living. For this external work, therefore, it has to be likened to an army. As such it ceases to be democratic. The Central authority possesses plenary powers enabling it to impose the enforced discipline on the various units working under it. Provincial organizations and Provincial Parliamentary Boards are subject to the central authority.

It has been suggested that, whilst my thesis holds good when there is active war in the shape of civil resistance going on, it cannot whilst the latter remains under suspension. But suspension of civil disobedience does not mean suspension of war. The latter can only end when India has a constitution of her own making. Till then the Congress must be in the nature of an army. Democratic Britain has set up an ingenious system in India which, when you look at it in its nakedness, is nothing but a highly organized efficient military control. It is not less so under the present Government of India Act. The ministers are mere puppets so far as the real control is concerned. The collectors and the police, who 'sir' them today, may at a mere command from the Governors, their real masters, unseat the ministers, arrest them and put

them in a lock-up. Hence it is that I have suggested that the Congress has entered upon office not to work the act in the manner expected by the framers but in a manner so as to hasten the day of substituting it by a genuine Act of India's own coining.

Therefore the Congress conceived as a fighting machine has to centralize control and guide every department and every Congressman, however highly placed, and expect unquestioned obedience. The fight cannot be fought on any other terms.

They say this is fascism pure and simple. But they forget that fascism is the naked sword. Under it Dr. Khare should lose his head. The Congress is the very antithesis of fascism, because ' it is based on non-violence pure and undefiled. Its sanctions are all moral. Its authority is not derived from the control of panoplied black shirts. Under the Congress regime Dr. Khare can remain of Nagpur, and the students and citizens of Nagpur, and for that matter other places, may execrate me or/and the Working Committee without a hair of the demonstrators' heads being touched so long as they remain non-violent. That is the glory and strength of the Congress—not its weakness. Its authority is derived from that non-violent attitude. It is the only purely nonviolent political organization of importance, to my knowledge, throughout the world. And let it continue to be the boast of the Congress that it can command the willing and hearty obedience of its followers, even veterans like Dr. Khare, so long as they choose to belong to it.

*Harijan*, 6-8-'38, p. 208

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### A MINISTER'S WOE

(Dr. Katju wrote a note on the failure of winter crops in many parts of India which was apprehended to lead to a serious food shortage and after setting out the steps the U. E Government had taken to meet the shortage concluded by observing that without public co-operation, however, little progress could be made. Commending the note Gandhiji observed as follows:)

This note from Dr. Katju is worthy of close attention by the Kisan and his guides as also urban people. The impending calamity can be turned to good use. Then it will be a blessing in disguise. Otherwise, curse it is and curse it will remain.

Dr. Katju writes as a responsible Minister. Therefore, people can either make or mar him. They can remove him and replace him by a better. But so long as ministers of people's choice are in office as their servants, the people have to carry out their instructions. Every breach of law or instructions is not satyagraha. It can be easily *Duragraha* rather than satyagraha.

*Harijan*, 21-4-'46, p. 97

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### THE BIG GULF

(From *Harijansevak*—Originally appeared in "Question Box")

Q. On what principle is the question of salaries of ministers in Congress majority provinces going to be settled this time? Does the Karachi resolution in this regard still hold? If the question is to be settled on the basis of the present high prices is it possible, within the limits of their revenues, for the provincial budgets to increase the pays of all their servants threefold? If not, will it be proper for the ministers to be paid Rs. 1500/- while a *chaprasi* or a teacher is told to make two ends meet on Rs. 15/- and 12/- p.m. and not make a fuss about it because Congress has to run the administration?

A. The question is apt. Why should a minister draw Rs. 1500/- and a *chaprasi* or a teacher Rs. 15/- p.m.? But the question cannot be solved by the mere raising of it. Such differences have existed for ages. Why should an elephant require an enormous quantity of food and a mere grain suffice for the ant? The question carries its own answer. God gives each one according to his need. If we could as definitely know the variations in the needs of men as those of the elephant and the ant, no doubts would arise. Experience tells us that differences in requirements do exist in society. But we do not know the law governing them. All therefore that is possible today is to try to reduce the differences as far as possible. The reduction can be brought about by peaceful agitation and by the creation of public opinion. It cannot be done by force or *duragraha*, in the name of satyagraha. The ministers are the people's men. Their wants even before they took office were not those of *chaprasi*. I would love to see a *chaprasi* become worthy of holding the office of a minister and yet not increase his needs. It should also be clearly understood that no ministers need draw up to the maximum of the salary fixed.

It is worthwhile pondering over one thing that arises out of the questions. Is it possible for the *chaprasi* to support himself and his family on Rs. 15/- p.m. without taking bribes? Should he not be given enough to keep him above temptation? The remedy for this is that as far as possible we should be our own *chaprasis*. But even so if we need them we must pay them enough for their requirements. In this way the big gulf that exists between minister and *chaprasi* will be bridged.

It is another matter as to why the pay of the ministers has been raised from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1500/- p.m. But this is nothing as compared with, and does not solve, the main problem. With the solution of the latter it will *ipso facto* be solved.

New Delhi, 14-4-'46  
*Harijan*, 21-4-'46, p. 93

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### CONGRESS MINISTERS NOT SAHIB LOG

(From "Notes")

A Congress worker asks:

"Should the Congress ministers live in great state like their English predecessors? Will it be right for them to use Government cars for private work?"

From my point of view there can be only one reply to both the questions. If the Congress wants to continue as a people's organization, the ministers cannot live as *sahib log* nor use for private work facilities provided by Government for official duties.

New Delhi, 20-9-'46

*Harijan*, 29-9-'46, p. 333

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### TASK BEFORE MINISTERS

(Originally appeared in columns of "Notes" under the above title)

I have before me quite a number of letters fiercely criticizing what they consider to be their luxurious life. They accuse them too of favouritism, even nepotism. I know that much criticism comes from ignorance. Ministers should not be sensitive. They would take in good part even carping criticism. They would be surprised if I were to send them the letters I receive; probably, they receive worse. Be that as it may, the moral I draw from them is that the critics expect much more from these chosen servants of the people than from others in the way of simplicity, courage, honesty and industry. In this matter we cannot imitate the English rulers of the past, except perhaps in industry and discipline. The whole purpose of this note will be served if on the one hand the

ministers profit by valid criticism and the critics learn to be sober and precise about their facts. Inaccuracy or exaggeration, spoils a good case.

On the train to Delhi, 8-9-'47

*Harijan*, 21-9-'47, p. 325

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### WHO SHOULD BE PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS?

The following is a free translation of Principal Sreeman Narain Agarwal's letter in Hindustani from Wardha:

"In the Constitution that is being framed by the Constituent Assembly, there is to be provision for the election of provincial Governors by the majority of voters under the adult franchise system. From this one is entitled to infer that as a rule, the nominees of the Congress Parliamentary Board will be elected. The Chief Minister of the province will also be of the Congress party. Common sense dictates that the provincial Governor must be above the party politics of the province concerned, or above being unduly influenced by the Chief Minister or above friction between himself and his Chief Minister.

"In my opinion there is no necessity for a Governor. The Chief Minister should be able to take his place and people's money to the tune of Rs. 5,500 per month for the sinecure of the Governor will be saved. Nevertheless, no provincial Governor should belong to his own province.

"Moreover, in this way the expense and worry of an election by the majority of the adult population will be saved. Will it not be proper and better for the President of the Union to select Governors satisfying the reasonable test above suggested? Such Governors will surely raise the tone of the public life of the provinces governed by them. It is worthy of note that the present Governors have been appointed by the Central Cabinet of the Union on the above basis and, therefore, their influence on their provinces has been wholesome. I fear that if the Governors are

elected as threatened under the forthcoming Constitution, their influence is likely to be unwholesome.

"Further, the Constitution as foreshadowed makes no mention of the village Panchayats being the foundation of the progressive decentralization in the place of the old hunger for centralization. There are other such defects which one can profitably point out, but I have no right or desire to enter into an elaborate criticism of our seasoned leaders. I have but ventured to draw your attention to the defects which have appeared to me and demand your guidance."

There is much to be said in favour of the argument advanced by Principal Agarwal about the appointment of provincial Governors. I must confess that I have not been able to follow the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. I do not know the context in which the proposal under discussion has been made. But, examined in isolation, the criticism appears irresistible, with the exception that much as I would like to spare every pice of the public treasury, it would be bad economy to do away with provincial Governors and regard Chief Ministers as a perfect equivalent. Whilst I would resent much power of interference to be given to Governors, I do not think that they should be mere figure-heads. They should have enough power enabling them to influence ministerial policy for the better. In their detached position they would be able to see things in their proper perspective and thus prevent mistakes by their Cabinets. Theirs must be an all-pervasive moral influence in their provinces.

Principal Agarwal says that there is no mention or direction about village Panchayats and decentralization in the foreshadowed Constitution. It is certainly an omission calling for immediate attention if our independence is to reflect the people's voice. The greater the power of the Panchayats, the better for the people. Moreover, Panchayats to be effective and efficient, the level of people's education has to be considerably raised. I do not conceive the increase in the power of the people in military, but in moral terms. Naturally, I swear by Nai Talim in this connection.

New Delhi, 11-12-'47  
*Harijan*, 21-12-'47, p. 473