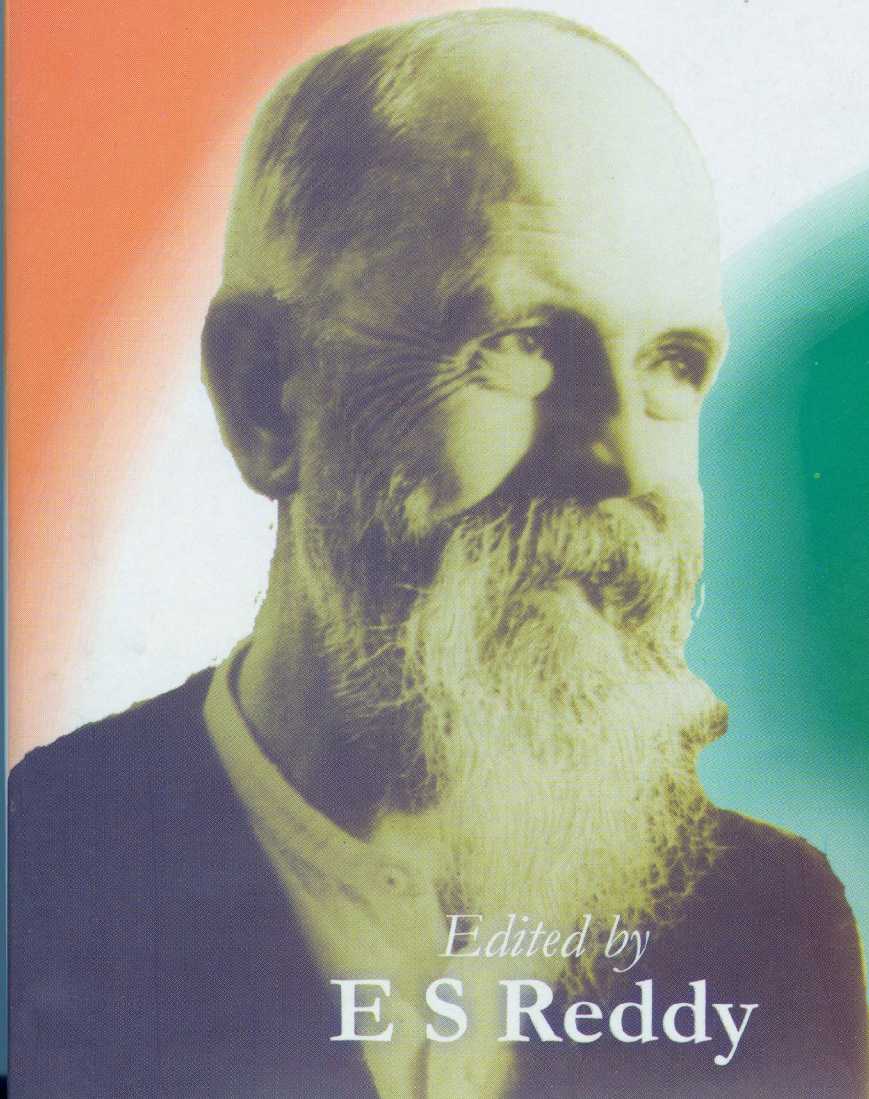


HEART-BEATS OF **INDIA**

C F Andrews' Articles in
Foreign Periodicals



Edited by
E S Reddy

HEART-BEATS OF INDIA

C.F. Andrews' Articles in Foreign Periodicals

Edited by

E. S. Reddy

With a foreword by

B.L. Nanda

**Konark Publishers PVT Ltd, in association with National
Gandhi Museum, New Delhi, 1995**

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

GLORY AND WONDER OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Cape Times, Cape Town, February 18, 1914

THE LEADER OF THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT IN INDIA

International Review of Missions, Geneva, 1924

HOME RULE AND HOME SPUN

Manchester Guardian, January 31, 1924

INDIA AND ENGLAND: THE ECONOMIC RELATION

The Contemporary Review, London, July 1924

A DAY WITH MAHATMA GANDHI

Atlantic Monthly, Boston, November 1924

THE INFLUENCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI

The World Tomorrow, New York, December 1924

A NEW OPIUM POLICY

The Contemporary Review, London, August 1925

YOUNG INDIA THROWS ITS PEBBLE

The Survey (Graphic Number), East Strousburg, PA (USA), March 1, 1929

THE COMING CRISIS IN INDIA

New Republic, Washington, DC, April 3, 1929

CHRISTIANITY AND RACE PREJUDICE

The Crisis, New York, August 1929

PRESIDENT HOOVER AND THE ORIENT

New Republic, Washington, DC, December 4, 1929

WHAT NEXT IN INDIA?

The Nation, New York, January 1, 1930

INDIA DEMANDS FREEDOM

Review of Reviews, New York, February 1930

WHAT NEXT IN INDIA? - 2

New Republic, Washington, DC, February 26, 1930

INDIA - SYMBOL OF EASTERN ASPIRATION

The World Tomorrow, New York, March 1930

HEART-BEATS IN INDIA

Asia, New York, March 1930

GANDHI AND INDIAN REFORMS

Yale Review, New Haven, March 1930

INDIA'S EMIGRATION PROBLEM

Foreign Affairs, New York, April 1930

SOUL FORCE IN INDIA

The Nation & Athenaeum, London, July 19, 1930

WHAT HOPE FOR INDIA?

New Republic, Washington, DC, October 22, 1930

IS SADHU SUNDAR SINGH STILL LIVING?

The Christian Century, Chicago, November 11, 1931

GANDHI AND THE MISSIONS

The Christian Century, Chicago, June 15, 1932

GANDHI OFFERS HIS LIFE

The Christian Century, Chicago, October 26, 1932

WHEN LIFE DEFEATS DOGMA

The Christian Century, Chicago, November 30, 1932

LIFTING THE DEADWEIGHT FROM MISSIONS

The Christian Century, Chicago, January 25, 1933

THE UNTOUCHABLE PROBLEM

The Contemporary Review, London, August 1933

INDIA REVISITED

The World Tomorrow, New York, March 1, 1934

THE ORGAN AND THE ORGANIST

The Christian Century, Chicago, August 29, 1934

THE INDIANS IN ZANZIBAR AND EAST AFRICA

The Contemporary Review, London, June 1935

MAHATMA GANDHI'S BIRTHPLACE

The Contemporary Review, London, January 1938

GANDHI AND PROHIBITION

The Christian Century, Chicago, March 2, 1938

INDIA'S GREATEST PROBLEM: OVERCROWDING ON THE LAND

The Contemporary Review, London, February 1939

THE ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Education, Boston, March 1940

ARE ALL RELIGIONS EQUAL?

The Christian Century, Chicago, June 12, 1940

PREFACE

'One of the greatest and best Englishmen,' this is how Gandhi described C.F. Andrews. 'I have not known,' the Mahatma wrote, 'a better man or a better Christian.' It would have been a remarkable achievement for any man to have enjoyed the confidence and friendship of Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru; it was all the more remarkable that the recipient was an Englishman during the very years when the Indian struggle for independence came to a head, and relations between India and England were under unprecedented strain. While on the faculty of St. Stephens College at Delhi, Andrews incurred the suspicion of many of his compatriots in India who considered him at best a crank and at worst an apostate and a traitor. His correspondence was censored and St. Stephens College acquired a taint of sedition, but he caught the eye of Gokhale, the most respected political leader of the day in India. It was through Gokhale that Andrews came to know Gandhi.

In the closing months of 1913, the Indian struggle in South Africa under Gandhi's leadership reached a critical stage. The news of mass arrests, flogging and shooting of the Indian immigrants sent a wave of horror through the length and breadth of India. Gokhale despite his failing health, toured the country to collect funds and educate public opinion on the heroic resistance of the Indians in South Africa. He was in constant touch with the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, who scandalized the South African Government and the British cabinet by publicly drawing attention to the atrocities against the Indian satyagrahis in South Africa. General Smuts and his colleagues were embarrassed and hinted at the possibility of a compromise; when they agreed to appoint an Enquiry Commission, but Gandhi refused to have anything to do with it. Lord Hardinge deputed a senior British official to South Africa and at the same time urged Gokhale to use his moderating influence on Gandhi. Andrews who had great admiration and respect for Gokhale at once agreed to go to South Africa as his personal envoy. On 1st January 1914 Andrews disembarked at Durban. He had never seen Gandhi. He was introduced to 'a slight ascetic figure dressed in a white *dhoti* and *kurta* of such coarse material as any indentured labourer might wear.' He bent down and touched Gandhi's feet. This instinctive gesture of reverence to an 'Asiatic' scandalized the local Europeans. When the editor of a Durban newspaper personally protested to Andrews, he reminded him that Christ and St. Paul and St. John were also 'Asiatics'.

Andrews's role in the negotiations between Gandhi and General Smuts was commended by Gandhi, who in a cable to Gokhale, described the final settlement as the joint work of Andrews and himself. The negotiations were, however, long and difficult. The strain on Andrews must have been immense; while they dragged on, his mother fell ill seriously and died, but the South African adventure, besides rewarding him with Gandhi's friendship, was a highly educative experience for him. It is significant that he devoted a good deal of his time and energy during the next two

decades to the problems of Indians living abroad.

It was after Gandhi's return to India and emergence on the Indian political stage that Andrews's real identification with the nationalist struggle began. Unlike other 'British friends of India,' such as A.D. Hume, William Wedderburn, Henry Cotton, and Annie Besant, Andrews did not hold any office or preside over the Indian National Congress. He preferred to remain in the background, as a friend, philosopher, and a constructive critic. Jawaharlal Nehru recalls in his autobiography that when he read Andrews's essay: 'Indian Independence - The Immediate Need', he felt not only that it made out an unanswerable case for independence, but mirrored the inmost recesses of the hearts of the Indian people. 'The deep urge that moved us and our half-formed desires', Nehru wrote, 'seemed to take clear shape in his simple and earnest language... It was wonderful that C.F. Andrews, a foreigner and one belonging to the dominant race in India, should echo that cry of our inmost being. '

Despite his identification with Gandhi's goals and methods, Andrews's participation in the nationalist struggle was indirect and behind the scenes, through letters, articles, books and meetings with officials and non-officials in India and England. By the early 1930s Andrews had lived down much of the ridicule and suspicion in England, and earned the respect, if not the agreement, of influential men in Whitehall and Fleet Street. This influence, which was later skilfully exercised by his mends and disciples, such as Agatha Harrison and Horace Alexander, to an increasing degree, enabled Andrews to bestir the British ministers and thus to hasten the decision-making process that enabled Gandhi to end his fasts in 1932 and 1933. Andrews did not always agree on the merits of Gandhi's fasts, but he knew how deeply the Mahatma felt on those issues and how important it was to save his life and let India breathe again.

I am glad that E.S. Reddy has retrieved and edited 30 odd articles contributed by C.F. Andrews in the 1920s and 1930s to foreign journals - mostly in Britain and in the United States. The purpose of these articles was to interpret the various facets and stages of nationalist struggle. It was a difficult task in the face of organized propaganda by the Imperial machine against Indian nationalism. Written in a simple, fluent and elegant style, they provide fascinating flashbacks on a momentous period of our history.

B. R. Nanda

INTRODUCTION

C. F. Andrews performed a great service to India by his persistent efforts to make India's aspirations and struggle for independence understood and appreciated in the world. That was as important as his travels to assist Indians overseas or the victims of disasters in India, natural or man-made. He was best qualified for this task as a trusted colleague of Gandhiji and Rabindranath Tagore, and a true friend of the Indian people. He was associated with the national movement and had participated actively in the movement for social reform. He detested evils such as untouchability and admired the commitment of Gandhiji and Tagore to the uprooting of such evils. He had a deep understanding of the heart-beats of India, and could speak and write with personal knowledge and conviction.

On his visits to Europe and the United States, he worked tirelessly as the ambassador of his adopted country, meeting prominent public leaders, delivering numerous sermons and lectures, and publishing books and articles. His broad international outlook, compassion for the oppressed in all lands and devotion to Christianity unsoiled by bigotry appealed to audiences of liberal-minded people. He was able to publicise India's case in influential periodicals in the West, countering vicious propaganda of the imperialists and racists, and obtain for India the sympathy and solidarity of numerous people.

Andrews was among the first of the "prophetic" churchmen who identified themselves with the poor and the oppressed, especially in India and South Africa, rejecting the immorality of their own governments, and thereby facilitated the transition to freedom and reconciliation. Gandhiji recognized his sterling qualities on their first meeting in South Africa in 1914 and said, as early as 1919, that Andrews was like a brother to him, and that he had done more for India than many Indians. (*Young India*, November 26, 1919).

I have collected the articles published by Andrews in Britain and the United States, and in an international missionary periodical in Geneva, as my modest tribute to this great Englishman. I have also included a lecture on Tagore published in Cape Town in 1914, because of its great significance at the time.

I hope this collection of articles will help promote an understanding of the situation in India before independence – the immorality of British rule and its consequences, the leadership and personality of Mahatma Gandhi, the dedication of Gandhiji and Gurudev to social reform and the sacrifices of the patriots in the struggle for freedom. I was particularly fascinated by the description of the personality and philosophy of Gandhiji from the intimate knowledge of a friend who lived with him on happy occasions as well as the difficult days of fasts when his health was failing.

I have great pleasure in acknowledging my gratitude to the librarians at the Harvard University, the Yale Divinity School, the New York Public Library and the University of Witwatersrand who have been most helpful in enabling me to obtain these articles. I am grateful to the late Nikhil Chakravartty, A.K. Damodaran and Dr. Y.P. Anand, Director of the National Gandhi Museum, for their encouragement, and to Shri B. R. Nanda for contributing a foreword. I am also grateful to National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi, for having undertaken to publish the articles as a book.

E. S. Reddy
New York
July 1, 2003

GLORY AND WONDER OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE¹

[C.F. Andrews went to South Africa in January 1914, at the request of Gopalkrishna Gokhale, and with the encouragement of Rabindranath Tagore, to assist Gandhiji and the Indian community in their difficult struggle for dignity and national honour. His mission proved crucial in securing the Smuts-Gandhi settlement.

The Indians in South Africa at the time were mostly labourers and the Europeans looked down upon them, unaware of the cultural heritage of India. But the announcement of the Nobel Prize to Tagore in the midst of the struggle made many of them curious. Reverend Andrews found enthusiastic audiences for his lectures on the life and thought of the Poet.

The climax was a meeting in the City Hall organised by the Archbishop of Cape Town. The Mayor of the City, John Parker, presided. The overflow audience included the Governor-General, Lord Gladstone, many members of Parliament and other dignitaries. John Merriman, a former Prime Minister of the Cape, gave a vote of thanks. Gandhiji had the lecture printed as a souvenir and sent complimentary copies to many influential Europeans.

Cape Times, which reproduced the lecture, said that Mr. Andrews opened it with an interesting account of the Bengal renaissance, an extraordinary intellectual and spiritual awakening which began early in the last century with Ram Mohan Roy, was continued by Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chandra Sen, and culminated in Debendranath's son, Rabindra.]

If it had not been for this revival the appearance of such a poet and musician as Rabindranath would have an air about it of unreality. It is true, as we shall go on to see, that both his personality and his art have qualities which only belong to the highest order of genius; but Rabindranath is no isolated phenomenon, standing apart from his own age and country as a kind of accident in human history. No poet with a universal message was ever this; and Rabindranath is not an exception to the rule. Rather, to use an opposite metaphor, he has come forward on the crest of a great wave, with the surging tide of his own nation's life behind him. Others who are still today the masters of Bengali literature, were borne on by the same tide, but Rabindranath has reached the topmost wave of all. He is the national poet of Bengal in the same sense that Shakespeare was the national poet of England in the days of Queen Elizabeth. This fact is a remarkable one in the present century. Indeed, of all

¹ *Cape Times*, Cape Town, February 18, 1914

the poets living in the world, there is none, as far as I am able to judge, who holds the same place in the affection of his own people, and it is this which gives a freshness, a spontaneity, a width of humanity, to his work, which is altogether refreshing in our somewhat artificial age.

Personality of the Poet

I think I shall bring before you most vividly the second part of my subject, the personality of the poet, if I describe as simply and as clearly as I can one unforgettable day in London when my friend told me his own life-story, marking out for my benefit the chief points in his own literary career. There is much, of course, that must remain untold, for it was too sacred and intimate for publication, but that which I am able to tell you without reserve will, I trust, disclose the poet and reveal his message. He was good enough to allow me to take full notes at the time, and in many cases I shall quote to you his own very words. You must picture, therefore (and most of my present audience know the spot well!), a house just outside the entrance to South Kensington underground station. The time of the incident was a morning in October, and a dark and thick London fog filled the air during the first part of Rabindranath's narrative. But strangely enough, and very beautifully, just as he came to the end of his life-story and spoke of Death and Immortality, the fog rolled away and the warm sunshine bathed the air. The glory of the radiant, sunlit mists could be seen from the upper window, where we were sitting, and the gloomy London streets were enveloped for a short space in all the glory of a poet's dream.

He told me first about his father - the great *Maharshi* - how all the household became still and hushed when he was present in the house, anxious not to disturb his spiritual meditations. He spoke to me also, with great tenderness, about his mother - how she died when he was quite young; and as he saw her face for the last time, calm and beautiful in death, it awakened in him no childish terror nor even a childish wonder; all seemed so peaceful and even natural. It was only later, as he grew older, that he learnt Death's meaning.

Early Childhood

The account he gave me of his own life in early childhood was as follows: "I was very lonely - that was the chief feature of my childhood - I was very lonely. I saw my father seldom; he was away a great deal, but his presence pervaded the whole house and was one of the deepest influences on my life. I was kept in charge of the servants after my mother died, and I used to sit, day after day, in front of the window, and picture to myself what was going on in the outer world. From the very first time I can remember I was passionately fond of Nature. Oh! it used to make me mad with joy when I saw the clouds come up in the sky one by one. I felt, even in those very childish days, that I was surrounded with a friend, a companionship, very intense and very intimate, though I did not know how to name it. I had such an exceeding love for Nature, I cannot tell how to describe it to you; but Nature was a kind of loving companion always with me, and always revealing to me some fresh beauty". This was

how he pictured his childhood to me on that foggy day in London, and a passage in his *Jivan-smriti* makes the picture still more vivid. "In the morning of autumn," he writes, "I would run into the garden the moment I got up from sleep. A scent of leaves and grass, wet with dew, seemed to embrace me, and the dew all tender and fresh with the new awakened rays of the sun, held out its face to me to greet me beneath the trembling vesture of palm-leaves. Nature shut her hands and laughingly asked every day, 'What have I got inside?' and nothing seemed impossible".

I must break off for a moment to read you one of his later songs addressed to the sunlight. I recall to mind as I begin to read it to you how in the sunless days of England he seemed to lose his own brightness and vivacity, and to long intensely for the sunlight of "Golden Bengal". Here is the poem itself:

"Light, my light, the world-filling light,
the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light!

"Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life: the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love; the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth.

"The butterflies spread their seals on the sea of light. Lilies and jasmines surge up on the crest of the waves of light.

"The light is shattered into gold on every cloud, my darling, and it scatters gems in profusion.

"Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heaven's river has drowned its banks and the flood of joy is abroad".

His school life, he told me, was a failure; and he learnt most of his knowledge through association with the older members of the Tagore family and by his own eager interest in all that had to do with poetry and art. He was also passionately fond of music and acting. But the whole of this period of boyhood and youth was extremely subjective and this mood is represented in all his earliest works.

In Free School Street

The time of his real birth as a poet he dates from a morning in Free School Street, Calcutta, when, with dramatic suddenness, the veil seemed to be removed from his eyes and he saw the inner soul of reality. Here I shall quote his own very words, for the phenomenon was one of the most remarkable in literary history. He told me the story as follows: "It was morning. I was watching the sunrise in Free School Street. A veil was suddenly drawn, and everything I saw became luminous. The whole scene was one perfect music, one marvellous rhythm. The houses in the street, the men moving, the children playing, all seemed parts of one luminous whole - inexpressively glorious. The vision went on for seven or eight days. Every one, even

those who bored me, seemed to lose their outer barrier of personality; and I was full of gladness, full of love, for every person, and every tiniest thing. Then I went to the Himalayas, and looked for it there, and I lost it... That morning in Free School Street was one of the first things that gave me the inner vision, and I have tried to explain it in my poems. I have felt, ever since, that this was my goal: to express the fullness of life, in its beauty, as perfection - if only the veil were withdrawn". I copied this account down word for word, as the poet told it on that foggy London morning; and I can remember distinctly even now that quiet laugh that he gave as he said, "And I lost it", and also the emphasis he laid upon the words, "fullness of life".

In Rabindranath's own prose work, *Jivan-smriti*, the same incident is also recorded. You will like to compare this passage with the word-picture he gave me in London. They corroborate and explain one another. "Where the Sadar Street ends, trees in the garden of Free School Street are visible. One morning I was standing in the verandah, looking at them. The sun was slowly rising above the screen of their leaves; and as I was watching it, suddenly, in a moment, a veil seemed to be lifted from my eyes. I found the world wrapped in an inexpressible glory, with its waves of joy and beauty bursting and breaking on all sides. The thick shroud of sorrow that lay on my heart in many folds was pierced through and through by the light of the world, which was everywhere radiant. That very day, the poem known as 'The Fountain Awakened from its Dream' flowed on like a fountain itself. When it was finished still the curtain did not fall on that strange vision of beauty and joy. There was nothing and no one I did not love at that moment... I stood on the verandah and watched the coolies as they tramped down the road. Their movements, their forms, their countenances seemed to be strangely wonderful to me, as if they were all moving like waves in the great ocean of the world. When one young man placed his hand upon the shoulder of another and passed laughingly by, it was a remarkable event to me... I seemed to witness, in the wholeness of my vision, the movements of the body of all humanity, and to feel the beat of the music and the rhythm of a mystic dance. For some days I was in this ecstatic mood. My brothers had made up their minds to go to Darjeeling, and I accompanied them. I thought I might have a fuller vision of what I had witnessed in the crowded parts of the Sadar Street if once I reached to heights of the Himalayas. But when I reached the Himalayas the vision all departed. That was my mistake. I thought I could get at truth from the outside. But, however lofty and imposing the Himalayas might be, they could not put anything real into my hands. But God, the Great Giver Himself, can open the whole universe to our gaze in the narrow space of a single lane".

The Outcome of the Vision

The volume of lyrics, *Prabhat Sangit* (Morning Songs), was the direct outcome of this time of vision and illumination. It contains the poem, "The Fountain Awakened from its Dream," referred to above. There is in these poems a romantic longing to know intimately the meaning of the world and human life. The poet feels the stirrings of love within himself, and strives to get freed, as it were, from the bondage of his own narrow individuality, and to merge himself in the larger life of nature and

humanity. But as yet he has not the deep-laid basis of practical experience on which to build. *Prabhat Sangit* contains some of Rabindranath's purest lyrics; they are, however, like the lyrics of Shelley, mainly in the realm of the imagination, and not so closely related to common human experience as those of his later poems. To poetic natures which have had even a glimpse of what Rabindranath saw that morning, and have themselves witnessed even for a fleeting moment,

“The earth and every common sight
Apparelled in celestial light.
The glory and the freshness of a dream”.

These songs of sunrise will have a rapture and an intimacy which no other forms of his poetry can equal. But this gift of poetic vision (like the kindred gifts of a highly sensitive ear for music, or an artist's appreciation of colour and form) is not granted to everyone; and if Rabindranath had remained absorbed and entranced in this palace of imaginative splendour, he could never have become the national poet of Bengal.

But outer circumstances, as well as his own inner spirit, prevented the young writer from remaining too long in that enchanted garden of the soul. As he went on with his story that morning, he marked the next stage of his own literary career from the date of his wedded life (which began when he was twenty-three), and from the change which came to him when his father, *Maharshi*, insisted (much against his own inclination) that he should go down to Shilaida, on the banks of the Ganges, and supervise there the large family estate. This work brought him into closest touch with the village life of Bengal, and he had to deal each day with the practical affairs of men; to understand and appreciate the elemental passions of mankind, stripped of all convention and artificiality; to study with a heart brimming over with tenderness and love the home life of his own Bengali people. To his own great good fortune, also as a poet, his joy in communing with nature found at the same time its fullest and freest expression. During the pauses in his active, business life, he would live all alone on the sandflats of the Ganges, moving up and down from village to village in his boat.

“Sometimes,” he told me, “I would pass many months absolutely alone without speaking, till my own voice grew thin and weak through lack of use. I used to write from my boat the stories of the village life which I had witnessed in the course of my work, and put into written words the incidents and conversations which I had heard. This was my ‘short story’ period; and some think these stories better than the poems”.

Love for Motherland

It was during this period in Shilaida, he told me, that an intense and burning love for Bengal, his motherland, seemed to take possession of his soul. The national movement had not yet come into actual outward shape and form; but the forces which were to break forth later were already acting powerfully in the hearts of leading Bengali thinkers, and Rabindranath's soul caught the flame of patriotism, not in Calcutta itself, but among the villagers of Bengal. His unshaken faith in the destiny of

his own country, its glorious past, and its still more glorious future, received its strongest confirmation from what he saw in the country life of his own people. He was not unaware for a moment of the dangers which threatened that life through its contact with the new social forces from the West. Indeed, this forms the theme of many of his short stories. But he believed, with all his heart, from what he had witnessed with his own eyes, that the stock from which the new national life was to spring forth was sound at the core. He spoke to me that morning with the greatest possible warmth and affection of the Bengali villagers, and of the many lessons he owed to them of patience, simplicity, and human kindness and sympathy. Time will not allow me to enter more fully into this part of his narrative, but it was clearly nearest his own heart.

I will give at this point Rabindranath's own ideal for his nation:

"Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high:
"Where knowledge is free:
"Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls:
"Where words come out of the depth of truth:
"Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection:
"Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand or dead habit:
"Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought and action -
"Into that heaven of freedom, my father, let my country awake".

And side by side with this I would give his own prayer for strength:

"This is my prayer to Thee, my Lord - strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart.
"Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.
"Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service.
"Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might.
"Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles.
"And give me the strength to surrender my strength to Thy will with love".

As an instance of his dramatic power of seizing a commonplace incident in his own country, and giving it the saving touch of humanity, I select the following:

"The workman is busy with his wife, digging clay to make bricks for the kiln. Their little daughter goes to the landing place by the river. There she has endless scouring and scrubbing of pots and pans.

"Her baby brother, with bald head and brown naked limbs, sits patiently on the high bank at her bidding. She goes back, when her work is done, to her

home, with the full pitcher poised on her head, the shining brass water-vessel in her left hand, and with her right she holds the child... she, the tiny 'mother,' grave with the weight of all her household cares".

The Next Great Landmark

Rabindranath dated the next great landmark in his own literary career from the time when he was nearly 40. He left the work of the estate in the country, and there seemed to come to him, so he told me, the strongest and deepest impression that there was about to arrive in his life a *Varsha Sesh*, a close of the year. He seemed to anticipate some vast sorrow and change, for which these quiet unbroken years in the country had been a solemn preparation. A restlessness took hold upon him. The mood of the poet at this time is represented in that which is perhaps the most dramatic of all the poems in *Gitanjali*:

"Light, ah where is the light? Kindle it with burning fire of desire.
"There is the lamp, but never a flicker of flame - is such thy fame, my heart?
Ah! death were better by far for thee!
"Misery knocks at thy door and her message is that thy lord is wakeful and he calls thee to the love-tryst through the darkness of the night.
"The sky is overcast with clouds and the rain is ceaseless. I know not what this is that stirs in me - I know not its meaning.
"A moment's flash of lightning drags down a deeper gloom on my sight, and my heart gropes for the path to where the music or the night calls me.
"Light, oh where is the light? Kindle it with the burning fire of desire!"

A New Educational Model

Slowly there came to Rabindranath, so he tried to explain to me, the clear and unmistakable call to give up his life somehow (he knew not how) more wholly for his country. He went to Calcutta, and prepared to start a school. His own school life, as I have said, had been an unhappy one - too wooden and conventional. He longed to work out a new educational model which should bring the young into closer touch with nature and also inspire them with nobler ideals of their own country and their own country's past traditions. This he actually accomplished later at Santiniketan, Bolpur. But on his arrival in Calcutta to take up the work, he was handicapped for want of funds. "I sold my books," he said to me pathetically. "I sold all my books, my copyrights, everything I had, in order to carry on the school. I cannot possibly tell you what a struggle it was, and what difficulties I had to go through. At first the object in view was purely patriotic, but later on it grew more spiritual. Then in the very midst of all these outer difficulties and trials, there came the greatest change of all, the true *Varsha Sesh*, the change in my own inner life".

He went on to tell me of that change, how, when he was forty years old, his wife died, and almost immediately after his daughter showed signs of consumption. He left the school and went away with his daughter to nurse her and tend her but after six months

of mingled hope and anguish she passed away from his arms and left his heart still more desolate. Then came the third overwhelming wave of sorrow. His youngest son, to whom he had learnt to be father and mother in one, was taken suddenly ill with cholera and died in his presence - the child of his love. I cannot speak, in a public lecture such as this, of all that Rabindranath told me about that time of suffering and death. He referred to it, in speaking to me that morning, with the wonderful unreserve and freedom of truest friendship and what he said has left a mark on my own life that nothing can efface.

As I have told you, while he was still speaking, the darkness of the London mists rolled away and there appeared for a moment the sunlit vision of an eternal glory. This outward scene was but a faint symbol of the story that was being told me so simply, so quietly, in that upper room. He spoke of the days and hours wherein death itself became a loved companion, an infinite illumination - no longer the king of terrors, but altogether transformed into a loved and cherished friend. "You know," he said to me (and these words I can repeat), "this death was a great blessing to me. I had through it all, day after day, such a sense of fulfilment, of completion, as if nothing were lost. I felt that if even an atom in the universe seemed lost, it could not be lost. It was not mere resignation that came to me. But the sense of a fuller life. I knew now at last what Death was. It was perfection - nothing lost, nothing lost".

Through what long-drawn agony that peace and joy came out at last triumphant the lines on his face told me as he spoke these words, as well as the radiance that filled it. We can enter into his sorrow through the veil of poetry (for he has opened his heart to me) in that most simple of his lyrics which rises to the height of a solemn and majestic faith. It runs as follows:

"In desperate hope I go and search for her in all the corners of my room. I find her not.

"My house is small and what has once gone from it can never be regained.

"But infinite is Thy mansion, my Lord, and seeking her I have come to Thy door.

"I stand under the golden canopy of Thine evening sky and I lift my eager eyes to Thy face.

"I have come to the brink of eternity from which nothing can vanish - no hope, no happiness, no vision of a face seen through tears".

The Goal Attained

We may learn also how the goal of infinite illumination was at length attained from the companion lyrics which follow:

"On the day when death will knock at my door what will thou offer to him?

"Oh, I will set before my guest the full vessel of my life - I will never let him go with empty hands.

“All the sweet vintage of all my autumn days, and summer nights, all the earnings and gleanings of my busy life will I place before him at the close of my days, when death will knock at my door”.

“Oh thou last fulfilment of life, Death, my death come and whisper to me!

“Day after day I have kept watch for thee: for thee have I borne the joys and pangs of life.

“All that I am, that I have, that I hope, and all I love have ever flowed towards thee in depths of secrecy.

“One final glance from thine eyes and my life will be ever thine own.

“The flowers have been woven and the garland is ready for the bridegroom. After the wedding the bride shall leave her home and meet her lord alone in the solitude of night”.

It was during this period of *Varsha Sesha* that *Gitanjali* was written. The English translation now published contains also some poems from other works, *Naivedya*, *Shishu* and *Kheya*. They all mark the great transition, during which the poet's national and social longings, so deep and ardent in themselves, became more and more spiritual and merged in the universal, just as in the earlier period his passion for beauty and his almost physical companionship with Nature had become more intimately spiritual as life advanced. It is this realisation of the spiritual in and through the material - the material becoming luminous and transparent through life's inner experience - that appears to me the glory and the wonder of Rabindranath. He had attempted (to repeat his own words to me that morning) to “express the fullness of life in its beauty as perfection - if only the veil were withdrawn”. And the glory and the wonder is this, that he has withdrawn the veil so far.

The Last Phase of All

Rabindranath has now fared forth as a voyager, a pilgrim. This is the last phase of all. It was his own health which first compelled him to set out to the West. There was also the natural longing to be with the only son that now remains to him among his children during his University career. But here again, as in the former period mentioned, the outward circumstance has brought with it a new poetic and spiritual experience. “As I crossed the Atlantic,” he wrote to me, “and spend on board ship the beginning of the New Year, I realised that a new stage in my life had come, the stage of a voyager. To the open road! To the emancipation of self! To the realisation in love!”

In another letter which he wrote earlier to me, dealing with the union of the conflicting races of the world, the overcoming of the colour prejudice, the “making of man,” he uses these words: “This is the greatest of all problems men have been asked to solve. It is, I believe, the one problem of the present age, and we must be prepared to go through the martyrdom of sufferings and humiliations till the victory of God in man is achieved”.

Such are some of Rabindranath's inner thoughts and longings at the present time. During his "Voyaging" period he has been dwelling more upon the universal aspects of humanity. He is facing the larger international problems of mankind. He is attempting to comprehend the harmony of his own life's work and to read its inner meaning: to account for these wonderful currents of emotion which have welled up from the pure fountain of song. Whether his true and original poetic spirit can be kept free, and breathe freely, in this new philosophic atmosphere, remains yet to be seen. It may be that the dramatic instinct, which has again and again come to his aid in the past, will return; and in that case, we may find that the unity of life, which he is now seeking to express, will be worked out in a drama of action rather than uttered in a lyrical outburst of song.

When Rabindranath first came to England he placed before his English friends some translations of his poems. He did this with the greatest modesty and diffidence, and without realising the supreme value of his own achievement. "I found," he said, "that I had to strip my Bengali verses of all their gaudy ornaments and clothe them in the simplest dress". That "simplest dress" has now been seen to represent the most beautiful and rhythmical English prose - a new form of English composition which has actually enlarged the bounds of our own literature. The triumph has been won, a triumph never before, I believe, achieved in literary history, of a poet transcribing his own imaginative thoughts into a wholly new medium, and giving his own spiritual message in perfect poetic form to two people speaking two different tongues.

Of the effect of the little book, *Gitanjali*, on the mind of the thinking West, it would be difficult to speak in strong enough terms. It has been already confidently declared by men of the highest literary reputation that its publication is likely to introduce an epoch in thought and style comparable with the Italian influences of the sixteenth century - an epoch in which the English mind will find a fresh creative impulse from abroad. However this may be, and the future alone can show the value of the prediction - the translations of Rabindranath have already afforded a common meeting ground of appreciation between East and West, such as in modern times has not been realised in any other sphere. It has led to the great hope that in the higher phases of life and thought East and West may become wholly and intimately one. Where the disruptive forces and jealous rivalries of race and colour and intolerant creeds, of commerce and trade and party politics, are so seemingly strong and outwardly powerful, it is indeed no small blessing to mankind, if even a single voice can be heard above their discordant tumult, speaking a message which East and West alike acknowledge to be true and great. The sovereignty of the poet, which I mentioned in the beginning of my lecture, is no shadowy thing. It is already heralding the downfall of ancient tyrannies and the coming in of new world forces which make for peace.

Extraordinary Resemblances

I had intended to speak in detail of Rabindranath's great and noble conceptions of the spirit of God in man; to deal specially with his leading idea of the *Jivan-Devata*, that

singularly rich and original interpretation of the *atma* and the *paramatma* of the Vedanta. I had also intended to speak of his wonderful school of Santiniketan, Bolpur, where music and song have been made, as in Plato's *Republic*, the very warp and woof of the texture of education. But time will not allow me to linger in these tempting meadows of thought. I would only add one word in conclusion.

Many have found in the newly translated poems of *Gitanjali* resemblances extraordinarily akin to Christian teaching, and have hastily assumed that Rabindranath has borrowed these wholly and directly from the Christianity of the West. The more, however, I have considered the matter, the more I have felt certain that the main source of these spiritual conceptions of the poet has been the great storehouse of thought contained in the ancient Indian classics and in the *Vaishnava* literature of medieval Bengal. Even such a poem as that beginning, "Here is thy footstool, and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, the lowliest, and lost", which is so wholly Christian in spirit, may be found, symbolically expressed, in a hundred passages in the early *Vaishnava* hymns. And again the thought, so alien to popular Hinduism today, "Deliverance is not for me in renunciation", combined with the conception of the "fullness of life" as the true pathway to salvation, is not foreign to that ancient Hindu thought which could picture Janaka, the Kingly-Saint (*Rajarshi*) and produce the *Bhagavadgita*. It was also worked out fully before the poet's own eyes in the life of his father, *Maharshi*.

Not for one moment do I wish to imply that the Christian spirit has not been profoundly appreciated by the Bengali poet, or that it has not profoundly influenced his work. The atmosphere of modern Bengal has been deeply permeated with Christian ideals and the sensitive nature of a great and noble poet could not live in that atmosphere without feeling their power. In all Rabindranath's writings I have found an appreciation of the Christian spirit in its purest form, and this has been, if I may make a personal confession, the deepest joy of my friendship with him. But, as I have said, the main source of his religious conceptions, the source indeed of his appreciation of Christianity itself, I find, not in the vague and diffused mental atmosphere of modern Calcutta, but in his own deep study of the *Upanishads*, in the Buddhist ideal, in the *Vaishnava* hymns, and in the sayings of Kabir. These all, as I have reason to know, have intimately affected his spirit at different periods of his career.

Perhaps the two influences that have left their deepest marks on *Gitanjali* itself have been the *Upanishads* and *Vaishnava* writings. May it not come to pass that, in the higher ranges of ancient Hindu thought on the one hand, and in the higher ranges of primitive Christianity on the other, there will be found a great mountain chain, which, when fully explored, will unite the East and the West together, and offer at length an unbroken highway for the great onward march whereby humanity shall reach

"Those shining tablelands,
To which our God Himself is Moon and Sun".

THE LEADER OF THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT IN INDIA²

No great movement of the human spirit affecting vast multitudes of people can be without significance to those who are praying each day for the coming of God's Kingdom. In this article I shall attempt to describe, as far as I am able to do so, something of the spiritual meaning to humanity of the great movement which has penetrated India from one end to the other in recent years, called Non-co-operation. I feel certain that there are deep currents of moral and spiritual emotion running through it, which give it a religious colour and tone and represent something new in the religious life of humanity. At the same time, I am fully aware that at the present time its political aspect is most prominently before the public. I should wish to add that in what follows concerning one whom Indians universally call Mahatma Gandhi I am not writing from hearsay. It has been among the greatest privileges and blessings of my life to be associated with him as an intimate and personal friend, loved closer than a brother. But if I write with the fullest warmth of affection, I shall also endeavour, as he would wish me, to be critical. I trust that I shall not be misinterpreted if I take up in all that follows what may be called the Indian position. It is not possible to tell the story without attempting to see things from the angle of vision of the Indian people themselves. That it is necessary to do this appears to me to be implied in the statement of the Sermon on the Mount, that we should seek to do to others what they would desire us to do to them. We should do our utmost to see one another's point of view before passing a judgment.

A short time ago, a rumour suddenly went round the whole of the Indian press, receiving eager comment and wide attention, that Mahatma Gandhi had actually been awarded in Europe the Nobel Peace Prize. From all sides, even from his political opponents, arose a chorus of joyful and expectant approval. No choice would have been more popular all over the East than this. That the rumour was regarded as

² From: *International Review of Missions*, Geneva, 13:190-204, 1924. The article carried the following note by the editor:

"Mr. Gandhi is the leader of a powerful political movement, and political questions lie outside the scope of this Review. But he is also a great religious teacher who more than any other in this generation has influenced the mind of a people constituting one-fifth of the human race. We are therefore glad to publish this interpretation of his life and teaching by a writer who is his intimate friend".

highly credible, in spite of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi was in prison at the time as a passive resister for waging war upon the British Government in India, is itself an index of the thoughts of the people of India concerning their spiritual hero. For his fellow-countrymen regard him as, above all, an apostle of world righteousness and world peace. They are certain that his place in history will be that of a modern saint. They regard the prison where he is now confined as the crown of his sainthood; and references are not infrequently made to another Prisoner, who was tried by a foreign government many centuries ago and put to death upon a Cross.

What has been of supreme moral and spiritual interest is to find in the saintly character of this modern Indian leader, who has so deeply stirred the hearts of men, the portraits of a Savonarola and a St. Francis of Assisi combined - if one may venture to use Western comparisons for one who has sprung from the heart of the East. For in him we come into touch with a man who is acknowledged on every hand to be a religious devotee, with much of the tenderness and joyfulness, the sacrifice and childlike nature of St. Francis, and yet withal a political reformer of an intensely active character and disposition, dealing with world governments and powers. For Mahatma Gandhi is the gentlest of human beings, living a life of extreme poverty in his religious retreat at Sabarmati, where every bird and beast and living creature is dear to him and little children are the most precious of God's gifts. Here one night not long ago at evening worship, during the singing of a hymn, a cobra crept on to his shoulder; but he stilled the alarm among his boys and went on with his meditation. Yet the same bare-footed saint has been like a warrior at the head of the greatest political movement that modern India has ever seen. He has been waging "war" (as he has loved openly to express it) against the autocracy of the British Government in India, not by the use of modern scientific weapons of destruction, but by the tremendous unity of a people's sovereign will, guided by his own personal inspiration.

Put briefly, the non-co-operation movement, which Mahatma Gandhi started, was an attempt to bring about by moral force a "change of heart" in the Government of India. I shall explain later what direct change of heart was required and how he intended to accomplish his main object. Here I would simply state that a great wave of indignation against the British Government swept over India in the year immediately succeeding the war because of the tragedy of Amritsar. Where the people expected bread they were given a stone. They turned to the Indian saint in their humiliation, and he promised them victory if they would faithfully observe his teaching of strictly passive resistance, and fulfil his discipline by suffering injury but never striking a blow in self-defence.

The movement itself expressed outwardly the sudden rise of national feeling which swept over the East at the conclusion of the war in Europe. In Egypt it brought Christian and Musalman together. In Asia Minor it led to armed resistance under Mustapha Kemal. In India it produced the passive resistance movement called Non-co-operation.

If the character of the Indian struggle is to be rightly understood, the personality of its

leader must be studied. What I would like to make clear at the very outset from my own personal knowledge is this, that Mahatma Gandhi's affection for the British people and for the British character has remained unshaken throughout. To bear this in mind is essential to the correct understanding of his purpose. He believed, with all his heart, that if he did not flatter Englishmen, but stood up against them where they were in the wrong, and forced them to see where they had done wrong, he would succeed in the end. He believed, that is to say, in their innate sense of justice and acted upon that faith. I know personally, from intimate association with him, that it was this fundamental belief in the British character as susceptible to generous feeling that carried him forward with a certainty of moral victory. He had, as he often told me, in the course of a long and strenuous life put this belief to the test and found it answer truly. Englishmen have ever been and still remain among his faithful friends. His whole theory of moral warfare depends upon a belief in the generous response of human nature. That was his ultimate appeal. He believed that he had discovered a principle which would work for the redemption of wrong-doing in the world and for the recovery of the wrong-doer. This principle, when applied in action, he called *Satyagraha*, which means "Truth Force". Man's nature was, he believed, essentially good, not bad. It could not possibly resist the final appeal of suffering voluntarily endured for the sake of truth. This has been his one fundamental and unshaken faith.

It is necessary to describe something of his previous history. He had originally gone out to South Africa as a young barrister, not intending to stay there. But when he saw the humiliation of which his fellow-countrymen were subjected on account of their colour and race, he determined to remain. Soon he became their champion. He gave up all his own private wealth, which was considerable, and lived as a peasant clad in an Indian homespun peasant's dress. He did everything possible to show his goodwill towards the British in South Africa, often returning kindness for injury. Twice over he acted as stretcher-bearer in times of war, tending the wounded of friend and foe alike under the Red Cross. He had the privilege, which he greatly treasured, of bearing Lord Roberts's only son out of action and carrying him eighteen miles on a stretcher to the base with the help of some Indian companions. At the same time he stoutly refused to allow any indignity to be put upon his own people after the Boer War was ended. Twice over he won the victory in a passive resistance campaign by which he maintained the honour of his fellow-countrymen. In one of these conflicts against injustice³ more than 2000 went to prison out of a population of 12,000 all told.

Ten years ago I had lived with him in South Africa for some time, towards the end of his third and greatest moral effort, and I had watched him applying his principle of passive resistance by means of a small body of Indian people who were perfectly moulded to his will and obedient to his direct inspiration. These willing sufferers, carefully prepared by him to go through any amount of hardship, were the Indians domiciled in Natal and the Transvaal, who were struggling to maintain the few rights that were still left to them and to resist certain things, which they rightly regarded as

3 The *satyagraha* in the Transvaal

intolerable evils. One of these evils which they resisted was a £3 poll tax. This had to be paid even by women and adult children, with the penalty, if they did not pay it, of being forced back into indentured labour on the sugar plantations. This was one of the iniquities against which the struggle had to be waged to the bitter end and it can easily be imagined how sharp the conflict was.

It should be mentioned in a parenthesis - for it is of great importance for a clear understanding - that Mahatma Gandhi had with him in all these different passive resistance movements not only his fellow-countrymen but also Europeans who were his closest friends and followers. He endeavoured to raise the issue to the plane of humanity and to keep it from being merely "national" or "racial" in its character. I know from his own conversations what immense stress and importance he gave to this aspect of the struggle.

While I watched Mahatma Gandhi at this time in South Africa he appeared to me to have all the ardour of a scientist on the eve of making a new discovery, and he carried on his experiment. The odds against him were tremendous. Yet he came out victorious in the end. Early in the year 1914 General Smuts acknowledged the wrong which had been done to the Indians in Natal. The £3 tax was abolished and an equitable settlement was reached. Thus the passive resistance movement in South Africa was brilliantly successful. It was an almost perfect vindication of moral strength as the only means of righting evil in the world. The greatest victory of all was this, that not a single act of violence could be charged against the thousands of Indians who took part in the struggle. As a direct consequence, the long conflict which had been waged ended in goodwill and friendship restored. The Europeans in South Africa spoke and wrote of the Indian leader with great respect and admiration on his departure.

On his voyage back to India he went by way of England and arrived at Southampton on the very night of the outbreak of the war, August 4, 1914. With characteristic promptness and self-sacrifice he offered the next morning his services at the India Office as stretcher-bearer and hospital worker. He promised to serve in any capacity as a minister to the sick and wounded for the whole duration of the war. His services were accepted and he worked unremittingly; but an attack of pleurisy in England in November 1914, which was nearly fatal, made it imperative for him to return to the warmer climate of India. When he had fully recovered, twice over he offered for hospital work in Mesopotamia. He was prepared to raise a company of 500 workers who should be under the strictest discipline and ready for devoted service. But on both occasions his offer failed to obtain acceptance at the headquarters of the British Government in India.

His last strange act of service on behalf of the Allied cause, in whose righteousness at that time he fully believed, was to start a recruiting campaign in his own province of Gujarat to enlist Indian fighting men. This was, and has always been, to me quite inexplicable on his part; because he himself is the strictest believer in moral force as contrasted with physical force. I have mentioned this inconsistency because it pained

me very greatly at the time and led directly in his own case to another almost fatal illness and complete physical prostration. During this critical time of illness I was with him and learnt to know the beauty of his character as I had never known it before. Throughout all these years which I have now rapidly recounted I do not think it would have been possible for anyone to have shown more clearly by act and deed his deep affection for the British character and for men of the British race.

Soon after the war was over a supreme disappointment met him. It was, he told me, like receiving a sudden blow in the face. This was the forcing through the Viceroy's Council of the Rowlatt Act - the Black Act, as Indians soon learnt to call it. The measure was regarded on all hands as tyrannical. When it came up before the Council not a single Indian member voted in its favour. Every possible effort was made by Mahatma Gandhi, through interviews with the Viceroy, to warn him of the impending danger. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri⁴ made a truly prophetic declaration as to what the certain consequences would be, if the Act was forced through. But against the will of the whole people the Act became the law of the land. The injury and insult were felt most keenly of all because the people of India had been expecting something quite different - some measure of generosity - now that the war was over.

When everything else had been tried in vain, Mahatma Gandhi stood up before the people and called for passive resistance.

It was in a condition of physical weakness that he launched his assault, using in his great offensive the one signal weapon of passive resistance. He called upon the people of India to resist this arbitrary decree of Government only by moral weapons, and to prepare to go to prison in their thousands until the Act itself was repealed. The response in every part of the country was immediate, for the moral indignation was great indeed.

But in making this new experiment in passive resistance, the Indian leader had omitted from his calculation one factor which proved to be of paramount importance. Since his return to India after long absence in South Africa, he had often tested on a small scale, at Champaran, Kaira, Ahmedabad and elsewhere, the endurance of the people. But he had not fully realised that the masses in India, numbering many millions, had never been schooled in suffering and patience like the tiny Indian domiciled community in Natal and in the Transvaal. He began the experiment on the same scientific lines as those he had laid down in South Africa, but almost immediately, even before the movement was fairly launched, an error of the first magnitude appeared. The Punjab has been for generations the home of the fighting men of India. Its people did not understand what passive resistance truly meant. Mob riots suddenly broke out and ruined the whole effort. With a glorious sincerity of purpose that revealed in a moment the saint rising above the politician, Mahatma Gandhi, at the first breath of violence, called off the whole movement, and with a penitence which went to the utmost lengths of self-humiliation confessed in public

4 V.S. Srinivasa Sastri

that he had made a "Himalayan blunder".

Between the tragic end of this first struggle and the beginning of the second, I was away in South Africa, where the Indian people were again faced with cruel wrongs and hardships. The racial situation there had once more become critical. Mahatma Gandhi had asked me to go out and I could not refuse. But before I went I could understand that trouble was brewing afresh in India itself of a most serious character. The Amritsar massacre and all that followed it in the Punjab had at last become fully known to the Indian public; the people of England, on the other hand, had no conception of the humiliation which it had caused and the burning sense of outrage that remained unappeased. As a second cause of trouble, the treatment of Turkey after the war, and the disclosure of the secret treaties with regard to Turkey's dismemberment, had brought the whole Mohammedan population to the extreme point of indignation. They declared with one voice that they had been cruelly deceived, when they had helped the allied cause against the people of their own religion. These were the "two wrongs" that were mentioned so often by Mahatma Gandhi and his followers. They were called the "Punjab" and "*Khilafat*" wrongs. For them, repentance had to be made by the British Government in India. The power of that Government, which had thwarted the wishes of the Indian people, must be bent to the people's will. Self-government was long overdue, and it must be speedily obtained so that such injustices might not happen again.

As I have said, I was not present in India when the preparations for the Non-co-operation Movement began. I know, however, that Mahatma Gandhi employed every effort he could think of before taking the final step. For passive resistance, with him, always represents the last resort when every other method has failed. It is, according to his principle, like a final declaration of war - a war, not of physical might, but of moral force.

This time, when the struggle opened, it was evident at once that the people had been schooled and disciplined in the practice of non-violence as they had never been before. The Musalmans, who believed in the sword, had entered into a solemn compact with Mahatma Gandhi not to use the sword as long as they took part in the movement. This compact was strictly observed. As a result of this, a Musalman outbreak in the North, accompanied by bloodshed and violence, was happily prevented. During this critical time, the Viceroy and Governors went about with absolute safety owing to the passive character of the movement, which was strictly observed by Musalmans and Hindus alike. I was present in the Moplah area in South India during the rebellion and came to the conclusion that its origin could not be justly charged to the Non-co-operation Movement.⁵

But though, in this larger sphere and among the educated classes, all violent revolutionary acts were rigidly banned and complete passive resistance was observed,

5 The Moplahs, members of a Muslim community in Kerala, killed six officials in August 1921, and subsequently attacked Hindus, committing robbery, arson and murder. The Government suppressed the revolt by ruthless repression, killing hundreds of Moplahs.

yet among the masses in distant villages over such an immense area as the whole of India the violent temper of the people could not altogether be restrained. The spirit of violence again and again appeared among the masses like a fire smouldering beneath the ashes. It was an ugly temper, altogether contrary to that mind which Mahatma Gandhi required in order to make his experiment work out successfully to the end. For unless goodwill and friendship came at the last, when the will of the people had been accepted, the experiment would fail.

Mahatma Gandhi himself went about the country and everywhere the simple village people flocked to him in tens of thousands. He drilled them and disciplined them in peaceful methods with all the power of his magnetic personality. His nearest followers in the different provinces made almost superhuman efforts in the same direction. But the whole movement grew beyond control. In Bombay, at the time of the Prince of Wales' visit, the conflagration broke out with all its force, and not even the presence of Mahatma Gandhi himself could stop it for some days. At last, at Chauri Chaura, a mob riot of a peculiarly brutal character occurred, in which non-co-operators themselves, using their saintly leader's name, appear to have joined with the mob.

The agony of spirit which Mahatma Gandhi went through during those days, is only known to those who were nearest to him. An angry meeting of leaders took place at Delhi. They wished to go forward in spite of the violence that had occurred, but Mahatma Gandhi refused to carry on the struggle in its further stages while violence was abroad. He sadly confessed, with an almost broken heart, that "the spirit of violence was in the very air". He was himself arrested almost immediately after this, and sentenced to imprisonment for six years. At his trial he took upon his own head the guilt for any act of violence which had been committed in his name. Nearly two years of that long sentence have now been passed in prison. The movement itself has suffered greatly owing to the absence of its leader. Nevertheless among a considerable number of his followers in every province his imprisonment has meant a fresh consecration in acts of service and devotion. Throughout the length and breadth of India a new living energy is visible, which has changed the face of the country. Much of the spirit of subjection - the spirit of fear and flattery and weak concession - still remains. But a fearlessness and independence have entered into the hearts of the younger generation which mean nothing less than a revolution.

The Non-co-operation Movement has by no means run its course. In some directions it has only started to go forward. In others it has come to an impasse. Yet it is quite possible, even at this early date, to look back and draw some lessons from it and consider how far its method has already helped forward the progress of world peace. Let me give one instance, which I saw with my own eyes in the Punjab itself, where the warlike spirit is strongest and the restraint from physical violence most difficult. It will be remembered that the Punjabis had been the first to break out into open violence in the earlier struggle over the Rowlatt Act which I have already recorded. But at Guru-ka-bagh I saw them, during this present struggle, stand up against military police with no weapon in their hand. They were hurled to the ground, time

after time, but they suffered it all joyfully without striking a single blow in return. I saw them one by one carried away stunned and senseless. But on the next day when I visited them in the hospital and watched their faces, they were happy like children in their religious fervour as they uttered in reverence and love Mahatma Gandhi's name. When I asked them whether they would be prepared to go through the same suffering again, their faces lighted up with joy as they answered "Yes".

This is only one out of the hundreds of sights that I have witnessed. They have convinced me that the lesson of non-violence has been learnt at last in India in a truly wonderful manner. Perhaps in India alone is there a tradition strong enough and an idealism high enough to carry out faithfully and purely the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. It was not lightly or unadvisedly that the President of the All-India Christian Conference in December, 1922, declared that Mahatma Gandhi was "the greatest living Indian Christian". The phrase was well understood all over India and its implication was accepted by the Indian people as embodying a true idea.

Mahatma Gandhi, during the last stage before his imprisonment, lamented the fact that "popularity had dogged his steps". He declared that if he had had only those hundred followers who implicitly believed in him and understood him, instead of the millions who shouted his name, he would have been able to win a victory for the truth in India as he had done in South Africa. It would appear that this most difficult lesson of working by the few and avoiding the excitement of multitudes had to be learnt by bitter experience. He has been humble enough to learn it. The duty of bringing a great empire to repentance cannot be undertaken by a host of untrained and undisciplined men. In a passive resistance struggle, the victory is only retarded when the shouts of the passionate multitudes drown the still small voice of conscience. For it is this inner voice which has to be appealed to in true moral warfare if ultimate success is to be obtained.

But if individual men and women could be so inspired that even in isolation they would be prepared to carry out to the end this principle of suffering without retaliation, the influence of their lives over the hearts of men might be incalculably great. It is quality in this warfare that counts, not quantity. The salt of the earth must not lose its savour. The light of the truth must not be confused or obscured but must shine like a lamp set on a high place. It is in this way, through individuals who have had the courage to believe and suffer and also to acknowledge their mistakes, that all the greatest spiritual movements in history have been adventured.

It has seemed to me, while I have watched with eager sympathy the course of Mahatma Gandhi's struggle, and taken part in certain phases of it which won my whole-hearted acceptance, that the lessons of failure have now at length been truly learnt. A greater movement is about to begin, in which the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi's teaching will be carried out with firmer confidence and fuller certainty of ultimate victory. His followers will go far beyond the field of external politics to the principle of growth within the soul. They will learn more patiently first to reform and discipline themselves before they reform others.

In Mahatma Gandhi's own personality there has been a rare blending of the currents of the East and West in one stream. His early manhood, spent away from India in the midst of the fiercely aggressive pioneer life in South Africa, has given him a fiery energy of spirit which is almost volcanic in its power of upheaving the sluggish nature of men's minds. But all this strength of personality, which had been hardened into steel by contact with the opposition of the West, has been moulded and welded together with a temperament peculiar to his birth and ancestry in India and his Hindu religious tradition. This has been for generations producing a gentleness and refinement which eschewed violence and passion. It is this twofold character in him that has made his movement so remarkable an event in the history of mankind. To the best minds in East and West alike the whole spiritual adventure of his life should prove powerfully arresting, as an attempt to combat evil in the world without once employing the dread ultimate arbitrament of physical force. To the West, it has been an appeal - for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear - to abandon the material basis of power in dealing with the East, to give up relying upon "white prestige" and to assume normal human relations. To the East, it has been a message of hope, recalling India to her own vast domain of inner spiritual strength, bidding her to throw aside timidity, feebleness and sloth, and to declare in no uncertain voice the supremacy of man's soul. It may be that the "moral equivalent for war" which Mahatma Gandhi so fearlessly adventured forth to find, has not yet been gained, or its regions of practice in human life not wholly explored. But the shores of this land of promise and of peace towards which humanity is straining its eyes are not altogether now an unknown harbourless coast owing to his agonising strife. Its capes and headlands have already been marked out upon the chart, and soundings have been taken of an anchorage from the storm and a desired haven.

This article was written on board ship in the month of November 1923 while returning to England. I have just received by post from India a very remarkable editorial written by a Hindu leader, Mr. K. Natarajan, who was unable to follow Mahatma Gandhi in many important points of the non-co-operation programme on its political side, but yields to none in his devotion to him as a social and religious leader. The editorial was written for Christmas Day, 1923, and it embodies sentiments which prevail everywhere in India today. I quote the following passage:

"More than nineteen hundred years ago, Jesus Christ was nailed upon the Cross by a Roman governor. The orthodox Jews who instigated Pilate to commit this infamous crime were no doubt satisfied that the great movement which Christ had set on foot had failed. Failed! It was Roman justice that had failed, it was Jewish bigotry that had failed. An empire which had ceased to heed the voice of justice and humanity in the pursuit of its own selfish interests which are always ephemeral, is like a rotten tree which but awaits the first passing blast to come to the ground. The Roman Empire fell, and upon its ruins the Church of Christ rose to a great height of power. And today though organised Christianity but feebly reflects the spirit of its Master, the personality of the Master Himself stands forth before all the world with a

compelling grandeur.

"Never before have so many earnest minds of all races and creeds turned to Him for light and guidance in their perplexities. The number and insight of the new lives of Christ are alone evidence of this fresh and deepened interest in His life and teaching. But the most impressive proof of it is that Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu, has sought for the first time in history to apply the Master's teaching to politics as the best means of raising the people of India to a consciousness of their duty to themselves and to humanity. Mahatma Gandhi, it is true, is "buried alive" under the order of authority. But a seed which is "buried alive" does not die, but gets the opportunity without which it cannot fulfil its purpose. That is the reflection which on this Christmas eve occurs to us, and we commend it to the reverent thought of all our readers, Christian and non-Christian.

"Mahatma Gandhi's movement has made the central teaching of Christ known and cherished in quarters to which a hundred years of the propaganda of Christian missions had not been able to penetrate. And it has presented it in a form readily assimilable to the Indian mind. Not only among Hindus but among Indian Christians also are being revealed a new meaning and a new purpose in the message of the Galilean Prophet, not antagonistic to or destructive of their precious national heritage, but setting it forth in its full intrinsic worth and value".

These are the words, not of an Indian Christian, but of a Hindu social reformer. They may serve to show the importance of considering carefully and fully the meaning and implication of the movement to which they refer.

HOME RULE AND HOMESPUN⁶

The elections, which have just been concluded in India, can give to the English onlooker but poor representation of the actual feeling in the country. The *Swaraj* party - who may be called the Nationalists of the left - had only received permission from the National Congress to take part in the elections within a few weeks of the polls. That permission was very reluctantly given; and a large proportion of the non-co-operators, who wished strictly to follow their leader, Mahatma Gandhi, stood out of the election altogether.

This meant that *Swaraj* party by no means represented the full strength of the Non-co-operative movement. There can be little doubt that if the whole energies of the non-co-operators had been devoted to winning the elections they would have swept the polls. With an experience of twenty years of Indian life, during which I have been more closely associated in India with the National movement and its leaders than any living European, Mrs. Besant alone excepted, the impression left on my mind by the election results is one of great surprise at the number of seats everywhere obtained by the *Swaraj* party.

Notice has been given by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya that he will move immediately resolution demanding the release from prison of Mahatma Gandhi. I doubt if there will be a single Moderate whose seat depends on a popular vote hardened enough to vote against such a motion. If he does, he knows for certain that his seat will be lost at the next election. The only supporters whom the Government of India may count on to vote against the motion will be their own nominees and private members representing certain vested interests which depend on Government favour. This motion of Pandit M. M. Malaviya's will create an interest in the Councils among the masses in the Indian village almost for the first time. For the villagers have hitherto faithfully observed Mahatma Gandhi's instructions and practically ignored the Councils altogether.

I find, since landing in England, that it is still necessary to explain that the title "*Mahatma*," which has been given by universal consent to Mr. Gandhi on account of his passive-resistance struggle in South Africa, does not imply anything occult or mysterious when used to designate him, but simply means "Great Soul". Such titles are given in India, first of all by popular consent, and then become common words of everyday use. "*Mahatma-ji*" is the name by which Mr. Gandhi is universally known in India today.

It is vitally important to realise that among the masses of the common people in India that whole electoral system is unpopular owing to Mr. Gandhi's disapproval. It is

⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, January 31, 1924; reprinted in *The Living Age*, Boston, 320:464-67, March 8, 1924.

regarded as a mere foreign innovation - to take part in which is to become identified with the Government. It has not yet to any considerable degree acclimatised itself to Indian life, which is a life of villages rather than of towns. I can understand how extraordinarily difficult it is to realise this in England, where elections are commonplace events affecting the whole people. But if we are not very careful we are in danger of mistaking what is still merely a side current in Indian affairs for the mainstream.

There has been no one in all my recollections of India who has understood the masses of the people like Mahatma Gandhi. He has held them in the hollow of his hand, and even from jail he still holds them today. The reasons for his great influence among the masses are twofold - his saintliness and his voluntary poverty. He has lived their own life at all times and shared with them their desperate hardships. I have seen them coming to him and pleading, "*Mahatmaji*, do take more care of yourself. You are the only one in the world who understands us. If you die, who is to look after us?"

He is as different from any political leader in the West as it is possible to imagine. Only in a country so essentially religious as India would such a saint be made into a political leader. Perhaps the most wonderful thing of all, which shows his magnetic personality, is the fact that he has carried away with him on a wave of high enthusiasm very nearly the whole of the English-educated Indian community, men and women who have received the full training of the West.

In London I have been living in the Indian Students' Hostel, in Gower Street, and the reverence for Mahatma Gandhi's name is quite universal. There is no difference of opinion about him. This brings me to a second astonishing factor. The enthusiasm of Indian Mohammedans for him is as great as that of Hindus. He is the one man in modern times who has united the whole of India - rich and poor, caste and outcaste, Hindu and Muslim.

I have often pondered over the nature of his supreme influence, and more and more it has seemed to me to be due to the two things I have mentioned - his saintliness and his voluntary poverty. At one time, as every Indian knows, he was earning by his brilliant talents at the bar £5000 a year in Johannesburg, in South Africa. He kept open house with lavish hospitality. But after reading Tolstoy's life and corresponding with him he abandoned everything he possessed and clad himself in the coarse homespun dress of a village peasant and began to plough and spin and weave at Tolstoy farm. That was thirty years ago, and he has never since abandoned this life of extreme poverty.

When he goes to see the Viceroy he wears the same villager's dress. When he was asked at his trial, as a prisoner, to state his occupation, he said, "A farmer and a weaver". When he found that, owing to high prices after the war, it was impossible for the poverty-stricken villagers to wear more than a loin cloth, even in the cold weather, he determined to do the same.

The essential feature about Mahatma Gandhi's political programme was that he made the educated classes and the Government of India itself face the reality of the poverty of India. That poverty was to him the one vital problem to be solved. It was because he found the Government of India failing to face that problem that - to use his own word - he became a "rebel" and refused to co-operate with it.

So utterly bent upon reality was he that at the very height of the political ferment, when passions had been aroused on all sides and extremist views were carrying everyone away in the excitement, he suddenly startled Lord Reading by offering voluntarily to drop his own boycott of the British Government and to co-operate again if the Viceroy would only join with him in a campaign against the drink and drug traffic and would help forward home spinning and home weaving in order to recuperate the village life of India and make it morally healthy. If these things were done, he said, it would be the first sign of repentance on the part of the British Government for "the wrongs done at Amritsar and the infamous Treaty of Sevres". It would also be the first step towards complete Indian *Swaraj*.

He added, characteristically, that he knew that Lord Reading was bound hand and foot by a military budget which only the drink and drugs revenue made solvent, and that Lancashire would never allow the British Government to foster an industry which would destroy the trade in cotton goods on which Lancashire people depended. Nevertheless, he added, if the British Government, as a sign of repentance for wrongs done in the past by the oppression of the village poor, could shake itself free from vested interests and could take boldly the side of the poor and become their true protector, he on his part was ready to co-operate and to throw his whole strength into a united effort for the relief of the desperate poverty of India.

This offer of co-operation was made perfectly clear to the Government of India, but it was not even debated. No conference was called and the non-co-operation movement went on. To me, at the time, this appeared to be a failure in Lord Reading's statesmanship which was almost unaccountable. For I believe him to be essentially a Liberal at heart. Probably "prestige" more than anything else stood in the way, and it had been determined not to parley with "rebels".

This brings me to the point where the Indian situation today, in perhaps its most fundamental aspect, directly affects Lancashire. There is one word which is on every Indian's lips. It is not the word "councils," but the Indian word "*khaddar*". Its meaning is "home-spun cotton," and the supreme effort is being made to clothe the people of India once more with homespun cotton cloth instead of the mill-made product. The economic argument is used that India, because of its monsoon, is like no other country in the world. Its climate is divided into one long dry season, during which very little agricultural work can be done, and one short wet season, during which the village agriculturists must work long hours in order to get the cultivation completed. The one problem, therefore, of the 800,000 villages of India, if poverty is to be avoided, is how

to employ usefully the slack months of the year, in the dry season, when very little agricultural work is possible.

This problem, so it is asserted, was solved in ancient India by the use of the home spinning wheel and the village loom. Each village produced its *khaddar*, and thus saved the expense of purchase from abroad. The argument runs on that Lancashire during last century profoundly disturbed this village economic life of India by flooding India with cheap cotton goods. Little by little the temptation to buy these Lancashire goods and to wear them, instead of the coarse homespun, crept in. This became the fashion in India even among the poor.

In direct consequence of this change the arts of home spinning and home weaving died out. India became almost entirely dependent upon foreign cloth. The villagers spent their spare time idly, instead of industriously. When famine came they had no occupation, nothing to fall back upon. They either died or else subsisted on Government doles. So the poverty of India increased. Therefore the modern economic solution of poverty in India is to find out a way to reverse the process by building up the village industries once again.

I have stated the argument without any qualifications. It will be necessary to examine it; for it means a new situation to be worked out, not only by the village of India, but also by the Lancashire population.

INDIA AND ENGLAND: THE ECONOMIC RELATION⁷

Very few thoughtful people can doubt that great advantages have accrued to India during the last century of British rule.

But it is not equally realised in England that forces have been at work, owing to the unfair economic relationship between India and England, which have perpetually tended to weaken the good which has been done. In this article an attempt is made to estimate as far as possible, from the Indian standpoint, wherein the weakness lies in the present economic position. A study of some of the salient facts may show why moderate and reasonable people in India cannot bear the prospect of further delay in the grant of responsible Government, and why they are not at all satisfied by the offer of a Statutory Commission in 1929. For while it is acknowledged that the recent reforms have done something to relieve for the moment the old bad situation, the opinion remains unalterably fixed that the evils in a foreign Government are still spreading disease in the body politic, and that hitherto a merely superficial remedy has been applied.

In India, economic problems arise out of the relation to England, because:

- (i) India is still ruled from Great Britain.
- (ii) Departments, directed chiefly by British officials, still deal in a costly manner with a very large part of the daily life and interests of the people.
- (iii) The British Government in India is still bound by close economic ties with England in regulating the fiscal policy of India.
- (iv) The British Government is still in a real sense the landlord of British India, disposing, as it thinks fit, of the rent it receives.

There are four parallel heads, on which the moral issue is raised with regard to this economic relationship:

- (i) British predominance acts as a deterrent to initiative, enterprise and leadership: it is destructive of moral force in the Indian people.
- (ii) "Home Charges" drain the wealth of India to England and thus establish an unfair

⁷ *The Contemporary Review*, London, 126: 38-44, July 1924

position.

(iii) Economic fiscal advantages have been given to England in the past and are still being given, and these demoralise both giver and receiver.

(iv) The heavy incidence of the Land Revenue causes agricultural depression and a general impoverishment, which leads to a moral poverty in its turn.

1. British predominance

"Subjection", says Seeley, "for a long time to a foreign yoke is one of the most potent causes of national deterioration". Is this true of India? There has been undoubtedly a serious moral and economic loss, side by side with much that may be counted as gain. It is the loss that is here specially considered.

The predominance of the British race has crushed Indian initiative; and in consequence the new economic structure of modern India has been imposed from without, rather than developed from within. In Japan, the advance in the new economics has been from within - organic, assimilative, self-achieved. In India, the Government (like all great alien patrons who attempt to regulate from without) tends to keep in leading strings and pauperise its clients by making them too dependent on its bounty. The steady pressure of a foreign superiority, which is never absent, has carried with it a contraction of innate powers among those who are placed unnaturally in an inferior position, and thus has tended to bring about that national deterioration of which Seeley speaks. The system of administration is necessarily foreign to India, and Indians have been obliged to adapt themselves laboriously to foreign ways. The qualities of independence and originality, which are most needed in modern commerce, have had little scope for development among educated Indians; and enterprising English traders and speculators have been able to take advantage of the weak condition of the country in order to exploit its economic resources. They have also had the immense utilitarian advantage of belonging to the ruling race, and have used that advantage to the full. Indians, under these conditions, have remained for the most part subordinates and inferiors, not only in the large area of Government employment, but also very frequently in the still larger area of modern trade and business enterprise. This position of continual inferiority to the Englishman has been rendered all the more unbearable because it has happened in contradiction to the different charters which pledged impartial treatment. The pledges, given as early as 1833, have never fully been carried out. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 remained, for a generation, almost a dead letter. Thus, in addition to the actual evil of Indians remaining for nearly a century in an inferior position, there has been the added evil of broken promises, which have raised hopes only to blight them with depressing moral effect.

2. The "Home Charges"

These very words, "Home Charges", which have been in constant use for over half a

century, tell their own tale. For what is the "Home" referred to? It is not India; though all the money comes from India to pay these charges. It is England that is the "Home", and the British in India continually send Indian money "Home" to England. If we examine these "Home" charges critically, we find that while undoubtedly some of them are paid in return for valuable services rendered to India, which Indians themselves could not perform, yet the majority of them are paid for things which could have been done by Indians themselves.

The Home Charges are made up both of the interest paid on capital invested in India and the pensions and other payments made to England on account of the services rendered by British civil and military officials in India, together with the amount of salaries withdrawn from India by those whose families are living in England. When capital is borrowed in a country and the interest is paid back in the same country; when incomes are made in a country and spent in the same country, then there is no "drain". That country is self-supporting. But when money is taken out of the funds of a country and then sent away to a foreign country, in spite of the fact that the service rendered could have been performed by the inhabitants themselves, then it is clear that such money is a dead loss. It is a drain on the country's resources of a most serious character.

In estimating this drain, it is fair to make due allowance for the interest paid on foreign capital as not being a direct loss to the same extent as that of pensions, etc. It is true that, wherever possible and feasible, it is always best for a country to raise an internal loan, rather than a foreign loan. But the development of whole areas, like Argentina, by means of foreign capital shows that countries which are absolutely independent may find it more profitable to obtain capital from abroad than wait, with land and communications undeveloped, until sufficient capital is subscribed at home. At the same time, it is undoubtedly true that both in the past, and to a lesser extent in the present, India has formed an attractive area for exploitation by British capital in the matter of safe investment; and therefore sufficient efforts have not been made by the British Government in India to obtain the capital required in India. There was probably enough capital locked up in India to float all the different loans, if there had been the inspiration of a national and patriotic movement behind them. The manner in which a poor country like the Irish Free State has recently managed to float its own loan, by means of capital chiefly subscribed in Ireland, is an example of the moral enthusiasm which comes when *Swaraj* has been attained. India, therefore, has suffered economically and is today paying a very heavy debt, in the form of interest sent abroad year by year, owing to the demoralising effect of a foreign Government, which has borrowed money and men from a foreign land, when both money and men were to be had in India itself.

The military expenditure of India has been perhaps the heaviest drain of all; for an immense amount of this expenditure has gone out of the country altogether. It has not meant, therefore, the circulation of money in the country such as the payments for a purely indigenous army would naturally entail, but a direct withdrawal of money from India to England in order to pay for foreign troops. These troops are kept, not

merely to help to resist an invasion from across the frontier, but also to prevent any rebellion in India. If India had her own indigenous Government and her own indigenous troops, it is obvious that these military charges could be considerably reduced, and also that more military stores might be purchased in India and less from abroad. As will be seen later on, the heavy weight of the military expenditure necessitates the Land Revenue remaining at its present high figure.

3. The Fiscal System

With regard to the foreign character of the Indian fiscal system in the past, whole volumes have been written. It has been shown by unimpeachable evidence that Great Britain in earlier days treated India fiscally as a conquered country, which, because of its complete subjection, might be economically exploited. The evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1832-33 shows that the cotton industries of India were deliberately weakened in order to press forward the import of new mill-made Lancashire goods. When attempts were made later in India itself to compete by machinery with Lancashire cloth, an excise duty was placed on every bale of Indian mill produce before it was allowed to leave the Indian mill. This cotton excise duty has been acknowledged to be morally indefensible. It has been accepted by historians as another instance of the imposition of the will of the superior power on a subject people. No free country would have allowed it for a single moment.

What is not equally realised is that the fiscal policy of India with regard to other matters also has again and again been directed towards British rather than Indian expansion. Even at the present time, the fiscal control still remains in the hands of the British rulers. The Finance Department has been kept strictly within the British sphere. There has never yet been an Indian Finance Member in the Viceroy's Council. The largest items of the Budget remain "reserved" subjects. The military expenditure cannot be touched by the elected representatives of the Indian people. Even in other matters, as a last resort, the will of the Viceroy is supreme in regard to finance. This was made crushingly evident by the certification of the Salt Tax last year. What is rejected in the Assembly is put back mechanically and automatically by the Viceroy, even when his action is in direct opposition to the will of the people.

The moral effect of such a fiscal system is easy to understand. It has obviously led to British commerce obtaining a privileged position. It has given an unfair advantage to the British manufacturer and trader, who has been practically certain that he could reckon on the weight of British prestige and British influence to support him. When I once asked Mahatma Gandhi what he meant by the word *Swaraj*, he answered immediately, "Fiscal Autonomy".

One further word needs to be added with regard to Excise. If the Excise policy of the Government of India had been entrusted to Indian hands, foreign spirituous liquors would almost certainly have been prohibited long ago and an immense amount of drunkenness in India would thus have been avoided. It is not unlikely that, by this time, a complete prohibition of alcoholic liquors would have been enacted by law,

and India would have taken her place side by side with the United States as a "dry" country; for this would be in accord with the precepts of all her great religions.

With regard to opium, as early as 1880 Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji protested with all the earnestness of his own moral conviction against the iniquitous traffic in this poisonous drug, which had been forced on China under the threat of war. For nearly a whole century this immoral revenue had degraded India. At last the conscience of the world had become so shocked that Great Britain could no longer resist its appeal. In the year 1907, China had taken 51,000 chests of opium, containing 140 pounds weight per chest. From that time, the yearly rate was diminished by 10 per cent, until in 1913 it was prohibited altogether. After the Chinese traffic had been abandoned, a similar traffic with the British colonies in the Far West was continued, and still even today, as in former times, revenue is made by the British Government in India out of the poisoning of neighbouring peoples.

4. Land Revenue

The frequent recurrence of scarcity, and even of famine, and the serious deterioration of agricultural incomes over large areas of the country, have made the whole question of the incidence of the Land Revenue upon the agricultural population one of primary importance. It needs to be clearly understood that the Government acts as legal owner of the soil and takes from it a revenue amounting, roughly, to about 50 per cent of the net assets. This charge upon the land is revised every twenty or thirty years, as the case may be, and enhanced as the land rises in value. The assessment and enhancement have been kept hitherto very strictly in the hands of the British rulers themselves. The people have not as yet been allowed to have any direct voice in the matter. As an illustration of this, I may bring forward the following incident. During the Kaira trouble in 1917, the peasants claimed that their harvest had practically failed, but the Government agents declared that it was of taxable value. I went to the Governor in order to claim that the point in dispute might be submitted to arbitration, but the Governor refused. He said to me: "At home I would not allow any one to come between me and my tenants. The Government, as landlord, is in the same position here".⁸ Under responsible Government, military and other expenditure would probably not be so heavy as at present. Remissions might be made in time of scarcity, on a more liberal scale. It might also be possible to reduce the land taxation all round.

The moral effect of extreme poverty upon a depressed village population is well known. In India, the burden of indebtedness has been added to that of ignorance, misery and hunger. Whatever rise in the prices of foodstuffs may have occurred in recent years, it appears to be certain that the village population has not received its full share of the benefits. I would refer, for an instance of a statistical survey, to Dr. Mann's work on the village problem in the Deccan.

8 After a *satyagraha* by the peasants, the authorities announced that if the well-to-do farmers paid up, the poorer ones would be granted suspension of tax for the year.

A further criticism shows that the present heavy land taxation leads to unequal distribution of wealth - the village poor growing poorer in spite of their acknowledged industry and frugality. The new wealth that is flowing into India tends to accumulate in the hands of the trading classes, who are very lightly taxed; while the burden of the taxation is borne by the peasantry. The agricultural classes are more and more exploited by the traders and moneylenders, and their ignorance makes such exploitation doubly difficult to avoid. Up to the present, only the most meagre efforts have been made, and the most inadequate sums of money expended, in order to give them primary education, and thus put them on more equal terms with those who exploit them. Though "the most patient and frugal peasantry in the world",⁹ they are weighed down by debt and haunted by the spectre of famine. Sir William Hunter,¹⁰ whose name still holds a high rank both as administrator and historian, stated with full knowledge of the conditions prevailing in his own time, that forty millions of people in India always lived on the borderline of hunger. They never knew what it was fully to satisfy the hunger pangs. I seriously doubt, judging from my own experience among the Indian village people today, whether any material improvement in the stark hunger problem has occurred since his time. When after this, the information is given that the Land Revenue, taken from the same peasantry, amounts approximately to 50 per cent of the net assets, the ordinary reader cannot help but feel that there is something wrong with the conditions, though he may not be able to point out a remedy. It can hardly be regarded as a sufficient solution of the problem to point to highly organised State agencies for famine relief. Even if excessive mortality is avoided, the danger of pauperisation remains. The question needs continually to be asked whether, by reduction of military expenditure or other methods, the burden of land taxation cannot be further lightened, and, at the same time, whether the ignorance of the peasantry cannot be dispelled. The issues of life and death are so vast, and the possibilities of human suffering so immense (a famine area not seldom including over 50,000,000 people) that the economic question is here raised to the highest pitch of moral importance.

⁹ *Imperial Gazetteer*, Volume IV, page 204

¹⁰ Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900), Indian administrator and later member of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress.

A DAY WITH MAHATMA GANDHI¹¹

Perhaps the simple detailed account of a single day with Mahatma Gandhi during his convalescence will, more than anything else, bring the Western reader much nearer to the heart of things in India. It may possibly, at the same time, leave him somewhat bewildered at the subtle differences of mental temperament which are so fascinating, and yet so baffling to trace down to their ultimate source. Without any question, in the East the power of religion over life has marvellously persisted. The "Ages of Faith" are still being lived; and India is, above all others, the country where spirit rules over matter in the modern world. This is the deepest difference of all between East and West, and it is seen in Mahatma Gandhi most distinctly.

The day begins very early. At 4 a.m. the household assembles. We remain seated on mats upon the floor of the verandah in perfect silence. Sometimes the moon is shining through the waving palm trees outside. On other mornings all is dark. After the silence there follow Sanskrit verses, chanted in a monotone, and a hymn from some mediaeval saint. Then silence once more for a short time while we remain seated and after that each retires. Our united worship is now over. Each one goes apart and strict silence will be observed until the sun rises in the east.

I would mention, in a parenthesis, that prolonged early morning meditation is no unusual habit in India. With the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, it has become a natural custom to begin the day with this inner silence a very long time before the dawn. Often he thus enters upon the day soon after two o'clock in the morning and sits in silence till seven. It is the only way, he has told me, that the spirit can be controlled in all its moods and be made ready for the trials of the day. Others, whom I know well, have given me similar accounts of the process of their daily lives, by which the mastery of the soul is reached in the early dawn through meditation and silence.

Among the Sanskrit verses, recited in our household prayers with Mahatma Gandhi, are the following from the *Bhagavad Gita* (I am quoting from Sir Edwin Arnold's perfect translation, which is called *The Song Celestial*):

That man alone is wise,
Who keeps the mastery of himself! If one
Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs
Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
Desire flames to fierce passion...
But if one deals with objects of the sense,
Not loving and not hating, making them

¹¹ *Atlantic Monthly*, Boston, 134:668-771, November 1924

Serve his free soul, which rests serenely lord,
Lo! such a man comes to tranquillity.

And like the ocean, day by day receiving
Floods from all lands, which never overflows:
Its boundary-line not leaping, and not leaving,
Fed by the rivers, but unswelled by those,

So is the perfect one! To his soul's ocean,
The world of sense pours streams of witchery;
They leave him as they find, without commotion,
Taking their tribute, but remaining sea.

As I have read that passage over and over again, it has given me an insight into the true mind and character of the East. Mahatma Gandhi carries out its precepts to the fullest extent. It remains ever the highest ideal to be reached; the pearl of great price, for which a man will sell all that he has, if only he may obtain it.

About seven o'clock in the morning Mahatma Gandhi has some milk and fruit. This is his staple food throughout the day even when he is well. Very soon after this, Pandit Radhakanta Malaviya arrives with his two little children carrying some white blossoms. The blossoms are laid at the Mahatma's feet, and then the little ones run to his arms. They are not in the least afraid of the Hindu saint, who is very human where children are concerned. A portion of the *Ramayana* is read and studied on the roof. The sea murmurs on the beach and the palm trees wave their leaves backward and forward gently in the morning breeze. At eight o'clock this quiet time is broken. An endless tide of visitors begins to flow toward him. Each comes for advice; and it is strange to note how the political issues always take a philosophical turn before many minutes are over. This does not mean that the solution offered is any the less practical; but while the English mind quite naturally and instinctively looks to the immediate effect in politics, the Indian mind with equal naturalness of instinct looks to the remoter springs of action.

Let me give two examples from his "Non-co-operation" programme which may help to reveal its true character as a deeply religious movement. In the south of India the pariahs have been treated in the past as less than human beings. In the whole of India there are nearly sixty million people of the lowest castes who are called "Untouchables" because it is still regarded as a pollution for an orthodox Hindu even to touch them. The Non-co-operation workers have ardently set themselves against this oppression. Trusted leaders have begun to "non-co-operate" with orthodox Brahminism in its strongholds of reaction. The very same ethics are being applied that are used against the bureaucracy itself. Hindu non-co-operators, who are Brahmins, have taken with them outcaste Hindus and claimed an entrance to the Brahmin streets and quarters in Travancore State which hitherto have been strictly reserved against the so-called pollution of untouchables. They have offered themselves side by side with the untouchables who go with them, as ready to endure

any assault, and even death itself, in order to break down this age-long tyranny. They will go on until the moral victory is achieved.

But the State Government could not permit disorder and breaches of the peace. So the police intervened. First of all, they arrested and imprisoned every one of these young adventurers in social freedom - both Brahmin non-co-operators and pariahs alike. Immediately others took their place. Then the leaders who were directing the movement were arrested and imprisoned. But as the number of arrests increased and it seemed likely that the prisons would be filled, the Travancore State authorities suddenly changed their programme. Those non-co-operating caste Hindus, who were offering to go through the Brahmin quarters in company with untouchables, were not arrested but were simply prevented from going forward. The police stood on guard night and day and blocked the road.

The moral tension grew more acute. Those who were seeking an entrance refused to take water or food till they were allowed to go through. Many of them fainted from exhaustion and were taken to the hospital where they continued their hunger strike.

By that time, the attention of Mahatma Gandhi had been directed to this new phase of the struggle against "untouchability". He called off the hunger strike immediately. Such a weapon, he said, might be used by a father against his wayward son to repentance; but against an alien and impersonal system, such as a State, it surely became a weapon of anger. It did not connote the compulsion of pure love but the compulsion of dread and fear. I was present when two orthodox Brahmins came all the way from Travancore to see him on his verandah and to implore him to call off the struggle altogether. "Is the road a private or a public road?" he asked. When they confessed to him that it was a public road and that only these poor outcasts of humanity were excluded, his face became drawn with pain. "The struggle must go on," he said. Many months have passed since then and this strange peaceful conflict, waged with the weapons of love, still goes on. The passive blockade still continues.

There is one problem, which perhaps has penetrated more deeply into the heart of Indian life at the present moment even than untouchability. It is called the "Hindu-Muslim" problem. Forces of disruption have been at work and violent animosities have been excited which sometimes have tended to make even the mention of the word non-violence a mockery in this connection. But the devotion of Musalmans to Mahatma Gandhi is entirely apart. His name among them is "a thing enskied and sainted". It has remained high above all this lower atmosphere of bitterness and party spirit. In spite of the storms that have been raging and the passions that have been roused the Musalman leaders have remained as true to Mahatma Gandhi as he has remained true to them. Day after day I have watched them coming to him in his verandah to pour out their love at his feet. From the touching scenes I have witnessed, one might almost gather that the warmest corner of his heart has been kept for them and they have found this out. He, in his singular personality, is the one binding force. It is strange indeed how the personal spiritual element has to come in order to produce, out of this sharp religious contrast, human fusion. Here in his spirit

is a supreme gift to Indian unity. Behind it lie whole centuries of mystical religion; for it is the same spirit as that of Kabir and Nanak and countless other saints of mediaeval India, who dared to proclaim that one God was being worshipped by Hindu and Musalman alike.

On two days in the week Mahatma Gandhi maintains complete silence. For he is the editor of two weekly papers, and he writes his editorials on these silent days. One of these papers is called *Young India*, and it is probably the most remarkable weekly newspaper in the world today. It contains no advertisements but only page after page from the editor's exhaustless spring of new ideas written in compact English sentences with not a superfluous word. The other paper, called *Navajivan* (New Life), printed in Gujarati and Hindi, has by far the larger circulation. It is his pet child and he lavishes his best energies upon it. Even without advertisements its net profits had come to fifty thousand rupees a short time ago, all of which were handed over to the National Congress.

At noon he usually takes a very short rest for half an hour, but this is often made impossible by visitors. A full hour is afterward given by him to his son in teaching him Gujarati literature. Then he sits down to the spinning wheel. For to him the economic salvation of his country through the spinning wheel has become more than a mere doctrine. This ideal of his, that India should thus win her salvation, is a pure and passionate faith wherewith his very life has become enriched and enlarged. He inspires with his own enthusiasm anyone who comes within the orbit of his attraction. In spite of the fact that the doctor had forbidden spinning so soon after his serious illness he found that he could not keep away from it any longer; and even though it may tire him physically it is certainly a great relief to the mental strain of the day.

That strain becomes the hardest to bear in the evening. For the crowd will insist on gathering in large numbers; and among them are always the poorest of the poor. For those poor people his sympathies are ever ready to be given to the fullest limit of his endurance. But when the time of sunset comes sheer physical weariness at last makes even his indomitable spirit yield before its urgent demand for rest. A short walk, very slowly, along the beach at sunset, the evening prayers, and again the silence of meditation - these bring the long day to a close. He sleeps well and thus recuperates his strength.

Since this was written, Mahatma Gandhi, all too soon, has left his home of convalescence by the seaside and has returned to his own *Ashram*, or religious retreat, at Sabarmati, where his work is far more strenuous.¹² From that place he is now directing the whole Indian national movement along the pathway of non-violence.

¹² Gandhiji was released from prison, on medical grounds, in February 1924. He stayed at Juhu beach in Bombay from 11 March for convalescence, and returned to his *Ashram* in Ahmedabad on 29 May.

THE INFLUENCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI¹³

It may be well for people in America to receive at first hand a brief account of some of those characteristics in Mahatma Gandhi which make him the greatest spiritual influence in Indian political life at the present time.

My own experience of him has been probably more intimate than that of any other Englishman; for I have had the unspeakable and inestimable privilege of his friendship, not only in India, but in South Africa. Therefore I am able to write from what I myself have seen and heard and known.

The most vivid impression of him, which stands out in my mind today, as I write this article, is that which I obtained during a very long and tiring day in Durban, South Africa, during the final act in the drama of the Passive Resistance Struggle. It was midsummer in the Southern Hemisphere, and the heat that day was terrific. There were, at the time, twenty thousand passive resisters, who were all making their preparations to march over the high veldt into the Transvaal in order to court arrest. They aimed at getting rid, once and for all, of the degrading system of Indian indentured labour, whereby the labourers, who had passed through their five years of indenture on the sugar plantations, were obliged to go back once more under indenture, or else to pay a poll tax of £3 for every man, woman and child over 13 years of age, a thing that it was almost impossible for these poverty-stricken labourers to do.

The racial insult of that poll tax had rankled long in people's minds in South Africa, and Mahatma Gandhi had at last shown them a way by which they might obtain salvation. They were to undertake a long march, which should be a kind of pilgrimage, into the Transvaal, appealing to the generosity and pity of human hearts which would be moved by such a sum of suffering.

On that day, which so vividly impressed itself upon my memory, the Indian labourers from the sugar plantations had left their work in a body and had come into Durban to meet Mahatma Gandhi. Already four thousand had gone forward, as a kind of advance guard, some weeks ago, and these had all been arrested and imprisoned. Mahatma Gandhi had been imprisoned also, and been released so as to come to terms. But when the withdrawal of the poll tax was refused he began again the struggle with greatly increased forces. The women and children who joined in this strange army were almost as numerous as the men. In all the history of the world, such a warfare, carried on by defenceless people, has hardly ever been witnessed. The whole effort

¹³ From: *The World Tomorrow*, New York, 7:365-66, December 1924

was profoundly Christian in its bearing for those who had eyes to see and ears to hear and understand.

At 110, Field Street, Durban, the headquarters of the campaign, was Parsee Rustomjee, a merchant, who had been all along a devout and courageous follower of Mahatma Gandhi and had himself faced a long imprisonment. Near to his shop were Mohammedan merchants, who were also helping in the struggle. The great bulk of the Indian labourers were Hindus, very many were "untouchables". But all were united together and equally loved by the one personality, whose leadership was unchallenged, Mahatma Gandhi.

At that time he was very little known, and his long passive resistance effort had gone on year after year almost unrecognised by the world at large. The Indians had silently suffered and endured. But then, at the end of 1913, things had come out into the open. General Smuts was the protagonist on one side and Mahatma Gandhi on the other.

The whole day long the crowds of passive resisters assembled in Parsee Rustomjee's courtyard. It was thronged almost to suffocation. The women and children were in the centre, the men overflowed into the streets.

All through that long day I watched the behaviour of the crowd and their attitude towards Mahatma Gandhi, their leader. It was there for the first time that I could understand the secret of this amazing influence with his fellow countrymen and the reason for their devotion to him. I can only describe this briefly by saying that my thoughts went back to the Gospel story for an analogy. He was there, in the heart of that multitude that pressed upon him. They had come to him without anything to eat; and he was busy providing for their needs. An infinite tenderness and compassion shone from his eyes, while the mothers brought their little children to him, so that he might lay his hands upon them and bless them. The crowd would never leave him even for a moment and his patience was inexhaustible. He had not time himself to rest or take his own meal while he supplied others with food, for they went on pressing upon him and he would not turn them away.

As I have often in memory looked back upon that scene and afterwards recalled many other pictures also of a similar character I have been able from time to time to find the parallels I needed in history. Sometimes the scenes I have witnessed have reminded me of stories about the Buddha. But most often my thoughts have turned to the legends concerning St. Francis of Assisi. Mahatma Gandhi is, most nearly of any one I know, the St. Francis of this modern age, the Little Brother of the Poor.

There is another side, and it flames forth on certain occasions in a manner quite unlike St. Francis. This attitude is more near to the historical parallel of Savonarola. For instance, with his mind aflame at the sufferings of the poor and the luxuries of the rich, he ordered bonfires to be made of foreign clothes and ornaments on the beach at Bombay, where nearly three hundred thousand people had assembled in excitement.

There he mounted the great pile and himself applied the flaming torch at night, while the vast crowd raised shouts that rent the sky. This temperament must be reckoned with in his nature; but it is true to say that such puritanical fervour is never the deepest thing about him. The deepest side of his nature is to be found in his infinite tenderness and compassion and sacrifice for others and in the pure and radiant joy in poverty and suffering which binds his own heart to the poorest of the poor and also binds their hearts to him.

I have seen him in his own province of Gujarat, in the very midst of the country, entirely away from all big towns, under the full moon and the open sky. Yet even there the crowds had followed him. At the news of his coming, people had flocked in such numbers that the whole of one vast untilled area was covered by them as they camped out for the night. At the meeting place they were packed closely together on the hard dry ground, waiting for hours together in patience, eager to see his face and to obtain his blessing upon themselves and their little children. The crowd of women there was practically as great as the crowd of men.

So dense was the crowd on the occasion I am referring to that the platform on which he sat and from which he spoke was placed in the middle of a great field which was bare at that time of year. As I sat near him at the centre it was hard to see how far the crowd extended back in all directions - behind him as well as in front of him. I was obliged to leave before the end of the meeting and walked through the crowd with difficulty. By the number of steps I took to get out I reckoned that the crowd every side was between 150 to 200 yards deep. Thus the whole country round had flocked in to see and hear Mahatmaji. There was a religious ceremony of a partial eclipse of the moon that night, but no one left his place. The one religious ceremony, which all the villagers were bent on was the sight of Mahatma Gandhi himself.

Such then is the influence of Mahatma Gandhi in India today. His imprisonment has not weakened that influence. It is today even greater than before, because it is based on a firmer foundation of understanding. His whole heart was set on love and unity and peace.

A NEW OPIUM POLICY¹⁴

In the Imperial Assembly at Delhi on March 12th and 13th, 1925, during the debate on the Opium Question, Sir Basil Blackett, the Finance Minister, held out the hope that if the local governments agreed, the Imperial Government might be willing to hold an inquiry by a representative committee into the opium policy, in order to see if any changes might be necessary. Sir Basil Blackett himself frankly took his stand on the Royal Opium Commission of 1893-95. He spoke of it in the terms of highest praise, as if it were the final word on the subject. At the same time he warmly congratulated Dr. S.K. Datta - who might be called, on this one question, the leader of the Opposition - for his well-reasoned argument in favour of an inquiry. The debate took the form of a vote of confidence, and the Government of India was defeated by sixty-two votes to fifty. The non-official Indian members were singularly united and the vote itself was impressive, as it included almost every Indian non-official present. It came also at a time when there was a wide cleavage among non-officials on other subjects.

What is the new opium policy, to which the leaders of Indian thought are looking forward? To answer this question, it is necessary to consider the course of the World Conference at Geneva,¹⁵ and to note their extreme dissatisfaction over the actions taken by the Government of India. They objected, first of all, to the fact that though opium had been declared a "Transferred Subject," in which the people's choice should prevail, the delegate to Geneva had been appointed by the Executive power and not by the Legislative Assembly. They also strongly objected to the delegate chosen to represent India. For the last person whom the Indian leaders would have wished to go to Geneva was Mr. John Campbell, and they said so bluntly at the Assembly. For some years past he had shown reactionary tendencies, and had consistently obstructed the American proposals throughout. The Indian leaders believed in these American proposals, on the whole. They wished to join hands with America in carrying through a world reform, and they were entirely opposed to Mr. Campbell's policy of obstruction. This may be seen at a glance from the statement signed by Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore - the two greatest names in India today and both of them keenly sensitive for the honour of their country on this question. The fears expressed concerning Mr. Campbell proved true. His attitude at Geneva was more obstructionist than ever. When at last he was withdrawn and the whole case left in the far abler hands of Lord Cecil, even then the shadow of the India Office was not entirely lifted. The British Cabinet Minister was led into blunders by his advisers,

¹⁴ *The Contemporary Review*, London, 128: 163-69, August 1925

¹⁵ The first World Conference on opium was held in Geneva from November 3, 1924, to February 11, 1925. An agreement, protocol and final act were signed at the end of the Conference.

which were of the gravest character. He had no information about the changes of thought that were taking place in India itself, and he did not realise fully the unrepresentative character of the India Office.

It will not be out of place, at this point, to refer to one of these blunders, because it will show how backward the India Office is, not only in its policy, but in its information. Lord Cecil, at a time when he was anxious to be entirely conciliatory towards America, quoted some figures from an India Office publication called *The Truth about Indian Opium*. He stated that in America the opium consumption per head was thirty-six grains per annum, which was in excess of the Indian consumption. This was only one of the inaccuracies in that singularly misnamed pamphlet. Now it happened that, as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Stephen Porter had himself inquired into that very scandal. He had proved up to the hilt its untruth, and had shown that the American consumption was eight grains, and not thirty-six grains at all. Thus America came well within the League of Nations index figure, and was not an excessive consumer, as the India Office pamphlet had made out. The evidence of this had been published a year ago, and yet this libel on America continued its circulation from the India Office. When Lord Cecil had all unconsciously repeated the charge against America, thinking it to be the truth, Mr. Porter got up and rebutted with indignation the false statement which the British delegate had uttered about his country. No one could have been more startled and distressed than Viscount Cecil. His apologies were profuse; but the incident left a bad impression.

This story is worth repeating, because one of the most serious complaints against the Government of India and the India Office, not in this matter only, but in almost every subject of reform, is this, that they are continually behind the times. They move forward too slowly to keep pace with the current of the age. As for their conscientiousness, no one can call it in question. No administration in the world is harder worked. As Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said once at Simla, a Ministry of Archangels could not avoid blundering in a position such as theirs. The really able people at the top, who carry on the work, are few in number; the retrenchment by the Inchcape Committee has made their work harder still, for it depleted their staff in certain offices. They are all egregiously overworked, overworn, overtired, and worried to death. The problems of 320,000,000 people are so vast, the routine work is so heavy, that no one among them has really the leisure needed to get to the bottom of any single problem, studying it by itself thoroughly and radically. All that can be done is to keep the administrative machine in some state of regular motion. Therefore, with every good will in the world, things get into arrears. Humanitarian questions - such as prison reform, the Andaman Convict Station, police tyranny, peasant indebtedness, forced labour, women's work in mines, the doping of factory babies, and a hundred other subjects - are all of them so terribly long overdue, that the situation becomes almost desperate. Only some painfully direct action, such as passive resistance, or else some sudden pressure from the outside world, like the Geneva Conference, can thoroughly shake the Government out of its routine habit of mind, to face a new world that is thinking new thoughts. Lord Curzon was perhaps

the keenest intellectual worker and the hardest driver at making the pace that India had known in modern times; but even he broke down under the strain of a giant's labour, and made blunders, in consequence of overwork, which could not be repaired.

Opium had been for many generations in India one of those questions that had fallen hopelessly into arrears. All that concerned the Central Government, encumbered by its heavy military budgets, was the opium revenue; and this was easily and steadily obtained. But the British Parliament vote on the China traffic in 1892 and the Royal Commission of 1893-95 disturbed this *laissez faire* attitude. The China opium trade, which had been declared "morally indefensible" in the House of Commons, had to go. It was not, however, till revenue had been taken out of it for nearly twenty additional years that it came at last to be abandoned. Meanwhile, a second line of defence had been built up, and an opium trade was carried on with the five million Chinese outside China, which seemed likely to prove almost as profitable as the old China trade itself.

But the Hague Convention came, and this export trade of India fell under another searching scrutiny. It was seen clearly that if opium smoking was bad in China, it was bad out of China also. But there were many interested powers at the Convention, each with its own interests to consider. Therefore the terms of the Opium Articles, on the point of export trade from India, were rendered intentionally vague. Then the war came, and for the time being no one thought about the treaty which had just been signed. The trade went on just as before. But Article VII, in spite of its limiting clauses, was a difficult one to explain away altogether. It read as follows:

"The Contracting Powers shall prohibit the import and export of prepared opium. Those Powers, however, which are not yet ready to prohibit immediately the export of prepared opium shall prohibit it as soon as possible".

The Government of India had been the chief exporter of opium for smoking to the Far East. When the war was over, the Article proved embarrassing. For the Hague Convention was taken up into the League of Nations and the whole discussion of opium was re-established, after the Peace Treaty at Versailles, on a world scale. America had entered into the struggle with her own experiences in the Philippines of total prohibition. She was inspired with moral idealism in the person of Bishop Brent, who had been Bishop in those islands. In the Plenary Conference at Geneva, the American delegate went straight to the point and bluntly charged Great Britain with breaking the Hague Convention for financial reasons. Lord Cecil declared that such a charge was "very wounding - very wounding indeed". But it was never withdrawn by America.

The official reply offered by the Government of India has been unsatisfactory. One explanation has been that opium exported from India is not "prepared" till it gets to Singapore. Another is that India's trade is covered by the words "as soon as possible" in Article VII. Another is that Singapore, Macao, and other places certificate this opium as "legitimately" needed, and therefore India is not to blame. A fourth

explanation is that the War prevented the last steps in the Opium Articles' ratification at the Hague.

Dr. S.K. Datta, Pandit M. M. Malaviya and Pandit Motilal Nehru have openly expressed in the Assembly that they are dissatisfied with these lame explanations. They would willingly forfeit the revenue that is obtained out of this disreputable traffic. Indeed, it is possible to go still further and suppose that the Indian Government itself would be glad to get rid of it. But the Singapore Government has been running its administration very largely on its opium monopoly for forty years and it is a difficult thing to surrender.

Here, then, we come at last to a new and definitely formulated export opium policy, put forward publicly by Indian leaders, and voted for by practically the whole body of Indian non-official members of the Imperial Legislative Assembly. They would abolish the export trade in opium, where Indian opium is sent out for smoking purposes, and thus come into line with the clear demand of the Hague Convention and also of the Geneva Conference. The loss of revenue would be willingly and gladly accepted in view of the moral obligation to mankind.

A proposal, no less significant, has also been made with regard to India's internal consumption. Here the Indian leaders agree with the Indian Government that a Dangerous Drugs Act for India would be impracticable. India is a land of small, scattered, and remote villages, often with no medical aid immediately near. It would not be possible, therefore, to obtain a medical prescription in every case where opium was urgently needed as a specific remedy. Therefore it would be impossible to try to limit the use of opium to medical prescription alone, and to make any other use penal. But Indian leaders suggest that the League of Nations' index figure of 600 milligrammes per head per annum should be taken as a working basis. In Indian weights and measures, this works out at a consumption of six seers (i.e. twelve pounds avoirdupois) per 10,000 persons. Their proposal, put very briefly, is this, that as soon as possible all districts in British India and Burma should reduce their consumption (if it is not already reduced) to six seers for each 10,000 of their population.

When we have regard to the ease with which opium may be obtained at the opium shops, it is clear that Indian villagers as a whole are remarkably free from opium addiction. In the vast majority of the villages throughout the country, the consumption is well within the League of Nations' index figure of six seers per 10,000 people. Four of the largest provinces - Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the United Provinces and Madras - with a population of over 170,000,000 souls, have an average consumption which is under eight seers for each 10,000 people. The whole of British India and Burma has only the average consumption of twelve seers for each 10,000 of its population. If the Indian States were added, it is likely that the figure would be higher, but it is only possible to deal with British India in classified statistics. Therefore the new proposal of the Indian leaders, namely, to reduce the consumption in every district to the League of Nations' index figure of six seers per 10,000 people,

is not likely to prove so difficult as at first sight may appear. It might be called the policy of progressive limitation; and if the Government of India were to accept it as the Government policy, it would mean the gradual rationing of all the opium shops down to the minimum amount. Indeed, it has also been suggested that, as education on the subject advanced among the villagers, the practice of selling opium in a medicinal form, such as Dover's Powders, might be introduced both at Government dispensaries, and, in more remote places, at the village Post Office - just as quinine is sold at present. A certain check would have to be kept upon the amount which might be purchased at one time and also upon the stock that might be held. Everything would be done, according to this reform policy, to convert the present irrational eating of crude opium into a more rational and scientific use, without the legal insistence on a medical prescription. At the same time, in districts where opium addiction had been prevalent, registration of addicts, together with a more drastic form of prohibition, might have to be adopted.

While this new rationing might be actually in progress and this new education having its effect in the schools, a definite attempt would be made to reduce consumption in those areas where it is now clearly excessive. Such an attempt to remove an age-long opium abuse has recently been made in Assam with remarkable success. By means of voluntary effort, combined with Government rationing of shops, the consumption has already been reduced by nearly half. But even now its index figure of fifty-two seers per 10,000 people is hugely excessive. Yet the tide of popular enthusiasm for reform has by no means reached its limit and the people themselves are determined entirely to remove the curse. The Government also have been taking action as they have never done before. This has been one of the startling results of Mahatma Gandhi's personal influence. For the whole reform movement took its rise from his visit in 1921.

Excess in consumption over other parts of India may be briefly explained as follows:

(1) There is an increasing demand for opium in the new industrial centres, where the old religious sanctions of village life have been broken down. The consumption rate for Calcutta is 144, and for Rangoon 108 per 10,000 people. Though the presence of a Chinese immigrant population accounts for some of this excess, new habits of addiction are beginning to appear among the mill and factory hands. In Bombay, where there is no Chinese problem, the consumption is forty-three per 10,000 and many other industrial towns show as high a figure. The doping of babies by their mothers with opium also accounts for much of this new evil in the cities.

(2) There is evidently a long entrenched opium habit in Rajputana, which has had its effect on the neighbouring parts of British India. We cannot get accurate figures for Rajputana here, because the consumption in the Indian States is not tabulated as in British India. But Ajmer is a small portion of British territory in Rajputana itself. The Ajmer area has a consumption of fifty-two per 10,000. This may give us an indication of the consumption that is going on in the adjoining States. From all that I

have heard, at first hand, it appears that the opium habit has led to great demoralisation. Malwa is a state in Rajputana which actually cultivates opium. Malwa opium is even now being smuggled into Assam, where I am working at the opium problem as a member of the Assam Congress Inquiry Committee.

(3) There are certain areas of excessive consumption in the borders of Rajputana itself. These are found in Gujarat, in Sind and in the lower and central parts of the Punjab. The consumption rate is between thirty and fifty for each 10,000 people.

(4) Two strange areas of excessive consumption appear on the East Coast. One is in Orissa, at Puri and Balasore. The other is in the Godavari district. It is not unlikely that the opium habit here was brought back from Burma and Malaya by the large number of emigrants who go across the Bay of Bengal.

(5) An illegitimate practice is to be found in Burma, by which opium is allowed to the Chinese labourers, but prohibited to the Burmese. The Chinese smoke opium: and this exception in their case is so contrary to the Hague Convention and the League of Nations, that it ought to be stopped. Its result has been quite disastrous, as may be seen from the district of Mergui, where the consumption is 147 per 10,000, owing to the presence of the Chinese in the mines. The Burmese, who wish to smoke, purchase their opium secretly from the Chinese or other races.

In concluding this article, I would wish to add that it is my own great wish and hope that this purely humanitarian subject of opium reform may become a common meeting ground for Congress workers and Government officials. But for this to happen, the Government of India must be prepared to leave definitely its own old, outworn policy behind, and accept the new policy of the reformers. Since opium has been declared a transferred subject, the people's policy ought to carry weight and the Government should give it a fair trial.

YOUNG INDIA THROWS ITS PEBBLE¹⁶

There is an old Bible story, which has very often come to my mind when thinking out quietly the present position of social reform in India. We are told in one of the early books of the Bible how David went out to fight Goliath. Before the battle, Saul tried to make him put on the heavy armour which he himself had used. David first of all tried to put it on, but felt very uncomfortable in it. Then, throwing it aside, he went down to the brook and picked out some smooth stone, and with his own sling went against the great giant and slew him.

This has always seemed to me a parable of the present state of Indian affairs. The ruling Western powers in their interest in Indian social reforms have tried again and again to get young India, which is eager to fight the old deep-rooted evils in the social systems of the East, to take up their own powerful weapons which they themselves have found useful. Educated Indians have tried again and again to use these weapons. But lately, under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership, young India, like David of old, has revolted and decided to non-co-operate with the West. In this reaction against Western methods, it has turned to its own peculiar ways of dealing with these old social evils. Both in China and in India, that is the present aspect of affairs. We call it sometimes the rise of nationalism in the East; but we must remember that it is essentially an endeavour to do things in one's own way rather than accept any longer the tutelage of the West.

This is the thesis which I want to illustrate from my own experience; and everything that follows will come from what I have actually witnessed with my own eyes as I have lived among the followers of Mahatma Gandhi and shared their life with them.

Let me first of all take the illustration of the moral struggle against "untouchability" in South India, which we call the Vykam struggle. It needs to be understood that a very large number of the poorest people, especially in the south of India, are called "Pariahs," or "outcasts;" even their touch is regarded as defiling by orthodox high-caste people.

Vykam is a village centre, in the middle of the backwaters of Travancore. The sea comes in and out with tidal water along different channels, which intersect the country; and in this part there is one highway, which goes through Vykam itself. Apart from this one road, people would have to go across rice-fields, to get from one part of the country to another, with possibly some waterway intersecting. Thus this highway is one of the most important roads in that part of the country. But since it runs through a Brahmin quarter, close to the Vykam temple, the Brahmins for hundreds of years have refused to allow any of the Pariahs on it, for fear of defilement. Thus it has remained open only to high-caste people and customary usage has gained the sanction of law. This social injustice has now unfortunately become

¹⁶ *The Survey* (Graphic Number), East Strousburg, PA (USA), 61:710+, March 1929

embodied in the law of the land.

The young followers of Gandhi determined to make out of this a test case, and to try to throw open this high road for all human beings alike. One interesting thing in the story, which shows the strength of Mahatma Gandhi's movement, is this: the young leader, who originated the idea of this struggle, was a Syrian Christian from the ancient Syrian church in Travancore - a young barrister called George Joseph. He was a devoted follower of Gandhi and a prominent patriotic worker in Travancore.

Mahatma Gandhi was almost desperately ill at the time the struggle began, and I was with him at the seaside near Bombay where he was lying in extreme weakness. In any case, the whole plan of action was mapped out from Gandhi's bedside, and the struggle began.

The followers of Mahatma Gandhi took with them the "untouchable" friends, whose rights they were advocating, and walked into the Brahmin quarter. They were immediately beaten, and one was seriously hurt. Then the police of the Travancore State arrested George Joseph and his followers for encouraging trespass; they were condemned to imprisonment for varying lengths of time, up to one year. At once, volunteers came pouring in from all parts of the country in order to take the place of those who were arrested. The State department then ordered that no more arrests should be made. The police were to prevent by force any of Mr. Gandhi's followers from entering the road. They made a cordon across the road. The leader of the volunteers then asked Mr. Gandhi for instructions. He told his followers to stand opposite the police cordon, until police gave way. They were to take the attitude of prayer and treat the whole matter as sacred religious duty. The young followers of Gandhi thereupon built an *Ashram* (a place of religious retreat) of reed huts near to the village and organised everything on a religious basis, beginning and ending each day with prayer. They went to their post at the barrier singing hymns to God, and in no way offering any violence at any point in the struggle.

Mahatma Gandhi then urged them to go on with the struggle however long it might last. He expressed his pleasure at all the arrangements. He also sent me down to help and encourage the passive resisters and to report to him about it. What follows I saw with my own eyes.

The place itself is flat low-lying land. In order to reach it, I had to cross waterways by one ferry after another. Everywhere the palm trees grew in great luxuriance. It was a land of palm trees, reflected in the water. Under a clump of palms the *Ashram* of Gandhi's followers was built. Each day at four o'clock the *Ashram* began its morning prayers. Then followed the rapid cooking of an early morning meal - some rice preparation. Soon after five, the procession of volunteers started for the barrier. There were long tortuous narrow lanes through the palm groves leading to the centre of the village. The villagers lined the road each day in order to see the volunteers pass; and they sang their hymns as they marched in their white robes to the barrier. At the barrier itself, they stood side by side with the Pariahs in an attitude of prayer, and one

was seated at a spinning wheel and went on spinning silently the whole time as a symbol of Mahatma Gandhi's *Khaddar* (home-spinning) movement.

The sympathy of the villagers was obviously with Gandhi's volunteers. While I was present, I held many discussions with the Brahmins and found that they were wavering. But they were not ready to give up this age-long privilege of exclusiveness. They clung to it more through dogged conservatism than through any belief in its virtues.

The different bands of volunteers stood at the barrier without a break for six hours; each watch was changed at noon; and at six o'clock in the evening the day's struggle was over. The volunteers then went back, singing their evening hymn to God. The whole *Ashram* retired to rest between eight and nine o'clock, after a meal of rice.

The climax came during the drenching monsoon rains. At that time the country, which is very near to the sea level, becomes flooded; and during the year of this struggle the flood waters reached up to the waists of those who were standing at the barrier. The police were stationed during the floods in flat boats, which were moored across the road and fixed with ropes to posts. Thus the police were dry-shod on their watch; but the volunteers were sometimes up to their shoulders in water; and the strain was so great that the hours of duty had to be shortened from six hours to three hours. During this crisis of the flood there was much illness in the camp, which was itself nearly under water; and the suffering undergone by the volunteers at one time became acute. But naturally public sympathy was immensely increased by the bravery with which they went on enduring these hard conditions.

It was probably, most of all, this brave endurance of suffering which broke down the Brahmin resistance. In the end, after about one year and four months, the struggle was over and the road was opened, the Brahmins themselves accepting the new conditions and offering to allow the Pariah to walk past the temple and through Brahmin quarters. They said, "We cannot any longer resist the prayers that have been made to us, and we are ready to receive them".

It will easily be seen from this illustration how entirely unlike the weapons of the West is this indigenous weapon of India for dealing with her own social problems. Out of this Vykam struggle there has come not merely the opening up of one single highway for the Pariah, nor yet even the winning of the human right to use many of such roads, but a complete change in the angle of vision among the whole orthodox community of South India. It is likely to be the crowning point of victory in the whole struggle. What this means, in a country where these poor "untouchable" people number over fifty millions, can hardly be overestimated. For centuries, this deep-rooted evil has been going on unconquered. Now at last it would appear that a blow has been struck at the heart of the wrong, which may destroy its very life force and thus remove it from the earth.

A second illustration may be given from my own experience in Assam with regard to

the great opium evil. Assam has been the one province in India on the border of China, which has been most addicted to the opium curse. The non-co-operation movement, which Mahatma Gandhi initiated, was regarded from the first as a movement of self-purification throughout the length and breadth of India. It was to be non-co-operation with evil in any shape and form.

When Mr. Gandhi went to Assam he was especially asked by the leader of Assam to deal directly with the opium evil. During his visit he took up no other subject and dealt with it in his own direct method. He went through the villages in out-of-the-way places, meeting the villagers face to face. He went especially to those villages which had sunk most deeply of all under the opium evil. Everywhere he declared that the villagers must give up directly and immediately the opium habit. When they asked him what would happen to them when they gave up opium, he told them to have faith in God and to have boundless trust in God's power of deliverance. The simple villagers saw in Mahatma Gandhi himself the living vision of God and gained their strength of faith from his personality.

What happened was nothing less than a miracle. Within six months of his visit the opium consumption in Assam, which is under government control, was reduced by over 25 percent, and that reduction has continued ever since. Not merely was there this reduction in the consumption of government opium but also, I was told, the smuggled opium was equally reduced. To put the matter very briefly, that one visit of Mahatma Gandhi has completely changed the opium situation in Assam. It has resulted in a moral purification infinitely greater and more powerful than any legal prohibition.

It was not possible for me to be with Mahatma Gandhi during this visit to Assam, but I visited the same villages two years later when I was engaged in arduous work there as a member of an important opium commission, and was able to verify by eye witness the facts which I had been told about Mahatma Gandhi's visit. Again and again I saw villagers who had been addicts for thirty or forty years and had never touched opium since the day when Mahatma Gandhi told them not to do so.

Here again it seems to me is another illustration of the old Bible story. The Government from the West had attempted all kinds of methods and plans for getting rid of this evil in Assam. I have often studied the chart of opium consumption in Assam. What is visible is a slight rise and fall year after year in accordance with the prosperity and depression of the country. But during the whole period, in spite of all kinds of endeavour, there was no real improvement, no complete conquering of the evil. But on the other hand, when a saint like Mahatma Gandhi came face to face and heart to heart with these illiterate villagers in their own villages and gave to them the word of faith, he was able to effect in the shortest possible time what all government measures had been unable to do for half a century.

The moral of the story is this: if by delicate, sensitive sympathy with those internal forces in India, that are themselves the vital springs of reform, we from the West can

in any way help forward India in the throes of her social revolution, we can do well. But if on the other hand, we attempt to press on India from the outside our own methods and our own ideas as though in that way reform can be effective, then we are really in danger of throwing back the Indian reform movement and impeding its onwards progress.

THE COMING CRISIS IN INDIA¹⁷

Without any doubt, affairs in India are now rapidly coming to a head, and a crisis may be expected, such as occurred a few years ago in China. It will require the most careful statesmanship to keep peace. The new arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, which has been reported while I have been planning this article, is itself a sign of the times. Let me start from that for now as always, since 1918, Gandhi and Gandhi alone is the central driving force in Indian political life. If the scanty news which has reached America is correct, his arrest took place over the "Burning of Foreign Clothes".¹⁸ I must go back in my explanation to make clear that issue.

At the height of the non-co-operation movement, many years ago, the excitement of the masses of the Indian people had passed beyond all bounds. I can well remember the eager word that was on every man's lips at the time: "When shall we get *Swaraj* (self-government)?"

In those exciting years, Gandhi's political movement had met with amazing success. It was estimated that over twenty-five thousand had voluntarily courted arrest and gone to jail. The country had become united by a common suffering. Hindu and Mussulman were demanding the same thing. The Viceroy had very nearly agreed to call a round-table conference and come to terms with the leaders of the revolution. We have a startling revelation in Mr. Drew Pearson's interview with the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Lloyd, which admits us, as listeners-in, to the inner secrets of those days.¹⁹ For even Governors can be indiscreet at times. He said to Mr. Pearson in an interview:

"Just a thin spindly, shrimp of a fellow was Gandhi!

"But he swayed three hundred and nineteen million people and held them at his beck and call. He didn't care for material things. He preached nothing but the ideals and morals of India. You can't govern a country with ideals! Still, that was where he got his grip upon the people. He was their god. India must always have its god. First it was Tilak, then Gandhi, now someone else tomorrow..

¹⁷ *New Republic*, Washington, DC, 58:89-90, April 3, 1929

¹⁸ Gandhiji was arrested in Calcutta on March 4, 1929, for lighting a bonfire of foreign cloth. He was later sentenced to a fine of one rupee. The fine was paid by someone without his knowledge.

¹⁹ Drew Pearson, American journalist, visited India in 1923 and interviewed the Governor of Bombay. He sought the Governor's permission for an interview with Gandhiji, then in prison, but was refused.

An account of his interview with Sir George Lloyd was published in *Young India* on November 22, 1923, and reproduced in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume 23, Appendix VI, pages 556-58.

“He gave us a scare! His programme filled our jails. You can’t go on arresting people forever, you know - not when there are 319,000,000 of them. And if they had taken his next step and refused to pay taxes! God knows where we should have been!

“Gandhi’s was the most colossal experiment in world history; and it came within an inch of succeeding. But he couldn’t control men’s passions. They became violent and he called off his programme.

“You know the rest. We jailed him”.

When Pearson asked if there was any likelihood of Gandhi’s being released before his six-year term expired, he replied emphatically, “Not while I’m here. Of course my term expires in December. They can do whatever they like with him, after I go back to England”.

Sir George Lloyd went back to England and a new Governor succeeded him who released Gandhi very quickly. Lord Lloyd, as he is now, went on to Egypt, where he has gained a reputation, not unlike that he had in India, as a “strong man”. But such “strength” is not a match in the end for Gandhi. No doubt with Lord Lloyd, ideals are still at a discount, in Cairo as well as in Bombay.

“You can’t govern a country with ideals”. It is not hard to see the contempt, coupled with fear of Gandhi, in almost every word of Lord Lloyd’s interview, and it tells us much about what is happening today in India. The tragedy of the whole situation is this, that nearly every one of the national leaders is an idealist, with little practical experience of affairs, and they are face to face with one of the ablest groups of officials that the world has ever seen.

To make things worse the masses of India are undisciplined. Now and again Mahatma Gandhi’s own actions have only increased the ferment, until the cauldron has boiled over. The violence to which Lord Lloyd referred broke out first in Bombay over the “Burning of the Foreign Clothes”. Day after day that burning had gone on. For instance, I have a record of one such bonfire on Chowpatty Beach, Bombay, which was over one hundred feet high, attended by over one hundred thousand people. In his own exaltation of heart, Gandhi did not understand at first where his frenzy was leading his passive resistance movement. But the Bombay riots, as he tells us, opened his eyes. The mob of illiterate mill-hands, whom he had encouraged to burn foreign clothes, soon began to burn other things as well. They set fire to houses and street cars, and presently killed innocent people in the streets merely because they were Europeans. In other parts of India, the same violent conflagration broke out, and thus Mahatma Gandhi’s programme of non-violence was defeated.

He fasted and prayed. He poured out his soul in humiliation. Then, while his own followers were on the point of rejecting his leadership, and confusion was in the non-co-operation camp, the Governor, who couldn’t “govern a country with ideals,” arrested him and cast him into prison.

There was no chivalry in such a deed. It was the clever move of a man of the world, watching for the exact moment to trip up the idealist and put him where he can do no more mischief. Indeed, Gandhi's arrest and trial are not altogether unworthy, in certain respect, of comparison with another scene, recorded in the Gospels. He was sent to prison for six years. "You know the rest," said the Governor to Mr. Drew Pearson, "we jailed him". The Governor added that there would be no release of Gandhi in his term of office. But fortunately, his five years' governorship had already nearly expired and Gandhi was released by his successor.

But a strange fatality, seems to pursue the passive resistance movement, concerning the "Burning of the Foreign Clothes," which Gandhi has initiated. I think he does not altogether believe in it himself for the furtherance of his programme.

The atmosphere of Bengal today is even more violent in certain respects than that of Bombay. The young ardent spirits in Bengal have always, in their heart of hearts, favored the pathway of violence, which has appeared to them more daring and adventurous than the slow, long torture of passive resistance. It is significant that at the time of Mahatma Gandhi's arrest in Mirzapur Park, Calcutta, the "Burning of Foreign Clothes" programme had been revived. It remains to be seen whether he will still continue now to defend the burning as in accord with non-violence, or whether he will withdraw it altogether from his non-violent programme. Perhaps the point may be decided before this article appears.

It has not been out of proportion to concentrate thought upon this one issue of violence or non-violence for it represents the parting of the ways in Young India today.

Mahatma Gandhi definitely promised, at the All India National Congress in Calcutta last December, to lead the Indian people forward in a non-violent struggle, unless the British Government accepts the national demand for *Swaraj* before December 31, 1929. The sands, he affirms, are fast running out. Unless the national demand is granted during the current year, nothing short of separation from Great Britain will satisfy the people. But he has declared emphatically, at the same time, that he will only lead a struggle of passive resistance.

Within three months of this declaration, Mahatma Gandhi himself has been arrested, and the issue appears to have been over the "Burning of Foreign Clothes". It is clear already that the issue of violence or non-violence will have to be faced.

Meanwhile, two events have happened which must enormously complicate the problem. The former is the Moslem League meeting, at Delhi, presided over by His Highness the Aga Khan. It is hard to tell how far this meeting actually represented average Mussulman sentiment; but His Highness the Aga Khan's one sentence, that the Moslem community was a "nation" within India and not merely a religious community, has perhaps done more than anything else to distress those who are

anxious to bring about a true Hindu-Moslem entente, uniting Indians together as one people.

The second event, long anticipated and feared by nationalists of all parties has been the repudiation of the national demand for *Swaraj* by certain Indian princes. An organised attempt is being made to cause a split in that direction. The new National Constitution, which has been prepared by the All Parties Committee under the chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru, has been rejected by these princes on the ground that it does not sufficiently safeguard their own treaty rights. They have somewhat fulsomely expressed their own undying loyalty to the Crown.

Nevertheless, these two splits in the national unity do not disturb me so much as the appeal to violence which has been adumbrated in Calcutta by the renewed "Burning of Foreign Clothes". For that appears to me an ominous sign of the times. There is a writing on the wall, not hard to read.

Let me give some examples. In London, last year, it was easily possible for me to meet the most ardent of the younger Nationalists. They concealed nothing from me. Their own ideal was still definitely that of *ahimsa*, or non-violence. But they declared almost without exception, that their own bitter experience had very nearly proved to them that the West did not understand any weapon except force. It was therefore useless to go to prison again, as they had gone before. Circumstances would, in the long run, compel an appeal to force.

Again, the All-India Trades Union Congress, held in December at Jharia, in the coal and iron districts of India, where industrial development is most strenuous, swung over in an unmistakable manner to the side of Moscow, with its ridicule of non-violence. Although the Communists are still in a minority in that Congress, they are clearly rising in importance.

Once more, in the All-India National Congress itself the swing towards the Left has been marked. When Mahatma Gandhi pleaded for one year's delay, he was nearly out-voted. Those who voted for immediate separation thought, as far as I can gather at this distance, that the old patient methods were no longer to be pursued. That vote in open session of the National Congress, in which roughly nine hundred voted against Mahatma Gandhi and thirteen hundred voted for him, was ominous for the future. It meant that the patience and endurance of the younger men among the Indian intelligentsia were almost exhausted.

One thing remains to be said: it is useless today to tell Young India to practise caution, or merely to point to the dangers of precipitate action. To take that course is only to inflame passion. Nothing but a great and generous deed on the part of British statesmen can save the situation now from disaster. But can such a deed be done in time?

CHRISTIANITY AND RACE PREJUDICE²⁰

The Christian religion at its inception stood out boldly for racial equality. There were violent controversies within the early Church, but the race question was settled once and for all when the declaration was finally made, that there could not possibly be any distinction between the Jew and the Greek, the barbarian and the Scythian, the slave and the freeman, because all were one humanity in Christ Jesus.

This charter of race equality was never seriously questioned by any Christian until the evil days of the slave trade and the setting up of that cruellest of all racial distinctions between slave and slave owner. Race Churches in which the races worship separately were originally slave Churches. They arose out of this brutal distinction between races on a slave basis.

Though it was the disgrace of my own country to fight fiercely to retain the monopoly of the slave traffic between Africa and America, yet it was also the glory of Great Britain that she gave many of the noblest pioneers in the long struggle for the abolition of Slavery. An historian has said that perhaps the one purely disinterested act in modern politics has been the Abolition of Slavery. It is with an infinite relief that one reads how our own forefathers carried through that struggle to the end, and how the victory spread from one country to another to the ends of the world.

This same victory reverberated in a thousand other directions. It gave a generous outlook to the Nineteenth Century, making it the greatest century of humane liberalism in all human experience. The breath of freedom, which made a man fair-minded in thought and deed, spread over the earth. We have the Declaration of Racial Equality in India as early as 1833. The whole colonial policy of Great Britain in Cape Colony, Natal, the West Indies, and in other critical racial areas, was decided at first on the same progressive lines.

In other countries the same spirit of freedom also prevailed. Such outstanding figures as Lincoln in America, and Gladstone in Great Britain, made at last this one principle of racial equality fundamentally sure. Whatever difficulties might arise in practice, in the eyes of the law all men and all races are equal. This one truth thus seemed to have established itself finally for mankind in the same way that the Abolition of Slavery itself had done. It has been my own task many times over to study the official documents with regard to Indian and Colonial affairs during this great age of Liberal statesmanship last century when Gladstone and Bright were in the ascendant. They declared that there must be nothing within the British constitution which meant in the eyes of the law racial

²⁰ Address at the Quadrennial Conference of the British Student Christian Federation, Liverpool, January 5, 1929. From *The Crisis*, New York, August 1929.

inequality. Now and then great battles were fought over this issue, but the principle itself was always acknowledged. It was this that made Mahatma Gandhi in early days such a profound believer in the British Constitution as the champion of racial freedom.

But the pendulum has swung back. The reaction came towards the close of the Nineteenth Century. While equality between the white races became acknowledged, equality outside the white races was questioned. What has sometimes been called the “Religion of the White Race” has even taken the place of the Christian religion. This “white race religion” has carried with it imperial domination and economic exploitation. With such immensely powerful adjuncts as these, it has been able subtly but surely to undermine the British Constitution itself and to leave it today in many parts of the world merely a façade without any substantial background. The Colonial Office, with its long traditions of racial equality, has often fought a brave fight against this reactionary tendency; but it has been obliged to give way and acknowledge in practice that there is one law for the white race, and another law for the other races as inferior.

Thus the Christian principle of racial equality, which was upheld by the greatest statesmen of last century has been virtually abandoned in the Twentieth Century. The spread of white racialism has infected the Christian Church. When I was in South Africa, in 1913-1914, Mahatma Gandhi was refused admission to a Christian Church at Christmas tide, when he wished to hear me preach. An Indian Christian would have received exactly the same treatment, and so would a Chinese Christian or an African Christian. We have thus got a religion today which calls itself Christian, but does not acknowledge the ultimate Christian principle of racial equality. It cannot truly say “We are all one humanity in Christ Jesus” because it does not believe this.

When I came back from South Africa on a very short visit to England, early in 1914, and my heart was pained with the racialism within the Christian Church which I had witnessed, I found the whole atmosphere filled with the Kikuyu controversy, intercommunion between the different Christian denominations and troubles between rival sects, while this racial wrong was destroying Christ’s religion at its very root.

The World War followed and the racial evil has grown worse and worse. Since the War, and in accord with the brutality of the war spirit, we have suffered terribly in India at Amritsar; in Kenya we have seen a racial franchise and a racial conscription imposed; and we have had an unjust Colour Bar Act in South Africa. Is it to be wondered at, if the Simon Commission, on which only white men were allowed to sit, is called in India a “White Race Commission”? Meanwhile churches that refuse communion to different races have spread a noxious epidemic which shows very little sign of abatement. Is Christ divided?

I have not paused to argue the case for racial equality, but have taken it as one of

the final facts of the Christian religion, just as it is also a final fact in the universal religions of mankind. The shame of which I have just spoken is this, that while, for instance, the faith of Islam and the Buddhist faith practise as well as preach, yet over large areas those who profess the Christian faith do not practise it and thus Christ is divided.

Again and again when we go abroad and even in England itself the question is put to us by those who belong to other religions: “Why do you Christians alone today uphold racial inequality and judge men according to the colour of their skin?” We are often told that the Christian Religion is the religion of the White man and that it is a symbol of imperialism and haughty domination. If we protest that Christ never taught such things we are brought up against the fact that Christ’s followers practise this on a large scale. It is an African proverb which says: “Your deeds speak so loud to me that I cannot hear what you say in your words”. It is these loud speakers all over the world – the dark deeds of Christendom – which are trumpeting forth race-domination from Europe. No wonder that the still small voice of the Holy Spirit of God cannot be heard.

What then remains to be done? Are we to fold our hands? No. That is not what our forefathers did when they were faced with slavery. They laid down their lives for the truth. The one single death of John Smith of Demarara, the young missionary, who died for the slaves of the sugar plantations in British Guiana²¹ did more to abolish slavery than all the other strivings put together. It gave the moral power behind the plea of Wilberforce and others, which carried it home to men’s hearts.

What is needed is a revival of the spirit of martyrdom and sacrifice for the Christian faith which we profess. It is only those who have carried their faith to the test of action, those who have lived for their faith with the joyful consciousness that at any moment they may be called upon to die for it – it is only these that are able to hold their own position without wavering when the crucial test comes. It is only these who can wrest victory out of defeat. There must be no compromise: not betrayal: no looking back.

Because the issue is so grave : because it is a matter of life and death – not to you and me only, but to the Christian Faith itself as it is lived and practised among men – for that reason, I have waited in England for this Liverpool Conference, in order that I might pass on to the young Christian students of this country, the moving indignation that we feel on account of the wrong that is being done and the determination to right it.

Very soon the call may come to finish what has been given to me to do in the life-span allotted by God; for I am nearing the age of sixty and the body has been tried by much illness in the tropics. But if it were only possible to deliver over

²¹ Now Guyana

this one supreme longing of my heart, for which we have struggled all these years, often apparently in vain – the longing of removing from the fair name of Christ this racial reproach, and to bring to an end, for His sake, these racial Christian Churches, then I could joyfully leave the work to be carried on by those whose idealism is still untainted with timidity and whose young lives are still reckless with courage. For we cannot, we must not, swerve one hair's breadth from the great charter of human solidarity and human redemption, which Christ himself has given us:

“In Him, there can be neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, for all are one Man in Christ Jesus”.

PRESIDENT HOOVER AND THE ORIENT²²

In Planning for Permanent Peace, the Ferment in China and India Must Not Be Ignored

The message which the President of the United States delivered on the anniversary of Armistice Day, this year, to an eagerly listening world, was no mere empty tribute to the cause of international peace.²³ Mr. Hoover was not content with those oratorical statements which tickle the ear of the multitude but end in nothing. As far as ever he could, he dealt solidly throughout with concrete facts, leaving no doubt in anyone's mind as to his own fixed purpose to get to the root of the war evil, and then carry through by every means in his power the practical remedy for it. The same course of action, rather than speech, had stood out clearly as one of the chief features of the Macdonald conversations. Looking back on both events, it is not difficult to see their exact sequence; and the remarkable resultant, in the favorable reception of the neutrality proposal for all food-ships during times of war, has been chiefly due to the very thorough spade-work and foundation-laying which went before. If accepted, such neutrality would relieve the huddled nations of Western Europe, with their over-population, from the biting grip of fear in one direction at least. By giving this relief, it would make a disarmament, in naval forces, far more feasible. A masterstroke has been dealt for the righteous cause of peace in thus weakening the sinews of war.

Looking back on the past since the first Armistice Day, eleven years ago, and combining President Hoover's name with those of Dawes, Kellogg and Young, it is manifest that America's practical contributions towards the removal of those mountainous difficulties that remained after the World War have been second to none in solid achievement.²⁴ The part that America has thus played in bringing

²² *New Republic*, Washington, DC, December 4, 1929, pages 33-34

²³ In an address on Armistice Day (November 11, 1929) in Washington, DC, Herbert C. Hoover (1874-1964), President of the United States (1929-1933), urged immunity during war for ships carrying food supplies. He offered to reduce the American Navy as low as other major naval Powers agree. He urged that governments "remove starvation of women and children from the weapons of war".

²⁴ Charles C. Dawes, United States Vice-President, chaired an international committee to review the reparations imposed on Germany after World War I. The conclusions of the committee, known as the Dawes Plan, extended the term of payments but imposed stringent conditions to ensure payments by Germany.

In 1929, the Dawes Plan which threatened the value of Germany's currency, was replaced by the Young Plan - named after Owen D. Young, an American financier - which reduced the amount of reparations.

gradually nearer world peace on one side of the surface of the earth has been worthy of the idealism, mingled with practical effort, whereon the Republic has all along been based. It is in line with its own great tradition of human emancipation.

But having said this with a very full and thankful heart, and after reading many times over President Hoover's speech and noting its immediate reaction on world opinion, it has filled me with wonder to discover why a statesman so wise and wide-awake as President Hoover has confined himself to the problem of Europe and made no direct reference at all on such a world occasion to the problem of Asia. For, as far as I could gather, that second half of humanity (which forms in its own dense area, a majority of the world's population) did not come within his ken. Europe loomed so large as to block out the light of Asia.

It is all the more strange to me in President Hoover's case, because he was educated on the American Pacific slope facing the Far East and has spent important years of his life in China and Burma.²⁵ Yet at Washington, facing the Atlantic, his mind has evidently become so absorbed in the problems confronting him there that the Orient seems to have faded for a time at least out of his mind's vision. Even Secretary Stimson,²⁶ fresh back from the Philippines as his intimate friend and adviser, does not yet appear to have brought with him the true world perspective as it affects the United States.

Yet the fact is palpably evident to those who have lived their lives in India and China, that since Armistice Day, eleven years ago, there has been raised among the masses of the village people in both these eastern countries a ferment so feverishly upheaving, that it can only be described adequately in the scriptural words as a "shaking of those things that can be shaken, so that those things that cannot be shaken may remain". This quite recent interior revolution has brought with it non-co-operation in India and civil war in China. It has affected a much more populous area of the earth's surface than the birth of national consciousness in Japan which preceded it by two generations.

Such a tremendous oscillation in a densely crowded mass of human beings must surely, one would have thought, be recorded on all the political seismographs of the West, and especially in America with its long Pacific coast. But the silence of the President's speech makes me wonder whether its world-shaking importance has yet been realised. There have been, of course, minor political events which have created an eddy of excitement. Such an occasion was the sudden danger to

Frank B. Kellogg, United States Secretary of State, together with Aristide Briand, Foreign Minister of France, sponsored the Treaty for the Renunciation of War which was signed by fifteen nations in Paris on August 27, 1928. The Treaty came to be known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact and Kellogg was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1929, but it proved ineffective.

²⁵ Mr. Hoover had studied mining engineering at Stanford, California, and worked as an engineer in Tientsin, China, in 1899-1900.

²⁶ Henry L. Stimson (1867-1950), Secretary of State during the Hoover administration.

the foreign settlement at Shanghai more than two years ago. But the intellectual and moral upheaval, which has changed the face of these two countries, India and China, with their eight hundred million souls, has only been referred to in the pages of erudite reviews; it has not caught the popular mind or come into the lime-light of world politics in the West.

What has happened, briefly, is this. The moral prestige of the West has suddenly melted into thin air like a morning mist before the sunrise, leaving these millions of our common humanity in the East - men and women of the same flesh and blood as ourselves - looking out towards America and Europe with eyes now at last undazzled by any false glamour of Western superiority. They have got over - to change the metaphor - their stage fright.

If this transvaluation of values were only intellectual, it might be met by rational processes of mutual accommodation and economic adjustment; but it is essentially moral and spiritual and therefore supra-rational. It has come also with the reflex force of a violent rebound and it has sped with amazing swiftness all over the East and over Africa as well, gaining still further intensive force from the vast drive of the Soviet influences from the North. Such a combination of forces - the aftermath of the World War, the Russian Revolution, the Chinese and Indian upheavals, the African native unrest, the sudden eclipse of European moral prestige - has, perhaps, never happened before in human history since the French Revolution. History is indeed being written in very large handwriting in the East today.

Far more seriously than any mounting up of new naval armaments, the explosive forces generated by the blank refusal even to discuss at Versailles, or Geneva, or Washington, the principle of racial equality, have now grown so vast, and at the same time so inwardly intense, that control and direction are no longer practical or possible unless something speedily is done to mitigate the internal evil. The racially insulting Asiatic Prohibition Law of 1924²⁷ still remains on the statute books of the United States; the colour bar legislation still holds its grip upon the industrious African native in South Africa; the Kenya policy still implies racial discrimination in favour of the European race; insults literally infinite in number carry out into sordid effect these racial policies of governments in daily social practice. Nevertheless, at such a time in world history, we wearily seem to be satisfied with the sedative, "All quiet on the Western front," and to satisfy ourselves with the hope that if the Young Plan goes through successfully and naval parity is reached in January at London, we shall then have almost within our sight "World Peace".

²⁷ United States immigration act which excluded Asians

WHAT NEXT IN INDIA?²⁸

The past six months have witnessed many swings backward and forward in Indian political life. A pause has now been reached in this oscillation with the Viceroy's announcement that dominion status was the declared goal of British statesmanship and that a conference was to be summoned in London.

Everyone in India today who reads the newspapers and thinks for himself realises Great Britain's critically difficult position owing to the unemployment problem. She is not in a position to challenge India, her best customer, to an economic warfare. The new tone adopted in England towards China has also not passed unnoticed. Young India, especially, has begun to feel a new strength of her own. She is no longer in a pliant mood. These inner facts will probably account for the chequered reception which has been given to the Viceroy's declaration. The younger members of the nationalist party, who are at heart in favour of complete separation from England, are critical of everything that comes from England today. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who is their acknowledged leader, has stated to the press:

"A conference to discuss peace terms, when war is being waged against us by the British government, is not to be thought of. Such a conference must be preceded by a cessation of the present warlike repressive activities. There must be a clear indication that the British government is out for peace, on the basis of the Indian nationalist demand, and is not merely playing for time".

Mahatma Gandhi's first reaction to the announcement was no less characteristic. "Any such conference," he said, "must be like Caesar's wife, above suspicion". At the same time he was prepared on certain conditions to welcome the Viceroy's proposal for a round-table conference in London. Later on, a meeting was summoned of leaders belonging to all parties and creeds. I have seen the list of those present and would regard it as truly representative. It included the name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the left and that of the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri on the right wing of Indian politics. This meeting issued a statement to the press which was unanimously agreed upon. It recognised the sincerity of the Viceroy's utterance. Three things were demanded: (1) a quiet atmosphere for the conference; (2) a political amnesty; (3) a majority from the Indian National Congress among those members of the conference who should represent the Indian people.

On these points there should not be any serious difficulty. Then follows, in their statement, a request to the Viceroy to corroborate their own interpretation of his message, so that there may be no misunderstanding. They assume that the

²⁸ *The Nation*, New York, 130: 25-26, January 1, 1930

conference itself is to place before the British Parliament what form the dominion constitution of India shall take. Thus the Viceroy's twofold declaration, that dominion status was the goal and a conference was to be held, has been taken by all the Indian leaders to mean that the conference is to decide the new dominion constitution of India.

Up to the present, I have not been able to find (after searching through the somewhat scanty news from India) any sign of a deadlock, or disavowal, or disagreement. But it is evident that many newspapers in England have not given the same interpretation to the Viceroy's speech which the Indian leaders have given; nor are they at all convinced that negotiations have advanced to the point of framing a dominion constitution. We are left, therefore, in a state of uncertainty which may possibly be ended one way or another before what I am now writing is published. If I am asked how far it is desirable and possible to go in carrying out the British government's pledge of ultimate dominion status for India, I would say without any hesitation that the earlier constitution under the Reform Councils of 1921 - making some subjects "reserved" and others "transferred" - proved unworkable. It had in it all those elements of distrust and timidity which ruin honest statesmanship. One of the chief secretaries in the Government of India at Simla said to me: "This Reform Constitution is so bad that it has only one thing to recommend it: no one can ever wish to go on with it, and therefore it drives us forward to something better".

But if that be granted (and hardly anyone who knows the facts would question it) then it carries with it the obvious corollary that the new constitution, unlike the half-hearted measure that went before, must proceed on lines of trust and boldness. There is really no half-way house. Responsible government can only mean full responsibility; to offer with one hand and then to draw back with the other is futile and unstatesmanlike as well.

For the past ten years an incessant torrent of propaganda has been poured forth all over the world, deluging us all with the news that because India is composed of many races, religions, castes, languages, therefore the idea of self-government is impossible. Every riot has been magnified; Miss Mayo's slanderously unfair book has been trumpeted forth; caste barriers have been exaggerated. On the other hand, nothing has been said concerning the underlying unity of Indian life; its geographical completeness; its moral power of patient endurance; its essential reasonableness and moderation; its universal demand for freedom to govern itself in its own way. I shall not easily forget, when I was travelling, in Indian dress, in a third-class railway carriage, how the villagers after discovering my identity crowded round me asking with eager lips and faces: "When shall we get *swaraj* (self-government)?" That was more than twelve years ago in a remote country district almost at the foot of the Himalayas, far from any town centre. If the demand for *swaraj* was so nearly universal then, what must it be today?

It was profoundly interesting to me to read in Mahatma Gandhi's paper, only a

week ago, that he had been visiting that very district. He relates simply that the crowd had been more than twice as great as those multitudes who had gathered at the very height of the non-co-operation movement. We often hear today that his influence is on the wane, that he retains but a shadow of his former greatness. To those who know the facts that is just as absurd as it is untrue to say that India is not eager for *swaraj*.

If then the question be asked: "Would you be ready to entrust India during this coming year with full responsible government, both provincial and central?" I would answer, "Yes". If I were further asked concerning any safeguards to the minorities and to the depressed classes that might be needed, the reply would be that there would necessarily go along with the new constitution a declaration of rights, these rights to be so framed as to comprise a statutory law which no Parliament could overrule or annul.

Lastly, if the problem of military and naval defences were raised, I would point out that India is already an original member of the League of Nations and a signatory of the Paris pact and also of the World Court. Her record is one of peace with her neighbours, not of war. Also it should be pointed out that not a single dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations has a full self-supporting armament as yet, either by land or sea. If officers from England were still needed to carry over the Indian Army intact into the new constitution, they would surely be willing to continue their service for that purpose as long as they were needed. Important details of gradual transference of responsibility could be agreed on, with the necessary accommodations, when once the main issue of full self-government was decided.

INDIA DEMANDS FREEDOM¹

Tremendous pressure from within threatens to take India out of the British Empire. For centuries this vast land of 318,000,000 inhabitants has been divided against itself by differences in caste, religion, politics, and race. But resentment against British rule, gathering strength, found a measure of unity at the 1928 All-India Congress in Calcutta. A demand for full dominion status was made, a demand rooted in the promise for home rule made to India during the World War.

No assurance came from England that dominion status would be granted in the near future; and finally, just before the New Year, the long smouldering desire for freedom came to a white heat at the 1929 All-India Congress at Lahore. On December 31 radical opinion forced a vote of 897 to 816 demanding not merely dominion status, but complete independence. This new demand is to be supported by an elaborate plan of civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. England, convinced that the economic life of the Empire depends on retaining India, will resist independence to the end. As this is written in mid-January the first hostile demonstration against Great Britain is set for January 26. No one knows what will happen thereafter.

If the startling events now happening in India are to be fully understood in the West, it is necessary to get the right background. They must be seen in their true perspective. Perhaps no country in the world has suffered so much as India from misleading news. In what follows, I am giving first hand evidence of things which in the main I have witnessed.

During the World War, British India and the Indian States jointly provided a million and a half men for military service. There were also considerable numbers who risked their lives as lascars in the mercantile marine. Besides this, the whole of the Eastern front which could be munitioned from the southern side of the Suez Canal (including Mesopotamia, Palestine, and East Africa) was supplied with military provisions and railway material from the Indian factories. Lord Hardinge, as Viceroy, used the expressive phrase that India had been bled white.

Mahatma Gandhi in his eagerness to do service, notwithstanding his well-known pacific ideals, went so far as to enter on a recruiting campaign for the Allied cause.

¹ *Review of Reviews*, New York, 81: 76-80, February 1930

On May 4, 1918, I was in Delhi with him at an hour of critical danger, when the Russian front had completely given way and an invasion of Asia was momentarily threatened. He offered his whole-hearted support to the King Emperor. In the moral confusion that followed the War, this significant part played by India has often been overlooked by the West. But it has been continually referred to in India itself.

The Indian soldiers, returning from the front, brought back news to the remote villages of India concerning what they had seen. They were stirred by new hopes as they had never been moved before. Pledges of self-determination had been given by President Wilson and Premier Lloyd George on behalf of the victors; and the people of India awaited eagerly their faithful fulfilment.

Then, on April 13, 1919, followed the tragedy of Amritsar. A riot occurred in this city of northern India. In it six Englishmen were brutally murdered and an Englishwoman was seriously assaulted. General Reginald E. H. Dyer, British Brigade Commander at Jullundar, was called to quell the disturbance. Hundreds of Indians who were holding a meeting in disregard of military orders were shot down without warning. They were in an enclosed space from which there was no escape. The wounded were left to die, uncared for in their agony. General Dyer confessed that he had done this to create a moral effect. He also invented the "crawling order," which required Indians to pass the scene of the riot on their hands and knees. This was deliberately devised in the same manner to humiliate a proud and sensitive people.

Here again, I witnessed the result of this with my own eyes. It was an injury which could not be condoned. Not since the massacre of Glencoe had a British General acted in this manner. In ordinary times, such an act of terrorism would have been quite unthinkable. But May, 1919, was the zero hour in the fatal aftermath of insensibility which followed the World War.

Great Britain partly recognised the wrong that had been done. The aged Duke of Connaught came to India, on behalf of the King, and spoke of the "dark shadow of Amritsar". He asked that it might be forgotten. But such memories are indelible in the life of a rising nation. The blow was all the heavier because the people of India believed the time had come for them to have their own *swaraj* (self-rule) in fulfilment of the King's proclamation of August, 1917. That word *swaraj* had been given by the King himself, and they believed that it would be fully carried out. The Indian soldiers had come to their village with that news from the front.

The Reform Councils of 1919 were intended to fulfil the King's promise. But they proved, from the very first, overloaded with safeguards and reservations. Possibly, if the political atmosphere had been more propitious, these safeguards would have fallen into abeyance and the Viceroy's veto might have remained unused. But the "dark shadow of Amritsar" was over the land and there was no

mood for compromise or conciliation. The national uprising had reached a climax. The Mussulmans had their own conflict with the Government of India; Hindus and Mohammedans became, at least for the time being, remarkably united.

Late in the year 1920 one of the most powerful movements of modern times, springing from the heart of the Indian people, was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. This was called by the negative and clumsy English name, Non-violent Non-co-operation. It was, in effect, a peaceful general strike of the whole people. So long as it remained strictly non-violent, it was practically irresistible, owing to its profoundly moral character. Along with a passive resistance of the administration there was carried out an active purification of many age-long abuses. Above all, Mahatma Gandhi led a campaign to raise the status of the outcaste. Lord Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay, confessed to an American interviewer that Gandhi's peaceful warfare had come to the verge of success.

The terms offered again and again by the non-co-operation leaders to the Government of India were perfectly simple. A Round Table Conference was to be summoned, where British and Indian arbitrators were to sit side by side and work out by mutual agreement a Dominion Constitution for India. In December, 1921, a preliminary parley was held between the Viceroy and the Indian leaders on these lines. But the previous question of the release of political prisoners proved intractable, and these first negotiations were abandoned.

Shortly afterwards the non-co-operation movement itself began to lose its non-violent and peaceful character. Thereupon Mahatma Gandhi withdrew from it altogether. In the hour of depression that followed, the Government of India struck hard. Mahatma Gandhi was imprisoned in April, 1922, with a sentence of six years' imprisonment, for "creating disaffection". After his imprisonment, the non-co-operation movement lost its main driving spiritual power. But the bitterness against the British rule went on accumulating and the national determination was hardened.

On the advent to power of the Labour Government in Great Britain under Premier Ramsay MacDonald, early in 1924, Mahatma Gandhi, who had become seriously ill in prison, was released. He then directed the whole of his attention to the spiritual work of healing the social, religious, and economic evils from which India had so long suffered. Especially he strove for Hindu-Moslem unity, prohibition of drink and drugs, together with the removal of the social ban against the outcastes.

His influence, as it thus became more spiritual, gained for him a devotion that was even greater than had been given him at the height of the success of the non-co-operation movement. That influence still remains paramount. Nothing could be further from the truth that his influence has been on the wane. Probably it has never been greater than it is at present. One of the greatest of his efforts was

to seek to revive the economic life of the villages by means of home spinning and home weaving.

In the years that followed Mahatma Gandhi's release from prison, attempts were made by the non-co-operators under Pandit Motilal Nehru to wrest a victory from the Government of India by obstruction from within the Reform Councils. Following out the earlier technique of Mr. Parnell, in the British House of Commons, they formed an intransigent opposition. They obstructed administrative measures, especially on the side of finance. Thus they were able to defeat the Government again and again, passing resolutions and at the same time demanding that a Round Table Conference be held.

This continual embarrassment led the Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, to appoint, two years before the scheduled time, a Royal Commission to inquire into the revision of the Indian Constitution. Sir John Simon was appointed its chairman, and the King's signature was attached.

Such a Commission would not, in any case, have satisfied the non-co-operators, whose demand was a Round Table Conference. But the small though important body of Indian Liberals, who had never joined the non-co-operation movement, would gladly have welcomed Sir John Simon except for one blunder which at such a moment was really worse than a crime. For Lord Birkenhead decided, on his own responsibility, that none except British members should serve on the Commission; therefore no Indian member was appointed. Thus the Commission became racial at the very moment when race feeling was running highest.

When the Royal Commission came out at last, it was boycotted not only by the entire body of non-co-operators, but by all the Indian Liberals as well. Up to the end this opposition was strictly maintained. Thus the Simon Commission, owing to this initial blunder, in spite of all its hard work at official documents, received little support from those who were best fitted to give it an independent, unofficial opinion. Whatever conclusions it may reach, the fact remains that its evidence has been chiefly derived from official sources. It cannot by any stretch of imagination be taken to represent the best opinion of the Indian people.

In December, 1928, the impatience of the nationalists in India reached a climax. The younger generation demanded an immediate declaration of independence, together with separation from the British Empire. But Mahatma Gandhi, by his moral influence, carried what was called a compromise resolution. He agreed to be the first to declare independence, if dominion status was not granted before January 1, 1930.

This challenge was not taken seriously in Great Britain so long as the Conservative Government was in power. Meanwhile a second commission had been appointed to inquire into the changes needed in the Constitution of the Indian States ruled by the Princes. The attention of Great Britain was partly

diverted from British India towards the problem of these states. At the same time, a considerable section of the Mohammedan party in India separated themselves from the compromise resolution of the All-India National Congress, which Mahatma Gandhi had accepted. These Mohammedans also refused to accept the draft Constitution which had been drawn up under the chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru by a committee to which all parties in India had been invited. This was called the All Parties Committee; and the Dominion Constitution which it proposed for acceptance by the British Parliament was framed on constitutional and parliamentary lines.

Lord Birkenhead had himself challenged the Indian leaders to produce a Constitution. The All Parties' Report was the answer to that challenge. Yet so long as the Conservative Government was in power, no notice was taken of it. But from the first moment when Premier Ramsay MacDonald took the helm, a new course was steered in Indian affairs. A declaration was made by the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, that dominion status was the goal of British rule in India, and a Conference was promised in London - after the report of the Simon Commission had been published - a conference wherein the British Government, Indian leaders, and Indian Princes should take part.

This Conference was to consider how these different elements in India - the India under British rule and the India under the Princes' rule - should be related to each other. It was clearly intended to correspond to the Indian national leaders' demand for a Round Table Conference. The Viceroy thus endeavoured at last to accept, as far as he could, the Indian leaders' demand.

Meanwhile, in India itself, things were happening to rouse unusual excitement. There were disturbances caused by incessant strikes in industrial centres. Floods swept over large areas of the country, rendering the village people homeless and foodless. Misery abounded. Then followed arrests of communists and advanced labour leaders. Their treatment in prison, while under trial, led to passive resistance. At length, in October of last year, the death by hunger strike in jail of a young Bengali patriot, Jatindranath Das, brought the excitement of the people to a head.²⁹ The news of his suffering spread from village to village. His death took place in Lahore, the very centre where the All-India National Congress was to be held.

At first the Viceroy's invitation to a Conference in London was favourably considered by the national leaders. The President-elect of the Congress,³⁰ who represents the younger generation, agreed with Mahatma Gandhi to attend on certain conditions. But the leaders stipulated that the Conference must discuss

²⁹ Jatindranath Das (1924-1929), a political worker, was accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Case. He went on a fast in Lahore Central Jail on July 13, 1929, in protest against the treatment of under-trial Indian political prisoners. He died on September 13, 1929.

³⁰ Jawaharlal Nehru

and settle the Dominion Constitution and not postpone the decision to an indefinite future.

It was at this point that negotiations broke down. In the British Parliament there was a majority not at all prepared to go forward with any immediate decision for *Swaraj*. But the Indian leaders were adamant on this point. They had received too many broken promises in times past. Therefore, when before Christmas the Viceroy met Mahatma Gandhi, he was not able to give the assurance needed from the British Parliament. Negotiations finally broke down.

After that the sequence of events was inevitable. When the All-India Congress met just before the new year, Mahatma Gandhi himself proposed the resolution for independence and rejected dominion status. At the same time he was able to get two generous resolutions passed in the Subjects' Committee, one expressing sympathy with the Viceroy in the peril he had just passed through by a bomb explosion,³¹ the other appreciating his offer of a Conference, but at the same time refusing it. To carry these two motions meant no slight exercise of calming influence in the midst of the excitement of those days.

Only when a full account of the Congress proceedings reaches America will the inner history of this crisis in India be fully revealed. We shall know then how far the followers of Islam have united with Hindus in this independence resolution and how far they have refrained. On that one issue much will obviously depend. My own opinion is that among the masses of the villagers Mahatma Gandhi's words will be obeyed. Some, who are inclined to judge lightly, may imagine that this independence resolution is not to be taken seriously. But such persons do not know Mahatma Gandhi, who never says one word beyond that which he is ready to put into practice.

With regard to the form of passive resistance that will now be offered, we have the clearest picture in what happened recently in Bardoli. There the people unitedly refused to pay the land tax to the Government when it had been enhanced beyond what they felt to be just. In the end the Government was obliged to yield. If such civil disobedience can be carried out on a large scale without violence it is difficult to see how the administration itself can be carried on. All depends on the extent to which the people are in earnest and ready to suffer for the cause.

³¹ In December 1930, the train on which the Viceroy was travelling was wrecked by a bomb. But Lord Irwin escaped injury.

WHAT NEXT IN INDIA? - 232

While attempting to gauge the driving power behind recent events in Lahore and the subsequent happenings on January 26 which has been designated by Indian nationalists as the Day of Independence, it may be well to offer a rough analysis of the different elements in the political situation that go to make up the composite life of modern India during her present revolutionary mood.

As a practical issue, we can place little stress at such a crisis as this on the Moderates, who recently met in Madras and passed resolutions along the old constitutional lines, with petitions to the British Parliament. The chief leaders in this small intellectual group are among my close personal friends, and mentally I have a strong sympathy with their own temperamental attitude of caution in a period of rapid change. Yet they themselves, perhaps would be the foremost to acknowledge that their exhortation carries very little weight outside the quiet circle of a few like-minded individuals. It does not reach the masses. There is no corporate public opinion behind it. They have never once attempted to ride the storm as Mahatma Gandhi has so often done. Their intellectual outlook, together with their power of seeing the other side as clearly as their own, has made them hesitate too long.

Therefore, in its present hurricane temper, the vast illiterate population of India, now articulate for the first time, pays them little attention. The crowd passes them by and sweeps along to Chowpati Beach in Bombay, or to the open sands in Madras, or to the burning *ghat* at Calcutta, where Jatindranath Das's body was burned in the presence of a multitude that no one could number. His self-imposed martyrdom, after a hunger strike which ended in death on the sixty-third day, has done more to drive the masses of India forward into a cyclone of whirling revolution than all the work which the Moderates have done through years of patient constitutional reform to prevent it.

There is a close parallel between this attitude of the Moderates in India and the pathetic figure of Kerensky in the early days of the Russian Revolution. It may be that things will not move so fast in India as they did in Russia during the autumn of 1917; for there is an essential conservatism in the village life which cannot easily be overcome; but after having personally passed through the exciting days of the non-cooperation movement in 1921, it would by no means be difficult for me to imagine what would happen, with the political barometer so low, if the storm swept round again.

To say all this is not at all to depreciate the ultimate steadying value of the Moderates or to underestimate their moral courage. But the pace at which things are moving in India is too strong for them and they are left behind

bewildered. In the non-co-operation movement of 1921, I witnessed the very same thing happening. They knew in their heart of hearts that they had no appeal that could reach the masses, and so they wisely kept aloof until the tyranny of mob excitement was over past.

Yet while they thus hold back and hesitate to take the plunge along with Gandhi, whom they love and admire with all their hearts, they find themselves being carried forward irresistibly on the tide of events far beyond their depth. We hear them speaking at their own Madras conference with an urgency almost of despair insisting that the Labour Government shall quicken its pace before it is too late. They have issued the following appeal:

"We firmly believe that the only rallying cry which can unite Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, the Europeans, the propertied classes and the labouring classes, can be Dominion status, not as a distant goal or ideal, but as an object capable of achievement within the shortest possible limit of time. Those of us who believe in the peaceful evolution of India, cannot but deplore that any action of the people of this country should raise the cry of independence and involve our future in turmoil and confusion. Believing that the Labour Government and Lord Irwin are in real earnest in seeking an acceptable solution of the constitutional problem, we should be guilty of utter short-sightedness and lack of statesmanship if we fail to seize the opportunity that has been extended to us".

Such an appeal would have been eminently presentable if it had been made earlier, when Pandit Motilal Nehru had just issued, as Chairman, the All-Parties Report on dominion status. But that rare opportunity was lost by a Conservative Government in Great Britain at a critical moment when Lord Birkenhead was Secretary of State for India. These reactionary forces in both Houses of Parliament always rally whenever any forward step in Indian policy is suggested, and they are to be found in all political parties. It is the knowledge of this fact that paralyses the Moderates and makes them hopeless. At the present time, for instance, Lord Reading and Mr. Lloyd George are watching every sign of movement forward with a view to crying halt. Therefore the intellectuals in India are sadly aware that there is hardly any more chance of their own moderate programme's being accepted in London than that of the extremists. It is not unlikely that they will be driven, by reaction in England, either to seek shelter, again under Gandhi's banner, or else to stand aloof from the political struggle.

When we come to the National Congress, it is clear, to those who understand the inner situation, that Mahatma Gandhi has by no means lost his control. Yet the ever-increasing impatience of the younger leaders, who were the rank and file of the non-co-operation movement of 1921, makes him constantly defer to their demands and advance somewhat further than he would wish on his own account to go. His moral authority is unchallenged. But he himself is sensitive to the new atmosphere of Young

India, which he breathes in with every breath. His deep affection for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is also carrying him along with the rapid current of the times. He has passed his sixtieth year; but he is amazingly young at heart, and a daring course has its own attraction for him.

The question may be asked how far he is likely to continue to maintain his doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-violence) if another Amritsar occurs. With the present Viceroy in power, that is the last thing which should happen; and we may hope for the best. On the other hand, the forces of youth among his own followers may break the bounds of non-violence. If that happens, I cannot for a moment doubt that he will retire; for his dearest hopes will then have been shattered and his own life purpose frustrated.

What then, about the younger leaders and their methods? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has already gained a position of universal esteem in Indian hearts, which is only second to that of Mahatma Gandhi himself. He is the uncrowned king of Young India. Only in Bengal, perhaps, is this allegiance challenged. There, Sjt. Subash Chandra Bose has gone further than anyone else.

There is a pronounced communist element which has gathered strength through the labour movement in one of its ramifications. It is extremely difficult to follow its rapid changes and to gauge its actual hold upon the people; but it is probably strongest in Bombay and Calcutta. Thus, it will be seen that driving power of the Left has immensely increased in recent years; and since the youth of India is specially affected, the momentum is certain to be greater in future years.

The question may be put whether any of the forces in the country which have not been gathered into the magnetic field of the national movement up to the present, are likely to stand out strongly against it, or lead an opposition to it. There is, for instance, a large body of Mohammedans who have kept aloof from the National Congress altogether. My opinion is that even though these may feel it impossible to join with the Nationalists in their passive resistance, they are hardly likely to take up a definite line of opposition to them. Again, there are the Indian princes with their subjects. Among the princes, there is much verbal expression of loyalty to the British rule; but it must also be remembered that, in many parts of the country, the subjects of the Indian princes are restless in the extreme, owing to the oppression which the princes have exercised over them.

Lastly, there is the large body of the outcastes, or "untouchables". It would appear likely that these would remain passive spectators of what goes on about them. There is only one national leader whom they are ready to follow to the death, and that is Mahatma Gandhi. If he were to call upon them to take their part in the passive resistance struggle, they probably would follow his leadership. But the burden is not likely to fall on them.

Thus, the forces in the country which appear at present to be either neutral or

favouring the official Government are hardly likely to take active part in any struggle, unless some fanatical passion were roused and old enmities broke out afresh. I am aware that what I have written is really venturing on speculative ground; it is hazarding a conjecture rather than predicting a certainty. Perhaps the truth is that, if once violence broke out in India and spread throughout the country, no one at all could see what the end would be. Mahatma Gandhi has said that anarchy itself would be preferable to the slave mentality which prevails in India today. When speaking of his own possible arrest and of the bloodshed that might follow, he recently exhorted his people through the columns of *Young India* to remain strictly non-violent. If they did, he hoped to achieve something and surely solve the great problem of mass civil disobedience. But if, on the other hand, the people did not remain truly non-violent, "then," he writes, "it will take a very long time to obtain real freedom".

It may be asked what, in the light of such a critical situation as this, has been my own judgment as to the right course to adopt. Personally, I have little doubt in my own mind that the time is now overdue for responsible government to be offered by the British Parliament. This alone will gain any hearing or acceptance from the Indian national leaders, moderate and extremist alike. Adjustments may have to be made, and anomalies may still continue during the period of transition. But such things have happened in every period of peaceful revolution. These adjustments would be entirely different from the niggardly provisions, which destroyed all sense of fair dealing under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. For those old safeguards and reservations made the "Reform Councils" a mere façade of self-government without any solid building behind it. The Viceroy of India, or the governor of a province, could veto any piece of legislation he disliked and also "certificate" a rejected measure, so that it became at once the law of the land. Mussolini himself has not retained in his own hands more absolute power than this. Furthermore, each cabinet was divided - both provincial and central - into two separate sections, which were called "reserved" and "transferred". Subjects such as finance were reserved in the hands of the officials, who represented the British Government in India. Subjects such as education were transferred to Indian ministers, who found themselves tied down in every direction owing to shortage of funds. Thus, there was a semblance of self-rule without any real authority.

After a very careful consideration of all that I have personally witnessed, the uppermost question in my mind is not at all whether responsible government should be offered. That I now regard as axiomatic. Rather, I have pondered long and wondered whether even this is likely to allay the present acute political unrest. To put the matter in another way, the vital question to be considered is not what will happen if the British leave India, but rather what will happen if the British remain in their present irresponsible position. There is no thought in my mind that they should be required to evacuate the country at a moment's

notice, but rather that responsibility should be put in Indian hands while the civil servants from England, who are now holding office, are gradually replaced by Indians themselves. The position of the British who remain needs to be changed from one of domination to one of service.

Mr. Baldwin's reported speech during a recent debate in the House of Commons, on the Viceroy's announcement, struck me by its sincerity and truth. Indeed, it is not too much to say that his presentation of the subject, if it were generally accepted, might raise to a higher level the whole meaning of the relation of East to West in modern times:

"Far away [he said] in the dawn of the State, the greatest of the great races then emerging from the mists of antiquity was the Aryan race. When that race left the country it occupied and began its wanderings it founded Athens and Rome and made Europe. In the veins of the principal nations of Europe flows the blood of their Aryan forefathers. The speech of the Aryans has spread through Europe and America, and to the dominions beyond the seas. At the same time, another branch of the same Aryan race covered the Himalayas and entered the Punjab and spread through India. As a historic fact, ages ago, these scions of the Aryan race stood side by side in their ancestral home – the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxon peoples and the ancestors of the Rajputs and the Brahmans. And now, after centuries have passed, the children of the remotest generation have been brought together by the inscrutable decree of Providence".

If it were possible, without any camouflage, to think things out along those lines, there seems to be no ultimate reason why India should find it more difficult than South Africa to maintain an absolute independence of her own and yet be loosely attached, for her own advantage, to the British Commonwealth of Nations. But here's the rub: Would General Hertzog in South Africa, or Lord Delamere in Kenya, ever admit the ideal of racial equality which Mr. Baldwin so sincerely describes? Has Lord Birkenhead, as Secretary of State for India, ever acted in that way? If that was in his mind, why did he appoint an entirely racial Commission to report to Parliament on the Indian constitution? Why did he not at least include Lord Sinha, as an Indian colleague? Why did he not deal with the leading Indian nationalists direct, as he dealt with Michael Collins and the Irish nationalists direct, in order to settle the new constitution of the Irish Free State? The fact is that there are two minds in England today – the mind of the generous idealist which loves freedom, and the mind of the hard businessman which loves profits. It is with the former, not with the latter, that the new hope in India lies.

In such a recognition of racial equality as that which Mr. Baldwin appeared to maintain, lies the main hope of peaceful progress in the future. In the failure to recognise this racial justice lies the ultimate collapse of world peace. For Mahatma Gandhi is fundamentally right. It is really a new spirit that is needed, not merely a political maneuver. There should be frank and open recognition by

the Anglo-Saxon race all over the world that its ancestry goes back to Asia as well as to Europe: it should be realised also that Asiatic exclusion laws, exercised with such invidiousness as now exists in Australia, on the Pacific, in South Africa and elsewhere, are the surest of all possible means to bring about a new world explosion.

Not that any Indian national leader – least of all Mahatma Gandhi – would ever be content to gain recognition for Aryan India only, to the exclusion of non-Aryans. For racial equality, not superiority, is the only worthy end in view. Nor again would the just acknowledgement of racial equality imply the cancelling of all “gentlemen’s agreements” restricting immigration, where an economic necessity on either side made such mutual settlements advisable. But it would stop once and for all such racial treatment as educated gentlemen and ladies from Asia too often receive on the Pacific coast. It would also prevent Mahatma Gandhi’s being refused admission to a Christian church, as happened some time ago (in my own actual experience) in South Africa.

It was this very phrase “change of heart” that was first used about the British in India in a very notable book by Henry W. Nevinson. He summed up the whole political situation by saying that what was needed most of all was that “complete change of heart, which our God-fearing forefathers called conversion”. Until that came, there could be no peace in British India. For no sensitive peoples could suffer long the humiliations of race that Indians, even in their own country, were compelled to suffer. The phrase stuck. Morley quoted it, and added his own comment that “bad manners in India on the part of an Englishman were a blunder worse than a crime”. But manners have grown worse instead of improving, since Nevinson wrote those searchingly true words; and Englishmen, who have gone out to India on their own account, have often gone as traders, with little concern for the people, and with great eagerness to make money quickly at any cost. Therefore, the time has come for India to govern herself and to exercise within her own dominions her own national freedom.

INDIA - SYMBOL OF EASTERN ASPIRATION³³

It is only when what is happening in India is related to the whole situation in the East that its true proportions can be understood and its perspective visualised. For since the World War, it has not been India only that has non-cooperated with the West but almost every other eastern subject country as well. The Arab revolt, for instance, which first began in Syria against the French, has now flared up against the British. The long-drawn Chinese struggle to get rid of extra-territoriality really belongs to the same category. So does the hardly-suppressed rising in Java. Even in the Philippine Islands, the same spirit of revolt is made evident with a pathetic moral protest of its own. An aged Filipino found life no longer bearable, after the news was sent over from California of the rioting in that state against his own people. He committed suicide, leaving behind a message giving the reason of his act. While suicide to uphold national honour has been not unknown in Japan, this act in the Philippine Islands is almost unprecedented. The unrest in Africa is scarcely less serious than that of Asia, and it bears the same character. The news that comes from Natal is most alarming; and if the Cape franchise is taken away by General Hertzog and his party in power it is difficult to know what will happen in the Cape Province.

It would be an entire misreading of these widely scattered events to regard them as starting from the higher educated classes, and only reaching down to the poverty-stricken multitude later; for while it is quite true that in Asia students have led the revolt, it must not be lost sight of that these students themselves have come direct from the villages and have never lost touch with the village folk who are their kith and kin. They have made their own discovery everywhere that the people in the villages are themselves restless. Thus the driving force behind the students' revolt has come from the peasantry; and it has not seldom taken the complexion of religious fervour. This religious aspect of the new struggle for human liberty has called forth acts of incredible sacrifice and kindled the flame of freedom anew when the fire seemed to be dying down. Such was the hunger strike of young Jatindranath Das of Bengal, who died on the sixty-third day of his fast and never once weakened in his agony of self-martyrdom. The millions of India were moved by his death as they had never been moved before; for he sprang from the village people. He was known personally to me and had worked with utter unselfishness in flood and famine relief in North Bengal when I was with him at Patisar and the surrounding districts.

This moral and intellectual revolt against the West, which has destroyed the old prestige of Europe and brought the younger generation to the very verge of open

³³ *The World Tomorrow*, New York, 13:110-11, March 1930

rebellion against every form of Western rule, has often been defined as the rise of nationalism. But the definition misses one important point: that there underlies what is happening a unity of sentiment which goes much deeper than the simple desire for national independence. There is now impending a cyclic change such as comes once in a thousand years among the masses of mankind. The millions of Asia are "on trek," as it were, with a restlessness that impels them from within. At rare intervals in the past there have been such upheavals within the human mind driving it to attempt new paths of desperate adventure.

Amid this vast upheaval of life in Africa and Asia, there is rising to the surface, right up from the subconscious to the conscious, not only the keen sense of racial humiliation, but also the vivid awareness of increasing poverty and misery hardly to be borne. The bitterness of these things is felt all the more deeply by contrast with the increasing wealth and racial independence of the West. This contrast, constantly now before the eyes of the masses of the East, owing to much closer contact, has turned the gaze away from the circle of bitterness within to that which presses without. It is noticeable how the civil war in China is itself imputed to the intruding presence of the foreigner: and there is much to bear out that point of view. The recrudescence of Hindu-Muslim antipathies in India is traced to the same source; and again in this instance there is much that shows how a third party aggravates the trouble. The reaction of the Arab against the Jew in Palestine makes both sides angry with the British rulers who come from the West. The East says, in so many words, "For God's sake, let us alone, to settle these things among ourselves. Can you not understand in the West that it is the height of injustice to turn us out of your own lands and then come with violence into ours to dictate to us what we shall do?"

I remember once travelling back from Pretoria to Durban and going along the corridor of the train to the coach reserved for Coloured people. There I entered into conversation, through an interpreter, with an old Zulu Chief who had just been present at a conference to meet General Hertzog. He was lying back sick at heart and groaning with inward pain. "You have taken away," he cried, "all our lands; you have insulted us; will you take away our sky also?" That cry seemed to come from the very inmost heart of the East, and where it is accompanied by agrarian distress, indescribably acute, among millions of the human race it forebodes infinite trouble. For these surging tumults within the breast are fraught with critical peril, if once they pass beyond the threshold into active life. Yet to suppress them still further by force is only to make the final explosion greater. To use a parallel metaphor, violent repression merely adds fuel to the fire.

If this diagnosis is correct - and I have studied the symptoms at close quarters for many years - then clearly something is needed which will be much bigger than anything that is being devised or decided today to meet the crisis in the East. Just as naval disarmament cannot be undertaken by any one power alone in isolation, so what I may venture to call "racial disarmament" requires a

world conference, or at least a world commission. For the racial adjustment needed throughout the world cannot be effected by the efforts of one Western power alone, however important. In the interests of world peace, the League of Nations must not for its own sake allow this whole issue to run its course, unnoticed and neglected, any longer. If it does it will certainly be regarded by the East as a mere tool in the hands of the stronger Western powers.

The controversy between India and Great Britain can hardly be settled by isolated action because it is part of a much greater conflict of ideals dividing the East and the West. Merely to let each Western nation go on doing just what it likes in a special corner of its own, which is called its "colonial empire" is really to go back once more to the old selfish view of absolute national sovereignty. It also keeps alive the fallacy that one country can be the "possession" of another. All that is meant by the World Court, the League of Nations, and the Kellogg Pact, is stultified by such an attitude of mind. Historically, it belongs to our pre-war mentality.

Much else has to be shaken off besides. If war is wholly to be renounced as an instrument of national policy, then the suppression of weaker races by force of arms must be given up with it. For such forcible suppression carries with it all the perilous aspect of war, and thereby as an inevitable consequence world peace is endangered. My plea, therefore, is this: that nothing less comprehensive than a world conference or a world commission is needed to inquire into race relations, if these upheavals in Africa and the East are to be dealt with in a rational and peaceable spirit. Only thus will the East cease to regard the League of Nations itself as an engine of oppression.

HEART-BEATS IN INDIA³⁴

The difficulties that are always inherent in the direct rule for a long period by one country over another have recently become accentuated in India to a very marked degree. It is not too much to state that a severe crisis has arrived. Since November 1, 1929, when the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, made his important announcement upon his return from England - officially declaring that dominion status as the goal of British policy for India was implicit in the declaration of 1917 - hopes have belied fear and fears in their turn have belied hopes. It is almost certain that, before this article can be published, more changes will have taken place in the kaleidoscope of current events. The truth which Sir John Seeley foretold about India fifty years ago is becoming evident that prolonged subjection to a foreign rule is in itself demoralising.

For, in spite of advantage that may have accrued to India under British rule, including national unification, it has become abundantly evident, to those who have eyes to see, mind to think clearly and hearts to understand, that the newly quickened national life has now at length broken its way out of its protecting and impeding sheath and has sprung upward with a leap through the dark to seek the open air of freedom. What every free man in Britain would welcome in his own land has begun to happen in India. The younger generation is determined to be in subjection no longer. "Freedom is my birthright" has become the cry of the people of the land; and it should stir the heart of England no less than that of India.

In accordance with the Indian temperament this new passion of national enthusiasm has become religious in its fervour. The religion of patriotism is held by millions in India today as an almost fiercely militant creed. I have witnessed its power as it has swept forward over the land from one end to the other. It has reached the remotest country districts. This religious aspect of Indian nationalism is worthy of serious attention; for it is in direct line with much of the ancient spirit of Hinduism. That faith has always manifested peculiar attachment to the Indian soil. It is intimately connected with the worship of the rivers and mountains of the motherland, so that every part of India bears some sanctity. The patriotic feeling of the Hebrews for Zion and Jerusalem has its parallel in India. Benares and Puri, Brindaban and Hardwar are sacred cities. The Ganges has its special worship. So has the region of the Himalaya.

Perhaps the most significant fact of the new age in Indian history which has now opened, is that in addition to these local shrines all India has now been taken up into Hindu worship as a goddess, whose name has become popular as "*Bharat Mata*," in English translated "Mother India".

³⁴ *Asia*, New York, 30:196-9+, March 1930

It was to no small degree because Katherine Mayo used this religious title for her book of contumely, as if in bitter sarcasm, that the resentment in India went so deep, especially among the younger generation whose religious and national feeling she had thus outraged. Nothing but this could account for the iron entering into the soul of India in the way it did. It was an insult to Mother India herself, the goddess of the nation.

In every part of India today, especially among the student class, the figure of Mother India is vividly portrayed conforming to the peculiar shape of India in the map of Asia. Her head is depicted amid the Himalayan Mountains in the north. Her arms are stretched out towards the east and the west across the centre of the map. Her feet meet together in the south at Cape Comorin. Such a picture of Mother India, the goddess painted in glowing colours, I have myself seen in students' rooms wherever they congregate together. Flowers are often offered, and sometimes a light is kept burning as a sign of worship. Her devotees are to be found even beyond the Hindu fold. The whole aspect of patriotism has received in this manner a new inspiration of religious fervour.

In the Bengal national movement, earlier in the present century, this special form of worship obtained its first great impetus as a political force. At that time, among the ardent, single-hearted band of young patriots who went forward fearlessly to meet their death, Bengal itself was the Mother. "*Bande Mataram!*" - "Hail Mother!" - became the national watchword and also the common daily greeting. Soon after this period, the song of the Bengali novelist, Bankim,³⁵ with these two words as a refrain, was taken up more widely still, to be the national anthem of United India. Today it is usually sung at great national gatherings as an act of religious devotion. Even in distant parts of the world, wherever a few Indian settlers gather together, they use this national anthem, "*Bande Mataram*," and adopt these two words for their distinctive greeting. As far away as Fiji and British Guiana, I have met with the same words of national welcome. In this worship of India as the Goddess Mother, all the fervour of religious devotion and sacrifice is introduced into the cause of Indian freedom. To die for the cause is to die for the Mother herself.

This in some measure accounts for the supreme act of sacrifice recently offered by one whom I knew well and admired - Jatindranath Das, of Bengal, who died on the sixth-third day of his hunger strike as a political prisoner in jail. I had known him during a flood-relief campaign in North Bengal, at Patisar, as a tireless and devoted worker, rescuing starving villagers from death. He was a Hindu, and those whom he helped were Mussulmans. His ardour was not less, but more, on that account; for he believed with all his heart in national unity. Even at that time he had determined to sacrifice his life for his country. Before

35 Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1894). The song "*Bande Mataram*" is in his novel *Anand Math*.

his death, on the Bengali festival day when each sister binds a sacred thread round the wrist of her brother, Jatindranath Das's sister sent him in prison the thread she had woven, with her own blood upon it, thus encouraging him to go on with his suffering even unto death. It is out of such heroic martyrdom that Indian freedom is being wrought and won.

Amid all this ferment there has sprung up alongside the new patriotism a deep resentment, which is one of the most noticeable features in modern Indian life. The passion for freedom has taken a racial as well as a national turn. There is no longer a mere tolerance of British rule, but a growing hatred of it, which cannot be restrained. This would hardly have arisen in such harsh measure if the British in India had been able to recognise long ago, in practice, the racial equality actually pledged by Queen Victoria in her famous Proclamation of 1858. There has been no attempt on the part of the British to adapt their own mode of living in India to indigenous customs. The rulers have held themselves almost rigidly aloof; and the club-life of more recent times has only accentuated the evil.

The Mogul conquerors, who came before the British, were themselves foreigners from central Asia. But, at least throughout the whole of the earlier part of their rule, they kept up a fine tradition of assimilation, inaugurated by the Emperor Akbar. They received back as their reward, a loyalty from the Hindus that constantly stood them in good stead. But the cold British temperament could not win the same allegiance. In spite of the fact that the prestige of the British at one time stood very high indeed and the British reputation for justice carried great weight, this barrier of race aloofness mingled with colour prejudice has risen higher still, overshadowing everything else.

A short time ago the poet Rabindranath Tagore, whose own mind is essentially international and non-racial, urged me strongly to return to my own people in the West. "When I was a young boy," he said, "the respect for the Englishman in India was very marked indeed, in spite of a cold aloofness that often repelled us. There was then a moral prestige that we all acknowledged. Now, however, this has vanished, and a positive resentment is taking its place, which is very harmful to both England and India. Therefore it seems to me that your own sphere of work is to make clear in the West this alteration that has taken place in recent years, especially since the European war".

Mahatma Gandhi gave me the same advice and cordially approved what the poet Tagore had said. In Gandhi's own experience, in spite of innumerable shocks from colour prejudice in South Africa, the final disillusionment came only at the end of the World War. In the hour of outward victory, Great Britain's moral character sank low in the estimation of the East. This was due to such events as the Treaty of Sevres, the declaration of a protectorate over Egypt, the sharing of mandatory power with France in the Near East and above all to the action of General Dyer at Amritsar, in combination with his cruel and

humiliating use of martial law.³⁶

The truth was this, that trench warfare and lying war propaganda had hardened the most sensitive minds in Europe. Statesmen and soldiers alike were brutalised. Therefore men like Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore were shocked beyond measure by the things that incredibly happened. Tagore renounced his knighthood with a noble gesture, and Gandhi started his non-co-operation movement. With his own direct way of speaking Gandhi declared that Great Britain had need of repentance. How nearly the non-co-operation movement succeeded, Lord Lloyd himself, former governor of Bombay, has testified. "He gave us a scare," he said to Drew Pearson in an interview. "Gandhi's was the most colossal experiment in world history, and it came within an inch of succeeding. But he couldn't control men's passions. They became violent, and he called off his programme. You know the rest. We put him in jail".

The story has been sedulously circulated abroad that, since the time of his imprisonment, Mahatma Gandhi has lost most of his influence as a political leader. But in reality just the opposite has occurred. His spiritual power with the masses has been steadily growing, and on that firm basis his political counsel and advice have become paramount on all critical occasions. Sooner or later, the leaders of the movement for *swaraj*, or self-government, came back to Mahatma Gandhi, because there is absolutely no one else who can sway the masses of village people. In view of the fact that these form ninety percent of the whole population, it will easily be understood how incapable other leaders are without Mahatma Gandhi's support. Since the day when the Viceroy made his pronouncement, it has been apparent to every one that the moral leadership of India still remains with Gandhi. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the new president of the National Congress, India's independent political organisation, numbering thousands of members, carries immense weight with the younger student generation. He has great powers of independent initiative, which he exercises, but he has not yet attained the full moral prestige that only Gandhi can now wield unhesitatingly and without question in every part of India.

When we think of Mahatma Gandhi as a political leader, we have to put aside all thought of diplomacy. He is the one man of modern times who has tried to carry through a political struggle with absolute simplicity of purpose. His method has always been to fix the minimum demand that he holds to be both reasonable and just. After the minimum has been fixed, he will not depart from it by even a comma. That is why his own terms seem so extraordinarily reasonable at first sight, until one realises that there will be no toning down. Thus, even in the midst of all the overwhelming excitement of national enthusiasm manifested at the recent meeting of the Congress – held the last week of each year (this time at

³⁶ On April 13, 1919, British and Indian troops, under the command of Brig. Gen. R. E. H. Dyer, opened fire on an unarmed assembly in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, protesting the repressive Rowlatt Act; 379 people were killed and 1,208 wounded in this gruesome massacre.

Lahore) – he has offered again and again the right hand of reconciliation. He does this because it is a part of his creed of *ahimsa*, or non-violence; it is also his creed to be strictly truthful to his opponents and to do them every service. During the non-co-operation movement, when he was at the height of his power, he pledged himself in an open letter entitled “To Every Englishman” to co-operate if only the official Government would take up the *khaddar* movement – home spinning and weaving – and prohibit drink and drugs. I can well remember the incredulity of some of his followers at such an offer, which seemed like a weak surrender; but he showed them plainly that if such a change of heart took place in official India the rest would surely follow.

In the same manner, in reply to the Viceroy’s pronouncement of last November, he stated his own position with a boldness of moderation that would startle hardened politicians. “It is due to friends in England,” he writes in *Young India*, “that they should realise my fundamental position... I can wait for Dominion Status, if there is a real change of heart – a real desire on the part of the British people to see India a free and self-respecting nation; and, on the part of the officials in India, a true spirit of service. But this means the substitution of the steel bayonet by the goodwill of the people... If I choose to remain within the Empire, it is to make the partnership a power of promoting peace and goodwill in the world, never to promote exploitation, or what is known as Britain’s imperialistic greed... I am fully aware that India has not developed strength enough to assert the position here adumbrated. If therefore it is realised now, it will be largely through the good grace of the British people... But, if the time is not yet ripe for India to come to her own, I have patience enough to wait. I can work and live for no other goal. I recognise that mine is but the voice of an individual. How far it is representative of India’s millions, no one can say. I certainly cannot”.

A week later, in the same magazine, he answers an old correspondent, J. B. Pennington, who long ago retired from the civil service in Madras. The correspondent suggests that, if Gandhi were only associated with the Government of India on equal terms, he could get all he wanted without bloodshed – even a republic. “The republic,” Mahatma Gandhi replies, “of my imagination would have to be one gained by non-violent means. And if the country would continue its choice of Non-Violence and Truth, it would not need to drive the English out. It would have converted the English, who would work as willing servants and consider it an honour to live on Indian sufferance. If such a consummation comes to pass, it would be something of which India will be richer. It may be a dream never fulfilled, but it is enough for me that it makes me happy. Under the present administration equality is impossible. It is both ruinous to India and based upon brute force”.

Since, in December, 1926, the status of South Africa was decided to be the equivalent of an independent nation having its own ambassadors, and since the use of the word “independent” in this connection was allowed, Mahatma Gandhi

has troubled little about whether India's new status is to be called "dominion status" or "independence". But he has affirmed again and again that he cannot be content unless his people are allowed to live on terms of goodwill and friendship with Great Britain under *conditions of strict racial equality*. This is the one absolute condition. If the change of heart implied in strict racial equality had been made visible in outward action, Gandhi's main object would have been obtained. But the younger generation in India has lately pressed for something more than this. The younger men are plainly for separation and demand such complete independence as the colonial states of North America themselves obtained from Great Britain more than a century and a half ago.

Up to this latter point of demanding separation, Mahatma Gandhi has also been prepared to proceed, if there is no change of heart evident in the British administrators themselves, which should make them ready to serve instead of rule. He knows well from his own life's experience that political revolutions of a drastic kind cannot be won without great suffering and sacrifice, especially where the tap-roots of an ancient system have gone down into the ground and can only with great difficulty be cut away.

Yet at the same time, while demanding separation, Mahatma Gandhi keeps on telling his British adversaries openly about the weakness of the Indian nationalist position. This he does with perfectly devastating frankness. He also explains to his friend the opponent that the door is open still for negotiation. All this is in accord with his two principles of *ahimsa* and *satya* - non-violence and truth - which he rigidly observes. His cabled message to the American papers should be studied with the greatest care in this connection: for it is an illuminating document.

"The independence resolution," he affirms, "need frighten nobody. I had repeatedly declared that for me, as for all other members of the Indian National Congress, dominion status could mean only virtual independence, that is partnership at will for mutual benefit and to be dissolved at the instance of either partner... The real cause of satisfaction to lovers of peace consists in the fact that, throughout the full debate, the Indian National Congress supported methods of non-violence and truth, to the exclusion of other methods. Civil disobedience is a dynamic expression of non-violence. It is undoubtedly fraught with great danger and difficulties, but infinitely less so than the present danger of unbridled but secret violence breaking out in many parts of India, owing to understandable and pardonable impatience on the part of many youths. Responsibility for initiating civil disobedience rests on me and I am not likely rashly to embark on it".³⁷ It needs to be remembered in this connection that from the time of the non-co-operation movement of 1921

37 Statement to the New York World, in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume 42, page 371

all secret assassination and bomb throwing have been discountenanced in Indian political life.

Mahatma Gandhi has clearly defined his programme. The boycott of the central and provincial legislatures as they are at present constituted and of the whole judicial system affirmatively passed upon by the delegates at the Lahore Congress - represents a revival of the original non-co-operation scheme. This is to go into effect on January 26 - Independence Day. Civil disobedience, involving non-payment of taxes, is to be inaugurated at the discretion of the Congress Committee, when and where it may deem fit. Non-participation in the proposed London Conference is also part of the accepted political programme.

But Gandhi has laid down a constructive programme of internal reform, which he emphasises as of utmost importance. Home spinning, he still insists, is the only solution for the economic distress of the great agricultural population. The removal of "untouchability," the ban upon the Outcaste, will be the second great step forward. It is difficult for those who do not know India to realise what an immense advance has already been made in this direction and at the same time how much remains yet to be done. The settlement of the age-long communal dispute between Hindus and Mussulmans will comprise the third step.

Here Mahatma Gandhi makes the momentous announcement that the old compromise solution suggested in the All Parties Conference Report 38-based on acceptance of dominion status for India - lapses and new solution must be found not on differential but on strictly national lines. This implies that the old "give and take" position must be abandoned on both sides and that national unity is to become the one and only test of every theory put forward. There are Mussulmans, such as Dr. Ansari, who have already accepted this position of putting the nation first. It remains to be seen how far the rank and file of the Mohammedan world in India will be ready to abandon the purely religious for the purely national solution of the problem. The National Congress, says Mahatma Gandhi, will concentrate on this question. Those from outside who would at once predict failure in this direction should remember what modern Turkey has accomplished.

There remain two vital economic issues: liquor and drug prohibition; the boycott of foreign cloth. Gandhi adds that the whole question of debts incurred by the British rulers will be referred to an independent tribunal. He also announces that the door for a conference in London, convened to satisfy the national aspirations for independence, has been purposely left open.

38 An All Parties Conference was held in Delhi in February-March 1928 to consider principles for a constitution of India. Dr. M.A. Ansari chaired the Conference. It decided that the objective should be "the establishment of a full responsible government," rather than independence favoured by the Indian National Congress.

It is evident that, under Mahatma Gandhi's moral counsel and advice, the fulfilment of the constructive programme will be considered at every turn the final test of capacity on the part of Indians to carry out the progressive non-violent campaign for political freedom.

How far the bewildering confusion of politics in Great Britain, as well as in India, will allow this programme, which Mahatma Gandhi has thus boldly outlined, to be carried forward successfully and peacefully remains to be seen. The British Cabinet today is in a very precarious position, and great risks can hardly be taken with impunity. Yet it is evident that almost reckless confidence will be required if anything effective is to be accomplished.

GANDHI AND INDIAN REFORMS³⁹

For those from the West who wish to obtain an authentic view of what is going on in the world of India today, there is no better introduction than the weekly paper edited by Mahatma Gandhi called *Young India*. With wistful interest, I have turned over the pages of a recent issue, and with a certain amount of homesickness. For India draws the hearts of those who have made it their home as no other country. In order to explain the vivid changes that are taking place in India before our eyes, I shall follow the arrangement of material which Mr. Gandhi gives in his paper. There are two striking impressions that stand out as a result of reading any one of its current numbers. It discloses a social revolution in progress which in the end will bring renewed prosperity to the Indian villages much more completely than any political campaign can do. It also proves how mistaken is the published report that Mr. Gandhi's personal influence in these villages is "on the wane".

This particular number begins with an article on the drink traffic. "Fighting the Monster" is the heading, and severe blows are dealt at the monster's vulnerable points. The writer supports the gallant effort now being made by Mr. Gandhi's followers among the villages of Gujarat to suppress the drink traffic altogether and abolish drug addiction. The Government of India, in spite of long continued efforts, has been unable to accomplish this end, because a utilitarian purpose has been mixed up with direct moral demands. Throughout the past years the motto "maximum of revenue with minimum of consumption," has been the declared Government policy, constantly repeated in official documents. With such an end in view, the maximum of revenue has almost inevitably loomed larger than the minimum of consumption in the eyes of the excise officials.

We learn from the writer who is fighting against the monster Alcohol that every year the villagers themselves have been organising their forces in order to overcome the drink and drug evils. But at some stage or other their efforts seem to dwindle away and for the time being to fail. Yet nothing daunted, they have planned a fresh enterprise and renewed the struggle. A Parsi religious ascetic has been leading this total abstinence campaign among the Hindu villagers and continually encouraging them in their good purpose. This fact reveals with a flash of light one of the most striking features of the Indian national movement in our modern age. Men of all religions are combining to carry out the national social programme and in this way a new, underlying religious unity is slowly being established.

³⁹ *The Yale Review*, New Haven, n.s.19:491-507, March 1930

In the All-India National Congress of December, 1928, the attack upon recognised social evils formed the larger part of the nationalist programme. If this was less evident at the Lahore National Congress of December, 1929, it was because the political situation had suddenly become so acute that the sessions were taken up almost entirely with the political issues. Among the national leaders who are outstanding as social reformers - placing national social reform before the interests of their own creed or race - Dr. Ansari, a late President of the Congress, is the most prominent figure among the Muslims; and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, this year's President, is equally prominent from the Hindu side. Among Christian leaders, Mr. K.T. Paul and Dr. S.K. Datta stand out in the first rank as national workers. While profoundly Christian in their appeal, they have won the hearts of all the people of India by their ardent patriotism.

Some years ago, at the height of the non-co-operation movement, I was engaged with others in famine and flood relief in North Bengal under the inspiring leadership of Sir P.C. Ray.⁴⁰ It was typical of the new spirit abroad that while the villagers were Mohammedan by religion, those in our camp who were doing this rescue work were Hindus. One of these, an enthusiastic Hindu student,⁴¹ met his death last year by a hunger strike which he carried out in protest against his prison treatment as a political offender. He died on the sixty-third day of his self-imposed fast. This student was well known to me as a most self-sacrificing worker, and his ardent temperament was aflame with patriotic fervour. Wherever help was needed he was just as ready to unite with Mohammedans or Christians as with his own Hindu people.

A great deal has been recorded in the West concerning the riots in different places between Hindus and Muslims, and there is truth in the news about them amid much exaggeration; but we rarely hear the counter-balancing fact that the new religious life of India is becoming solidly united in works of social importance owing to the steady growth of national enthusiasm. This impulse has already brought together different classes and creeds more closely than any other spiritual factor in our own generation.

In the year 1924, I was asked by Mahatma Gandhi to go down to a little village called Vykam, in South India, where a passive resistance struggle had begun. The objective of this struggle was to throw open the road round the village temple for the use of the outcastes. The orthodox Brahmans had obtained a legal right to close this road against these unfortunate people. The first person to offer passive resistance, by going along this road hand in hand with one of the outcastes, was George Joseph, an Indian Christian. He was severely beaten by the orthodox Brahmans and afterwards imprisoned by the Travancore State for breaking the law of the land. Immediately, from every part of India, other followers of Mahatma Gandhi, who were chiefly Hindu by religion, entered upon

⁴⁰ Dr. (Sir) Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944), prominent scientist and social worker.

⁴¹ Jatindranath Das

this passive resistance struggle. The story is too long to tell in detail, but after heroic endurance for a year and four months, their moral effort was successful, and the orthodox Brahmans themselves requested that the temple road should be opened for all classes of the community. While I was present watching the progress of this struggle, it was noticeable to me that Brahmans who had thrown off the yoke of conservative Hindu orthodoxy, were most prominent among the passive resisters.

On no single occasion within my own recollection has any national worker refused to serve those who are outcastes or "untouchables". On the contrary, I have received the fullest support from Brahmans and other Hindus of high caste in such a service. Thus slowly but very surely a new public conscience is being formed under the stress of this earnest national endeavour, and it is beginning to take the place occupied by the old sectarian conscience of former days.

In the copy of *Young India* before me, an important economic issue is raised by Mr. Gandhi. We hear of a prize which is to be offered to any reader who can make a simple but efficient spinning wheel for use in the Indian villages. It will be awarded for a machine that can produce the greatest amount of yarn in the shortest time and can be most easily and cheaply constructed by the villagers themselves. The prize offered amounts to \$37,000. The sum at first sight seems a large one for a poor country, but it is not excessive when the magnitude of its object is realised. For the intention of the donor is to improve the hand-spinning of cotton throughout the 750,000 villages of India. Mahatma Gandhi regards the revival of village industries as the most vital problem in the domestic life of India today. He would put its solution far above the success of any political campaign.

The reason for this can only be understood by those who know intimately the life of the Indian village. Its poverty is almost inconceivable. I have often worked in Orissa where the whole countryside has fallen far below the economic level of subsistence. Stark hunger is the perpetual condition of the impoverished people. Their villages have literally sunk down to the ground. For floods and famines have followed one another in quick succession, and when the mud huts have been swept away by the overflow of the rivers, the villagers have scarcely had the strength and the courage to replace them.

It is true that the Government of India has done much in the past to relieve this poverty by various means. Among these, the formation of Co-operative Credit Societies, the opening up of new irrigation works, and the codification of the Famine Relief rules, have had important and beneficial results; but in spite of these, while the population increases slowly, the poverty does not seem to become less. Since ninety per cent of India is agricultural, and each family of villagers has only on the average about two acres of land for cultivation, it can easily be realised how the village problem appears almost insoluble. Furthermore, it is impossible, in the greater part of India, to carry on agricultural work throughout the whole year because of the dryness of the soil.

It is here that Mr. Gandhi's economic policy comes, with a gleam of light, into the midst of the surrounding darkness; for he has pointed out that in order to restore prosperity, we must go back to the method of the past, where village industries existed side by side with village agriculture. We must find, he says, one universal occupation which shall engage the spare time of the villagers and bring an appreciable increase to the income of each family. He points out that the only occupation which exactly fulfils all these conditions is hand-spinning. Therefore, through the generosity of his Hindu followers, this prize that I have mentioned for the best spinning wheel has now been announced in an All-Indian competition. When this new model has been finally chosen, the plan is to offer it to the villagers at the cheapest possible rate and to permit them to make the new spinning wheels for themselves in their own villages without any infringement of patent.

For a long time it was not easy for me to understand the insistence of Mahatma Gandhi upon this spinning programme as the most vital factor in all his schemes of national reform. But after nearly twelve years' experience of the progress of this work in the villages and after the sight of the prosperity which it has brought to impoverished homes, I have become almost as enthusiastic about this remedy for India's poverty as Mahatma Gandhi himself. It should not be mistaken for an attack upon modern machinery as such. Indeed, he points out that it is really a method by which modern machinery, in a form suited to the present conditions prevalent among the village people, can be effectively introduced. When it is realised that through such a machine, the spare time which is being wasted in idleness may in the future be utilised by the villagers to their best advantage, it will easily be understood what a peaceful revolution may take place if once the new model can be made practical and universal in its operations.

After this announcement about the spinning wheel, Mr. Gandhi's paper publishes a report concerning new agricultural work in a backward northern district, directed by Mr. F. L. Brayne, an Englishman, who is a Deputy Commissioner serving under the Government of India. For some years Mr. Brayne had been carrying out a scheme in the villages for the uplift of the social and economic life of the people. This had attracted Mahatma Gandhi's attention, and he had asked one of the graduate members of the "Servants of the People Society" to investigate and report concerning his experiment. This Society was founded in Lahore for the service of the poor by the late Lala Lajpat Rai, whose name is familiar in America. Together with the "Servants of India Society," founded by Mr. Gokhale, it forms one of the noblest efforts now being made by the intelligentsia of India to come closely into touch with the village people. Through such intellectual advance towards the poor during the last twenty years the contact between the educated classes and the illiterate villagers has become much more intimate than before. There are few more hopeful signs with regard to the future development of the country than this.

When we examine the report which Mahatma Gandhi publishes on Mr. Brayne's work, we find that a singularly sympathetic and appreciative attitude has been adopted throughout the whole inquiry. The report runs in a series through different numbers of *Young India*. Many defects in Mr. Brayne's methods are pointed out, but praise is given both to him and his wife for their self-sacrificing lives.

This brings me to a very important fact concerning Mahatma Gandhi's programme. Although in higher political matters, he is still a non-co-operator, he has had hitherto no hesitation whatever in offering his hearty co-operation wherever good work is being carried on for the uplift of his own people. I may take one example from my own experience. During the years 1924 to 1927, I was asked by him on two occasions to go to South Africa in order to help towards the solution of most difficult Indian problems in that country. These difficulties affected those who had originally been induced by recruiters to go out from India to Natal as indentured labourers, and had, since that time, settled down in that country as free residents. The South African Union Government, however, was bent upon passing legislation in order to reduce the number of Indian residents in Natal to the lowest possible figure. Such was the openly declared policy of the hostile legislation which was being forwarded in the Union parliament. Racial bitterness had been aroused by these acts, and thus fuel had been added to the fire. At such a crisis in the lives of these very poor people in South Africa, for whose sake Mahatma Gandhi in earlier days had undertaken unspeakably hard sacrifices, not only did he ask me, personally, to go out and co-operate with the deputation sent by the Government of India, in order to bring about a peaceful settlement, but also throughout the whole struggle he was the best helper that the Indian Government could rely on for advice and support. It was he who proposed publicly at that time the name of the Right Honourable V.S. Srinivasa Sastri as the right person to send out as the first Agent General to South Africa, and the Viceroy accepted this suggestion.

With regard to the two chief social and economic questions which most powerfully affect the life of the Indian villages, namely, the prohibition of drink and the revival of village home-spun industries, Mahatma Gandhi has on several occasions promised his support if only the Indian Government would follow his proposals. In an open letter "To Every Englishman", published during the height of the non-co-operation movement, he laid special stress on these two vital issues. It needs to be explained that he is himself a protectionist and holds that the boycott of foreign cloth must go on side by side with the encouragement of the village home-spun industry. Indeed, he has gone so far as to advocate openly the burning of foreign cloth that still remains in the possession of Indian patriots as a pledge and token of their loyalty to the poor. In this letter he wrote as follows:

"I am certainly hoping that before long it will be possible for England to

co-operate with India on equal terms. Then will be the time for examining trade relations. For the time being, I bespeak your help in bringing about a boycott of foreign cloth.

"Of similar and equal importance is the campaign against drink. The liquor shops are an insufferable curse imposed on society. There was never so much awakening among the people as now upon this question... I would like you to speak out your mind clearly on that question. Under every system of government, as far as I can see, prohibition will be insisted on by the nation. You can assist the growth of the ever-rising agitation by throwing the weight of your influence on the side of the nation".

Co-operation along these lines has never been acceptable to the Government of India, partly for budget reasons; perhaps also because of the protectionist form which Mr. Gandhi's advocacy of hand-spun village cloth has taken. Yet the fact remains that co-operation on a very extensive scale has thus been repeatedly offered by Mr. Gandhi himself in the course of the past ten years. The intense respect with which he is regarded by Indian Government circles is hardly realised in America. An instance of this confronted me recently in Montreal. When I had spoken in praise of Mr. Gandhi's social and economic programme, I was seriously taken to task because just at that moment the news had been sent across the wires that he had been arrested. A month or so later, when the Calcutta papers reached me, it was made clear that the arrest had been merely a formal one and that the whole case had been nothing more than a test of the legality of a very doubtful police regulation. In the court before which the case came, the magistrate and his attendants stood up when Mr. Gandhi entered in order to show him their deep respect. A nominal fine of one rupee (thirty-five cents) was imposed, and the case was then dismissed. What followed was even more significant; for it was reported that the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, had been present at a social gathering in New Delhi to which Mahatma Gandhi was also invited, where they had had a long talk together about important matters. Thus, although there are many things wherein the Government of India and the national leaders have been unable to come to terms, the bridge leading from one side to the other has not yet been broken down, and the present Viceroy by his sincerity of character and courtesy of behaviour has made such social amenities still possible and such frank personal discussions still available.

Another incident may be instanced which will throw light on the present relations between the British Government and the Indian nationalists. During the recent negotiations with the Government of India concerning the holding of a London Conference to discuss dominion status for India, it was Mahatma Gandhi himself who was the leading figure at the momentous interview with the Viceroy just before the All-India National Congress at Lahore. Though he was unable to obtain from the Viceroy the assurance he required and felt obliged to boycott the London Conference, yet he was able at the same time by his moral

weight to keep the All-India National Congress strictly peaceful in its aims and to pass in open session, in the midst of all the excitement of those days, two resolutions expressing sympathy with the Viceroy - the first because of the Viceroy's efforts to obtain a conference in London, the second because of his escape from the bomb outrage which nearly destroyed his train. Thus, even while continuing his non-co-operation, Mahatma Gandhi never for one moment forgets his courtesy towards those who are his opponents. In his characteristic way he writes: "The real cause for satisfaction for all lovers of peace consists in the fact that in the full debate the All-India National Congress of Lahore supported methods of Non-Violence and Truth throughout, to the exclusion of all other methods".

While this is being written things are moving very rapidly indeed in India, and acts may soon occur which will make contact between the Viceroy and the Indian nationalists much more difficult than before. Yet even so it will be well to remember the fact that during the past ten years of non-co-operation an attitude of courtesy towards the Government has been maintained. Even now it may still be hoped that the final rupture will be avoided. Mahatma Gandhi has stated that if the Government of India will drastically revise the budget in order to protect the poor, he will be ready to reopen negotiations.

A profoundly interesting aspect of Indian social life is dealt with in my recent number of *Young India*. For over forty years, a long struggle has been carried on by Indian social reformers in order to raise the age of marriage in India, which is still lamentably low. It has, of course, to be realised that an age for girls which appears extremely low in the colder northern climate may be quite normal in the tropics; for puberty comes much sooner in a hot climate than in the North, and it is good and healthy for boys and girls to wed while they are still comparatively young. Thus Nature herself is on the side of early marriage in the tropics, but certainly not on the side of child marriage, such as India had become accustomed to during a period of social decline. Quite recently, the bill which had been brought before the Indian Legislative Assembly time after time, called the "Age of Marriage Bill", was at last passed into law by an overwhelming majority in both legislative houses. This Marriage Act has raised the legal marriage age for girls in British India to fourteen years.

Much misunderstanding has been caused in the West by the idea being spread abroad that Miss Mayo's *Mother India* has been the main cause of this raising of the age of marriage in India by legislation. As one who has taken an active part in this social reform movement over a period of twenty years and has watched every phase of this great struggle against orthodox and reactionary religious opinion, it will be enough for me to state from my own personal knowledge that entirely apart from anything which the book in question may have done to make public in the West this glaring social evil, the long and arduous campaign had already been virtually won before Miss Mayo's book appeared. I can say this with confidence, because, although the Government of India, for reasons of

caution which may easily be understood, was unwilling to press forward too quickly towards the overthrow of an old established social and religious custom, the vast majority of Indian national leaders had been themselves pressing the Government to accept this much needed measure of reform.

Mahatma Gandhi publishes on this subject an editorial called "The Position of Women," in which he writes as follows in his weekly:

"A fair friend who has hitherto resisted successfully the matrimonial temptation, has sent me this letter: 'There was a Women's Conference yesterday in Bombay at which many sound speeches were made and many resolutions passed. The question of the evening was the Age of Marriage Bill. We are so glad you uphold the age of eighteen for girls. Another important resolution dealt with the law of inheritance as it affects women. What a help it would be if you wrote a strong article in your paper on this subject! Why should women have either to beg or fight in order to win back their birthright? It is strange, and almost tragically comic, to hear Man born of woman talking loftily of the weaker sex and nobly promising to give us our due! What is this nonsense about giving? Where is there any nobility about it?'"

If it is true that one touch of nature makes the whole world kin, then the letter quoted from Mr. Gandhi's "fair friend" who has hitherto resisted successfully the matrimonial "temptation," brings the East and the West very close together; for we seem in such an utterance to have dropped from Asia into the very midst of the women's movement in the West. Needless to say, Mr. Gandhi chivalrously takes up the challenge and writes a very strong article indeed upholding an advanced age for the marriage of Indian girls. Space will not allow me to quote at length, though it is very tempting to show from it how he defends his own sex by saying, "Woman knows only too well Man's weakness and has obtained her ascendancy too often by indulging that weak side of her competitor. Woman has circumvented Man in her unconsciously subtle ways. The result is often a stalemate". Mahatma Gandhi is truly a saint, but he has also a keen sense of humour. His own bedrock principle on this question is that women must in every way be equal to men and must work with them in all kinds of public tasks on equal terms. He has always upheld women's suffrage, and in his own religious institution at Sabarmati he puts his belief into practice.

Another contribution to Mr. Gandhi's paper which is full of interest as a key to modern conditions in India is an account of his recent tour in the North. He went to that part of the country to spread his village programme for the removal of "untouchability," prohibition of drink and drugs, Hindu-Muslim unity, and the revival of village industries through hand-spinning. This tour met with greater success than any other. Mr. Gandhi was so overwhelmed by the vastness of the multitudes who came to see him that instead of speaking to them, he remarked that silence would be the best speech on such an occasion and the

spoken word would be an impertinence where only a small fraction of the audience could hear it. He stated that the crowds were easily twice as large as the largest he had seen in that district during the years 1920 and 1921, when "non-co-operation" was at its highest point. His influence is now being felt more widely than ever in the religious as well as the social and economic life of the people.

It is necessary in order to understand the mind of India to remember that sooner or later every single national cause turns to religion for its support and inspiration. The new national movement in India, which Mr. Gandhi has so vigorously championed, carries on this central Indian tradition. In the first place the figure of India itself on the map of the world has become during the last century in a strangely moving manner personified as the Divine Mother. Throughout the length and breadth of India this new worship has been gradually established with a spontaneous impulse which appears to show that it has touched a responsive chord in the hearts of the people. Her figure may be seen in pictures, wherein the head of the goddess is portrayed amid the Himalayan snows, while her feet touch the furthestmost southern point at Cape Comorin. Her arms are outstretched towards the East and West. Thus the map of India configures the new goddess. I have seen on many occasions this picture of the Divine Mother, India, placed on the wall of a student's room with flowers of worship before it. The traditional reverence in India for the great rivers and mountains, which are regarded as sacred, makes this transference of devotion to the whole of India simple and easy. To what extent this new worship will advance in the future it is difficult to say; but as a unifying factor in the national life it already has an importance of its own. Though still somewhat undefined, its influence has already gone beyond the intellectuals and reached the villages.

Mr. Gandhi has done nothing directly to foster this modern worship of the Divine Mother. On the other hand, he has laid stress upon a new religious ideal of the "Service of God" through devotion to the poor. He has pointed out that, in ancient times, God Himself was worshipped in the form of a poverty-stricken suppliant. The word for this in the old Hindu scriptures was *Daridra Narayan*. The word implies "God as Poor". The title is connected with a legend, wherein the Divine Being appeared in the form of a poor man begging for food and was recognised by a certain devout worshipper whose spiritual insight pierced through the outward form. His tender, sensitive heart did not neglect the poor, and he gained his reward in God's love. The story is a very beautiful one, and the idea underlying it is supremely attractive. It comes remarkably close to the words of Christ in the Gospel, "I was hungry and ye gave Me to eat. I was thirsty and ye gave Me to drink. I was a stranger and ye took Me in, naked and ye clothed Me; I was sick and ye visited Me. I was in prison and ye came unto Me. Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me".

Wherever Mahatma Gandhi goes through the villages of India he makes a special plea for offerings to *Daridra Narayan*. He uses such gifts for the spread of hand-spinning in the villages. The simple villagers are beginning to understand his deep philosophic meaning and to worship God under this new form. This story of God appearing in the form of a poor man had already been revived in the philanthropic work that had spread throughout India under the Ramakrishna Mission. Among the disciples of Swami Vivekananda, this mission has carried the new worship forward into actual practice with a self-sacrifice and devotion which grows stronger and stronger every year. Mahatma Gandhi has spontaneously accepted this new religious impulse. Thus by a happy combination of circumstances, the revival of Hinduism in purer forms, which is one of the most notable features of modern India, has been closely associated with the ideals of two among the very greatest modern Indian religious leaders, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi. It is interesting to note that Romain Rolland, who has written the best account of Mahatma Gandhi for Western readers, has now turned his attention to the life of Swami Vivekananda.

I cannot refrain from relating at some length the appreciation which Mahatma Gandhi also publishes in *Young India* of the work of Dr. and Mrs. Higginbottom. They have spent their lives, as missionaries, in the encouragement of Indian village life along sound economic and social lines. Mr. Gandhi was welcomed at their Agricultural Farm, Allahabad, and said that he had come, as a farmer, to learn what the good Doctor and his wife could teach him. He could not help noticing the contrast between the scientific and economical way in which the sewage was disposed of on their farm and the woeful neglect of this problem by the Municipal Board. "We had a peep," says the narrator, "at the little children whom Mrs. Higginbottom is bringing up with a mother's care. Most of these are children born of lepers. This part of the visit ended with a five minutes' function at which the students themselves presented a purse containing earnings from their own labour, specially dedicated to *Daridra Narayan*, and a huge basket full of the delicacies that mother earth had yielded at this farm. From this function Dr. and Mrs. Higginbottom took the party to the leper asylum near by. They seemed to take special pride in this work of theirs and Mahatma Gandhi could not help envying Mrs. Higginbottom the spontaneous love that the little children bestowed upon their adoptive mother, who with pardonable pride introduced the 'troupe' as 'my children'! The chaulmoogra oil injections are regularly given to the lepers with, it is said, eighty percent success complete or partial in recent cases and less success in advanced cases. But it is claimed that the ravaging progress of the fell disease is arrested even in advanced cases". This is an instance of Mr. Gandhi's sympathy with foreign medical work for the betterment of health conditions in India.

It may be asked by Western readers why, in a country like modern India, where all this reform is in the air, and where wholesome reform is eagerly supported by Mahatma Gandhi, by the poet Rabindranath Tagore and other great national leaders, a book like Miss Mayo's *Mother India*, professing to be written in aid of

social reform, has called forth such a storm of nation-wide indignation.

The main reasons are not far to seek. Others who have offered their criticism from the West were accepted because they had shown first of all by deeds of service and sacrifice their true interest in India and her people. But Miss Mayo had come to India on a short cold-weather tour and then had hastily framed a verdict indicting a whole nation. Other critics had taken care to be accurate concerning facts which they narrated at first hand and had respected the sanctities of home life. But Miss Mayo had brought charges against the private life and character of Indian families into which she had never won an entrance by humility. She had no first-hand knowledge. Some of her accusations are filthy. Let me add from an inner knowledge of those homes that they are scandalously untrue.

Furthermore, all Indians who have read her book have felt throughout its pages her arrogant contempt for their whole civilisation. They feel in its pages her morbid determination to set India before the world in the worst possible light without any redeeming feature. This has burnt like fire into their minds and inflamed them with deep resentment. They have found the book not only desecrating to the sanctities of their home life but also racially insulting.

Let me give, in conclusion, some personal touches concerning the character of Mahatma Gandhi, whom I have learned to understand and love during an uninterrupted period of more than sixteen years of intimate friendship. He is one of Nature's gentlemen, who never offends by saying or doing anything that would be out of taste. For his courtesy, even in the smallest things of life, is as unobtrusive as it is universal. He is the most perfect host to those who visit him as his guests - attending with his own hands to their needs night and day. Everyone's heart is drawn towards him who comes into personal contact with him. At Sabarmati *Ashram*, his own home of religious education, he reigns supreme by the noblest discipline of love. There is a freedom which always ends in service. Little children are his best companions. He rarely starts out on his daily walk without the children of the *Ashram* running by his side, holding both of his hands and talking and laughing all the way. They seem to find him out at once and never wish to let him go. He has no sense whatever of his own dignity or importance, and the poorest of the poor are at ease with him on all occasions. It is through his entire forgetfulness of self that he has won from others such a wealth of loyalty and affection, and he returns it in full measure.

INDIA'S EMIGRATION PROBLEM⁴²

The emigration of agricultural labour from India has gone steadily forward during the last hundred years, yet the congestion in the villages along the alluvial plains of northern India and in the low-lying parts of the south continues unabated. One of the greatest difficulties of the human race in the future will be to discover the best method of dealing with the serious over-population problem of the southeastern portion of Asia. The Chinese, who represent the most prolific race in the world today, are constantly finding further outlets necessary both in the north and in the south. Japan is becoming over-crowded. Java contains one of the densest single rural areas in the world. India, like China, is continually overflowing its banks, and this surplus of population spreads in wider and wider circles. Malaya and Sumatra are at present serving the useful purpose of absorbing some of the excess; Borneo and New Guinea may help later, but these lands do not of themselves hold the possibility of solving India's population problem.

This part of the world has always suffered from racial congestion. For many centuries it has contained one-half of the whole human race, and the saturation point has been always close at hand. In earlier days, the congestion in Asia was relieved by the calamities of flood, famine and internecine war, which swept away millions of human beings. The lives of these unfortunate people are now in some measure preserved, for we live in a humanitarian age. India, in spite of recent famine years, has been adding continually to its own permanent population at the rate of over one million a year. Even the incredible loss of twelve million lives by influenza in 1918 hardly seemed to keep down the ever-rising numbers. It is estimated that one year hence, the total census in India will reach three hundred and thirty million persons. In the same way, China, in spite of war, disease and famine, continues to spread abroad its hardy population.

Let me first trace briefly how this congestion of agricultural labour in Asia has been partly relieved before going on to consider what steps are likely to be taken in the future to deal adequately with the problem of still further agricultural expansion. Japan has attempted systematically to diminish the pressure on her soil by throwing open her northern islands for development and also by finding outlets in Formosa, Manchuria and Korea. Any agricultural settlement in Manchuria has hitherto proved a failure on account of the impossibility of competing with the Chinese, whose standard of living is lower. A recent development, with patriotic fervour behind it, has been the organised attempt to colonise an allotted area of Brazil, in South America, where large tracts of fertile land have been offered for cultivation. That experiment is of first-rate importance and should be carefully watched.

China is very rapidly filling up the waste lands of Manchuria by an emigration on a bigger scale than any which the human race has experienced since the rush from Europe to the United States in the last century. It is estimated that more than one million and a half new settlers went northward into Manchuria out of China last year, while in the present famine year even that vast number may be exceeded. Whole

⁴² *Foreign Affairs*, New York, 8: 430-41, April 1930

families migrate together, and in spite of overwhelming hardships they thrive and prosper. Towards the south, the drift of emigrants from China is mainly towards the Malay Peninsula and the adjacent islands of Indonesia. The labour undertaken here is only partly agricultural, for large mining, oil and commercial operations are being carried on, and wherever the way is opened up by modern development the Chinese show themselves to possess great adaptability and business capacity. They are by no means content always to remain tillers of the soil; instead of this, they are becoming merchants and estate holders. It is estimated that in recent times the exodus from south China for purposes of permanent residence has exceeded six million persons. Java, which now possesses a population of nearly forty million, has obtained its own outlet near at hand in Sumatra. This large island is now being gradually opened up for colonisation. Furthermore, a certain number of Javanese have recently been sent as an experiment to Dutch Guiana, in South America, where large vacant areas within the tropics are in need of agricultural labour. I have recently observed that experiment in action and have some grave doubts about its advantage, because it has necessitated a certain form of indenture which is difficult to control. It appears also to be leading to serious racial friction with the settlers from India who had gone out under indenture in earlier days.

India has been content, in the main, to fill up vacant areas which are close at hand rather than to attempt distant colonisation. The one exception was caused by the indenture system of Indian labour, which will be considered fully later. It was while studying its effects in the British colonies that my own doubts concerning this form of emigration were raised.

Large areas of desert land within India itself have been reclaimed. It is difficult to estimate the extent of the resettlement due to this cause, but I am probably safe in putting down the new population provided for in this manner at over ten million, and in estimating the irrigation area still undeveloped as offering ample room for at least six million more. These are all agricultural labourers and the land irrigated has shown every sign of permanent prosperity. In addition to this internal expansion, Assam has already taken more than a million recruited labourers for its tea gardens, and Burma has received an equal number for its ever-growing rice fields. But the saturation point will soon be reached, when further agricultural labour from India will not be needed.

Malaya has been hitherto a popular country for emigrants from southern India, especially among the Tamils, and it may be estimated that the incoming permanent residents will reach 750,000 persons in the not distant future. But hitherto the settlers, with their families, have been fewer in number than the seasonal labourers who go to and from across the Bay of Bengal, staying in Malaya only long enough to accumulate a small amount of capital. Yet a sediment of population remains after each tide recedes. India and China are meeting together in Malaya without any serious racial clash. At one time it seemed as though the Indian migration would be likely to prevail over the Chinese; but since the revolutionary disturbances in southern China have made a peaceful domestic existence there somewhat precarious, the Chinese have begun to bring their families with them to Singapore and Malaya, and this more stable form of settlement appears now likely to continue. The Chinese labourer has shown himself hardier than the Tamil. The Malay people themselves are

disinclined to do strenuous work. Therefore, the future of Malaya probably rests with the Chinese more than with any other stock. The Tamil population from India will come second. The Malay population will be able to keep up its numbers only by means of reinforcements from the adjacent islands.

One further undeveloped area for the flow of the Tamil villagers of southern India has been provided in Ceylon, where the tea and rubber plantations are almost entirely dependent on their cheap labour; the original inhabitants of Ceylon do not take kindly to this sort of work. Already the Indian settlers in Ceylon number over a million, and further additions may be expected, but the area of fertile soil in Ceylon is limited, and Tamil family life is very nearly as prolific as the Chinese.

So far we have been considering only the natural migration induced by the proximity of an overflowing agricultural people to countries where land is available. We shall now turn to the Indian indentured labour sent out to the remote colonies of the British Commonwealth under government auspices. The system of exporting indentured labour to far-off lands was highly artificial and it led to great abuses. The labour was recruited by professional recruiters who were paid so much per head for every recruit they brought to the depot. The price was higher for a woman than a man because the requisite number of women was more difficult to obtain. From the very first the system laid itself open to fraud; and when oversight and inspection were lax it became little less than kidnapping. The adoption of the system nearly a century ago was due to the needs of the British colonies rather than to the requirements of British India, for it was devised originally in order to save from disaster the sugar plantations in such places as Natal, Mauritius and the West Indies, which had brought very great wealth to leading merchant families in England. When slavery was abolished in 1834 the sugar planters were suddenly threatened with bankruptcy because the slaves refused to go back to the sugar estates as hired labourers. The system of indentured labour was then devised, and villagers were sent out from India in very large numbers. Their term of service lasted for five years.

The semi-servile existence of the indentured labourers on the plantations led to moral evils which were hardly less grave than those connected with the fraudulent means by which they often were recruited. Though admirable regulations were made to prevent abuses, the faults inherent in the system were so great that it could not be radically reformed. To give one glaring instance, the proportion of men to women was roughly three to one. As a result, sexual crimes were frequent, and murders, followed by suicide, were terribly common. During one long period of my life I had to undertake a thorough investigation of the fraudulent recruiting in India and of the immoral conditions under which the labourers lived on the plantations. My friend, Mr. W.W. Pearson, accompanied me and checked all the evidence. Later on, the Women's Associations in Australia invited Miss Garnham, of the London Missionary Society, to make an independent inquiry into the facts with regard to this indentured labour in Fiji. Her inquiry led to an even more severe condemnation of the system than we ourselves had made in our report. In the end, indentured labour was abolished between the years 1917 and 1920. On January 1, 1920, those who were still finishing their indenture were voluntarily set free. In India, the abolition of the system is often regarded as parallel to the abolition of slavery, which had happened nearly a century before in the West Indies and in other parts of the British Empire.

The extent of this emigration of indentured labour from India, which revived the prosperity of the British colonies in different parts of the world after slavery had been abolished, can be told briefly with statistics.

Mauritius was the first colony to receive such labour from India. The movement began immediately after the abolition of slavery in 1834, and for nearly eighty years ships were sent regularly with fresh emigrants. In 1911 it was decided that the island had sufficient population, and the system was closed down. At that time, the whole population was about 380,000 of whom over 260,000 were Indians.

British Guiana and Trinidad were the next colonies to petition the Indian Government to be allowed to introduce indentured labour. Small numbers began to arrive as early as the year 1839; but the fully organised immigration began only in 1845. The system spread at one time to many parts of the West Indies; and Dutch Guiana also received a large number of indentured Indian immigrants. By 1920, when indenture was abolished, there were in British Guiana about 125,000 Indian settlers. There were also 127,000 in Trinidad, 34,000 in Dutch Guiana, 20,000 in Jamaica, and smaller numbers in other islands.

In Natal, indentured labour was first drafted from India in the year 1860. Every other remedy had been tried in order to save the sugar plantations, which were falling into decay for lack of field labour. The Zulu at that time was unsuited for the work. Early in the present century a considerable section of the European population began making strong objections to any further Indian immigration, because of the rapid rise in the number of permanent Indian settlers. A poll tax of three pounds sterling was therefore imposed on those Indians who had finished their indenture and who wished to settle in the colony permanently. This was remitted if they were ready to submit themselves to the indignity of a new indenture. It was hoped that the poll tax would drive them either to return to India or else to go back to the plantations. This humiliating tax was a cause of great resentment in India, and the Hon. G. K. Gokhale proposed in 1908 that no more indentured labour should be allowed to go out to Natal. His proposal was carried into effect three years later. The poll tax nevertheless still continued, and was not withdrawn until Mr. Gandhi led one of his passive resistance campaigns to a successful conclusion. In July 1914 the Gandhi-Smuts Agreement was signed, by which this tax was abolished and the grievances were set right.

More than twelve years after this date, in 1926, a further struggle began. The Government of the South African Union desired compulsorily to repatriate the Indian settlers who had originally come out under indenture and had gained their right to residence. The government bill definitely aimed at compulsory repatriation and compulsory segregation. A deputation was sent over from India under Sir Muhammad Habibullah as president, and the South African Indian Agreement was signed in January 1927. By this settlement the "compulsory" bill was dropped and the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was welcomed as Agent General into South Africa. Owing to his statesmanship the tension between South Africa and India was relieved. The total number of Indian residents in the whole of South Africa today is 180,000, of whom about 150,000 live in Natal. The majority came over originally as agricultural labourers under the old indenture system.

The only other important field of indentured Indian labour is to be found in the Fiji Islands in the South Pacific. This immigration began in 1879 and continued until 1917, when all recruiting in India was stopped. The last indentured labourers were set free on January 1, 1920. Since that time there has been considerable improvement; but racial equality does not yet exist, because a racial franchise discriminating in favour of the Europeans is in operation, just as in Kenya and South Africa. The Indians number 70,000 and the Fijians 90,000. The two races live side by side with very little friction.

Thus it may be seen that the tropical colonies of Great Britain owe a great debt to India for the agricultural development of their soil. This service has not received adequate acknowledgement; and the impression left in India is that the colonies have taken Indian labourers when their economic needs were great, but have been ready to discard them when their difficulties were surmounted. While this might be true of Natal, it could hardly be said to refer to the other colonies without qualification. Nevertheless, there is considerable reason for the opinion that Indian immigrants to the British colonies have not seldom been seriously neglected, and in certain countries their full citizen rights have not yet been obtained.

During the past eighteen years I have had to visit the different colonies where Indian indentured labour was introduced, so that I might find out what social and educational changes were necessary, and I have made frequently reports to the governments concerned. During the hot weather of 1929 I went out in this connection to British Guiana, Dutch Guiana and Trinidad, under the auspices of the All-India National Congress and the Imperial Indian Citizenship Association of Bombay. At the same time I also received a cordial invitation to visit British Guiana from Sir Gordon Guggisberg, who was then Governor; and to visit Dutch Guiana from President Rutgers. It appears to be very little known in America that a large and important population from India has made its permanent home in the British West Indies and that it still forms the mainstay of agriculture there.

The Indian labourers coming out under the extremely hard conditions which I have described above were unable for a long time to make progress. The mortality rate was excessive, owing chiefly to malaria. Though the immigration had begun as early as 1839, the increase in the number of permanent settlers was very slow indeed. Nevertheless, while Chinese agricultural labour immigration proved a failure, the immigration from India in the end succeeded in gaining a firm footing in the land. At the present time, a large portion of the agricultural land, both in British Guiana and in Trinidad, belongs to these settlers from India and practically the whole of the rice cultivation is due to their industry. They bear a high character as agriculturists; and British Guiana, which has only three inhabitants to the square mile, is eager to receive more immigrants in the future if they are allowed to come under directly free conditions and without any trace of the old indenture system. But the people of India, who have still in their minds the bad impression left by the fraudulent recruiting of the past, are by no means anxious to send out more settlers to any British colonies, and have begun to look to Brazil instead as a new field of colonisation.

My own visit to British Guiana and Trinidad proved even more interesting and instructive than I had imagined. The new feature in the problem - which I had never studied to such advantage before - was the settlement in the same area of Indians side

by side with Afro-Americans. They live under conditions of race equality, along with a very small proportion of Europeans. After the abolition of slavery in 1834, the Afro-Americans had immense arrears to make up, yet if we judge from the records of those earlier days the progress achieved has been amazing. In educational and clerical work they have already obtained a good start, and they provide more than 90 per cent of the teachers. This rapid educational advance has drawn the younger generation from the land, not always with advantageous results. The indentured settlers from India on the other hand took less kindly to education, though they proved industrious farmers. As soon as they were released from indenture, they took up tiny plots of land of their own and with creditable thrift bought up vacant sugar land during the time of depression, when sugar could not be grown at a profit. It is profoundly interesting to notice how the two races, even though in certain ways they come into economic competition, have never quarrelled or become antagonistic to each other. On the contrary, although they very rarely approach intimacy, even while remaining side by side, they maintain friendly relations. It was necessary for me to consider very carefully whether a new racial complex would likely occur if the number of settlers from India was largely increased by immigration. It appeared to me that, though the influx of large numbers would be unpopular and is therefore to be avoided if possible without a compensating influx of Afro-Americans, there were as yet no signs at all of racial dislike. Perhaps no small reason for this is the friendly association of the two races together in the schools, and also the elementary teaching work done by the Afro-American teachers; for it is certainly true that the first impressions left by good and kindly teachers in early childhood continue in later life. How far the Indians themselves had benefited by the experiment of transplantation into a new world was a far more difficult question to answer. There could be little doubt that from the material point of view their lot as a whole had improved, though even here there were grievous exceptions; and the drift to the large towns - such as Georgetown and Port of Spain - has produced a mendicant class, spiritually as well as physically submerged. One of the chief reasons for the size of this class has been the tendency to rum-drinking handed down from the old sugar-plantation days. The liquor traffic in British Guiana is in the hands of the Portuguese, whose numerous shops near centres where pay is distributed to the Indian labourers offer temptations which are hard to resist. This rum-drinking is a new vice and it runs through them like some fatal disease. The sights I saw saddened me beyond measure, and I reported, long before leaving, that I could have no part whatever in steps to assist any more emigrants to come out from India, even under absolutely free conditions, unless the drink evil was drastically taken in hand. The promise was made while I was there that the number of licences would be cut down and the government control of the drink traffic made more stringent.

On the side of health, the malarial infection in British Guiana has not yet permanently decreased. As it is still a very poor country, which can seldom meet its expenses from its current income and must borrow from year to year, it is unable to spend money on fighting malaria, as has been done, for example, in Panama; and at present there seems to be no likelihood that the preventive work will be able to cope with the disease. Yet when we examine the health statistics as a whole, we note a slight improvement in recent years. In Trinidad, the annual death rate has been brought

down to a really low figure as compared with other tropical countries, and it should not be impossible to effect the same improvement in British Guiana.

The industry of the Indian farmers has afforded a good example to the Afro-Americans and has helped them to overcome the temptation to remain idle. It is impossible to see the patient, plodding industry of the Indian farmer and not be favourably impressed. On the other hand, the Afro-Americans - girls as well as boys - have shown a laudable zeal for education, and this admirable characteristic has touched the Indian settlers.

The future of these fertile lands is still somewhat in doubt. While the population of Trinidad is ample, and that of Barbados is overflowing, many of the adjacent islands are underpopulated, and British Guiana as yet is hardly even explored. It seems to me that the ideal arrangement for the future would be that first of all every inducement should be given the Afro-Americans of the West Indies to come and settle in the unoccupied portions of British Guiana. If they did so, a regular steamer service might be started to bring independent settlers from India, of course at their own expense and without any recruitment. For my own mind the balancing of the two parallel races is good for both, but the predominance of one over the other might lead to evil. Indeed, it might be a good thing to introduce an immigration quota to keep the balance even. In an empty country like British Guiana it might be possible to offer such favourable colonising conditions to each community respectively that they would be prepared to come over in sufficient numbers to make up the quota needed. The process would necessarily be a slow one, but in the long run it might be more beneficial to the country than some speedier method of increasing the population.

I have been dealing above chiefly with the migration of agricultural labour, either to countries in close proximity to India or else to distant colonies under the old indenture system. A brief survey is now required of emigration from India to East Africa, for it has certain peculiar features worthy of careful notice.

At the beginning of the present century large numbers of Indian labourers were brought over from the western shores of India under a three years' contract in order to construct the Uganda Railway from Mombasa on the East African coast to Kisumu on Lake Victoria Nyanza. This experiment in railway construction proved costly in human life to both Indians and Europeans. The Indian labourers were wretchedly paid, particularly in view of the ever-present risk of death; for even the wild beasts from time to time devoured many of them. It is reckoned that at one time twenty thousand labourers were at work on this pioneer work. Many of them remained as artisans when the railroad was completed, and ever since that date it has been customary to invite Indian artisans from the north and west of India for special work in Kenya. The process has gone on for many years, and a certain proportion of those brought over have remained and settled in the country. Others have come over as retail traders, and a few Indians have also entered for professional work as doctors, lawyers and teachers. With the single exception of a small group of Punjab agriculturists who established themselves near the Great Lake at Kibos, there has been very little permanent Indian agricultural enterprise hitherto. The total Indian population today, after thirty years of settlement, is still only about 25,000.

Meanwhile, however, the European population, fearing that Indian farmers might come in large numbers, had obtained from the Secretary of State for the Colonies an

ordinance excluding Indians as farmers and settlers from the agricultural highlands. This ordinance led to a very great bitterness, which has by no means been relieved by the Colonial Secretary's offer to compensate the Indian community by allowing them to purchase land in the unhealthy lowlands instead. It was pointed out that the ordinance was a direct infringement of an earlier promise of equal treatment and a direct encouragement of racial legislation.

In the year 1923 the situation became so acute that the British Parliament took up the matter seriously and delegates were invited from both India and Kenya to meet the Secretary of State in London. At that time I was asked to attend as adviser to the Indian delegation. In the end, the White Paper of 1923 was published, wherein the rights of the Africans were carefully protected; but both with regard to the common franchise (on an education-property basis) and also with regard to the agricultural highlands, the Indian demand for racial equality was rejected. This was a very great blow to those moderate Indian leaders who wished to remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations on the basis of a common citizenship without any racial discrimination.

In the neighbouring territory of Tanganyika the Indian problem has been far less serious, because the Mandate requires that all nationals shall be treated equally. Since India was an original signatory of the League of Nations Covenant, the 15,000 immigrants from India who are now settled there are able to demand equal treatment, and receive it.

It is difficult to make predictions with regard to the future of Indian labour immigration. The present juncture is critical. For if the political friction between India and Great Britain increases, it is likely seriously to affect even that migration of Indian agricultural labour across the Bay of Bengal and towards Ceylon which now goes on throughout the year. Meanwhile, many of the alluvial valleys of India are seriously overpopulated, the margin of land suitable for cultivation has very nearly been reached, and, apart from the immense irrigation scheme now in course of construction in the Indus Valley, only a few areas still remain where further irrigation on a large scale is possible. India will, therefore, be obliged to look outside its own borders.

Mesopotamia has been suggested as a fertile region which irrigation might make capable of absorbing a large Indian population. But there would be a serious danger of new racial friction arising between the Arabs who have inhabited Mesopotamia for many centuries and any very large influx of Indians differing from them in race and religion. Up to the present, there is little racial feeling in Mesopotamia, because the Indian settlement is comparatively small and confined to the trading classes. But any vast irrigation scheme would imply the coming of agricultural people, who might entirely alter the racial balance in Mesopotamia itself and put the Arabs in the position of a minority. We have recently seen how bitterly the influx of Zionists into Palestine has been resented by the Arabs, and we should need no warning against repetition of that sort of experiment.

While traders from India have gone to the east coast of Africa for over two thousand years, there has never yet been, as I have shown, any large agricultural labour migration. On the whole, the prospects offered along that coast for large settlements in the future are not promising. Equally unlikely is any settlement of Indians in

north-west Australia, which has a somewhat similar climate; for here the policy of “White Australia” stands in the way. The immediate prospects within the British zone are thus somewhat discouraging. Possibly the vast fertile and uninhabited areas of the great Amazon Valley of South America may attract agricultural labourers not only from Japan but also from India, though the practical difficulties of transporting them and safeguarding them from exploitation are enormous. Thus a solution is not in sight; yet the problem is becoming every day more and more acute.

SOUL FORCE IN INDIA 43

The Press news from India has taken hitherto but little notice of one feature that may prove to be of primary importance when the present struggle in India, to gain independence, advances still further. This may be described, by a very imperfect phrase, as the new technique of non-violent non-co-operation. It represents the peculiar moral quality, which the genius of Mahatma Gandhi has introduced in his passive resistance struggle to overcome physical might by the exercise of soul force. People in Great Britain have hardly yet realised that nearly five thousand persons, including some women, have voluntarily accepted imprisonment and have refused to defend themselves in the law courts. During the hottest months of the year in India, when even a life of unrestricted liberty is often almost unbearable on account of the heat, these sufferers for conscience sake have gladly undergone extreme bodily suffering in the hope thereby of helping forward the freedom of their own country. Even though very little is known in Great Britain about this exhibition of soul force, yet the countless millions in the villages of India listen to the story of it as they sit round in their circles at night. They tell of the *zulm* (tyranny) that is abroad and of the endurance on the part of their own people. Most of all, they tell of the heroic courage of their women.

Dr. Gilbert Murray, when dealing with the narrative of Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance in South Africa, concludes with the following words:

"Persons in power should be very careful how they deal with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasure, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort, or praise, or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy, because his body, which you can always conquer, gives you so little purchase on his soul".

It was in South Africa, nearly seventeen years ago, that I first saw this new technique of soul force practised by Mr. Gandhi, and took part in it. He had been summoned after arrest and imprisonment to meet General Smuts in Pretoria. He had decided to accept the invitation, and took me with him. A syndicalist strike among the European railway men and miners had broken out on the very day of our arrival. The strikers were called out in order to strike a paralysing blow at the administration. They had asked Mr. Gandhi to join forces with them, but he had refused. Indeed, he did much more. He called off at once his own non-violent resistance. He did not wish, he said, to take an unfair advantage of Government's weakness. His struggle was a moral one, dependent on soul force for its victory, and not on any compromise with violence.

On another occasion in India, at the height of the non-cooperation movement, when success seemed almost within his grasp, he called off his whole campaign in a similar manner. But this time it was for a different reason. Among his own followers and against his own strict orders, violence had broken out. Therefore, he affirmed, he was not prepared to gain a victory which would be tantamount to defeat.

In the course of a long letter received by me from an American friend, who had the good fortune to visit Mahatma Gandhi's *ashram* just before the arrests began, a singularly vivid picture is given of the scene he witnessed. The great leader of the Bardoli passive resistance campaign, Vallabhbhai Patel, was about to be arrested. This was rightly regarded by every member of the *ashram* as the prelude to sweeping arrests to follow. But everyone was gay and confident. The atmosphere - my friend wrote - was one of glad relief and almost of jubilation; for they all knew that the trial of their inner faith in non-violence had at last begun.

On this occasion, courtesy was observed on either side. The police under their commanding officer were considerate in their behaviour and sympathetic. After the arrest of Vallabhbhai, they allowed the inmates of Gandhi's *ashram* to stand in line on either side of the road to say good-bye. When all was ready, the officer in command bowed and invited Vallabhbhai to enter the motor. The courtesy was returned, and the car drove very slowly down the line while each waved his farewell. My friend's letter adds that Mahatma Gandhi was immensely pleased. He was daily expecting his own arrest to follow. But he was greatly hoping that if both sides "played the game" the harsher sides of the struggle might not come too much to the front. As for suffering, they were joyfully prepared to bear it.

Since this letter was written by my friend much has happened to dash to the ground the hopes thus raised. But the gleam of light which shines out from chivalrous deeds has not been absent. Much has been made in the newspapers of acts of rioting, but the acts of splendid courage and endurance shown by hundreds of the national volunteers have hardly been recorded. Wherever the influence of Mahatma Gandhi himself has been preserved, people have gone to the furthest limits of peaceful resistance and have suffered joyfully without a murmur the hardships involved in this new form of warfare.

The following story is taken from Mahatma Gandhi's weekly paper *Young India*. Mahadev Desai gives an account of his own imprisonment:

"The trial was over," he says, "and I was put in a prison van. On the back of the van was an English officer. There was a huge crowd all round. Suddenly a stone was flung from somewhere, and it hit the officer on the chin, giving him a nasty cut. 'See,' he cried, 'what your wretched people do! If they kept to non-violence we could have nothing to say. But look at this behaviour! People who cannot be non-violent had better keep out of this movement, or they will soon spoil it!'

"I hastily expressed my sorrow and told him that if he would stop the van I would speak to the crowds and make them thoroughly ashamed of themselves. But the officer refused and again began to complain. I asked him what I could do, shut up in the van as I was, and assured him that I was extremely pained at the incident and would gladly atone for it if I only knew how. The stone was lying in the van, and I asked him to hit me with it or with his stick, and I would bear it as a penance. 'No, no,' he replied, 'that won't do at all.' But after a little while he began to get sore again. 'See,' he said to me, 'what wretched things these people are doing! Look at Peshawar - why can't such people keep out of the movement altogether?' To this I assented with deep feeling, and we began to discuss the general situation. But once more he looked down at the stone, and said, 'I shall

keep this as a memento!’ But I implored him to throw it away. This suddenly touched him, and there and then he flung it from him”.

When such amenities as these are possible, things are still not beyond the remedy of goodwill. Yet we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that, human nature being what it is, the strain from day to day both upon the police and on the passive resisters must become almost unendurable. That the police on different occasions have broken all bounds of restraint can hardly be doubted. First-hand evidence has come to me by letter that puts the matter quite beyond dispute. There have been also excesses on the side of the mob. But singularly little that could be called violence has been done by any of the followers of Mahatma Gandhi. That the latter are winning universal sympathy becomes clearer by every mail. The masses of the village people are with Gandhi, and a peaceful revolution has begun, not in one part of India alone, but in every province.

The forces in Asia today that are bent upon violence are almost overwhelming. Russia and China have but little place for the soul force of passive resistance. Gandhi is openly mocked at as a dreamer. But it may be that the dreamer has discovered the moral equivalent for war.

WHAT HOPE FOR INDIA?⁴⁴

Whatever may be the final composition of the Indian Round Table Conference in London, one thing is quite certain beforehand. The silent pressure of the two volumes of the Simon Commission Report will be felt throughout the whole proceedings. As a parliamentary paper on the Indian Constitution it will be referred to as a primary authority by those who represent officially the Government of India. At the same time, those who seek to speak for the popular opinion of India at the Conference will have to meet its main arguments and show their own standpoint in contradistinction to the views of the Commissioners.

The popular side, in its constructive criticism of the Report, is likely to be ably represented by the Indian Liberals. But American opinion will have to take count of the fact that there is a far stronger and more drastic element in India today which has swept the country from end to end and could overwhelmingly (if it so wished) carry the polls at the election. Its radical attitude goes far beyond that of the Indian Liberals, and it has every justification for calling itself the nationalist party. What the Wafd appears to be in Egypt, the National Congress is in India. Before, therefore, the Indian Round Table Conference meets, it is of great importance to review the Simon Report itself in order to gauge its strength and weakness.

The Commissioners, who wrote it, advanced at one time so near to the heart of the real situation in India that they seemed on the very verge of reaching the truth behind the screen of outward appearance. And yet when the right moment came, instead of pressing ahead into the Promised Land of generous hope and forward endeavour, they turned back to the barren wilderness of futile manipulation of the old issues. They left most of the obstructive elements unremedied.

To give some examples, they saw clearly the evils of separate electorates for which different communal factions were incessantly clamouring. They realised also the selfish demands for extended powers, which were being made by the princelings of every little arbitrary Indian State. They watched the tiny group of Europeans resident in India as they eagerly pressed forward to grasp special privileges for themselves. They had the unending trouble of wading through piles of selfish memorials presented to them by each interested group and party. For since the Congress leaders and the Liberals had refused to give evidence before them, these groups along with the Government officials became their main source of information. What they were forced thus to ponder over must have made them pause, for Sir John Simon is one of the ablest lawyers in Great Britain, whose peculiar gift has always been his acute power of analysis. So much for this side of the picture.

On the other side, at a remote distance and in a blurred perspective, they saw the nationalist movement inspired by the personality of Mahatma Gandhi. They deserve credit for recognising its unifying power. A paragraph was written by them, which bears that interpretation, but it seems to have had but little effect upon their main recommendations. For in all that they advise concerning the central authority, they endeavour further to fetter the rising national forces rather than to release them.

⁴⁴ *New Republic*, Washington, DC, 64:255-57, October 22, 1930

There is one important line along which they tentatively advanced. The woman's awakening in India evidently struck them very forcibly indeed. It is not unlikely that Lady Simon, who is a well-known social reformer, had her influence here. Their words on this matter and their conclusions are perhaps the strongest side of the Report.

Thus the Commissioners, as I have said, caught glimpses of a promised land. But they did not go far enough to enter into the very heart of it. They could only watch things national, afar off and dimly feel their power. The tragedy was just there. Owing to the very conditions under which Lord Birkenhead had originally appointed them, with deliberate racial discrimination, from the first moment of landing they felt the national boycott in full force. There was thus hardly any chance of success in the highest sense of the word. For there was little possibility of their seeing the real living India – the India that will be moulding and fashioning the future long after the present anachronism of foreign suzerainty has passed away, as other imperialisms based on power have vanished in days gone by.

With all the relentless pressure of the first fatal blunder of their appointment, they made at last the Great Refusal. They saw, as I have said, with remarkable prescience, nationalism as the one unifying force which could overcome sectarian interests, but they refused to recommend it. Instead of doing so, they merely treated it as “seditious”. Where they might have struck out boldly for a New India freed from communal bigotry, effete landlordism, foreign interference and the arbitrary rule of puppet princes, they hugged the shore of safety and gave way to the communal spirit even among their own fellow Europeans. They did little to disturb the strong grappling power of those parasites and self-seekers under the administration, who have been curse of a divided India for generations.

In three matters alone they struck out a new line with some originality. The first was with regard to the landowners, when they suggested that any special representation of the landlord should be taken away and the land they owned should be taxed (however lightly) for the benefit of the community. Here they immediately stirred up a hornet's nest of vested interests and they are to be congratulated for their boldness. It is to be feared, however, that at some later stages in the struggle this part of the Report will be abandoned. Indeed, already a hint of this has been offered by the authorities who cannot afford to lose their support.

Secondly, the transference of “Law and Order” in the provinces to responsible Indian hands represents a great advance. But here as has already been pointed out in the press, the powers left to the Governor to introduce a civil servant from among the officials to take up the ministerial office practically tends to destroy with one hand what is offered with the other. For it is obvious that an official within the Cabinet of the provincial government, administering the most important of all the portfolios, will bring about a state of chaos once more instead of helping forward a unified responsible ministry. What is needed for complete provincial autonomy is for the head of the majority in the House to be asked by the Governor to choose his own cabinet without any interference in matters concerned by the Governor himself. The latter's power of initiative ought to be strictly and drastically limited. Otherwise there is certain to come, sooner or later, an intriguing Governor who will take advantage of the party and political divisions in order to divide and rule.

The third point has been the recognition of the place of women in Indian political life, which I have already mentioned. By enlarging the franchise for women in every direction, they have done a signal service.

On the other hand, in certain vitally important matters there is no hope of the recommendations of the Simon Report satisfying enlightened Indian opinion even of a moderate character. The first of these is the proposal of the Report that the central government should remain as autocratic as ever. Indeed when we come to look closely into the matter we find that the powers left to the Viceroy of indirectly affecting the decisions of the Legislative Assembly have actually been increased. He is to add to his own executive council one further member – his own nominee – whose sole duty it will be to lead the Government side of the House in the debates. This will inevitably mean that the Assembly is always in danger of being dictated to by the Viceroy. Since the Viceroy has also at his disposal the final right of certificating any measure that the Legislature refuses, it is clear that the power at the centre would remain still, under the Simon Report, autocratic and arbitrary.

The second issue is that of the army. The Simon Report proposes that the main army for Indian Frontier Defence should be paid for by the Indian taxpayer without any control over the expenditures and also should be attached to the British Imperial Defence Force and, therefore, kept under British control. It even appears to suggest the surprising recommendation that there should be two armies – one for external defence and the other for internal protection. Such an idea would have little to recommend it; yet as far as I am able to gather from reading a very obscure chapter in the Report itself, this is the final implication. But the whole question of the army is difficult to follow in the Report and it is not even clear whether the frontier army is to be always controlled from Britain or only temporarily until it is “Indianised”. The Right Honourable V. S. Srinivasa Sastri has pointed out passages which imply that there is no contemplation of British withdrawal from control of this frontier army at any time, even in the far distant future.

The third issue is that of the paramount power over the Princes. If this is always to remain in Great Britain, then there will be a perpetual dyarchy at the centre. This again would take away from India the right of self-determination, which carries with it the right of secession. For there would always remain the Indian Princes relying upon a final authority which is outside India itself. That would make full self-government impossible.

On these three issues, every political party in India is likely to be adamant. They will never allow such proposals as these to be embodied in a parliament act if they can help it.

India has recently, in the same way as China, learned the latent powers contained in the boycott. These go far beyond the more directly moral weapon which Mahatma Gandhi himself forged in *Satyagraha*, or Soul-Force. In *Satyagraha*, the moral appeal is uppermost throughout and the higher the appeal, the greater the hope of true success. On the other hand, the boycott necessarily carries compulsion with it. It is in reality a form of silent warfare. It falls below *Satyagraha* in moral value. It does not rely upon Soul-Force.

The remarkable success of the present national movement in India, which the administration is very acutely feeling, is due to *Satyagraha* and the boycott combined.

On the one side, there has been this moral force of the highest order called *Satyagraha*, exercised at its greatest intensity at Dharasana, Bombay and other places, when the *Satyagrahis* (passive resisters) stood up against police violence without returning a blow. The other force has been the economic boycott of foreign cloth, which has been in a sense retaliatory. This has brought its own powerful compulsion upon the Indian Government.

Both these forces taken together have made the strength of the popular will in India felt very seriously indeed by the central administration at New Delhi. For the people of India themselves have felt their own power and they are not likely to let it go again. That it will be exercised along with compulsion in one form or another is not unlikely. But the fact is evident that the Government knows now for certain the strength of the popular will.

In the long run, it will be mainly by means of this special weapon of economic boycott that the old imperialisms exercised in Asia and Africa will be brought under control by the people of the East. By disturbing trade with the foreigner, they will be able to reduce the powers of arbitrary rule, which have done so much to create mischief in the past. The use of this new weapon will make a very great difference to the future of all subject peoples.

Meanwhile, in India itself, the struggle goes on from one stage to another. Even before this article reaches the press some tentative halting place may have been reached. At the same time, it may well happen that the strength of the economic boycott has not yet had its full compulsory effect upon the Government. One thing is certain: all parties among the people of India are determined that the arbitrary rule of the Executive Council at New Delhi with the Viceroy at its head shall cease and that responsible Government containing the "substance of independence" (to use Mahatma Gandhi's phrase) shall be achieved. Only on this main condition will the struggle be concluded.

IS SADHU SUNDAR SINGH STILL LIVING?⁴⁵

The recent news that has come from India has made every one who has loved and revered Sadhu Sundar Singh for his goodness and been benefited by him in the spiritual life deeply concerned about his safety. Nearly two years ago the scanty information had reached us that he had already started for Tibet. Since then there have been from time to time fresh reports of his death.

One of the greatest spiritual blessings in my own life in India has been to live with men of the deepest religious instincts who are India's noblest children. India stands out in the world as a land where God is sought with entire self-dedication; where everything is abandoned in the search for the living God in a way that reminds us in the West of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Bernard of Clairvaux. I have often written the story of Mahatma Gandhi and the poet, Rabindranath Tagore. There is one another, whose name has rightly become world famous, Sadhu Sundar Singh, about whom I am now writing. In some ways his utter sacrifice for the sake of the poor is on a level with that of Mahatma Gandhi himself. His burning faith in God is no less intense, and the fire of his love is kindled at the altar of his worship of Christ as his divine Saviour and Lord, the one Master of his spiritual life.

For different years in succession, soon after I came out to India, it was my privilege to spend part of the hot weather, when college duties in Delhi were over, with Sadhu Sundar Singh and Samuel Stokes at Kotgarh in the heart of the Simla Hills, on the Hindustan-Tibet road, not far from the point in the road where Hindu temples no longer stand out upon the landscape and the Buddhist shrines begin to appear in every village and on every mountain slope. For Tibet, the land of Buddhism, is not far distant, and right beyond Kotgarh far into central Asia the Buddhist faith prevails on every side.

First let me describe that country, because it is the background of my story. The traveller climbs up by a mountain railway which is now built as far as Simla, 7000 feet above the sea. During the first part of the ascent from the plains, the country is very barren, and the railway passes along ledges of rock from which trees have been denuded. This continues right up to Simla and its surroundings. But on the Hindustan-Tibet road beyond Simla, the traveller comes to an entirely different kind of hill country, through primeval forests with huge trees rising from deep valleys where the mountains tower above you. At every break in the hills you can see an immense range of snow mountains which go from one end of the horizon to the other and rise to the height of 26,000 feet. They are snow capped in summer above the height of 13,000 feet and they retain their eternal whiteness all the year round above 16,000 feet. The view from Narkhanda, near to Kotgarh, is one of the most beautiful in the world. There, near Narkhanda, the mountaineer can climb as high as 13,000 feet quite easily and thus reach the top of Mount Hattu. On the summit of that

⁴⁵ *The Christian Century*, Chicago, 48: 1421-24, November 11, 1931

mountain you can see the whole panorama of snows from the borders of Kashmir almost down to Tibet. It is indescribably beautiful.

It was amid these scenes and places like these in the mountains that Sundar Singh and Samuel Stokes first met each other and began, in unison of perfect brotherhood, their ministry of love and healing. Samuel Stokes had been born of Quaker stock in Germantown, Philadelphia. He had worked in the plains, and lived as one of the poorest villagers, going barefoot as a wandering friar. With him, also - carrying his gospel in a little bag and wearing a large cross in front of his tattered garment - Sundar Singh lived much the same sort of life. They had met in the hills and learned to love each other; and they had gone many a march together through these very mountains.

Once, when they had gone across a very high mountain pass, in the bitter cold, Sundar Singh's strength had failed him. Stokes had to carry him in his arms until he also lost all his own strength. Then both felt that their last hour had come. Stokes told me that there was an inexpressible joy in that moment of vision when they thought that so soon they would meet their Lord. But this life course had not yet run out its full length. It happened that some travellers with mules came afterwards and took them to a hut on the other side of the pass and brought them back to life.

This Hindustan-Tibet road is a very remarkable and difficult engineering feat, made fifty years ago. It runs up and down between the levels of four and twelve thousand feet. There is a tremendous dip just beyond Kotgarh - three thousand feet fall in five miles - where the Sutlej river rushes through a mountain gorge. Then a climb of four thousand feet over a distance of five miles up hill. I have gone along that road. Every step from Simla to Kotgarh is known to me. There, at Kotgarh, is a little village congregation of Christians. It is an almost unique congregation situated there in the heart of the hills. The pastorate was looked after and shepherded by an old German pastor with white hair and beard. He and his wife were nearly eighty years old. They were living there with a small band of Christians right away from civilisation. When Sven Hedin⁴⁶ came in from Tibet, this was one of the first Christian mission stations which he reached. I was there at the time and remember well how he came into this little church to worship and return thanks to God after two years absence from civilisation.

It was this remoteness which deeply attracted Sundar Singh and Samuel Stokes. It seemed to be a little home of Christ, within the hills themselves, such as the home at Bethany. It was a place for Christians to take rest in amid the toil and hurry and bustle of the bigger world outside. There was a cave just above the village of Kotgarh. That cave became the home of Sundar Singh and Stokes, and his little band of young lads who came up with him. They were indeed a very strange company. Two were children of lepers, who were themselves suspected of leprosy; one other was blind, one was a cripple. There were five in all and every one of them was a waif and stray of humanity. Stokes had fathered and mothered them all and had taken them like a hen under his own wing. But a merrier company you would hardly meet in the world. They hardly knew what sorrow was. They lived a simple life of the

46 Sven Anders Hedin (1865-1952), Swedish explorer. He explored routes across the Himalayas and produced maps of Tibet.

most abstemious kind which hardly cost them anything at all. Stokes used to go down to the school where Master Isaac was the teacher, and they would help in the teaching. These boys of his used to join with the others in the school.

Then came the most difficult year we ever had for that special year was one long sickness from beginning to end, while we were at Kotgarh. Cholera had broken out and we had to nurse the sick and care for the dying. We were scarcely able to get through it all without loss. A party of Christian students from St. Stephen's College, Delhi, had come to join us at the beginning of the monsoon. They were somewhat careless with their health on the way out; some of them caught cold through not changing their clothes when they were soaking wet. They stood about too long in the chilling blasts of wind after the rain. Therefore they got fever and were put in bed. One of them had a high temperature night and day and we could not get it down. We took turns in nursing him. Then one other went down with high fever, and another with sunstroke. This continual sickness almost broke the strength of us all. For we were a very small party of workers.

After this Stokes himself was very nearly killed. He had baptised a boy belonging to the village of Kotgarh. The villagers started out to kill him. They nearly succeeded. We rushed out and up the hill and found Stokes lying on the ground. I thought he was dead. His face was pale and blood was streaming from his forehead near the temple. The people who had struck him became alarmed and fled, leaving Stokes on the ground almost dying. For one whole day he was in delirium and it was impossible for him to swallow any nourishment. His skull was injured. Finally he recovered consciousness. It was a terrible week altogether. Stokes was continually imploring in his delirium that nothing should be done to the hill-men who had tried to murder him. When he recovered he insisted on being carried down to Simla so that he could plead for their forgiveness and they were released. We shared our joys and sorrows together. Our joys were far greater than our sorrows.

Sundar Singh during these days was a help and support to us all by his quietness of spirit. He was a solitary. We let him be apart, for he loved to be alone. He was always ready to do any act of service. He loved to nurse the sick. But all the while the solitude of his own inner life in God seemed to grow upon him more and more. Stokes decided to form a Brotherhood of the Imitation. This was to be a literal following of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as he lived and walked on earth. Every single thing was literally to be given up for Christ's sake. No purse or scrip was to be carried; nothing was to be kept as one's own. The gospel story was literally to be fulfilled. Stokes and Sundar Singh together formed this order. Stokes was to be the head of the new brotherhood. The two brothers, Sundar Singh and Samuel Stokes, thus went on their way happily together. Frederick J. Western of the Cambridge Mission joined them. Each of them led his own solitary life in the villages among the Punjab people. Stokes was at a leper asylum ministering to the poor. Western went on with his work at Delhi. He walked barefoot through the streets of Delhi, living a life of self-abnegation and poverty. Thus it went on for a short time; but there gradually came a change in Stokes' views and the change came about in this way.

More and more he found that these very illiterate and superstitious villagers, who were born and bred as Hindus, had completely misunderstood his mission. They said

to him: "You are seeking your own salvation. You are eager to accumulate merit in order to attain your own release from human misery. Indeed, you are a very lucky man; for by earning quickly so much merit for yourself you will avoid many births and re-births. We poor people, on the other hand, are married and have all our worldly duties to perform. We cannot get salvation as quickly as you can. For you are unencumbered by a family".

Stokes found that he could not make them realise that he was not at all doing these things for his own sake, but that he was doing them simply for the love of Christ. He came to the conclusion that the best way to win them, and to get them to understand was actually to share their family life and to live as they lived. So in the end, after dedicating himself anew to Christ, he married one of those hill Christians. Her grandfather was a Chinese Christian and her grandmother an Indian Christian. That lady, his wife, is one of the very noblest Christians I have ever seen or could see. What she does to win those people in the hills to revere the Christian way of life no one could possibly tell. She is a real mother to all of them and she is specially loved by the women.

In this way Stokes himself changed his mode of life. He is now living a deeply earnest life in the heart of the hills as a married householder. Owing to Stokes' act in marrying and becoming a householder, the brotherhood was broken up. Yet looking back over nearly twenty years, we can see that it has been all to the good. There is a wonderful providence in God's love. For the breaking up of that brotherhood led, in its turn, to the setting free of Sadhu Sundar Singh. He could never have been what he has since become if he had lived all the while under Stokes' direction within the Order of the Imitation which Stokes had founded. He is, as he ought to be, serving under Christ his Master, following Christ in his own way, whether he be alive or departed. Also Western has been used by God in other remarkable ways suited to his own character. He is now the bishop of Tinnevely, in South India, deeply interested in the unity of the South Indian church.

Stokes has had altogether in his family seven children. One of these, little Tara Chand, fell ill and died to their very deep sorrow. But joy and love and peace have come also along with sorrow. One of Stokes' little girls is my godchild. His wife, as I have said, was the granddaughter of a Chinese Christian who had come over from China as a tea-planter and married a Rajput lady of high birth; so China and India were thus united in that Christian household. Now this granddaughter of Chinese and Indian parents is married to an American. Stokes' children are thus the descendants of China, India and America combined. They ought to be very remarkable children and produce in time some spiritual genius of the first order within the Christian church.

It was in 1925 that I saw Stokes and his family again and lived with them after I had come back from Africa. I had walked out as usual from Simla and was very run down in health at the time. He had sent out his hill pony to get me in. But on the third day after my arrival my leg began to swell and I became ill with blood poisoning. A poisonous spider had bitten me. Mrs. Stokes became my nurse. Altogether it was a very restful time. It made me stop in the hills longer than I otherwise would have done. The picture that always remains in my mind is the gathering of the family morning and evening while Samuel Stokes would lead the

family prayers in Hindi, praying to the Father to bless his children, remembering also in his prayers the one who had died. The servants of the household always came in and joined them. In the summer, Indians and Europeans come up from the plains and live in the guest house provided for them.

I have only told about Sadhu Sundar Singh in a roundabout way. Yet I hope I have drawn in outline a true picture. A more burning devotion to Christ than his I have never known. He is entirely absorbed in the things of the soul and is not of this earth at all. He longs to go his own way. Probably he never felt so miserable as when he was paraded over Europe. His whole heart and soul were longing for the Unseen. And anything that brings him into the middle of this material world, except for the comfort of sorrow and the relief of suffering and the testimony of his Lord and Saviour, is something he longs to escape from. His one desire is to get into communion with his Lord; to experience afresh the pure wonder and love that it brings him. He is a solitary and longs to live his solitary life.

From all the sensational and loud popularity and parade which he received in the West he has gone back into obscurity. No one even hears about him or knows where he is. He had tried to penetrate into Tibet, for he wanted to die for Christ's sake. But the first time he had to turn back ill. Then he stayed with the lepers at Sabathu and made his home with them. Now he has gone again and no one knows today what has happened to him.

I met him for the last time more than two years ago when he came to the little Christian church and spoke a few words at the end of the service. We had a meal together afterwards. He was just the same. I did not find any difference in him. He was looking very ill and worn and somewhat sad. But again and again his face would gleam with joy when anything brought the name of his Lord before him.

That then is the last picture I saw of him. Since then I have only heard the indirect news that his illness had further increased and his eyesight had been still more impaired. Yet he has gone that terrible journey to Tibet. Truly he has learned to suffer with his Lord! And if he has been privileged to win a martyr's death, in the service of Christ, it will be the one joy for which he has ever waited, longing for it to be fulfilled.

GANDHI AND MISSIONS⁴⁷

During the last few months a very serious concern has been felt both in Europe and America with regard to a pronouncement by Mahatma Gandhi about Christian missions in India. This statement was originally mishandled by the press and gave an entirely wrong impression of Mr. Gandhi's true meaning. It was interpreted as implying that as soon as India gained her full freedom, Mr. Gandhi would insist on all Christian missionaries withdrawing from India because of their proselytising character.

To all who know him this whole impression is absurd, for not only has he from the very first been the friend - the intimate friend - of many leading missionaries in India, but also he has continued to have friendly relations with the whole Christian missionary body even during his non-co-operation days. He has been continually asked by them to address them as a body on deep religious subjects. Thus the relations of friendship, both individual and social, have existed unbroken between Mahatma Gandhi and his followers on the one hand, and the body of missionaries in India, both European and American, on the other.

I have myself lived constantly in Mr. Gandhi's *ashram* at Sabarmati, and I have witnessed, with my own eyes, the kindness of every inmate of the *ashram* toward missionaries who have come to spend a few days in their midst. A missionary society like the Christa Seva Sangha has continually sent its own younger members to Sabarmati in order that they might learn, at first hand, the Indian method of living simply and religiously as a family, which Mr. Gandhi's *ashram* represents.

It would be possible to repeat a hundredfold instances of close relationship between Mr. Gandhi and the missionaries in an unbroken chain. It would also be quite easy to carry back the links of this chain to South Africa and to show there also the close friendship which he had and the part which missionaries played in his own life by furthering his Indian cause. In *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, I have gathered together a very large number of instances of this kind which show a direct contact with Christians and his own view of the place of Jesus in world history.

A further proof of the utter impossibility of his wishing missionaries to withdraw as a whole from India may be seen in his own "Declaration of Fundamental Rights" which he himself drew up and endorsed at the Indian National Congress at Karachi in March, 1931. Here he declared that religious freedom should be one of the primary fundamental rights of self-governing India. He further declared that the Indian government, under *swaraj*, should be entirely neutral in all matters of religion. Again he declared that each citizen should be allowed to practise his own religion without hindrance, provided there was no breach of public morality involved. It should therefore be a self-evident proposition that Mahatma Gandhi could not in the same breath declare these fundamental rights of all religions, and at the same time wish Christian missionaries to withdraw from India, for this would be an interference with religious liberty and a breach of religious neutrality combined in a single act.

⁴⁷ *The Christian Century*, Chicago, 49:765-67, June 15, 1932

What did Mr. Gandhi really mean by his objection to Christian missionaries, as he had himself witnessed them engaged in their work in India? First of all, he illustrated his meaning by stating that compulsory Bible teaching had been carried on in state-aided schools and colleges and that this was an offence to the religious conscience of mankind. Here I can give my own witness to corroborate that of Mahatma Gandhi. I was obliged to give compulsory Bible teaching at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, nearly thirty years ago, and only refused to do it when I found how objectionable to the parents of my pupils this compulsory religious instruction was. I actually found boys putting cotton-wool in their ears, at their parents' command, whenever they attended my Bible classes.

Clearly, in objecting to this, Mahatma Gandhi is on the side of Christ and not against the spirit of the Master. In the same manner undoubtedly, during the past years, medical mission work has taken advantage of the patient's sickness in order to enforce religious instruction. To this again Mr. Gandhi rightly objects, and every true Christian will agree with him. There have been a very large number of instances of this kind in the past where missionaries have taken advantage of British rule in order to spread their own teaching, often by the help of government funds. Neutrality in religion will make this kind of state preference impossible in future, and we ourselves, as Christians, ought to be glad that religious neutrality will be strictly observed instead of being contravened.

In the second place, there is in Mr. Gandhi's own mind a very strong objection to all proselytising. Also there is a feeling that it is wrong, except in the very rarest instances, for a man to change his religion. He would feel, as a Hindu, that what a man has been given by birth and inheritance, with regard to caste and creed, should never be abandoned. This, with him, is a fundamental Hindu doctrine which he calls the "Religion of *Swadeshi*", meaning by this that it is a religious duty for a man or woman to remain true to the religious traditions of the country in which they were born. This accounts for Mr. Gandhi's utter abhorrence of false proselytising methods and his uneasiness with regard to any proselytising at all.

In an address to missionaries, which he delivered in South India,⁴⁸ he gives us his views in a remarkable passage which it is necessary to quote in full as follows:

"After much thinking I have arrived at a definition of *swadeshi* that perhaps best illustrates my meaning: *Swadeshi* is that spirit within us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, first, in the matter of religion I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion - that is, the use of my immediate surroundings in religion. If I find my religion defective I should serve it by purging it of its defects. Second, in the domain of politics I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. Third, in the field of economics I should use only those things that are produced by my immediate neighbours, and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting.

"Hinduism has become a conservative religion, and therefore a mighty force, because of the *swadeshi* spirit underlying it. It is the most tolerant creed

⁴⁸ Speech on *Swadeshi* at Missionary Conference, Madras, February 14, 1916

because it is non-proselytising, and it is as capable of expansion today as it has been found to be in the past. It has succeeded, not in driving out (as I think it has been erroneously held) but in absorbing Buddhism. By reason of the *swadeshi* spirit a Hindu refuses to change his religion, not necessarily because he considers it to be the best, but because he knows that he can complement it by introducing reforms. And what I have said about Hinduism is, I suppose, true of the other great faiths of the world; only it is held that it is especially so in the case of Hinduism. But here comes the point I am labouring to teach.

“If there is any substance in which I have said, will not the great missionary bodies of India, to whom she owes a great debt of gratitude for what they have done and are doing, do still better and serve the spirit of Christianity better by dropping the goal of proselytising while continuing their philanthropic work? I make the suggestion in all sincerity and with due humility.

“I have endeavoured to study the Bible and consider it to be a part of my scriptures. The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount competes almost on equal terms with the *Bhagavad Gita* for the domination of my heart. I yield to no Christian in the strength of devotion with which I sing ‘Lead, Kindly Light,’ and several other inspired hymns of a similar nature. I have come under the influence of noted Christian missionaries belonging to different denominations, and I enjoy to this day the privilege of friendship with some of them. Thus I have offered the above suggestions, not as a biased Hindu, but as a humble and impartial student of religion with great leanings towards Christianity.

“May it not be that the ‘Go ye unto all the world’ message has been somewhat narrowly interpreted and the spirit of it missed? It will not be denied - I speak from experience - that many of the ‘conversions’ are only so-called. In some cases the appeal has gone not to the heart but to the stomach; and in every case a conversion leaves a sore behind it, which I venture to think is avoidable. Quoting again from experience, a new birth, a change of heart is perfectly possible in every one of the great faiths.

“I know I am now treading upon thin ice; but I do not apologise in closing this part of my subject by saying that the frightful outrage that is just now going on in Europe perhaps shows that the message of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Peace, has been little understood in Europe, and that light may have to be thrown upon it from the East...”.

When we come to consider Mahatma Gandhi’s ideas with regard to the true teaching of Christ, it becomes clear that the East is hardly likely to form the same conception that the West has become accustomed to chiefly through the excessive emphasis laid on the character and life of St. Paul. There can be little doubt that the missionary enterprise itself owes its special character and impulse to the absorbing figure of St. Paul as the first great missionary of the church. We have not yet gone further in the West to question ourselves more closely as to whether the missionary ardour of St. Paul, noble and devoted as it was, really represents the full gospel of Christ, or only a one-sided interpretation of it.

We are apt to forget, in our own missionary zeal, which fits in so easily with imperialistic aims of a lower kind, that there was no scorn too great for Christ himself to pour upon the Pharisee who “compassed sea and land to make one proselyte” but in the end only made him “twofold more a child of hell” than himself. This surely should give us cause for deep searching of heart when Gandhi warns us that we in India continually overstep the mark in our proselytising zeal.

There is another aspect of Christ’s teaching which bears closely on the subject of missionary endeavour. Christ’s teaching is scrupulously regardful of the personality of each individual man and woman. There is nothing of exploitation in it, but only the quality of service. There is no imposition from without, but only the development from within. For Christ there is always one single attitude towards one’s fellow men - the attitude of love for the man himself whose life has been implanted in him by God, and whose growth also is entirely in God’s hands. This recognition of God’s “gardening” should surely prevent the most ardent missionary from pulling up the human plant and transplanting it with little regard to its surroundings. It should prevent the ruthlessness and the self-will which Christ saw in the missionary Pharisee “compassing sea and land to make one proselyte”.

In thus merely outlining a vast subject, which needs careful study and delicate exploration, I have only pointed the way forward to a new ideal of missionary work which shall avoid the crude methods hitherto far too often adopted in the West. Mahatma Gandhi has no objection at all to the missionary who comes to his own country, India, in the full spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, and who is ready, in his daily life, to practise what he preaches, but he does object to a crude and ruthless proselytiser.

Father Verrier Elwin, living in utter humility and poverty a life such as St. Francis of Assisi lived of old, has become one of the best loved inmates of Sabarmati *Ashram* which is Mahatma Gandhi’s home. On the other hand, a missionary, if such a one exists, swelling with superiority complex of race and creed, and eager to force, by his dominating spirit, weak members of another race into his own religious fold - such a missionary Pharisee, even if he call himself by the name of Christ, becomes at once instinctively distrusted by those Hindus in the *ashram* and outside the *ashram* who are seeking humbly to learn and to follow the will of God as they themselves have been brought up to understand it.

The question may be asked whether this view of Christ’s teaching is not modified by two passages which come at the end of the gospels of St. Mark and St. Matthew. The former of these two passages, with its militant note of condemnation of all those who remain unbaptised, is a blot on the gospels as they have come down to us traditionally through the Christian church. It is an immense relief to learn from a critical study of the text that this passage does not belong to the original gospel at all, but is rather an addition by an unknown hand which was added by a scribe at a late date to make up for the loss of the last page of the original manuscript of St. Mark. We may therefore leave this passage out of consideration altogether.

With regard to the passage in St. Matthew’s gospel, much might be written. Here, again, there are certain doubts that arise at once concerning the text itself, but taking the text as it stands and acknowledging the lateness of much of the general outlook of St. Matthew’s gospel we may rightly assert that the “teaching” of the “nations” which

that gospel describes, is a very different thing from making, by all kinds of means, individual converts who may be induced to join the Christian society either by worthy or unworthy motives.

Mahatma Gandhi has deliberately stated that he has no objection at all to what he calls “true conversion”, meaning by that, heart conversion. Indeed, at one time, as he tells us in his book called *Experiments with Truth*, he seriously considered the question whether he should himself join the Christian society when he was in South Africa, and it was only after the warning of a friend called Raychandbhai that he decided to remain where he was in the Hindu society and not to change his religious status. His friend’s warning was, in this matter, a true one. His friend stated that Mahatma Gandhi should not take immediate action but study more carefully his own Hindu religion about which, at that time, he knew very little indeed. Probably this intimate experience in his own life has influenced Mahatma Gandhi’s thoughts more than anything else. To sum up his position today: First, he would strongly object to any so-called conversion to Christianity by unfair means or methods; second, he would not object to any sincere heart conversion.

Let me state in conclusion, that one of the dearest friends in India of Mahatma Gandhi was the late Principal S. K. Rudra of Delhi,⁴⁹ who appeared to him to be an ideal Christian.

49 Sushil Kumar Rudra, Principal of St. Stephen's College, Delhi, 1909-23. Mr. Andrews was greatly influenced by him. Gandhiji used to stay at his residence on his visits to Delhi. He passed away on June 30, 1925.

GANDHI OFFERS HIS LIFE⁵⁰

To understand the inner meaning of Mahatma Gandhi's recent fast⁵¹ we have to realise the desperate position he was in with regard to those vital interests of the depressed classes which he had so deeply at heart. Already, at the Round Table Conference, he had given a strange warning that he would resist separate electorates "with his life". Many of those who heard that phrase knew well what it implied. Indeed, he took pains at the time to make clear that he meant nothing short of death. Thus a grave situation, fraught with tragic possibilities, was developing even as early as November, 1931.

Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, came his imprisonment in Yeravda jail, on January 4, 1932. He had fully intended to spend the first months of this present year in going among the depressed classes in order to warn them of the impending danger if they accepted separate electorates. He wished to tell them that, if in this manner they cut themselves off finally from the Hindu community, they would be stigmatised as "untouchables" forever. This obvious fact, which the Simon Commission itself had recognised, he had intended to bring home to them in different parts of India by a personal campaign up and down the country. No one who at all realises his vast influence among them can doubt for a moment that he would have triumphantly succeeded. Indeed, before long he would probably have won over Dr. Ambedkar himself, who had been his chief opponent in London at the Round Table Conference. For even as late as May 17, 1930, Dr. Ambedkar had expressed the same view as Mahatma Gandhi on this very question of separate electorates. His change of front, in the midst of the conference, had been one of the most disastrous events last year. But Mahatma Gandhi was given no chance to do what he so earnestly desired. He was suddenly imprisoned, as I have said, without being granted any interview with the Viceroy, just one week after his return from London. He was thus confined behind the prison doors when the crisis came.

His vow, however, to resist "with his life", remained. Yet he could do nothing to fulfil it from within the jail. And the time was drawing near for the Prime Minister's award. So at last he wrote his first letter to Ramsay MacDonald, early in March this year, warning him solemnly that if separate electorates were decided upon, in the Prime Minister's arbitration award, he would be obliged to declare a fast "unto death".

Evidently the British Premier, in giving his final decision last August, supposed that he had fully met Mahatma Gandhi's difficulty. By giving those of the depressed classes who passed the literacy test a second vote in the general electorate, he felt certain that he had safeguarded their position among the Hindus. But the separate electorates, unfortunately, remained substantially incorporated in the award. For the representatives of the untouchables would be elected exclusively by the untouchables

⁵⁰ *The Christian Century*, Chicago, 49: 1299-1301, October 26, 1932

⁵¹ Gandhiji began "a perpetual and fast unto death" in prison on September 20, 1932, when the British Government announced separate electorates for "untouchables" (Harijans). He broke the fast on 26 September when he received a Government communiqué which satisfied him.

themselves. No caste Hindus would vote in these electorates. Thus the gap between them and the caste Hindus was bound to grow wider and wider. The communal poison, which was spreading its virus all over India, would remain in the body politic. To anyone who knows intimately Indian conditions, especially among the untouchables, it is not difficult to follow Mahatma Gandhi's reasoning at this point. Indeed, no one knows the condition under which the untouchables live more intimately than he does. But the British Prime Minister's award had now actually been delivered. It was like "the law of the Medes and Persians which altereth not". Yet there was one alternative still left. A loophole remained, which Mahatma Gandhi seized. If the caste Hindus could agree with Dr. Ambedkar and the other untouchable leaders on a better scheme of election among themselves, the Prime Minister offered to accept this agreed scheme and withdraw his own award.

Thus Mahatma Gandhi's fast, when his vow was at last taken, was not ultimately aimed against the Prime Minister's award as such. It was rather a very desperate attempt, on which he staked his own life, to get the caste Hindus and the depressed classes to come together, as they had never done before, and form their own agreement among themselves on non-communal lines. In this he was quite marvellously successful. For the moral pressure of his self-imposed fast accomplished in a single week what could not have been achieved by ordinary processes in a hundred years. He also obtained for the depressed classes a representation far in excess of what the award had offered.

But what are we to say concerning such moral compulsion? Is it truly an ethical mode of procedure? Can such a fast be justified? Is it not, after all, a form of violence in disguise? Is there really any difference between this moral violence and certain acts of physical violence which Mahatma Gandhi himself deplors?

It is true, there is a violence about it. I think Mahatma Gandhi would himself acknowledge this. But he would call it the compulsion of love, and he would say that only under the compulsion of extreme and intense love can such acts of moral violence be performed without departing from the law of *satyagraha*, or soul-force. On a previous occasion, when he "fasted unto death" against the mill-owners of Ahmedabad, he acknowledged that this fast of his was not free from a "grave defect". For he had enjoyed very close and cordial relations with the mill-owners, and his fast could not but modify their decision. He then wrote as follows: "With the mill-owners, I could only plead. To fast against them would amount to coercion. Yet, in spite of my knowledge that my fast was bound to coerce, as in fact it did, I felt I could not help it. The duty to undertake it seemed to me to be clear".

Here the intensity of his love was for the poor, downtrodden mill-hands; he was ready to go to the extremest lengths which love could urge in fighting their great battle; and he won. With the untouchables, his love is far deeper still. Indeed, it may be said to be the deepest thing in all his life. He loves them with a love that is stronger than death itself. Therefore he has felt justified in employing the same desperate moral compulsion, a fast unto death, in order to help them at this critical juncture.

In the years gone by, I have had many letters from him on all sorts of subjects, but there is one which I value most of all. It is so singularly revealing concerning his deep love for the untouchables that I am venturing to repeat it in full at this place:⁵²

“You have inundated me, Charlie, with your love letters, and yet I have neglected you all the while. But you have been much in my thoughts and in my prayers. You had no business to get ill.⁵³ You had therefore better be up and doing! And yet on your sickbed you have been doing so much! For I see more and more that praying is doing, and that silence is the best speech, and often the best argument also. And that is my answer to your own anxiety about the untouchables.

“I look at the problem as an Indian and a Hindu. You look at it as an Englishman and a Christian. You look at the problem with the eye of an observer. I look at it as an affected and afflicted party. You can be patient. I cannot. Or you, as a disinterested reformer, can afford to be patient; whereas I, as a sinner, must be impatient if I would get rid of the sin.

“I may talk glibly of the Englishman’s sin in Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. But, as a Hindu, I may not talk glibly about the sin of Hinduism against the untouchables. I have to deal with the Hindu Dyers. I must act and have ever acted. You act, you do not speak, when you feel most.

“Not knowing Gujarati, you do not know how furiously this question is raging in Gujarat. Do you know that I have purposely adopted a pariah girl, and that there is today, at the *ashram*, a pariah family living with us again? You are doing an injustice to me in even allowing yourself to think that, for a single moment, I may be subordinating this question to any other. But I need not give addresses, or write in English about it. Most of those who form my audiences are not hostile to the pariahs. Indeed, I had the least difficulty of all in carrying the propositions about them in the Congress.

“Moreover, I cannot talk about things I do not know. The depressed classes’ question in Bengal, I know only superficially. It is perhaps not one of untouchability at all, but of the *zamindar* (landlord) against the serf.

“I am attacking the sacerdotalism of Hinduism. There are some Hindus who consider it a sin to touch a portion of a human being, because they are born in a particular environment! I am engaged, as a Hindu, in showing that this is *not* a sin, to touch a human being; and that it *is* a sin to consider that touch to be a sin. It is a bigger question than that of gaining Indian independence; but I can tackle it better, if I gain the latter on the way.

“It is not impossible that India may free herself from English domination before India has become actually free from the curse of untouchability. Freedom from English domination is one of the essentials of *swaraj*, and the absence of it is

⁵² The letter was written by Gandhiji in January 1921. The full text is reproduced in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume 19, pages 288-90.

⁵³ Mr. Andrews suffered from a severe attack of influenza.

blocking the way to all progress. Do you know that today those who are opposing me in Gujarat are actually supporting the government, and the latter are playing them off against me?"

Thus ends the first part of this very remarkable letter. Evidently, however, Mahatma Gandhi felt that he had not yet made his meaning clear to me. He, therefore, went on in a postscript as follows:

"I began to think about you, and this question of untouchability, at two a.m. Not being able to sleep, I began to write to you at four a.m. I have not yet written all I want to say on this question. This is no apology. But I have not been able to clear the point for you, as it is clear to me.

"I must not keep one thing from you. One newspaper here is endeavouring to weaken my position on this very question by saying that I have been influenced by you in this matter, meaning thereby that I am not speaking as a Hindu, but as one who has been spoiled by being under your Christian influence.

"This is all rotten, I know. I began this work in South Africa before I ever heard of you; and I was conscious of the sin of untouchability before I came under other Christian influences in South Africa. The truth came to me even when I was yet a child. I used to laugh at my dear mother for making us bathe, if we, brothers, touched any pariah.

"It was in 1897, that I was prepared at Durban to turn Mrs. Gandhi away from the house, because she would not treat on a footing of equality one of those in my house, who was known to her to belong to a pariah clan, and whom I had invited to stay with me. It has been a passion of my life to serve the untouchables, because I have felt that I could not remain a Hindu if it was true that untouchability was a part of Hinduism.

"I have still only told you half the truth. I feel as keenly about the slaughter of goats at Kalighat as I do about the untouchables. Whenever I am in Calcutta, the thought of the goats being sacrificed haunts me. I asked Harilal, my eldest son, not to settle in Calcutta on that account. The pariah can voice his own grievance. He can petition. He can even rise against the Hindus. But the poor dumb goats! I sometimes writhe in agony when I think of all this. But I do not speak, or write, about it. All the same, I am qualifying myself for the service of these fellow-creatures of mine, who are slaughtered in the name of my faith.

"I may not finish the work in this incarnation. I shall be born again to finish that work, or someone who has realised my agony will finish it. The point is this - the Hindu way is different from the modern way. You notice my use of the word 'modern', for I do believe that the Christian way is not different from the Hindu way.

"I am still not satisfied that I have told you all that is just now rising to my pencil; but I dare say I have told you sufficient for you to understand....".

* * *

Only those who are able to enter into the spirit of these burning words of love for the untouchables, will be able to appreciate at its full value the character of Mahatma Gandhi's fast on their behalf. He saw these poorest of poor people, whom he loved so deeply, taking a wrong turn, which led to a hidden precipice. With all the reckless daring of devoted love he threw himself across their path. Even if his own life must be lost, with untold agonies in the process, he would sacrifice it for their sake. Surely in such a deed there is a beauty, rare and wonderful, which brings back to mind the words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends".

London, October 4

WHEN LIFE DEFEATS DOGMA⁵⁴

There is a problem of Christian faith which has confronted nearly every man or woman who has gone abroad to non-Christian lands for missionary work. Briefly stated, it is this. Among those whom we meet, we find some at least whose inner lives are filled with the presence of God. They live near to God in prayer; they are simple and humble in heart. In every sense they are good people. Some of us, who have never been abroad, may get a true impression of such people when we read Tagore's religious poems and hear about the beauty of his character. What are we, as Christians, to say to this? How are we to think about it?

The question was answered very crudely in earlier days. Some of the ancient fathers of the church spoke about these pagan virtues as "splendid vices". One answer, however, was given very early indeed, which was full of the Christ spirit. It was said that there was an "*anima naturaliter Christiana*" - a "soul of man naturally Christian". That word came very near to the truth.

But a theological doctrine in the end prevailed profoundly differing from this. It went back for its authority to the text, "There is none other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved". It evolved from this sentence, taken from St. Peter's speech in the Acts of the Apostles, the hard, ecclesiastical dogma that outside the boundaries of the Christian church there was no salvation at all. So insistent was the logic of St. Augustine that he could not even believe that tiny infants, dying unbaptised, might enter the kingdom of heaven. Surely here was a *reductio ad absurdum* which should have made the devout, intelligent Christian pause. It ought to have proved convincingly that a blind path had been taken. But long centuries went by before the incongruity was understood.

At one time, in my own religious experience, I used to live in the midst of theological intransigence of this character. In consequence, I suffered the miseries of a tortured conscience while breathing an atmosphere of many futile and needless fears.

Therefore I know from bitter personal suffering how harshly such fears strain man's sensitive spirit and poison with doubt his inner will.

My own rescue ultimately came from a closer and more faithful study of the spirit of Christ himself as he is disclosed in the gospels. For these very questionings drove me back to him. The result was revolutionary. Like Saul of Tarsus, at the time of his recovery from blindness, the scales fell from my eyes and I saw Christ plain at last as I had never seen him before. The events of his life, recorded in the gospels, were sparkling now with incidents, which pioneered the way to a universal spiritual kingdom. He broke down all the old barriers, one by one. Jew, Samaritan, Gentile, to him were merely human categories, superseded in the light of the one supreme reality - love to God and love to man. With reckless daring, he challenged the old conventions. He placed the publican before the Pharisee, the Roman Gentile before

⁵⁴ *The Christian Century*, Chicago, 49: 1469-71, November 30, 1932

the devout Jew, the excommunicate Samaritan before the priest and Levite. All these old man-made divisions he brought to the one profound test of obedience to the will of God. "Who is my mother and who are my brethren?" he asked in an exalted moment. The answer came from his own lips: "He that doeth the will of God, the same is my mother and my sister and my brother".

Thus he set at rest by his voice of moral authority the tired and weary spirit of humanity, which had entangled itself in a whole network of religious fears. He took the poor stricken thing in his hands, like a wounded and terrified bird, and gave back to it the use of both its wings to fly upwards to its true home in the sky. He emancipated us from our inhuman ideas about God, leaving us at last the simplest creed of all, "When ye pray, say, Our Father". "One is your Father in heaven, and all ye are brethren". "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect". And the greatest miracle of all was this, that he was able to offer freely, to those who asked him in simple faith, his own living presence which had won its moral victory over human sin and death. So mighty was his inner power in the hearts of men, that the poor and illiterate, the down-trodden and oppressed, were enabled by his grace to overcome the evil within themselves and to rejoice, even in the midst of pain, counting it all joy to suffer for his sake.

This then was the gospel, the good tidings. The broken-hearted were made whole; the captives were set free; the acceptable year of the Lord was proclaimed. Nothing that man could believe about God's goodness could be too wonderful to be true. His grace was far more abundant than we could either ask or think. Not a sparrow fell to the ground without the Father's will. Even the hairs of our head were all numbered. God's children were to be like him, loving, forbearing, long-suffering; they were to be forgiving, seventy times seven. The fruits of his spirit were love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there was no law. "By this," said Christ, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another". Love was the fulfilment of the law. Nothing was to come between that love and God himself. For God himself was love, and Christ, in human ways, was God's word of love to sinful men. In such a supreme word, direct from God, religious truth had at last reached its utmost limit. It had become universal, spiritual, eternal. And the proof - the supreme proof - of this was Christ's own victory over sin and death which had given to him a living power to redeem. There is an old hymn which has often helped me personally to grasp this truth:

In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of Sorrows has a part.
He sympathises with our grief,
And to the sufferer sends relief.

The poetry may not be of a high order, but the sentiment itself expresses an inner reality, which binds the human race together, in one, in Christ the Son of Man. This same universal presence of Christ, in all who are suffering, is brought home to us in the words, "I was an hungered, I was athirst, I was sick, naked, a stranger, and a prisoner. Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me". Thus the stranger in a strange land is no alien, but one of his own brothers.

From this living precept of Christ, we may surely deduce that those who have never known him outwardly, but have done the Father's will of love to all mankind, are accepted by him. For there is a church universal, whose boundaries extend far beyond all outward limitations imposed by mankind. And in that church, Christ is king.

Last of all, there came home to me the deeper, mystical strain of St. John's gospel. The universal Christ, St. John tells us, is the "true Light, that lighteth every man coming into the world".

Before the incarnation - if we are to measure time and space in that which is eternal - he was in the world, divinely entering into humble, human souls, as the Book of Wisdom describes his presence. And still today, according to the fullness of his grace, he enters every heart. Therefore his followers go out to distant lands, not to bring for the first time his inward spiritual presence into the lives of men, but rather to welcome his presence in them which has already gone before. For in strange lands and among strangers we are still able to find him and minister to him. In the very least of these his brethren, he himself is present.

There is an old story in the book of Genesis about Jacob in his lonely wanderings through the desert. It tells how, in a far-off land, he laid his head down to rest upon a stone, for a pillow, and dreamt a dream. He saw a ladder raised up to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending. When he awoke from sleep, he said, "How dreadful is this place. This is none other but the House of God. This is the Gate of Heaven".

We who, in earlier years, in the mission field, supposed in our vain imaginations that the whole realm of mankind outside the Christian church was a spiritual wilderness, unwatered by God's grace, have dreamed like Jacob, another dream. We have seen the angels of God ascending and descending in most unexpected places. We have found mankind everywhere to be a temple of the divine presence. And in Christ we have learned to behold the Father, whose good pleasure it is to unite all the diverse children of men, thus making them in very truth the family and household of God.

LIFTING THE DEAD-WEIGHT FROM MISSIONS⁵⁵

“The Laymen’s Inquiry After One Hundred Years,” which has been significantly called in its book of report “Re-Thinking Missions”,⁵⁶ has set before us a review of one large area of the mission field in the East with a thoroughness and frankness that is altogether refreshing and full of promise for the future. The report, as it becomes circulated and well known, is likely to accomplish for the whole missionary cause today what the Edinburgh Conference and its report did for the churches of Christendom nearly a quarter of a century ago. It maintains throughout that arresting note which compels attention.

The overwhelmingly rapid changes which have come over human thought and life, owing to scientific discovery, increased intercommunication, and new methods of research, were bound to have their repercussion on the missionary enterprise of the church. While, on the one side, they have caused much of the older form of missionary propaganda to pass out of date - just as the older Calvinism is dead in the theology of the Western churches - on the other side, they have brought into full recognition new values concerning the Christian faith itself which appeal most strongly to Eastern peoples.

Thus a different angle of vision had become imperative if missionary work were to hold its place among the most progressive forces in the world. It therefore became necessary, during this eventful twentieth century, continually to readjust missionary methods, in order to keep pace with the times in which we live. “The scribe instructed unto the kingdom,” as Christ taught us, must bring out of God’s treasury things new as well as things that are old.

The earlier revision of personal and institutional work on the mission field, submitted in a series of reports to the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, had its own marked effect. But the World War came, bringing anarchy and confusion into every department of life. After the armistice great difficulties of reconstruction remained. The whole missionary movement seemed to be losing its hold among practical men of affairs. Then, with that supreme touch of genius which accompanies great leadership, Dr. John R. Mott⁵⁷ summoned Christians throughout the world to a fresh conference at Jerusalem, in 1928. There could not have been a happier inspiration than this. The

⁵⁵ *The Christian Century*, Chicago, 50: 115-17, January 25, 1933

⁵⁶ Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Commission of Appraisal. *Re-thinking missions; a laymen's inquiry after one hundred years*. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1932. The Commission was chaired by William Ernest Hocking. It studied foreign missionary work of six Protestant denominations in India, Burma, China and Japan.

⁵⁷ Dr. John Raleigh Mott (1865-1955) was general secretary and later chairman of the World Student Christian Federation, 1895-1928; and Chairman of the International Missionary Council, 1928-1946. He was also a leader of the YMCA for many years. He chaired the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, and served as chairman of its continuing committee, promoting interdenominational cooperation in missionary efforts. He held discussions with Gandhiji on three occasions. He received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946.

young missionary churches of the East all responded joyfully, and they were offered a leadership at this Jerusalem conference such as had never even been thought of before. They fully rose to the occasion. An avenue was thus opened whereby at last the responsibility for evangelism in the East should more and more be borne by the young missionary churches within their own borders.

At the same time, a whole series of new questions had to be faced and answered.

Why were the younger churches still so strongly in revolt against the old missionary organisation? Why were the younger Christians in India, China and Japan, along with parts of Africa, chafing against missionary control in such a manner that a clash of ideals and aims could hardly be avoided? Why were the missionary institutions, built with money from the West, losing touch with the free current of national life in the East? Could these things in any way be remedied?

The Jerusalem Conference was called upon to face questions like these courageously and wisely. Therefore, soon after its sessions were concluded, a much larger inquiry was set on foot. This took different forms in different fields.

Under the joint leadership of Dr. Lindsay and Dr. S. K. Datta,⁵⁸ an educational survey was carried out in all the mission schools and colleges of India. The result was the publication of a report of exceptional missionary value. Similar investigations were inaugurated in Africa and the Near East, under the generous fostering care of the Phelps Stokes Fund and other foundations. Then came the sending of what was called a fact-finding commission to India, China and Japan, whose duty was to prepare the way for the Laymen's Inquiry itself. This latter has now completed the ordered series of all these revising commissions.

We can look back, with sincere admiration, upon the patience and perseverance with which such converging inquiries have been fulfilled. I was with Dr. Hocking,⁵⁹ the chairman of the Laymen's Commission, during his visit to London on his way to India, and was very deeply impressed by the earnestness with which he and his wife started out upon their labour of love. It was also a great happiness to be able to take them very early one morning to meet Mahatma Gandhi in London. He wished them, with all his heart, God's blessing on their journey. As I have read through their report, I have felt, without a doubt, that if the deepest Christian principles laid down by them were only carried out to the full, Mahatma Gandhi would be the first to approve. His own criticism of missions, which he gave to the press in India, is referred to in this Laymen's Inquiry, and the justice of what he said is acknowledged. His powerful aid is sought as a co-worker in the cause of righteousness. Such an attitude represents, in a single outstanding example, the new perspective which has been reached during these crowded years.

Perhaps the most significant thing, in all the mass of detail collected, is the deep religious earnestness and spiritual fervour which runs through each investigation. The living spirit of missions is manifest, reviving drooping hopes and restoring flagging courage. There is no disparagement of the old in contrast with the new. On the contrary, the Laymen's Inquiry recognises fully the first love and enthusiasm, the sacrifice and the tears, of that earlier adventure of faith, undertaken in Christ's name,

⁵⁸ Dr. S.K. Datta, Principal of the Forman Christian College, Lahore.

⁵⁹ William E. Hocking (1873-1966), professor of Philosophy at Harvard.

a century ago when mission work abroad began. The restoration and rekindling of that first love is the main object always kept in view. The pure evangelical purpose - the proclaiming of God's kingdom of love - retains its essential place as the keystone of the arch of all missionary endeavour.

The difference between the old and the new is rather a changing of focus and an enlargement of vision as to what that kingdom of God on earth really implies. The new missionary aim seeks to include in that kingdom body, soul and spirit, which together make up one human personality. It is not content with any narrower view of the gospel of Christ. In this respect, it is surely true to the spirit of the Lord and Master, who went about doing good and healing all manner of diseases while he proclaimed that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

No religious movement in human history, starting at white heat with purest heroism and devotion, has been able to keep for a long time its earliest enthusiasm untarnished. The Franciscans gave to mediaeval Europe one of the most perfect expressions of new creative life that the world has ever seen. Their impulse found its centre in the love of Christ the Redeemer. We are slowly recovering the records of that rare beauty and radiance which flooded Europe after the dark ages with the glorious sunlight of a great revival. Yet history shows how after a single generation decay set in, and the first passionate devotion receded. The Wesleyan movement of the eighteenth century affords another signal example of the same process, though in this instance revival has followed revival in marvellous succession.

The Laymen's Commission evidently had these historical precedents in view when they named their inquiry, "After a hundred years". For their main thesis is that the missionary movement of the early nineteenth century began with a joy of heroic martyrdom worthy to be compared with that of the earliest Christians, or the Franciscans; but they urge at the same time that after a century of effort new means have to be found whereby that first enthusiasm may be revived and that first love restored. The dead-weight of convention and routine must be lifted off. The words of the Book of Revelation must be realised afresh, "Behold I make all things new". It will be well to set down in order some of the points in the report where this newness is most clearly emphasised and expressed. It will be impossible to do more than refer to certain outstanding features.

1. The full "coming of age" of the younger churches of the East, to which I have already called attention, has been welcomed by every investigator who has gone out to review the mission field afresh and also by the Western missionaries themselves. This recognition implies a momentous step forward, similar to that taken when the first apostles at Jerusalem acknowledged the freedom of the Gentile churches. Indeed, the world drama described in the Acts of the Apostles is being repeated in our own day on a still larger scale. For these young churches in India, China and Japan are face to face with great empires of human life and thought in the East far larger and more impressive than the Roman empire of old. Kagawa is a true apostle to the Gentiles in our own days, as Paul was in the first century. Sadhu Sundar Singh in India has shown equally the "marks of an apostle"; and it may now be surmised that he had sealed his witness with a martyr's death. We who watch these ardent Christian spirits, aflame with the first love for Christ, are confident that the fire of Pentecost is still kindling men and

- women in the East, in our own generation, to supreme sacrifice and devotion.
2. This very fact has its obvious corollary. It implies that a new type of missionary is needed in these lands today - no less inspired, no less aflame with burning ardour, but a "servant of all" instead of a ruler and director of large institutions. What grace of humility this implies in a Westerner, belonging to the Anglo-Saxon race, can only be appreciated by those who have struggled through to victory after many painful failures and futile endeavours. For it is literally true with most of us who belong to that stubborn stock that before we have been out in the East a few months racial vanity rises to the surface injecting falsehoods into our souls and poisoning our minds. Those who think they are most free from this evil are often in the greatest danger of infection, so subtle is its invasion of the will. Yet only when the East sees the true servant of Christ from the West ready to take the lowest place in the kingdom of God, will full acknowledgement be made to the power of the cross of Christ.
 3. This arrogance of race has been intermingled in the past with a religious Pharisaism no less offensive. The "arrogance of the Christian" is a terrible phrase, which I have heard on the lips of humble men of God in the East who rightly condemn such pride. On the one hand, we from the West have tried to grow rich by the exploitation of Africa and the East, regardless of the solemn warnings of Christ. We have greedily accepted "all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them". We have sought to serve God and Mammon at the same time. On the other hand, in spite of all this glaring contradiction in ourselves between profession and practice, we have refused to acknowledge openly our own sins, as Christians, and have been puffed up with pride. We have spent our time in pointing out the evils which are being practised in the East by men of another faith, instead of seeking to strengthen the good things that remain and are ready to die.

An entirely different reaction toward the living religions of mankind is needed - a change summed up in the great words of St. Paul that whatsoever is good and pure and lovely and honourable and of good report should be thought upon, rather than those things that separate men one from another. In harmony with this humbler spirit, we shall earnestly seek fellowship in spiritual things with those who belong to these living religions of the East.

We shall remember that they have conserved for countless generations in the past an earnest faith in a divine providence ever working among mankind. We shall join with them, wherever possible, in sustaining and upholding this faith in God in the midst of the secularism of the age. In this connection, I would venture to repeat some solemn words which I have quoted elsewhere. They were spoken to me, shortly before his death, by a member of the Cambridge Brotherhood in Delhi. "If I had my life," he said to me, "to live over again in India, in the service of Christ my Lord, I should use it by seeking earnestly to bind together in love those who sincerely believe in God and try to do his will, rather than by holding controversial arguments with them as I used to do. For the material and secular interests are so strong today all over the world that the vital belief in God, which needs preserving most of all, is in danger of dying out among us through sheer

neglect. Instead of strengthening one another's faith in God we are weakening it by barren controversy between ourselves".

These words have remained with me ever since and they have shaped my whole life and practice. I have quoted them on many occasions. It was a great joy to me to find that this Laymen's Report entirely endorses their spirit. It points out that the time for allowing the practical expression of the Christian faith in action to bear its own witness has fully come. It depreciates controversy and sets forward spiritual fellowship as its new and deeply moving ideal. On this side, perhaps, more than anywhere else revision and reconstruction are sorely needed. We cannot doubt that by so acting and witnessing we shall get nearer to the mind and will of Christ, who came "not to destroy but to fulfil".

4. There is a clear recognition, in the Laymen's Report, that simplicity of living and adaptation to the climate and habits of the country in home and food and clothing are in keeping with the spirit and mind of Christ. These things should supersede that attitude of aloofness which differences of habit in a highly accentuated form frequently imply. Here I would add one word of caution, that it is not so much dress and food that matter, but simplicity and sacrifice in the inner spirit. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," says the apostle Paul, "but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost". While this is very clearly recognised in the report, the practical utility of acclimatisation and the value of living at a standard which keeps the missionary in closest touch with those whom he serves are also brought into prominence. No one who knows the condition of things today in India or China can doubt the importance of this recommendation in the report. The China Inland Mission have, in this respect, set an example that others might well consider following.

This last point leads on to one contribution in this report which is likely to be of great practical value. The commissioners find that the standard and quality of the personnel, on the different mission staffs, are falling below the level needed for such intensive work. They, therefore, plead for a higher standard of equipment and a more prolonged spiritual training for those who go out to the mission field. Behind this plea there lies the principle, which is often stated in the report itself, that the life of the missionary is the supreme witness for the gospel of Christ. Not what the missionary says, but what his life is, counts most of all.

THE UNTOUCHABLE PROBLEM⁶⁰

We are able to trace out in India one of the most determined and prolonged racial experiments ever attempted in the history of mankind. It was carried through over a vast period of years and became more and more complex as each generation passed on. Even under modern conditions some of its main features still persist, though successive blows have been dealt at its foundations which have shaken the whole fabric.

At the outset the experiment was a very simple one. The Aryan tribes, which entered the Punjab through the Khyber Pass, instinctively segregated themselves from the original dark inhabitants, endeavouring to maintain the integrity of their own stock amid those of another race. The process was not unlike that which is happening before our eyes in South Africa today and has led on to the Colour Bar. Marriage with the darker inhabitants was forbidden by strict religious tabus. So effective were these restraints that the two races remained continuously apart. After more than three thousand years, the original Aryan features can still be easily recognised among the high-caste Hindus. Other explanations have been given of this complex caste system of India, but what I have outlined still appears to me in the simplest manner to fit the facts. The very word for "caste" in ancient India (*varna*) may be translated "colour", and the religious system evolved is still called by orthodox Hindus "*Sanatana Varnashrama Dharma*", the Eternal Religion of Caste. The Aryans brought with them into India a magnificent intellectual equipment. It is a fascinating study to compare them with the early Hellenic stock which passed on into Europe. The parallel Sanskrit and Greek forms of grammar and speech denote a close kinship. The classical face in Greek sculpture can be traced in the highest types of northern India. At least we may say, with some confidence, that in the ancient history of mankind no other areas were so fertile in sheer intellectual greatness as ancient Greece in the West and India in the East.

We find, then, this caste instinct seeking to work out, to the extreme limit, the most rigid conditions of racial and religious exclusion. Caste was marriage, and marriage was caste. To marry out of caste was to be outcaste. To be outcaste meant social degradation even to the length of becoming "untouchable". While other later conquests of an alien people in a new country - such as those of the sixteenth century in the New World - were usually accompanied by ruthless slaughter, these Aryan conquerors were willing from the first to assign a place in the social structure, however inferior to their own, to those whom they had subdued. Though, in this manner, they avoided the final tragedy of wholesale massacre, nevertheless, by accepting the rigid principle of religious and racial exclusion, they brought about evils which in the long run were hardly less pernicious. For inevitably a petrifying of

⁶⁰ *The Contemporary Review*, London, 144: 152-60, August 1933

human society began to appear owing to segregation. Life tended to become static rather than dynamic.

The four original castes branched out in a thousand directions. Subdivisions multiplied. Even among the outcastes, or untouchables, the same ramifying tendency soon became apparent. Furthermore, occupational groups, such as goldsmiths and iron workers, began to separate themselves off into castes of their own; and among the lower castes the occupation of tanning and other means of livelihood, which involved the touching of dead animals, were regarded as unclean. Those who were engaged in these things tended to form new segregated groups. Thus occupation, and not merely racial origin, divided men off from one another. A whole theory of "pollution" grew up which went far beyond difference of racial origin. It may be noticed, in a parenthesis, that an analogy to this stratification of society, on a caste basis, can be traced in mediaeval Europe at the end of the Dark Ages. This resulted in the hard divisions of the feudal system. Moreover, the mediaeval Jewish quarter in different townships, called Jewry, corresponded in some measure to the segregated areas assigned to the depressed classes in Indian villages. But this analogy cannot be pressed too far. A much closer parallel to Indian conditions may be found in the colour bar of modern times, especially in South Africa, which has already been noticed. Thus Hindu religion, in spite of its universal outlook and philosophic basis of unity, by a strange doctrinal aberration became a powerful supporter of Caste. The religious dogma of *Karma* or Retribution was employed to justify these very social inequalities which had thus been made permanent. For the man who was born a *Sudra*, or an Untouchable, was assumed to have committed some offence in a previous incarnation, which had reduced him to this lower level. Only by fulfilling his function in society faithfully, in the status wherein he was born, could he hope to obtain his release and rise to a higher caste in a new birth.

Certain facts which stand out as prominent landmarks in Indian history need to be carefully studied before considering what is happening today. For it is only by a survey of the past that the future can be duly estimated. The constant irruption of warlike tribes through the mountain passes, following in the wake of the Aryan invaders, served in the long run to strengthen Caste. These inroads of nomad humanity, on trek from Central Asia, continued over a period of more than five hundred years. Each new warrior clan pierced its way either southward or eastward, and at first remained as a corporate group, detached from the Hindu religious life around it. But in the end these different tribes became thoroughly absorbed in the flexible Brahminical system. They formed new castes of their own and accepted the Brahmin supremacy. This accommodation of new groups within the Hindu social structure has not yet come to an end; for the same process is being repeated even today with respect to some of the aboriginal tribes, and it may form the key to the ultimate solution of the Untouchable problem itself. All careful investigators are agreed that new castes are still being formed at the bottom of the social scale, and that a levelling up is going on side by side with the breaking down of some of the more rigid barriers of Caste.

At one crucial epoch it appeared as though a change of religious outlook had come which might break through the whole trend of events and undermine the intricate caste organisation. For Gautama, the Buddha, though born in the rank of *Kshattriyas*,

or warrior caste, showed in his teaching a marked indifference to such social distinctions. His religious movement owed much of its driving force to the universal nature of its main principles, which tended to weaken Caste. The monastic life of early Buddhism was open to all classes. There was also a place in the new order for women as well as men. But the Brahmin priesthood, which had continually preserved the religious boundaries of Caste, rallied again after this attack. For a time, indeed, the fresh and living impulse of the Buddhist teaching prevailed in the North and West of India. It penetrated even to the South and crossed the Southern Seas. Then slowly and almost imperceptibly Caste resumed its sway in India, and Buddhism made its permanent home beyond the Indian borders.

A later and more forceful attack upon the caste system was made by the powerful encroachment of Islam. The Muhammadan conquest cleansed away much of the grossness of idolatrous superstition which the North of India at that time had still retained. It also helped to remove some of the worst abuses which had grown up under the overpowering shadow of Caste. Multitudes of outcaste Hindus were prepared to embrace this virile, proselytising creed of Islam. Those who became Muslims were accepted immediately as equals. The eighty million Musalmans in India today represent, in the main, the descendants of these converts from Hinduism. But in the South of India, where Islam had never penetrated very deeply into the village life, the evils inherent in Caste continued unchanged. The misery of the outcastes in the Madras Presidency can hardly be imagined by those who have not witnessed with their own eyes its demoralising effects. In Malabar, especially, the daily lot of the Untouchables has sunk so low that it has brought them almost to a sub-human level.

Yet from earliest times, religious leaders from within Hinduism have arisen, like prophets and seers of old, to protest against the social and religious segregation which Caste implies. These saintly and devoted men and women have done everything spiritually possible to break down the impassable barriers. They have embraced the Untouchables and admitted them freely into their own religious fellowship. They have sought, by their own examples, to abolish the worst forms of the caste system. Nevertheless, the closely knitted fibrous roots still remain below the surface, and like a spreading weed the rank growth of Untouchability springs up again and again to cover the land.

Other religious influences, outside orthodox Hinduism, have also left their reforming marks both in the North and in the South. The Sikh *Khalsa*, the Brahmo *Samaj*, and the Arya *Samaj*, have each in turn carried on with success the noblest redeeming and rescuing work. Furthermore thousands of outcastes, through different mass movements, have been carried forward on the strong current of a new and living hope till they have found shelter in the Christian Church. Yet it must be sadly confessed that hitherto, in spite of all these attempts to pierce through the walls of evil tradition, only the outworks have been demolished. The citadel of Untouchability has not yet been stormed.

Rabindranath Tagore, in addition to his vast literary fame, will go down to posterity in India on account of his fearless life-long championship of the cause of the Untouchables. Throughout the whole of his literary career, in his most famous novels, in his social satires, in his short stories, and in his immortal verse, he has

taken up their cause undauntedly. No Indian writer has ever done more, with burning words of indignation, to bring home to his fellow countrymen man's inhumanity to man. Thus he has been in a marked manner the Prophet of their emancipation. By his own pure life and daily conduct he has carried out into practice his faith in the unity of Man. One brief poem, embodying his thoughts, may be quoted here as revealing his inner spirit. It is a free translation from a young Bengali poet, Satyendra Nath Datta. It needs to be remembered that the work of "sweeper" or "scavenger" has been allotted in India to the Untouchables. This will explain the symbolism of the poem. Tagore writes:

Why do they shun your touch, my friend?
Why do they call you "unclean,"
Whom cleanness follows at every step,
Making the earth meet for our dwelling,
And ever luring us back from return to the wild?
You help us, like a mother her child, into freshness,
And uphold the truth that disgust is never for man.
The holy stream of your ministry carries all pollution away,
And ever remains pure.
Once the Lord Siva Himself saved the world from a deluge of poison
By drinking the draught with His own lips:
And you save the world from filth, every day,
With the same divine sufferance.
Come, friend! Come my hero!
Give me the courage to serve man,
Even while bearing the brand of infamy from him.

It would be hard to find a more delicately beautiful tribute to lowly, unrequited service than this. This song is widely known, and it has had its influence upon the course of the outcastes' struggle for freedom.

One event, still more recent, remains to be chronicled. Mahatma Gandhi has brought to a sudden climax his own supreme devotion to the cause of the Untouchables, offering his life as a ransom for the removal of the curse that has lain upon them for centuries past. He has been able, by his commanding personality, to bring to bear the whole power of the Indian national movement against this deep-seated and appalling wrong done to our fellow men. He has also most intimately bound up its removal and the winning of full independence for India in the same bundle of national hopes, declaring that *Swaraj* cannot possibly be obtained so long as millions in India remain degraded and enslaved. The story is well known all over India how he has, in the past, not only preached this as a doctrine, but also practised it in the inner circle of his own home, by adopting as his daughter a child born of untouchable parents. Thus, like Tagore, he has shown his faith in action. Furthermore, he has performed daily with his own hands every form of scavenger work. In his personal life and in his *Ashram*, both by word and deed, he has made what was before considered unclean to be clean and pure. His wife, Kasturbai, who was at first bitterly opposed to this

innovation, has in the end become one of the most enthusiastic and successful workers for the removal of Untouchability.

Will, then, this age-long evil yield at last to the commanding influence of Mahatma Gandhi? Probably no single greater spiritual force has ever attacked it at its centre. For in an extraordinary manner Mahatma Gandhi has won, even during his own lifetime, a universal moral supremacy among the multitudes in the Indian villages. His spiritual pre-eminence is acknowledged on every side throughout the length and breadth of the land. Above all, the Untouchables themselves have come to look upon him as their redeemer and saviour. His startling determination, even while in prison, to "fast unto death" rather than allow the Untouchables to be separated from the Caste Hindus in the new Constitution, has shown to the whole world what a desperate remedy was required if the evil was to be kept within bounds. Though weak and thin in his physical frame and advanced in age, he had felt that only such a final act of sacrifice could avail to set them free. In this act of fasting on their behalf he had the enthusiastic support and sympathy of Tagore. Again, by his more recent fast of twenty-one days, undertaken in order to purify the whole movement, he has deeply stirred the hearts of the masses of the Indian people.

A new hope of national unity in India has begun to dawn. It involves the final removal of this curse. Just as when the warmth of sunshine penetrates at last to the very centre of some vast mass of mountain snow, its icy hold gives way and the avalanche comes toppling down, so it is the ardent hope in countless human hearts that the great mountain load of misery within the wretched homes of the Untouchables may at length relax its hold and melt away beneath the sunshine of a happier and brighter world. Sooner or later these passionate longings are bound to be fulfilled. For we can now unhesitatingly assert that never has there been such a combination of forces allied together in battle line against this crowning human wrong. Thus, looking back in outline only from the first days of the Aryan invasion to the present time, it can be seen all along that the major problems of India, which has clamoured insistently for solution, has been that of a free intermingling of races, castes and creeds, within a common civilisation. The fundamental question has always been raised by saints and sages alike: how can a truly harmonious social organisation be formed out of elements so incorrigibly discordant?

By the very fact of India's own unique geographical position (as the one fertile monsoon land into which the tribes from rainless Central Asia instinctively overflowed), her rich plains had formed a meeting place where all races and religions met. Only a feeble resistance was ever raised against this influx from without. At no time did it appear difficult for the more hardy races from the North to pierce though the mountain passes. But this abundant freedom of access raised from the very first the whole question of social intermingling in its acutest form. If, therefore, after many centuries of effort the racial issue of India still remains waiting for solution, this should not be surprising to us in the West. Least of all can the Western peoples afford either to criticise or to condemn. For no problem of mankind has proved more difficult to solve than this; and whenever the European nations, especially the Anglo-Saxon peoples, have had to face it in their own history they have lamentably failed. Our sympathy, therefore, ought to go out in full to a country like India which has

struggled so bravely forward into the light and has accumulated such valuable experience for the whole world.

The racial problem of the Western Hemisphere⁶¹ may be seen most markedly in the colour question in South Africa, which I have already mentioned. It can also be witnessed in the Negro question of the United States and in other lands. If we are honest with ourselves we shall acknowledge quite frankly that the evil of Untouchability is by no means confined to India. The exclusiveness of the White Race is just as strong today as it was in Aryan times. What is still more lamentable is the fact that the Christian religion in the West has hitherto shown no signs of gaining a complete victory over this inveterate evil as it did over slavery a century ago. Racial prejudice in East and West alike has continued to run its course in spite of the highest dictates of the Christian faith.

These considerations bring us back quite naturally to the profoundest of all modern racial issues which distracts Indian life today, namely the White Race complex. For the Western rulers, not only in India but throughout the world, have repeatedly refused to accord racial equality to Indians within the British Commonwealth of Nations. They have raised the colour bar instead. In its most glaring form, this fact has been made apparent in South Africa by unjust discrimination and segregation. Other Dominions, also, have protected themselves by a "White Race" policy, which has made Indian immigration impossible. Australians may enter freely into India, but not *vice versa*. The same is true of Canada and New Zealand. Herein are revealed in an acute form grave issues between Indian and British statesmen, which no Round Table Conference has been able to remove.

This White Race complex, which has so deeply infected the British people in India and elsewhere, though parallel to the old caste evil, is in certain practical effects a wholly new portent in human affairs. For while the Caste system, with its Untouchability, attacked only a single country, the new caste prejudice has deeply infected every continent. It tends more and more to treat the whole of mankind, outside the European racial area, with half-veiled patronage bordering on contempt, as an inferior stock. Humanity, in such a theory, is divided up into two separate compartments. In one category are placed the White European Races, with their overflow in America and Australasia: in the other are massed together practically all the remaining peoples and races of the world. This unnatural division of the human race according to colour and complexion is as irrational as it must be disastrous in its final issues.

For the effect of these continually increasing discriminations has been to close up the avenue of friendship and to open the door of bitter resentment. In earlier days, under the East India Company, there were frequent opportunities for close companionships between Eastern and Western individuals. These led on to great mutual respect. In such an atmosphere of goodwill it was possible on the one hand for the West to help the East, as it emerged into a stirring period of renaissance, and, on the other hand, help came back in full measure to the West; for the philosophy and culture of the East were eagerly studied and appreciated in Europe as a new gift bestowed on the human race. But in the present atmosphere of mutual distrust owing to colour prejudice,

61 Apparently "West" rather than "Western Hemisphere"

nothing great or noble can flourish. The meanest side of human nature comes to the fore.

What is to be the end? As long as the two peoples - the Indians and the British, the East and the West - are forced to live closely together, with bitterness continually increasing, the racial evil cannot be overcome. For the very foundations of mutual trust and goodwill are obviously lacking. Therefore, only as educated and enlightened Indians are released from what has become an intolerable bondage will any possibility of friendship return. The responsibility for their own self-governance has now become not only an abstract right but an immediate and pressing necessity; indeed it is long overdue. Without this, racial dislike will increase and the world will become still more divided into two hostile camps.

Whether equal partnership between the two countries will become possible in the future depends more on the conduct of the West, which has power in its own hand, than on anything else. If the West is ready to accept racial equality in every sphere of life as the ideal to be aimed at and achieved, an equal partnership between East and West is still open; but if the West insists on racial superiority being recognised in India, China, and Japan, there can be no peace at all for the world. For on one thing above all others modern India is bent. She is determined to solve, from within, her own racial problems, including that of untouchability, on lines of equality and justice.

INDIA REVISITED⁶²

Two things have startled me during my late visit to India. First of all, I was surprised to find how completely questions about the White Paper and the political situation had fallen into the background in comparison with the grave economic crisis which was everywhere apparent.

In this country, we have failed to realise how India, which is the poorest country in all the world, has literally suffered most during these years of economic depression and low prices. It is also quite certain that during the coming year this suffering will still further increase, because there seems no immediate likelihood of the economic depression in the East lifting.

When I began to talk with different people about the White Paper, the answer usually was, "What is the use of talking about the White Paper? Don't you realise that the mere expense of it is prohibitive? Just now, when hardly any budget can be balanced and the indebtedness everywhere is becoming worse, the White Paper puts before us still further heavy expenses. These will continue to mount up, until the whole constitution which is now proposed becomes top-heavy and quite out of proportion to the needs of our poor people. We ought to have begun at the other end, with the village and the needs of the villagers; then we might have had a constitution which would have been cheaper than the present one. But this White Paper constitution is getting out of all proportion".

What I have seen of the North of India, during my late visit, has brought this point of view acutely home to me. When talking matters over, I find that even government officials share the same doubts about the practical effects of the White Paper.

Indebtedness has gone so deep that it has sunk both the landlord and the tenant. The moneylender has now obtained all the money that is to spare; and he is sitting tight on his money-bags, while the condition of the peasantry is becoming every day worse and worse.

The debts, which have been accumulating for many years, have now reached absurd and fictitious figures, which are out of touch with the realities of the situation. There must be everywhere either a moratorium or else a scaling down of debts, if the country itself is not to become utterly bankrupt. The situation is something like that of the Middle West of America before President Roosevelt took the agrarian situation in hand. Some drastic action, similar to that taken in America, is needed immediately in India. Many economists are pressing for an inflation of the currency; but wiser minds press for some drastic scaling down of all debts. When I was in Delhi, I found that the highest authorities there were well aware of the vast seriousness of the situation.

Probably the worst effects of this agrarian distress are found in Bengal, and they account for a very great deal of the unrest in that province. Even the great port of

⁶² *The World Tomorrow*, New York, 17:114-15, March 1, 1934. (Reprinted from *Reconciliation*).

Calcutta is half empty compared with the boom years. This lack of trade in Calcutta has led to the severest unemployment among educated Bengalis. Even graduates, with high degrees from Calcutta University, can find no employment at all. Whole families - which, in Bengal, often number over 100 members - are sunk in the depth of despair. Where before one highly educated member could help materially to support the family, now he himself has become a drain on the family instead of a supporting member. The temperament of the people is highly artistic and sensitive, and therefore the pangs of hunger and suffering are felt most acutely. The nervous state of the populace has continually bordered on despair for many years past, and mass psychology adds very greatly to the horror of what has happened. The situation itself is not altogether unlike that which Germany passed through in the years which immediately succeeded the World War. Our utmost sympathy is needed for a people whose nerves have been racked in such a cruel manner.

The second point which startled me during my visit was the bitterness which had increased generally among the Europeans who were living in India. This came out most when they spoke of Indians themselves. The universal depression has necessarily hit the Europeans who are traders and merchants very badly indeed. Therefore there is naturally a gloom over the European prospects in India which tells upon the inward character. But I could see that there was something going on much deeper beneath the surface. There was a heart bitterness, which seemed to be caused by loss of prestige. There was a keen unwillingness to take up readily the position of racial equality which the future demanded.

In Calcutta this bitter spirit appeared to be stronger than on the Bombay side; and there was a clear evidence that a recent assassination in that province had excited the average European into a state of resentment which might easily go still further and end in tragedy. There were very noble examples to the contrary - men and women who were bravely holding out for a new effort towards understanding and goodwill; but on the other hand, the atmosphere itself seemed almost surcharged with a bitterness which was returned by the people of the country. Only a great and united effort of goodwill on both sides could possibly conquer from within this feeling, which every external circumstance accentuated. While I was in Bengal, I found myself praying earnestly, night and day, for a ministry of reconciliation which might bring peace to shattered nerves and tired bodies.

While these depressing circumstances made the whole picture one of great gloom, there were other things which gave good cheer and hope. The movement towards the removal of untouchability, which Mahatma Gandhi was engaged in, was obviously meeting a glorious success wherever he was able to visit the village people. His influence has not abated in the least degree in rural India. Again the women of India are entirely with him in this great campaign to remove untouchability. On every side, during the recent social and political movements, the women of India have stood out boldly and fearlessly for what is right and true.

Once more, personal sacrifice of a devoted character was evident to me on a far larger scale than ever before when I went into the flooded areas of Orissa. There we had to meet with the difficulties and dangers of an overwhelming disaster, which involved hundreds of thousands of human lives. While money was very scarce, personal sacrifice was not only widely spread but organised and united.

Thus below the surface of the political and economic turmoil which has made itself evident in recent years, the heart of India is proving itself to be sound and good, and able to take on new burdens as they arise. The spiritual effort has not yet proved too great; and even though another year of grave economic trouble looms ahead, there is no cause for despair.

THE ORGAN AND THE ORGANIST⁶³

In the narrative which follows, concerning certain events which happened last year, I shall try to be as objective as possible, though I refer to things that appeared to me to take place in the unseen world of spirit. The reason for telling this story will be made clear in the conclusion.

During the earlier months of the year 1933, I had been engaged in writing a book called *Christ in the Silence*, which I had dedicated to my friend, John White, who was dying of cancer. A considerable portion of my time was spent in his room, and our love for each other had grown very deep indeed. When the call came suddenly to me to sail for India to help Mahatma Gandhi, the hardest trial of all was to part with John White at a time when his own death was so near. Yet he earnestly encouraged me to go out to Mr. Gandhi without delay and bade me not to think of him or to stay behind on his account. It was only with the greatest difficulty, however, that I could make up my mind to leave him, when he needed me so badly in his pain.

The last hours in England were spent with him. He said good-bye to me, after we had prayed together with great earnestness for the journey which was before me. Every day, for many months before he died, he and I together in his sick room had prayed for Mahatma Gandhi. On that last morning he himself in a very low voice, which was almost a whisper, prayed to God for Mr. Gandhi and me together. Then I went away. Though we were unaware of it at the time, he was even then on the point of death.

Three days after I had left him, he passed away amid great suffering bravely borne. The news of his death reached me when I arrived in India. On the voyage out, I wrote to him from day to day, posting letters at all the different ports, and these letters have been opened by his widow. For not one of them could reach him while he was still living. Yet, while writing these letters, I was even more conscious of his spiritual presence with me, and of the effectual fervency of his prayers joining with mine, than I had been when I prayed with him, in his own sick room, before leaving England. It was this that made me write so frequently to him during the voyage, for the impulse came to me very strongly indeed to do so.

At Aden, the Indian newspapers were handed me on board the ship; and as I anxiously looked through their columns, I could realise from one phrase that was used that for Mahatma Gandhi himself another fast was impending. This made me so anxious that I could hardly keep my inner distress under control. For long periods, both in the day time and at night, I used to walk up and down the deck hoping against hope that such a calamity might be averted. The steamer was not so full of passengers as it had been before we reached Port Said, and I could spend most of the time alone.

When the ship reached Bombay, reporters crowded round me, but only one thought was in my mind. Hurriedly, I gave them a few words about the state of affairs in England and then asked about Mahatma Gandhi. One of them told me that he had begun to fast, but later on had decided to take food again and this cheered me more

⁶³ *The Christian Century*, Chicago, 51: 1092-4, August 29, 1934

than I can say, for I thought the crisis was over. But just at the last moment before landing, another reporter ran up and told me that the fast had begun again. Immediately all the dreadful anxieties I had experienced during the last days of the voyage returned in fuller measure than before. It was clear to me, in a moment, that I must take the first train and go to Poona. So I started by the night train and reached there at 5 o'clock the next morning.

When at last I met Mahatma Gandhi in prison, permission was given me, while avoiding politics, to talk with him about the deeper things of a personal and spiritual nature. He was clearly feeling this fast more acutely than others; and although at first his strength seemed to be maintaining itself, it soon became apparent that he was becoming very rapidly weaker. Therefore I did not wish in any way further to impair his powers of resistance, and so these daily interviews became shorter and shorter. Nevertheless, in them I was able to appreciate certain spiritual truths in a manner that threw new light upon them. These memories are very precious and they have been stored up in my mind.

One thing very deeply moved me, on account of the recent experience I had received in the sick chamber of my friend, John White. It was to find how, in spite of great physical suffering, the inner joy remained almost invariably constant beneath the outer surface. For instance, I had seen John White, suffering terrible pain as he lay slowly dying from cancer - a pain which no morphia injection could control - yet even though his mind was dulled to some extent by the powerful anodyne administered to him, his brave spirit seemed to gain wings of flight while the body suffered. So toward the end of a whole week of Mahatma Gandhi's suffering, when it was clear that his physical exhaustion had become excessive, I questioned him concerning this inner peace; and when I told him the story of John White, his face immediately lighted up. He said that on this occasion, though the nausea and dislike to drink water was far greater than in the former fast, and the suffering at times was agonising, the inner joy remained steadfast. It was indeed even more constant than it had ever been before. This he related to me with such intense realisation that I could at once feel its truth. Just in the same way that I could feel the same reality of spiritual experience with John White, even so I could feel it also with Mahatma Gandhi.

On the last day before his release, Mr. Gandhi's suffering had become almost unbearable. This became visible in his very countenance. His mind also, at that dark moment, seemed under a cloud and he spoke with great difficulty. His voice continually faltered. He mentioned to me how he felt that the time had come to give up the struggle for life altogether and quietly resign himself to that preparation for passing away in peace, which he called *Samadhi*.

It was at once clear to me, by his use of this technical word, that he meant to die. So I asked him earnestly to continue his struggle for life a little longer. He promised to do so. Then I questioned him whether even under these trials of physical suffering, which had become so intolerable, he was conscious inwardly of the joy in the spiritual life about which he had spoken before. His face lighted up again immediately, and his answer in the affirmative was emphatic. His whole soul seemed to be expressed in the few words he uttered.

Then the order came for his unconditional release. My own joy may be easily imagined. At first I could think of nothing else except his release itself and the happiness it had brought. Yet at night time, when I remembered the whole scene, while he lay near to death, and his answer to me about his inner peace and joy, the true meaning of all this seemed to present itself before me in a vivid manner. For it came to me with a new power of understanding that the spirit in man is in some way independent of the mind and in a real sense immortal. The spirit passes through his physical frame with all its weakness, and yet appears to be distinct from the mental process which is more closely connected with the body. The mind and the body are both transitory, but the spirit in man is changeless.

I am not a philosopher and cannot define my terms. Neither have I any theories to offer, nor can I tell how it all happens. But I have had two remarkable corroborations of this thought during these recent months, which have almost made me a philosopher against my will; for I have witnessed in sacred moments two great souls who have been very near to death, and this has made me feel within my own spirit more vividly than ever before the distinction between the things which are temporal and the things which are eternal. While the body and the mind may be changed and transformed beyond all our present recognition, the Spirit in man seems to be immortal. There is now a certainty within me, greater than ever before, that our Spirit is independent and survives all change.

Such a truth I had learned from my mother's knee; for she knew it in her own experience. There are also the testimonies of saintly men and women constantly reaffirming it. But truth is never wholly gained till it becomes individual and personal. An inner conviction has now come to me which has made this realisation more than ever before a part of my own being.

After I had written this record of my own personal experience, I came across a singular corroboration in the life of Sadhu Sundar Singh, narrated in Streeter and Appasamy's book *The Sadhu*.⁶⁴ Sundar Singh had sought to follow Christ literally by fasting for forty days and forty nights. While he was not able to accomplish this, nevertheless some important results followed.

"Certain doubts," the book relates, "which he had entertained were finally cleared up. Previously he had sometimes wondered whether his sense of peace and joy might somehow be a hidden power of his own life welling up from within himself and not due to the divine presence. But during the fast, when his bodily powers were nil or almost nil, the peace increased considerably and became much stronger. This convinced him that this peace is a heaven-born peace, and not the natural operation of his human faculties. Another consequence of the fast was the conviction that the spirit was something different from the brain. He had been used to wonder what would become of his spirit after the decay of his body. But since, during the fast, he found that as his body became weaker his spiritual faculties became more active and alert, he drew the inference that the spirit was something altogether apart from the brain. 'The brain,' he said, 'is like an organ and the spirit like the organist that plays

⁶⁴ Burnett Hillman Streeter and A.J. Appasamy, *The Sadhu; a study in mysticism and practical religion*. London: Macmillan, 1921.

on it. Two or three notes may go wrong and may produce no music. That does not, however, imply the absence of the organist””.

THE INDIANS IN ZANZIBAR AND EAST AFRICA⁶⁵

A new danger is rapidly coming to a head in Zanzibar and East Africa which had not been foreseen in earlier years. The diminution of the Indian population, which could not before be effected by political measures, now seems likely to come about by economic pressure, destructive of Indian trade. The dislike of the Indian by the European in East Africa has been of long standing. Even when it diminishes for a season it crops up again. Though the Indian was there long before the European, the latter still thinks of him as an intruder, and has also persuaded himself that the presence of the Indian is bad for the African. Many Europeans honestly believe this: others use it as a political weapon.

Ten years ago the one persistent aim of the leaders of the Europeans in Kenya was to endeavour to get all Indian immigration stopped by statute. Just as South Africa had “shut the back door” (so the phrase ran), so East Africa must “shut the front door”. No further immigration of Indians into Kenya ought to take place on any terms whatever. The “Indian menace” was frequently spoken of in extravagant terms. Lord Delamere and Major Grogan were the promoters of this doctrine of the exclusion of Indians from the whole of Africa. “The front door”, proclaimed Major Grogan, “from India into Africa is Mombasa. That door must be shut! Durban has been closed to Indians: Mombasa must be closed also!”

When I was in London, as Adviser to the Kenya Indian Deputation, in 1923, this was the main object which Lord Delamere had in view. He sought to gain it out of the “Kenya Conversations”. As it happened, he lost this point, but he gained two things, almost equally important from his own racial standpoint, namely, a racial franchise and a racial bar in the Highlands of Kenya. It was strange that the Colonial Office, which so weakly gave way on the franchise and the Highlands, remained strong on the question of immigration. But there it was. Freedom of Indian immigration was not cancelled. The racial bar was not put up on that subject. It was probably only the logic of events that pacified at that time the obstreperous European colonists. For they were ready to do anything, just then, to get their own way. But facts went against them. It became more and more evident that Major Grogan’s cry about “swarms of Indians” coming over in every ship to Kenya was absurd. They never had come in “swarms” before; and they were never likely to do so in the future. Major Grogan and Lord Delamere had cried “Wolf!” too often. In the end, the cry lost its effect.

So, after the “Conversations” in London in 1923, Kenya affairs seemed for a time to settle down. The Europeans felt that they had won completely two out of the three major issues:

1. They had obtained for the future the franchise on a strictly racial basis.
2. They had obtained also the exclusive right of owning agricultural land in the Kenya Highlands.

⁶⁵ *The Contemporary Review*, London, 147: 684-91, June 1935

In this way they had finally established a “colour bar” in East Africa, not unlike that which had already been established in South Africa.

But on the third point, “Restricted Immigration,” the Europeans, as I have said, had been defeated. Both Europeans and Indians were allowed to come in on payment of a deposit, provided their entry could not be shown to be detrimental to the interests of the African native. One further point told in favour of the “open door” for Indians into Kenya. Tanganyika, which is Kenya’s neighbour, was placed under the League of Nations after the war, as a Mandated Territory. Great Britain took it over in trust from the League of Nations under certain express conditions. One of these conditions was that there should be no discrimination against any nation which was an original signatory of the Covenant of the League. India, as a signatory, held that position. Therefore, Indians could not be excluded from Tanganyika, which was under the Covenant of the League of Nations. This obviously made it more difficult to exclude Indians from Kenya; for it would be invidious to admit Indians into Tanganyika and exclude them from Kenya. These two practical arguments: (1) That the Indians were not increasing rapidly in Kenya, (2) That the Indians could not be, in any circumstance, excluded from the neighbouring territory of Tanganyika, told in the end with the European settlers in the Highlands, who were the political leaders in Kenya. A further event happened later which modified the whole position of the settlers. Sir Francis Scott, who now leads the European settlers, is not so intransigent on the Indian question as these two former leaders were. He has a greater sense of proportion. Therefore, during the past five years the restriction of Indian immigration, which was such a burning question during the Kenya Conversations in London in 1923, has tended to fall more into the background. This does not imply that the Indian in Kenya has become less unpopular with the average European. It only means that the constant anxiety lest the Indian should get the upper hand through weight of numbers has begun to diminish as each year the Government statistics tell the opposite story. The Europeans are increasing, while the Indians are decreasing. Quite unexpectedly the change in the world economic position has put a new weapon against the Indian into the European settler’s hands, and we are on the eve of a new struggle to oust the Indian from East Africa as far as possible, not by political means but by using the new economic factors. This weapon is the employment of economic monopolies for marketing African “native produce”. These monopolies would be usually European or State owned, and they would eliminate the Indian trader as middleman and creditor of the African native. The Indian in East Africa from time immemorial has been the trader of African “native produce”. He has always pressed forward with his store (or *duka*, as it is called in East Africa), wherever it has been possible to obtain trade. He has marketed for the African native the surplus produce which he wished to sell in order to obtain for himself cotton cloth and other things. In carrying on this form of trade the Indian has often undergone very great hardships; and I have often wondered at his bravery in facing the dangers of the climate and the wild surroundings. He lives out on the edge of the jungle and in the most malarial regions in order to get close to the Africans from whom he purchases goods and to whom he sells goods in return. Very many Indians die of fever. Some are injured by wild beasts, or even by human violence, in such out-of-the-way places. There is very little police protection.

All these risks are taken for what, after all, is often a miserable pittance. The Indian trader passes a wretchedly lonely existence. No other people would undertake such work, and no European could stand such untoward and solitary conditions. There is competition between these Indian storekeepers, and the African soon realises where he can get the best price for his own produce and also the cheapest cloth for his own use. The one thing that has encouraged the Indian to continue such an isolated existence is the comparative freedom to make his money in his own way, with very little interference and every encouragement given to thrift. Thrift is in his very nature, and here is an open field for it. That is the main inducement to him to live such laborious days. I have often visited such storekeepers, when on tour. They are called *dukawallas* in East Africa. Also I have met them in other parts of the world, such as British Guiana, Fiji, and elsewhere. They are all of the same type. They have many kindly virtues, of which hospitality is one of the greatest. Nothing was too good to offer me on such occasions, if they had anything to offer; and they would be indignant if I ever suggested any payment. I have sat in such shops for hours, after some tiring journey, and have watched the Africans, or other races, come and go, for barter or purchase.

The very first thing which I have noticed is the familiar and friendly relations between the Indian and the African. The African will stay for hours, loitering about the shop, picking up this or that, and asking its price. Meanwhile others come in, and the shop is almost turned into a club, where they laugh and talk, and in the end make some very small purchases. Never once have I seen any rudeness or rough treatment on the part of the Indian storekeeper. A European would be driven frantic by such methods of business and such leisurely purchasers; but the Indian seems almost to enjoy it! He knows a little of the language of the African, after a curious manner, pronouncing it in his own way, but easily making himself understood. There is no fear in the relationship between the two races; and this makes all the difference in a country where the fear of the European is almost everywhere dominant. Only with some missionaries, who have been able to cast out fear by love, is there such freedom as there is with Indians.

I would like to make this point well understood; for it is the key to the whole matter. The Indian may have some bad qualities. His penurious thrift may induce him to take advantage of the ignorance of the African. He may drive hard bargains. There may be other vices also. But with him the African is entirely free from the bullying and terrorising which haunt him in the presence of many Europeans and add another fear to his terror-ridden existence. The African can always be at ease with an Indian storekeeper, while he can very rarely be at ease with any European except the missionary. I have seen this, not in one land only, but in many countries, and I have put it to the test in a hundred ways. Therefore I know it to be true.

Let me give one slight example. Only a short time ago I was at Enkeldoorn in Southern Rhodesia, where I stayed for a time, during a long and trying journey, at the store of Mr. Desai. He dealt in what was called "native produce" from the Reserve, which was near at hand. There were about five other Indian storekeepers in the place and we decided to hold a meeting at which I should tell them about the Indian earthquake in North Bihar, and also about Mahatma Gandhi. There were African men and women in the shop who had come out of the Reserve. While we had our

meeting, Mr. Desai closed his store. He did it very quietly and the Africans obeyed immediately when he asked them to go outside the shop for a short time. As soon as our meeting was over, Mr. Desai opened his store again, and I noticed that every African, both man and woman, who had been there before, came back to the shop and began bargaining and laughing and talking. Not one had gone away! Surely this complete absence of fear and restraint is a human asset of very great value. I asked Mr. Desai about this, and he said to me that the same leisurely way of doing business, or even of looking on, went on every morning and afternoon, and sometimes late in the evening. It was the only way of doing trade; and he personally did not mind the inconvenience, for it seemed to suit the African native. But what European could ever afford the time and patience to carry on trade like that?

The last visit which I have just paid to different parts of Africa has saddened me. I have been where Indians are congregated, engaged in trade such as I have pictured. On every side I have seen something approaching destitution. Owing to the economic depression, the Europeans who are in authority have determined, in the interests of the native Africans (as they assert), to scrap the economic system of trading, bargaining and marketing, in which the Indian has played such an important part, and to make each "native product" a monopoly which only the monopoly-holder can buy and sell under Government authority. It is held that in this way the value of the "native product" can be raised and the African can get a better price for it than he could under the old system of individual bargaining and competition.

Under the old system, the European says, the African native did not get a fair deal. It was ruinous, wasteful, extravagant. Indians, as middlemen and money-lenders on a small scale, really had the African natives at their mercy. Thrift and business astuteness gave the Indian an advantage over the lazy, good-natured African.

Furthermore, the European argues, the price of the "native produce" had gone so low, partly owing to unwholesome competition, that the African native and the Indian storekeeper himself were getting nothing out of the trade. The "bottom had gone out of the market".

Thus the European, who is in authority, justifies the creation of these new monopolies controlled by the State, as being the only way of rescuing the trade in "native produce" from bankruptcy. In Zanzibar, for instance, the clove market had very greatly suffered, owing to the economic depression. The Indian middleman had gone on advancing credit to the clove-growers to enable them to tide over the depression. In doing so, without any return, the Indian himself had become nearly bankrupt. The Government was at its wits' end and appointed two Commissions. Mr. C.F. Strickland, an old Indian civilian, was asked to come over and advise the Zanzibar Government on the economic situation. He examined the whole field and warned the Zanzibar Government against the short cut of a monopoly. Instead of this he put forward a carefully thought out scheme of co-operative credit and marketing. This proposal the Indian middleman and traders were ready loyally to accept and also to help to make it a success. But the Zanzibar Government, listening to the advice of Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Last, two of their own officers who formed the second Commission, decided that Mr. Strickland's proposal would take too long to develop, and the crisis was urgent. Therefore they determined to take the short cut of a "clove monopoly".

It may be said that these economic problems will in the end right themselves; that the Zanzibar Government, when they have burnt their own fingers over a state monopoly, will come back to the old method of trade which they are now discarding. It may be said, further, that in Kenya and Tanganyika things may right themselves in their own way, by the inevitable law of supply and demand, which is greater than all monopolies. Then the Indian trader will have his rightful place given to him once more. This argument is being used by those who have given way to the new economic pressure and failed to resist it. But meanwhile far more serious things are happening. Fundamental rights are being threatened. For instance, in Zanzibar one of the methods of obtaining a state monopoly in marketing is to make the land of Zanzibar inalienable to Indians. But this takes away, at one sweep, the right of land purchase, which Indians as citizens have possessed for over a hundred years. The land of Zanzibar has now been alienated from Indians in the same way as the Kenya Highlands. No Indian can now purchase land without the Resident's sanction. With one stroke of the pen this fundamental human right is abolished by racial legislation. Or again, to show what is happening beyond repair, owing to these new monopolies in "native produce" the Indian storekeeper is almost doomed. The only fate left to him will be to take a post under the monopoly itself. This monopoly, however, is almost certain to fall into the hands of a European, and the European may act on the principle of eliminating as many Indians as possible. He may even take credit for doing so, and believe that he is "protecting the African native". If he adopts this position the Indian must leave the country. Even today the result of this has become obvious. The steamers going back to India are loaded with deck passengers. The net loss of Indian population in Kenya alone during the last six years has been 6,000 persons. The Indian population has fallen from 40,000 to 34,000 and it is likely to fall even more rapidly if this new economic system of monopolies gets a firmer footing in all the territories. Already this system of monopolies has been adopted and laws have been passed in Uganda, Zanzibar and Tanganyika. Only in Kenya has there been as yet no actual legislation. But we are told that new laws are now impending there also.

The most specious thing about this is that the whole of this economic monopoly system is being put forward in the supposed interest of the native African. He himself, of course, has no voice in the matter. There is no attempt, even, to explain it to him, or to get his own opinion. But the news is circulated everywhere that in these hard economic times the only way to save the African is by means of these monopolies, which will eliminate the middleman, who is making all the profits. Since the middleman is usually an Indian, the matter at once takes a racial aspect. With the well-known dislike of the Indian present everywhere among the European settlers, it is easy to paint the Indian in the darkest colours as being the chief cause of the trade depression and of the misery that has followed from it. In this way prejudices are accentuated, and the bitterness between the races, which seemed to be dying down, has been once more stirred up. The primitive African himself is being taught to look upon the Indian storekeeper as his enemy rather than as his friend. The picture that I have drawn is a dark one; and it may happen that some sudden rise in staple prices, due to world economic improvement, may take away some of its

gloom. But while the present state of things lasts, the position of Indians in East Africa as traders becomes more and more untenable.

MAHATMA GANDHI'S BIRTHPLACE⁶⁶

Many years ago I wrote out my own impressions of a visit paid to the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi at Porbandar in Kathiawar. The present time has seemed to me to be opportune to publish them, for they throw light upon a singular personality that has always been difficult for the West to understand. I had gone to Kathiawar, in Western India, in the year 1924, with two special objects in view. One was to visit the birthplace of Swami Dayananda, the great religious reformer and founder of the Arya Samaj, who had been born on the northern edge of the same peninsula of Kathiawar, while Gandhi had been born on the southern coast. No greater prophetic and puritan figure than Dayananda's had shaken the northern provinces of India during the second half of last century. The social and religious reform in the north, which did much to lead on to the political movement, really dates back to him. My second object was to spend some time quietly in Porbandar, where on October 2nd, 1869, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born; and it was my good fortune to find the very house that was his birthplace, close to one of the old massive city gates of this ancient town. I was shown the very room where he was born and could picture his babyhood there. Anyone who knows India will be sure that in the years to come this room will become a shrine in the heart of the devotees who will flock to visit it.

It had always appeared to me a significant fact that two of the greatest Hindu social and religious reformers should have been born in this small and remote peninsula of Kathiawar, where the ancient civilisation still lingers on almost untouched by the modern age. For the Arya Samaj, which Dayananda founded, broke entirely new ground in the north of India. In many ways he sowed the seed which Mahatma Gandhi afterwards reaped; though as this article will show their temperaments differed. At Porbandar I was met with the greatest kindness and courtesy by the members of the Gandhi family, who were still living in the old house in the centre of the town. They took me over it and also into the courtyard, and this way I was able to spend many hours on the spot picturing the past. Again and again, during my visit, I returned to the family in order to hear from the oldest members what they were able to tell me about the young boy whom they remembered.

The time of my visit was opportune. The Kathiawar Conference had just been held, over which Mahatma Gandhi himself had presided. On no occasion is he in a happier mood, or in a more humorous vein, than when he thus returns and lives for a while among his own people. In the train the people recognised me and were eager to talk with me about him. His chief demand at the Conference had been that "untouchability" must be removed without a moment's delay. The whole countryside was buzzing with the news of this.

"How can we give it up?" one sturdy farmer said to me. "Our women folk would never let us do so".

"They will follow Mahatma Gandhi," I replied. In the end this has proved true: for the greatest reformers in these new revolutionary movements have been the faithful women whom Gandhi has brought over to his side.

⁶⁶ *The Contemporary Review*, London, 153:35-42, January 1938

It was noticeable in the trains and on the railway platforms that these villagers of Kathiawar are a sturdy folk. They have a massive strength of independence and at the same time a rugged adherence to all that their fathers did before them, which makes them conservative by nature. I have often traced these two traits of conservatism combined with independence in Mahatma Gandhi himself. He is true to type. The further talk of the country people was concerning the centenary of the birth of Dayananda, which was drawing near. His home in childhood had been on the northern coast of the peninsula, where the climate and atmosphere distinctly differ from the south, though the distance across the promontory is not great.

Porbandar has a character of its own that cannot possibly be mistaken, when one has spent some time there and has sought its inner secret. Here, in the south seacoast of Kathiawar, the air is fresh with salt spray of the Indian Ocean, which is driven along the beach from great combing breakers as they burst with white foam. To drink in this air night and day makes it easy to realise how the child, Mohandas, gained from his very infancy his amazing powers of physical endurance. Still further, he received spiritually, as if a natural instinct, his faith in the unseen. Throughout half the year, during the monsoon, strong gales from the sea blow so hard upon the shore that it is impossible for any steamer to anchor in the open roadstead. The smaller boats are laid up until the calmer weather comes. But though the land is thus beaten by the tremendous waves of the southwest monsoon, the rainfall is not excessive. The soil has to be tilled with the greatest care in order to preserve its moisture. Nature is stern towards man. Man has responded to Nature by producing a strong and vigorous race. Cold and heat, sea-fog and sunshine, have each alike to be borne in turn. Exposure to the violent winds becomes as common as exposure to the burning sun. None but a very hardy people could survive and flourish.

Porbandar has received from Nature an unimaginable splendour of sea and sky. These make it a city of enchantment. It looks out from a jutting headland into the infinite expanse of ocean, like some radiant human spirit preparing to set forth and leaves the solid earth on its upward flight. It was in this fashion that I saw it at early dawn appearing out of the mist, while the first rays of the sun touched its pinnacles and towers with lucent gold. At sunset, again, as I watched it, the city seemed to rise above the incoming tide with all the magic beauty of some fairy palace described in the *Arabian Nights*. Once more, in the stillness of midday and throughout the calm afternoon, when the wind had dropped, the blue of the water was no less pure than the ultramarine of the Mediterranean as it is seen from the coast above the Bay of Naples. In the night-time I have also watched its beauty under the full moon, while the dim shadowy outline of the city becomes softened into a silvery whiteness, with here and there a yellow light reflected on the ripples of the tide. Truly the place seems set in a land of dreams. This same haunting beauty must have stirred the soul of Mohandas Gandhi more than sixty years ago, when he wandered along the seashore watching the breakers, or went out beneath the sky at night. He has often mentioned in his writings what a powerful appeal the glory of the stars has always made upon his mind. He loves to sleep in the open whenever possible, with nothing between himself and the sky. It is also with great reluctance that he will allow a mosquito net to intervene. At Phoenix, in Natal, I remember how he pointed out to me the glory of the evening sky in South Africa and spoke of the nights he had spent upon the veldt during the

memorable march of the passive resisters into the Transvaal. In his own personality there is something of the same blending - softness mingled with strength and sternness touched with gentleness - which makes one of its chief attractions. There is also a mystical vein, which runs deepest of all in his complex character. It is interwoven in a very striking manner with his strong practical common sense, just as the warp and woof unite on the weaver's loom to make a single piece of cloth. Into the midst of the hardest questions that have to be faced - such as the quelling of a religious feud, the removal of untouchability, the starting of non-co-operation - he brings this faith in the unseen and practical wisdom, woven together. To some persons the mystical vein in him, finally guiding his actions, is a source of confusion. They fail to understand him. With others, who know him intimately, it forms the master-key that unlocks his inner life.

An example of what I have just described may be taken from his own account of the passive resistance struggle in South Africa. "Only the general," he writes, "who conducts the campaign can know the objective of each particular move. The beauty of the *Satyagraha* (soul-force) method is this, that it comes up to oneself: one has not to go in search for it. A Struggle of Righteousness, in which there are no secrets to be guarded, no scope for cunning, and no place for untruth comes unsought: and a man of religion is ever ready for it. A struggle which has to be planned beforehand is not a righteous struggle (*dharma-yudda*). In the latter, God himself plans the campaign and conducts battles. It can be waged only in the name of God. Only when the combatant feels quite helpless - only when he has come to the extreme point of weakness and finds utter darkness all around him, only then God comes to the rescue. God helps when a man feels himself humbler than the very dust under his feet. Only to the weak and helpless is the divine succour vouchsafed".⁶⁷ The same mystical experience is present in that practical dreamer, St. Paul. He tells us how he prayed that the thorn in the flesh that buffeted him and prevented his activities might depart from him. But God said, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My power is made perfect in weakness". "Most gladly therefore," St. Paul continues, "will I glory in my weaknesses... For when I am weak, then am I strong".

At Morvi a disappointment awaited me, because I found that very little was known concerning the home and early days of Swami Dayananda. Nevertheless, it was not difficult to picture the general environment of his birth and upbringing. For there is a barren, solitary sameness about the whole country, which on this side of Kathiawar, is very rocky with only occasional patches of green verdure. Morvi looks out towards the Rajputana Desert. Porbandar faces the Indian Ocean. Morvi is stern and bleak in its rocky soil. Porbandar has always something of the tenderness of Mother Nature. It has the air of mystery about it - its haze continually rising, in calm seasons, from the ever-changing sea.

My knowledge of Swami Dayananda, who had died long before I came to India, has been derived from those few who knew him when he was still alive. Therefore I can only speak of his personality at second hand. He seems to me, in modern Indian history, to be the supreme exemplar of the great Puritan. He came forth from the desert, like a John the Baptist, to do the work of purging Reformation within

67 M.K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, preface

Hinduism, He did it with a giant's strength and an unerring logic of his own, which never failed him as he met face to face in open conflict the leaders of orthodox religion. Mohandas Gandhi, on the other hand, has become known to me owing to the closest personal friendship. We have lived together, in all kinds of difficulties and trials, and have learnt to know each other intimately. Thus I have come to realise the varied sides of his unique character - his utter tenderness to all living creatures: his attractive and persuasive love for every little child he meets: his bearing on his own back the burden of the poorest of the poor: his extraordinary sympathetic pain, which becomes a torture to him when anyone is hurt and he seeks to be their nurse. All these are qualities in him that are quite fundamental, and it is this side that I would emphasise more than any other, because, at times like these, such things may be forgotten amid the wear and tear of modern politics.

Once upon a time Romain Rolland wrote in a letter to me that Tagore was the Plato of our modern age and Gandhi was its St. Paul. This comparison greatly impressed me at the time, and I have often acknowledged its truth. The comparison of Tagore, with his breadth of human wisdom and his poetic soul, to Plato is almost perfect. Gandhi, too is like St. Paul in many ways, as the quotation I have just given shows. His conversion after he had grown up; his profound conviction of evil in the world which has to be overcome: his passion for righteousness: his moral fervour: his faith in God - all these are shared, in singularly distinct ways, by Mahatma Gandhi and St. Paul. But whenever I have tried to draw out the analogy, certain later thoughts have told me that St. Francis of Assisi comes nearer to him even than St. Paul. For St. Francis has that touch of tenderness for God's animate creation which St. Paul partly lacked. He also comes to us from Middle Ages, and carries with him in everything he does that medieval background, which is so singularly akin to what we find in rural India. It was that environment, in remote Kathiawar, wherein Mohandas Gandhi was nurtured, that made him what he is today.

Ahimsa Parama Dharma - "The highest religion is harmlessness" - this is the conclusion of the whole matter with Mahatma Gandhi. He translates the word *Ahimsa* by "Non-Violence," - a negative word which lacks colour and is unsatisfactory; for the Sanskrit word implies a positive quality. He balances it with *Satya* - Truth. "God is Truth," he says at all times and at all seasons. Gentleness and Truth must ever be intermingled. This blend of characteristics in him goes through all his life. He is essentially medieval in a great part of thinking, yet he lives and moves and acts in the modern world. He is able to touch in this manner the humblest Hindu peasant, and yet makes his appeal to one so ultra-modern in his views as Jawaharlal Nehru. He will launch out with intrepidity against "untouchability," and yet express at the same time a deep reverence for the caste system. He believes in idol worship, and yet his belief in God has a remarkable kinship with Islam. He wishes India to go back to hand-spinning and hand-weaving, and yet he is in favour of modern scientific improvements - especially in sanitation - provided they are simple. He has startled and shocked orthodox Hinduism by putting out of its pain with his own hand a poor maimed calf, whose suffering had become unendurable. In this he is essentially "modern". What a revolution this has implied in India can hardly be imagined in the West. Yet even when doing such a deed of mercy, he acknowledges that his action has a touch of Violence behind it, and he feels that it is difficult to reconcile it with

absolute Truth. Those who have followed Albert Schweitzer's ethical philosophy will find here something strikingly akin to that which Mahatma Gandhi has set out to practise.

One last paradox of his singular personality is this: Mahatma Gandhi's own faith, while sensitive to the solitary grandeur of the bare desert of Arabia, has also sympathy with the mysticism of Hindu India in the south and east. It is this double appeal, at one and the same time, which makes his extraordinary attractiveness to all sorts and conditions of men - on one side inclining him towards the orthodoxy of Islam; on the other side to the orthodoxy of Hinduism. His most devoted friends come from both these spheres of the religious life, and he is able by the alchemy of his own personality to blend them into one. Therefore he remains the centre of unity in India today, who draws the hearts of those in north and south and east and west together. Surely India is fortunate in having, at such a time as this, a great spirit so unique and so attractive.

One evening I sat for a long while in meditation at Morvi beneath the cloudless sky of western Asia bordering on the desert. The sunset was like that which one sees in Egypt or Arabia. The country to the north was altogether different from southern India, or the alluvial plains of Bengal. Yet only on the previous night I had spent many hours at Porbandar looking out over the moonlit sea with all its enchantment. Thus I realised instinctively that this promontory of Kathiawar, with its sea border on the south, contains blended within its narrow compass in a remarkable manner the two aspects of two areas of Asia - the barren desert of Western Asia and the luxuriant South East - the awe-inspiring, solitary majesty of Arabia and the teeming, tropical beauty of Ceylon.

While Dayananda, who was born in barren Morvi, had thrown aside idol-worship, Gandhi had never done so, though scarcely feeling the need of it in his own religious life and holding it lightly. While Dayananda had been the destroyer of the myths of medieval Hinduism, with his cry "Back to the Vedas," Gandhi had been a preserver of old legends, filling them with a new meaning. Yet Gandhi had been one with Dayananda in laying the axe at the root of some of the evil growths of the past, such as untouchability, child marriage, and temple prostitution. He had also been the first entirely to succeed, in India, in welding religion and politics together with indissoluble bonds. He has proved himself to be a modern and a medievalist at same time.

My visit to Kathiawar was ended when I had thus been able to see at leisure and in solitude both these places, Porbandar and Morvi, wherein two of the very greatest Indians, during the rise and fulfilment of British rule in India, had been born. Neither of them had become uprooted from his own native soil. Both had spent their early childhood, when impressions are deepest, far remote from the direct influence of foreign ways and customs. Even though, in after life in South Africa, Mohandas Gandhi for a time tried to live the life of the West, he did not succeed. His inner nature drove him back to the customs of his forefathers and their ways of living. Yet neither Dayananda, nor Gandhi could have done what they have done, or taught what they have taught, if there had been no touch at all between Britain and India. Humanity is one, and its

component parts in East and West cannot possibly be kept asunder. Who knows whether, in the distant future, the debt will not be the greatest on the Western side?

GANDHI AND PROHIBITION⁶⁸

Here in India at the present moment we are in the midst of a great prohibition campaign, conducted by Mahatma Gandhi, which is attempting to put an end to the ever increasing evils caused by the consumption of alcohol and opium. With very great earnestness Mr. Gandhi has requested me to appeal to the leaders of the churches in Europe and America to come out boldly and support this moral experiment in India.

What are its prospects? How does this attempt at prohibition in the East differ from that made recently in America? These two questions have exercised my mind ever since I received Mr. Gandhi's summons to help him. It needs a mighty faith on his part, in the midst of a war-stricken and disordered world, to launch out on such a vast adventure. In considering the prospects, certain factors wherein India differs from America must be thought out in some detail. They may be tabulated under five heads.

1. There is no private capital owned by big firms either in the opium or alcohol traffic in India. The sale of both of these is a government monopoly. This means that there are no vested interests. Therefore no large attempts, with private capital behind them, are likely to be made in order to break through the prohibition barrier. There is only one exception to this that needs to be mentioned parenthetically, as it is very important. In the Rajputana states, there has always been grown a large supply of opium, the greater part of which has been bought up by the Government of India. But a portion has always remained which is smuggled all over India and has been hard to detect. In this way, opium consumption has been more difficult to control than alcohol.

With regard to alcohol, public opinion in the villages is certain to be strongly opposed to any illicit distillation. The women, who suffer most when their husbands take to drink, have already shown themselves entirely on the side of temperance reform.

2. India, unlike America, is ninety per cent a *village* population. There are few big cities. The villages are remote from one another, and the success of prohibition will depend ultimately on whether these scattered villages unanimously desire prohibition and are able by vigilance to prevent local, secret manufacture. The industrial areas, which are fed with labour from the villages, will also have to come out strongly on the side of prohibition. As I write I am in the midst of one of the largest of these industrial areas, and I am assured that the prospects are very hopeful.
3. Unlike America, opium is sold openly today in India in shops that hold a government licence. Anyone may go into one of these shops and buy government opium. This brings with it a double problem in India instead of a single problem,

⁶⁸ *The Christian Century*, Chicago, 55:269-71, March 2, 1938

for opium and alcohol have to be prohibited together. Truly, the effort which Gandhi is now making is gigantic! If he succeeds, it will be one of the most memorable triumphs of his career.

4. Compared with the standard of living in India America appears to be very wealthy, for India is the poorest country in the world. This difference of standard is bound to make the Indian problem harder in some respects than that of America. For these intoxicants, produced and manufactured by the state, have hitherto been one of the largest sources of revenue which has helped to balance the budget. In Bihar and Orissa, for instance, if prohibition comes into force entirely new forms of revenue will have to be found for education, sanitation, medical aid, hospitals and all the other social services. Yet these are the poorest of all the provinces of India - so incredibly poor that a whole day's work in the fields, in the scorching heat or the drenching monsoon rains, may only bring a payment of five cents, or even less. The finance ministers will have to make up from other sources a huge deficit.

Here lies the crux of the whole situation at the present moment. Yet Mr. Gandhi faces it unflinchingly. He points out that after a while there are likely to be large compensations owing to a happier and better nourished agricultural population. I can share with him his hope and can also understand what incredible sacrifices these village people are ready to make when his personal call for self-denial reaches them.

5. The psychological difference between the Indian and American people in making the prohibition experiment needs the most careful notice of all. For in India the excise method now in force, whereby the government is the monopolist, has all the unpopularity of a foreign system imposed on India from outside. Young India, therefore, in its present nationalist mood, is eager to throw off this yoke as well as every other, and thus show to the world that it understands its own people better than the stranger from outside. The young nation claims the inalienable right to self-determination even if it involves making its own mistakes.

If all these factors are taken into account, it becomes obvious that no easy forecast can be made as to whether the Indian experiment will succeed or fail. The personal factor of Mr. Gandhi's influence is an imponderable one. What can rightly be said is this, that there are extraordinary difficulties, but also great possibilities.

India will have to count the cost in a way no other country has been called upon to do which has tried the experiment of prohibition. Fresh direct taxation can hardly be contemplated at this stage and yet the present financial position is almost desperate. The military budget, which is entirely in British hands, eats up half the central revenue. No big reduction, such as the substitution of Indian for British troops, is even contemplated. Year after year this military expense becomes more heavily felt; and whenever, as at present, a "Frontier War" is being carried on, the cost soars upward.

Clearly, sooner or later, these extravagances will have to be checked. For

incessant military expeditions spell national bankruptcy. "Between 1849 and 1890", writes Captain Colin Davies, "no less than forty-two expeditions had been considered necessary to counteract the marauding proclivities of the turbulent tribesmen". Even in more recent years things have been very little better, and a war which has lingered on for over a year and is not yet ended has entailed the employment of 37,000 troops at an enormous expense with very little result. Obviously the time has come to revise the whole military position in the light of practical economy as well as humanity in order to find out whether there may not be some better way of dealing with these independence-loving tribes.

In order to reduce expenditure to the lowest limit, the Congress ministers in every province have vigorously reduced their own salaries and have decided to travel third class. But something far more drastic than this will be needed in order to meet the new deficit which will now be caused by prohibition. It would be lamentable if it involved higher protective duties at a time when the all-round lowering of tariff walls is sorely needed, but it is difficult to find any other available means. What is already noticeable is the fact that the movement is everywhere meeting with popular support, and up to the present the heavy drain on the national budget has hardly been felt.

Certain notoriously "wet" districts have been bravely tackled first and the immense weight of woman's influence in India has been used to the full as a moving power. In the Salem district of the Madras presidency the prime minister himself, one of the noblest among the Congress leaders,⁶⁹ has opened the campaign. "I do not think", he writes, "that there has been at any time before such an upheaval of things among the women of our land, nor such huge gatherings and attentive listening among the mothers and the mistresses of the homes of poor people. My greatest regret is that the film industry, which is so eager to seize occasions, neglected this great opportunity. If a firm of film producers had sent its cameramen round with us, they could have fixed forever on the silver screen sights and scenes that we witnessed, and for which there could be no parallel in any other country. I am more hopeful than ever that there will be no difficulty in the enforcement of the Act.⁷⁰ I see no signs of any doubt either among the people or officials".

Such an auspicious beginning in one of the worst districts in the whole of southern India seems to speak well for the future.

The opium question in India presents certain obstacles, to which I have already referred. Clearly no prevention of opium smuggling is at all possible until the opium, cultivated and manufactured for medical needs, is confined to one centre. The second source of supply, which now comes from the Rajputana states, must be closed down. This obvious remedy has been pointed out again and again, but hitherto the amount of compensation required to satisfy the demands of the Rajputana states has not been forthcoming. Yet the economic waste through smuggling represents a far greater loss of revenue than the capital amount needed

69 C. Rajagopalachari, Prime Minister of the Madras Presidency, 1937-39
70 Prohibition Act

to close down this disgraceful traffic. It would appear that this may be more easily accomplished when the federation of the Indian states with the Indian provinces is accomplished.

It is not possible to explain at the end of this article the exact position which has now been reached with regard to federation in the long constitutional struggle between India and Britain. Briefly it may be said that while the provincial responsibility under the new Act of 1935 has proved acceptable, there is an almost unanimous opinion that the proposed centre of the federation is unworkable. Neither the Congress nor the Muslim League are ready to work it, and the states are lukewarm about it. Therefore at present the prospect is by no means hopeful. Yet much will depend on the federal centre, especially with regard to opium, whether the new prohibition policy succeeds or fails.

If the new centre can be so fashioned that full responsibility is given, then the greatest triumph in Mr. Gandhi's whole career as a statesman may be won. But if on the other hand reactionary forces obtain control at the centre then his great and notable experiment in prohibition may be brought to an untimely end. So vast is the issue at stake.

A word in closing. The following good news concerning the "Salem Experiment" has just come as I send this article: "It is estimated that 90 per cent of the addicts had given up drinking consequent on the introduction of prohibition in this district, says Mr. A. F. W. Dixon, district collector of Salem, in an interview. He expressed his satisfaction at the successful working of the Act so far. He said that the standard of living of the poorer classes had risen during the last three months. A large number of people who were addicted to drinking were utilising the money on better food, clothing and recreation. The maintenance of the improved standard of living of these people in the future depended largely on the cooperation of the non-officials in the strict enforcement of the act, concluded Mr. Dixon".

INDIA'S GREATEST PROBLEM: OVERCROWDING ON THE LAND⁷¹

By far the most serious problem affecting India as a whole, at the present time, is that of the excessively rapid increase of population. The overcrowding on the land is becoming worse every year and yet strangely enough, while much has been talked about it, there has been very little scientific investigation. Yet this problem underlies nearly every question that is raised with regard both to poverty and unemployment. It clamours for a solution more and more urgently. Facile answers have been given discounting the seriousness of the situation, but the danger ahead is far too grave for easy-going optimism or careless thinking.

It is already estimated that unless some very widespread epidemic occurs, such as that which swept away twelve million people in 1918-19, the Indian population (including Burma) will exceed four hundred million by the year 1941 - the rate of increase recently has been so abnormally advanced. This will mean that eighty-one million more human beings have to be provided for, with food, shelter and clothing, in the course of twenty years (from 1921-41) - a population bigger than that of modern Germany and Austria. Not even China, with all its multitudes, has ever shown such an immense increase in so short a time. No further irrigation schemes, and no modern scientific modes of agriculture can possibly keep pace with an increase of new population on so vast a scale.

There are very few possibilities of further migration to countries near at hand, or from one province to another. In Burma, which still is thinly populated, Indians are now unwelcome, and the same is beginning to be true of Ceylon. Only in Assam is there both vacant land and also a demand for more agricultural labour. But even there the numbers that can be absorbed year by year are comparatively small. Malaya cannot take a bigger quota than it does each year at present; indeed, the Indian Government has refused to send any more labour for the time being. The British colonies have no more desire to take new Indian emigrants, since the indenture system has been abolished. East Africa looks very empty on the map: but the numbers that could actually settle there would be so small as to be hardly noticeable when the increase in India runs to over three millions every year.

The reason for this very rapid increase is not far to seek. The monsoon rains have been fairly regular and full: peace has been almost unbroken: the joint family system and religious custom have still continued to set a premium on very early marriage, because the newly married couples have not got to provide for a home of their own, but are accommodated within the larger family circle. All these conditions point to a continuance of the present rate of increase. Even though it is true, as has been already pointed out, that the age of marriage is advancing, and child marriages are now illegal, nevertheless the fecundity of marriages in India does not appear to be

⁷¹ *The Contemporary Review*, London 155: 179-85, February 1939

diminishing. It has not even, as far as we can gather, reached its highest point. Therefore the pressure on the soil of these added millions of human lives can only make the present distress of poverty and unemployment still greater.

The saddest fact of all is this, that along with such an increase year by year, the normal expectation of life has decreased to a terribly low figure. While in Britain and other countries in Europe the average length of life has risen above 50, and in New Zealand above 60, in India it is still below 25. Men and women are cut off from the community by death just at the period when their mature political experience would be of the greatest possible value. The whole of India has mourned the early death of G.K. Gokhale, C.R. Das, and many others. Men of such intellectual brilliance and devotion to their country can ill be spared. Yet the number of such men who die young is actually increasing.

Recently, Dr. Macarrison, Dr. Ackroyd and others have been working out by experiment the problem of malnutrition and the results of their investigations have been very widely published. They corroborate in detail today the statements which have been made by earlier statisticians that a large percentage of the population in India lives below the level of subsistence. Even the rice, which when hand-milled used to have a fair nutritive content, has lost much of its food value now that it is being milled by machines. For the outer skin, where the nutrition lies, is polished away. In spite of every effort to stop this injurious process, it has proved to be exceedingly difficult to restore hand-milling as an industry because it is both tedious and irksome.

Industrialisation, which might absorb some of the surplus village population, does not appear to afford any adequate remedy in an agricultural country such as India.

Indeed, already the unemployment in towns is almost overwhelming, and people are actually drifting back from them on to the land. The scope, also, for industrialisation on a large scale is absent in India; because the mineral wealth is not sufficient for a fully developed factory system and the climate is unsuitable. India, as a country, must and will remain predominantly agricultural. The natural process lies, not in driving the surplus village population into the towns, but in giving them industrial employment close to the villages themselves. The spare time, when agriculture is impossible (owing to the heat of the sun drying up the soil) needs to be filled up with home industries, as is already done in Switzerland and Denmark, and also to a lesser extent in Holland. Perhaps Southern Ireland affords the nearest parallel in Europe to the Indian situation. Greater rapidity of communication, and also a cheap supply of electric current over the rural areas, may do something to render the economic problem of the villages less acute than it is today.

There is one side of the Indian problem of the villages that makes it altogether different from that of Germany, the United States of America and Japan. These latter are already highly industrialised countries, while in India the town population is quite insignificant. We have to think, not of Bombay or Calcutta, but of the 90 per cent of the people of India who live in the 750,000 villages. We have also to remember that, at each census, it has been shown that the agricultural proportion of the population has become higher instead of lower. Can the fertility of the soil of India withstand any more abnormal pressure?

One factor which might tend to lessen the very high birth rate of India, and thus give relief to the soil, would be the rapid spread of education, especially among the girls. For if the girls, in much larger numbers, take to education, then the age at which they are married will automatically be raised. Child marriages can never be done away with merely by legislation, such as the Sarda Act. The aid of strong and effective public opinion is also sorely needed. It is a well-known fact that a higher standard of education among increasing numbers of people aids the formation of new social ideas and accelerates changes in old bad customs. No reform is worth anything that depends on legislation alone; for the statute law is certain to be evaded unless the public will is behind it. Therefore the young Indian generation must be made more and more able to think for itself, and this can only be done by the rapid spread of education among the masses.

There is one very great hope that now lies before us in the fact that the people, even in the villages, are laying hold of the reins of provincial government, and are therefore boldly taking up these social and educational questions for themselves. Even where religion has fixed its unalterable prohibitions in the past there is a real prospect of reform. For no foreign government can interfere with the social and religious customs of another people with impunity. It has been quite definitely laid down in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 that the British rulers would observe neutrality in all matters concerning religion, and therefore it would be a breach of faith to interfere. For these reasons the British rulers hitherto have been necessarily most cautious. They rightly waited for public opinion to be formed very strongly behind them, before even the Sarda Act was passed. But where any new social reform is actually carried through by the people themselves, such popular legislation will be much more strictly observed than any official measures. Therefore self-government may actually prove, in the long run, to be one of the chief remedies of the present distress.

But here a proviso is clearly needed from the statistical standpoint. While, under popular government, social progress is likely to be far more rapid, the *immediate* effects of this may not result in a lower birth rate. Indeed, for the time being, this rate may go even higher because of better health conditions. Yet when once the self-governing process has been thoroughly established and won its way forward among the rural population - thus giving greater incentive to thrift and encouraging individual initiative - the whole trend will be towards more modern ideas of economy in domestic affairs. Old customs will give place to new ones, and a "slowing down" in the birth rate is likely to take place even in the rural areas.

It will be seen that I have not mentioned hitherto the question of birth control. As far as I can judge, this matter does not really come into practical consideration as a remedy in village India today - whatever view we ourselves may hold about it. Certainly such a practice as contraception by mechanical means does violence to deep-rooted religious sentiments, and Mahatma Gandhi has condemned it in quite unmeasured terms. Therefore it has no positive chance, as things are at present, of coming either within the means or even within the inclination of 99 per cent of the vast village population of India. Thus, even though it may still be debated and its supposed value in other countries may be set forward, nevertheless for the Indian

villages it is not really a practical proposition on any large scale and we must obviously seek remedies elsewhere.

I have already mentioned the remedy of education carried on everywhere in India among the masses of the people as in the long run one of the most important checks on over-population. Let me add that this has already proved effective among Indians abroad in the Colonies, who are leading the same agricultural life. The value of this check, therefore, is no mere guess work, but based on certain practical conclusions. Nothing else, perhaps, can get rid of the strongly ingrained customary habits, which are so deeply embedded in the village life and still determine, on unhygienic lines, what is the right and proper thing to do about the marriage of daughters. But along with education must go at the same time religious reform. For this is the chief motive power in a country so wedded to religion as India. We see at once, in the *Brahma* and *Arya Samaj* movements, and also among the Sikhs and other reforming bodies, how the religious motive has been introduced with good effect to raise the age of marriage. Among Indian Christians also the same thing may be noticed. If orthodox religious opinion were to give way on this point under the pressure of different reform movements, the result might be very great indeed.

For all the while, the national awakening itself is gradually revealing its own powerful influence in these matters. The idea is now gaining ground, even in remote villages, that on national as well as religious grounds, Mahatma Gandhi is strongly against the debilitating influence of child marriages, and that the national cause itself demands the postponement of the marriage age to a much later period in a young girl's life. His word has gone out and it is doing wonders here as elsewhere. Along with his great influence, which can hardly be over-estimated in village India, we notice how every year the women themselves are taking a much more active and intelligent part in the building of the new Indian Constitution. The extraordinary growth of women's influence, even in the past few years, must surely give us hope. For when the women of India make up their minds that a thing ought to be done, there is a marvellous power of sacrifice released which in the end becomes invincible. Not only Mahatma Gandhi himself, but also his wife, Kasturbai, immeasurably help forward by their personalities the women's movement in the villages.

What may be said, then, with some truth is this, that if the devolution of responsibility upon Indians themselves is allowed to go forward with all speed, it is likely to produce beneficial effects even on this grave and difficult question of over-population. For only as both the mind and will of the people take up the problem with earnestness is there any ultimate possibility of finding its solution. Alien rulers, as we have seen, however benevolent they may be, can never accomplish in a vast matter like this what popular rule can accomplish. But on the rising tide of a great national movement much may be done. Age-long social abuses are likely to be swept away. For very little can be accomplished by a despondent people, who merely hand over their own responsibility to others and allow abuses such as child marriage to go on unremedied, with all the fatal consequences which follow in their train. The difference between such a passive state of mind and the active interest of representative government is enormous.

While I have been writing these words a vivid example of the change which has already been brought about has come before my notice. Here, at Kotagiri, in the

Nilgiri Hills, I am far away from any railway station, among the villagers who inhabit these regions. Before the new national awakening took place these people had maintained their age-long Hindu customs unchanged for many centuries. But Mahatma Gandhi has done away with such intractable conservatism and has stirred politically even these remotest villages. The news of his doings has reached every part of these Hills and his actions are everywhere discussed. In the recent elections his name alone carried weight. "A vote for Congress is a vote for Mahatma Gandhi," was the easily understood watchword that won most of the elections. This was no "parrot cry," involving nothing more than a vote in the ballot-box. Every part of his programme was ardently discussed and canvassed at meetings where thousands gathered. Crowds of villagers, much larger than have ever been witnessed before, assembled. On the day of the elections to the local *Panchayats* the great bulk of the adult population came to the polls. Municipal elections, at the few centres in the Nilgiris which have municipal councils, including Ootacamund and Coonoor, brought with them equal enthusiasm and excitement. The provincial elections caused the greatest enthusiasm of all. The programme set forward by the Congress Ministry in office includes Prohibition, relief of indebtedness on the land, the spread of mass education, prison reform, and a large number of social measures which have been long overdue. Out of the ferment caused by an awakening of this kind the problem of over-population will surely have a chance of finding a solution more readily than during the passive, inert political existence of earlier days.

THE ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI⁷²

In writing this article on the Economic Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, it is necessary for me to explain at the outset that I am not a trained economist and can only give his ideas, from the practical point of view, where I have seen them in action, or had personal talks with him about them.

The best way of introducing the subject will be to tell a story. One day I happened to meet a commercial traveller, who had come over to the East from America in order to sell "Ford Tractors" for agricultural purposes. We had many interesting talks together; for he had visited India many times before and knew the country thoroughly well. After a while, I told him what had happened in North Bengal during the flood relief of 1921-22, when 1500 square miles had been flooded so deep by the monsoon rains that the rice harvest had been utterly ruined. Those of us who were administering relief had been faced by an alarming situation: for the soil was rapidly drying up after the flood, and, if it once became caked into a brick-like mud, no ploughing would be possible before the next monsoon rains set in. That would be too late, and a whole harvest might again be lost. There was no chance, that year, of being able to use the bullocks to plough the land, because they had all been destroyed by the flood or else had been sold in order to save the villagers from starvation.

We were almost in despair. At last I was able to bring up by rail from Calcutta what was called a "Disc Harrow". It had long, revolving blades, which cut through the soil to the shallow depth we wanted. One such tractor could accomplish the work of fifty yoke of oxen. So we got to work and in a fortnight's time the whole area was lightly ploughed. The rains that year were plentiful and there was a good harvest.

At the end of the season, the landlords came to us and asked us to sell them the tractor, but we decided not to do so. For in an ordinary season there would be sufficient scope for the adult labour of many families and these would be employed on the land, with fresh air, clean food, and a simple country life, where they might bring up their children in a wholesome manner. But if tractors were introduced, it would mean the unemployment of most of these poor agriculturists and the introduction of a very small number of skilled mechanics. The villagers would either be left unemployed on the land, or else drift down into the slums of Calcutta where they would swell the ranks of the unemployed. Could we, of our own accord, face the forcible eviction of the greater part of these villagers by thus substituting machine labour for hand labour? Was this "mechanising" of agriculture of any real value in India in those areas where the population on the land was so dense?

I asked the commercial traveller this question and he gave me an answer which greatly interested me as a humanitarian. He told me that there were two areas in the world, where he would not have the heart to sell a tractor. "The one", he said, "is the Yang Tze Kiang Valley in China, and the other is the Ganges Valley in India". He went on to explain that there were certain parts of the world which needed tractors, if they were to be cultivated at all. Among these he pointed to Soviet Russia

⁷² *Education*, Boston, 60:391-95, March 1940

and Siberia. But when it came to agricultural India, he had himself, as a practical man, felt the extreme difficulty of introducing mechanical ploughing and harvesting where the population was over one thousand to the square mile. He deeply interested me by showing me that he had studied Mahatma Gandhi's programme. It struck me at once as a unique thing in my own experience to find an American commercial traveller advocating the very programme which Mahatma Gandhi has put forward for the salvation of agricultural India.

Let me tell one more story about what I found out only yesterday with regard to a village close to where I am writing. Quite recently there has been an increase in mill manufacture at Coimbatore and other places in South India. This has reduced the weavers, who were flourishing in the villages near to Tirupattur, almost to the verge of starvation. They had a long-established handloom industry among these villages only a very short time ago. Now mill cloth has become so cheap that their hand-woven cloth, which used to have a good market, could hardly be sold at all. I have had a great deal to do with this mill labour in India, as I have been President of the All-India Trades Union Congress, and also on its Executive Committee. In addition, I have been called in by mill owners and mill labourers alike, in order to settle strikes, so that my experience of the cotton industry in India has been at first hand.

Let me give a very brief sketch of the conditions which prevailed before the International Labour Office at Geneva took up the subject of long hours of labour in the East. Even in the hottest weather in Madras, the labourers used to work at the looms for 11½ to 12 hours a day, beginning at 6 00 a.m. and leaving off between 6.00 p.m. and 6.30 p.m., with only half an hour's interval at noon, in which to get their food. Many of them had an hour's walk before they reached home in the evening. The work was "speeded up" in all sorts of ways, and the living conditions round the mills were indescribably bad. For a time, I lived in the mill area in order to study these questions. Since my ordinary work takes me among the villages, I had the opportunity of making a comparison. The vast moral evils in the slum quarters round the mills, and the sordid life which the mill labourers lived, made me wish that they had never left their villages.

It is quite true that since those days much has been done to improve conditions; but most of the evils, which degrade human life, still continue, and I have no wish to see industrialism, on this side at least, extended much further in India. Heavy industries may be needed close to the coal and iron centres. But the manufacture of lighter goods should be kept as near the villages as possible. That is Mahatma Gandhi's theory, and in an agricultural country like India I would heartily support it.

Here, then, in the form of two recent incidents, taken from my own experience, are typical difficulties which Mahatma Gandhi has to meet in framing his economic philosophy for the whole of India. No one knows so well as he does the inner life of the countless villages which all have a common background, and his theory is based on this intimate knowledge. He is never abstract; for he has essentially a practical and scientific mind and all his experiments are worked out in the laboratory of his own immediate surroundings. Only after long and painful research does he construct his theory. But when it is once framed, he pursues it, at whatever cost, and gives to it his indomitable spirit.

This village life of India, he points out, has a very closely knit economy of its own, which has gone on for thousands of years with many changes at the surface, but not at the centre; for it has remained, at the centre, simple, abstemious, self-contained; having few wants; and for the most part supplying these wants by means of its own handicrafts. What, however, has been happening during the last century under British rule, has been a gradual shifting of the centre. The village handicrafts have been destroyed by the invasion of cheap goods from abroad, which have been manufactured in mills by mass production.

He goes on to describe the effect of this process in his own vivid manner. Formerly, he says, the village life of India had two lungs, - agriculture and handicraft. Therefore it breathed freely. But the penetration of cheap manufactures, especially cotton goods, has destroyed one of the two lungs and the villager now can hardly breathe.

This would not have happened, if the result could have been seen beforehand. For cotton grows in plenty all over India; there are many idle months in the year wherein to spin and weave; and the process is very simple. Before the advent of cheap cotton goods from abroad, the village was active all the year round. In the dry season, when the ground was too hard to plough, the villagers spun and wove by hand their own garments. They thus saved their small earnings from the land. The light hand-work of spinning and weaving occupied every member of the family, and the present unemployment during the "idle" half of the year was quite unknown. The religious culture, with its song, drama and festival, kept the village life sweet and wholesome. The evils of the crowded cities had not yet been introduced. Above all, intoxicants, such as alcohol and opium, were practically unknown, and the diseases of the city were also absent.

Thus, from the moral standpoint, as well as the economic, this earlier economy was superior to the modern. India was naturally an agricultural country. The larger industries, needing immense quantities of coal and oil and iron, are almost ruled out by Nature, because the mineral supplies of India are very limited. On the other hand, sunshine and rain and a deep alluvial soil are present in larger quantities than elsewhere.

To repeat his main thesis in another form, Mahatma Gandhi declares that the invasion of the factory system with its centralised industries has tended to introduce the town vices. The villagers have found themselves stranded and workless during the slack seasons of the year, and have lost their skill in the village handicrafts which used to keep them busily employed. This degeneracy has gradually spread all over India and the disease has to be arrested. The "lung" of village handicrafts must be cured in order to restore health.

This, then, has been the almost superhuman task which he has set himself to accomplish. Nothing but his indomitable spirit and his faith in God could sustain him in such an uphill struggle to revive the village industries. This economic background really accounts also for his political programme. It is bound up with his stress on "Prohibition"; with his determination to abolish "Untouchability"; and with his effort to find a new basis for "Hindu Muslim Unity". For he believes that the handicrafts of the village, carried on without reference to caste or creed, are the best means of uniting the villagers and eliminating some of the main causes of religious and social conflict.

At the same time they will bring back health and better nourishment. Thus the moral and economic sides of the *Khaddar* (homespun) programme are one, - just as the two sides of a coin make up one piece of money. Since the provision of clothing forms nearly one half of the simple economy of the Indian villages, the stress which he lays on this *Khaddar* programme is not misplaced. Mahatma Gandhi sums up the economic benefits of hand spinning and weaving in the villages of India as follows:

1. It is immediately practicable because

It does not require any capital or costly implements to put in operation. Both the raw material and the implements for working it can be cheaply and locally obtained.

- (b) It does not require any higher degree of skill or intelligence than the ignorant and poverty-stricken masses of India possess.
 - (c) It requires so little physical exertion that even little children and old men can practice it and so contribute their mite to the family fund.
 - (d) It does not require the ground to be prepared for its introduction afresh, because the spinning tradition is still alive among the people.
2. It is universal and permanent, since, next to food, yarn alone can be sure of always commanding an unlimited and ready market at the very doorsteps of the worker, and thus ensures a steady, regular income to the impoverished agriculturist.
 3. It is independent of monsoon conditions and so can be carried on even during famine times.
 4. It is not opposed to the religious or social susceptibilities of the people.
 5. It provides a most perfect ready means of fighting famine.
 6. It carries work to the very cottage of the peasant, and thus prevents the disintegration of the family under economic distress.
 7. It alone can restore some of the benefits of the village communities of India now well-nigh ruined.
 8. It is the backbone as much of the hand-weaver as of the agriculturist, since it alone can provide a permanent and stable basis for the handloom industry, which at present is supporting from eight to ten million people and supplies about one-third of the clothing requirements of India, but uses chiefly mill-made yarn.
 9. Its revival would give a fillip to a host of cognate and allied village occupations, and thus rescue the villages from the state of decay into which they have fallen.
 10. It alone can ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among the millions of the inhabitants of India.
 11. It alone effectively solves the problem of unemployment, not only the partial unemployment of the agriculturist but of the educated youth aimlessly wandering in search of occupation. The very magnitude of the task requires the marshalling of all the intellectual forces of the country to guide and direct the movement.

In conclusion, there is one further economic theory of Mahatma Gandhi, called

Swadeshi, where I cannot follow him so closely. He holds, as a religious doctrine, what he calls the “economic principle of *Swadeshi*”. By this word he implies the constant preference for the goods of one’s own country. He would state the economics of *Swadeshi* as “the exclusive use of goods made in one’s own country,” and would carry this out as far as possible in practice. In the West, this would be called “economic nationalism,” or “autarchy,” and we are likely to regard it as a narrow doctrine; but he would repudiate any narrowness of spirit and would regard it rather as a law of nature, which man in his impiety contravenes to his own harm. “If,” he would say, “we were content with those things that could be produced in our own neighbourhood, instead of compassing sea and land to get goods from other countries, human life would lose one of the greatest incentives to war and become stable in its social character”.

Such a general economic principle would, of course, meet with many exceptions, and it would be unfair to tie Mahatma Gandhi down to its extreme, rigorous observance. Yet, as a working rule of life, he lays great emphasis upon it; and it guides not only his economic, but also his moral actions.

ARE ALL RELIGIONS EQUAL?⁷³

[In December 1936 Mr. C.F. Andrews, while on a visit to Gandhi at Wardha, discussed among other matters the former's contention that all religions are equal and that a man should always remain in the faith in which he was born. During his sojourn at Wardha Mr. Andrews often travelled the 75 miles to Nagpur to meet with some of his friends there. On one such visit he told me of the discussions he was having with Gandhi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan⁷⁴ and others. He left with me a letter he had prepared explaining his own position, which he said would be read to Mr. Gandhi and others and discussed further. This statement, here presented, shows that Mr. Andrews subjected Mr. Gandhi's ideas to critical examination and did not hesitate to point out what he considered unacceptable. A melancholy interest attaches to this statement in view of Mr. Andrews' death in Calcutta on April 5... - P. Oomman Philip.]

I

Your talk on religion yesterday distressed me, for its formula, "All religions are equal," did not seem to correspond with history or with my own life experience. Also your declaration that a man should always remain in the faith in which he was born appeared to be a static conception not in accordance with such a dynamic subject as religion.

Let us take the example of Cardinal Newman. Should he, because he was born in Protestant England, remain a Protestant? Or again, ought I to have remained in the very narrow sect of Irvingism? Or once more, ought I, in my later life, to have remained a rigid Anglo-Catholic, such as I was when I came out to India? You, again, have challenged Hinduism and said, "I cannot remain Hindu if untouchability is a part of it". I honour you for that true statement.

Of course if conversion meant a denial of any living truth in one's own religion, then we must have nothing to do with it. But I have never taken it in that sense, but rather as the discovery of a new and glorious truth, which one had never seen before and for which one would sacrifice one's whole life. It does mean also, very often, the passing from one fellowship to another; and this should never be done lightly or in haste; but if the new fellowship embodies the glorious new truth in such a way as to make it more living and real and cogent than the old outward truth, then I should say to the individual, "Go forward, become a member of the new faith which will make your own life more fruitful".

⁷³ *The Christian Century*, Chicago, 57:767-68, June 12, 1940

⁷⁴ Abdul Ghaffar Khan (1890-1988), a Muslim, was an associate of Gandhiji and a leader of the national movement for India's independence in the Northwest Frontier Province (now in Pakistan). Known as "Frontier Gandhi," he founded *Khudai Khidmatgar* (Servants of God) movement and advocated non-violence.

But let me repeat with all emphasis, this does not imply the denial of any religious truth in what went before. It does not mean, for instance, that a Christian is bound to believe that only Christians can be saved, and a Hindu that only Hindus can be saved. My dearest friend, Susil Kumar Rudra, declared openly that he cherished all that was good in Hinduism, and yet he was a profound Christian.

This attitude of Susil's - which has now become my own - is surely in accord with the mind of Jesus Christ. We find that Christ welcomed faith (i.e., trust in God's power to save) wherever he found it. When, at the beginning of his ministry, his closest relatives tried to restrain him, thinking he was suffering from religious mania, he cried, "who is my mother, and who are my sisters and brothers? He that doeth the will of God, the same is my mother and my sister and my brother". This was clearly said at a moment of exalted emotion; but it ruled his whole ministry.

II

Jesus mortally offended his own village people, among whom he had lived for thirty years, by pointing out to them instances in their own scriptures (such as Naaman the Syrian and the gentile widow of Sarepta) where God's grace had been found outside the Jewish church. So shocked were his fellow villagers at such a heresy that they tried to kill him. But, quite undaunted, he insisted on this fact on every possible occasion. The Samaritans were outcast by the Jews. So Jesus deliberately takes the good Samaritan for the centre of his parable and contrasts him with the priest and the Levite. When the pagan Roman centurion came to him, "I have not found", he said with great joy, "such faith, no, not in Israel". To the Greek Syrophoenician woman he said, "Oh lady, great is thy faith". Not only are abundant examples given of this manner of life which he pursued, but the essence of all his teaching was that God is our Father and that there are no favourites among his children. "He maketh his sun to shine and his rain to fall upon the just and upon the unjust". As far as I can see, he literally went to his crucifixion because he insisted on holding to the full this larger faith.

It is well also to notice his utter condemnation of those who seek at all costs to gain converts to their own religion. He says sternly: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when you have done so ye make him twofold more a child of hell than yourselves". Concerning mere profession of religion without practice, he is equally scathing. The phrase "whited sepulchers" has become proverbial.

To repeat, Christ is to me the unique way whereby I have come to God and have found God, and I cannot help telling others about it, wherever I can do so without any compulsion or undue influence. Khan Sahib Abdul Ghaffar Khan equally holds that Islam is the unique way to God, and I would most gladly sit at his feet, as you and I have both done, in order to find out more and more what Islam means to him; and I would sit at your feet also to find out what Hinduism means to you.

There is a generous phrase of Horace's which may almost be translated at sight: "*Maxima debetur pueris reverentia*," which means "The greatest reverence is owed to children". Christ said the same thing when he warned us, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones". I feel every day more and more that it is this spirit of reverence that we need, reverence for all that is good, wherever it is found.

As far then as I can read his life, Christ deliberately broke down every barrier of race and sect and reached out to a universal basis. He regarded his message as embracing the whole human race.

III

I find that Buddhism is a universal religion of a similar world-wide character. It went out from India all over the world and I honour it for doing so. Personally I am thankful that the Ramakrishna Mission is doing the same today, and I have had true fellowship with its missionaries in America, Australia and Europe. Also I find historically that Islam was proclaimed as a universal religion; and I have lived in the families of devout Muslims in different parts of the world with great happiness and shared many of their ideals.

Thus I find that a universal note, beyond the boundaries of a single country, is common to these living religions of mankind. Perhaps you would be surprised if I called you the greatest exponent of Hinduism today in the whole world. If a living truth is held with all the soul, as you hold it, you cannot help proclaiming it. I honour Paul the apostle when he says, "Necessity is laid upon me. Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel". I recognise in you the same divine necessity, burning within, which makes you say in deed, if not in word, "Woe is me, if I preach not that which I hold to be the gospel".

But then you may answer, "That means we shall always be fighting as to whose 'gospel' is superior; and this will bring with it all the evils of 'compassing sea and land to make one proselyte.'"

I don't think that follows. Let us look at it in this way: I feel, as a devout Christian, that the message which Christ came into the world to proclaim is the most complete and most inspiring that was ever given to man. That is why I am a Christian. As you know well, I owe everything to Christ.

But I most readily concede to my dear friend, the Khan Sahib Abdul Ghaffar Khan, whom I love with all my heart for his goodness, exactly the same right to hold that the message of the prophet Mohammed is to him the most complete and most inspiring that was ever given to mankind. That is why he is a Mussulman. Since it is to him a living truth, I fully expect him to make it known. He cannot and should not keep it to himself. And you surely have the abundant right to proclaim to all the world the living truth of Hinduism, which you regard as the supreme religion (*parama dharma*). I do not think that the act of Christian baptism militates against the idea which I have propounded in this letter, or implies the renunciation of anything that is good in Hindu or Islamic culture. The exact phrase is that we renounce "the world, the flesh and the devil"; that is to say, the essential evils of this life. I know that this would imply for a Christian the renunciation of certain things in Hinduism which you would think unobjectionable, such as idolatry; but there are Brahmos who renounce idolatry and yet remain Hindu. I do not want to be loose or vague myself here and I feel that there are clear-cut distinctions between Christians, Hindus and Muslims which cannot today be overpassed. But I do not think we need to anathematise one another in consequence. We should rather seek always to see the best in one another, for that is an essential feature of love.

There is a precious element of goodness which we can all hold in common. St. Paul says: "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report... think on these things, and the God of peace shall be with you". That seems to me to be a fine way towards peace in religion, without any compromise, syncretism, or toning down of vital distinctions.

IV

I have written this in as objective a manner as possible, when dealing with a subject so charged with emotion as religion is to me. I look forward to the time when the noble phrase of the *Qu'ran Sharif*, "Let there be no compulsion in religion," will be true all over India and throughout the world. It is the great ideal at which all of us should aim. In Japan, I believe, and also in Ceylon, a Christian member of the family may live happily in the same house with a Buddhist without sacrificing one iota of his own faith. I wish that this could be said of other lands also; for to act thus appears to me to represent the true spirit of religious toleration.