

### *1. TELEGRAM TO MAHOMED ALI*

KHULNA,

[June 17, 1925]

REGARDING DELHI TROUBLE<sup>1</sup> WANT SAY NOTHING ON MERITS. HAVE FULLEST FAITH YOUR INTEGRITY AND GODLINESS. MAY HE GUIDE US ALL.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

### *2. TELEGRAM TO BASANTI DEVI DAS<sup>2</sup>*

[KHULNA,

June 17, 1925 ]

BASANTI DEVI DAS

STEPASIDE

DARJEELING

MY HEART WITH YOU. MAY GOD BLESS YOU. EXPECT YOU BE BRAVE. BABY<sup>3</sup> MUST NOT OVERGRIEVE. REACHING CALCUTTA EVENING.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

### *3. TELEGRAM TO SATCOURIPATI ROY*

[KHULNA,

June 17, 1925 ]

UNTHINKABLE BUT GOD IS GREAT. MISSING FIRST TRAIN KEEP ESSENTIAL ENGAGEMENTS. LEAVING NOON. PRAY AWAIT ARRIVAL FINAL FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS. THINK BODY SHOULD BE RECEIVED RUSSA ROAD UNLESS FRIENDS HAVE VALID REASONS CONTRARY. NATION'S WORK MUST NOT STOP BUT ADVANCE DOUBLE SPEED HIS GREAT SPIRIT NOBLE EXAMPLE GUIDING US. HOPE PARTY STRIF WILL BE HUSHE AND ALL WILL HEARTILY JOIN DO HONOUR

<sup>1</sup> The reference is not clear.

<sup>2</sup> This and the telegrams that follow were sent on the passing away of C. R. Das on June 16, at Darjeeling. Gandhiji received the news at Khulna on the following day.

<sup>3</sup> Mona Das

MEMORY THIS IDOL OF BENGAL AND ONE OF  
GREATEST OF INDIA'S SERVANTS. CANCELLING ASSAM TOUR.  
GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

#### *4. TELEGRAM TO URMILA DEVI*

[KHULNA,  
*June 17, 1925*]

URMILA DEVI

NATURAL GRIEVE OVER DEATH LOVED ONES. BRAVE REMAIN  
UNPERTURBED. I WANT YOU BE BRAVE AND MAKE EVERY MAN YOUR  
BLOOD BROTHER. REACHING EVENING.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

#### *5. TELEGRAM TO MONA DAS*

[KHULNA,  
*June 17, 1925*]

MONA

BE TRUE TO FATHER AND BE BRAVE FACE IRREPARABLE LOSS, MAY GOD  
COMFORT YOU. EXPECT YOU CONSOLE BHOMBLE AND SUJATA. REACHING  
EVENING.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

#### *6. TELEGRAM TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

[KHULNA,  
*June 17, 1925*]

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

DESHBANDHU DIED HEART FAILURE DARJEELING. REMAINS REACHING  
CALCUTTA TOMORROW. AM PROCEEDING THERE TODAY. OBSERVE  
MOURNING BEFITTING OCCASION INVITE ALL PARTIES.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

## 7. TELEGRAM TO SAROJINI NAIDU

[KHULNA,  
*June 17, 1925*]

SAROJINI NAIDU

HYDERABAD

DESHBANDHU DIED YESTERDAY DARJEELING. WHO CAN KNOW OR  
FRUSTRATE GOD'S PURPOSE. YOU MUST NOT DISTURB REST IF YOU WILL  
CONTRIBUTE FULL SHARE MAKING UP LOSS ACCORDING OUR CAPACITY.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

## 8. TELEGRAM TO SHAUKAT ALI <sup>1</sup>

[KHULNA,  
*June, 17, 1925*]

SHAUKAT ALI

DESHBANDHU GONE. GOD'S WILL BE DONE. HE ALONE IS GREAT.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

## 9. TELEGRAM TO SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, VYKOM

*June 17, 1925*

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

VYKOM

I HEAR PROHIBITION ORDERS WITHDRAWN. MY CONGRATULATIONS. HOPE  
NO OFFENSIVE DEMONSTRATION AND NO ACT CALCULATED  
UNNECESSARILY IRRITATE ORTHODOXY.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

<sup>1</sup> At the end of this telegram Gandhiji wrote : Repeat to Mahomed Ali and add "inform Maulana Abul Kalam".

<sup>2</sup> In March 1925, Gandhiji went on a tour of Kerala, and held discussion with local leaders like K. Kelappan Nair, and the Commissioner of Police, Trivandrum— W. H. Pitt, with whom he later maintained contact in regard to the problem; *vide* "Letter to W. H. Pitt", 18-3-1925. Gandhiji released this correspondence to the Press on March 24, stating that the "agreement" embodied therein marked some progress in the movement for the reform.

## 10. AN APPEAL<sup>1</sup>

June 17, 1925

DEAR COUNTRYMEN,

The nation is in mourning for Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. And yet why should we mourn? For though Deshbandhu is dead, he shall live in us. We must take up the work at the point he has left it. Our first lesson must commence with rendering the honours that are due to the dead. Let our affection be not blind but intelligent.

When the remains reach the Sealdah station, there is likely to be a great rush of people. If we are to satisfy the desire of everyone to pay his or her respect to the remains, the following rules must be observed :

1. There must be no shouting.
2. There must be no rush towards the carriage. People should stand where they find themselves and must not push their way through the crowd.
3. A clear way must be kept for the coffin-bearers to pass.
4. There should be no one in front save the authorized band of *Kirtankars* and others. Those who wish to take part in the procession will kindly take up the rear.

They must not break through the line.

5. At the burning ghat, there should be no rush made towards the funeral pyre. It will not be possible to expose the body to view as it is feared that, three days having already elapsed, it must be in a state of decomposition.

6. Please remember that respect for the memory of the deceased patriot demands not any outward temporary show of affection, but an inward determination to deserve heritage the Deshbandhu has left us.

*I am your servant,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 19-6-1925*

## 11. THE GREAT BEREAVEMENT

CALCUTTA,

June 17, 1925

When the heart feels a deep cut, the pen refuses to move. I am too much in the centre of grief to be able to send much for the

<sup>1</sup> This was distributed in the form of leaflet.

readers of *Young India* across the wire. The five days of communion with the great patriot which I had at Darjeeling brought us nearer to each other than we ever were before. I realized not only how great Deshbandhu was, but also how good he was. India has lost a jewel. But we must regain it by gaining swaraj.

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India*, 18-6-1925

## 12. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

*Wednesday, June 17, 1925*

CHI. RAMDAS,

I am waiting for a train at Khulna. On reaching Khulna from Barisal by steamer I received a telegram that Deshbandhu Das<sup>1</sup> was no more. I am deeply shocked; because we had come very close at Darjeeling<sup>2</sup>. My anguish has a selfish cause: But it is there and I am not able to get over it. I have sent a few telegrams.<sup>3</sup> After debating whether I should eat or fast I came to the conclusion that it would be proper to eat. And then of course there was the meeting here. I attended it.<sup>4</sup> But for that meeting I would have gone straight to Calcutta. At the meeting I broke down although I did my best not to. After that I had no desire left to write. So I span. Spinning brought comfort. Then I bathed and ate. Then the post was brought. It included your letter and many others. I went through them. And now I have sat down to write to you, because this is the most convenient time.

It means a lot to me that you have started taking interest in the work there. May that interest continue. Try to read the *Gita* occasionally, and if possible regularly. Even if you read only two verses you must read them along with the meaning.

Your report about Kundla is interesting. If you overcome your fear, you will see that you have a lot of strength.

<sup>1</sup> Chitta Ranjan Das had passed away at Darjeeling on June 16, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Where Gandhiji had stayed with C. R. Das from June 3 to June 6, 1925; *vide* "At Darjeeling", 10-7-1925.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Basanti Devi Das", 17-6-1925, "Telegram Satcouripati Roy", 17-6-1925, "Telegram to Urmila Devi", 17-6-1925, "Telegram to Mona Das", 17-6-1925, "Telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel", 17-6-1925, "Telegram to Sarojini Naidu", 17-6-1925 and "Telegram Shaukat Ali", 17-6-1925.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Khulna", 17-6-1925.

In view of the above circumstances you may take it that I shall be in Calcutta for the time being. I shall write more from there.

Only this much for now.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Surendra's letter is worth reading. I am sending it to you. You may tear it up after reading.

From the Gujarati original: Ramdas Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### *13. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KHULNA<sup>1</sup>*

*June 17, 1925*

You have heard from Acharya Ray what a terrible blow has befallen us, but I know that if we are true servants of the country, no blow, however great, will break our spirit. I was faced with a conflict of duties this morning as soon as the sad news was broken to me. It was my duty to leave for Calcutta by the first train available. It was also my duty to go through the programme you had fixed up for me. The spirit of service in me prompted me to finish the work here, but whilst I have preferred to stop here, to meet those who have come from distant places, I shall, instead of my usual speech on Congress work, devote it to the memory of the departed Deshbandhu. I am sure that my staying here to go through the programme in preference to running up to Calcutta will please his soul.

Mr. Das was one of the greatest of men.<sup>2</sup> I have had the privilege of knowing him for the last six years, and, when I parted from him only a few days ago at Darjeeling, I said to a friend that the closer I came to him the more I came to love him. I saw during my brief stay at Darjeeling that no thought but that of the welfare of India occupied his mind. He dreamed and thought and talked of the freedom of India and of nothing else and I may tell you that, until the moment I took leave of him in Darjeeling, he was asking me to stop longer in Bengal to bring the different parties together, so that the energies of all may be concentrated on one

<sup>1</sup> Seven addresses were presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the local bodies, the Municipality, the District Board and the People's Association. Sir P. C. Ray announced the news of the death of C. R. Das.

<sup>2</sup> The newspaper reports that Gandhiji broke down and was unable to proceed for a minute or two.

purpose throughout my tour in Bengal.

Those who had differences with him, those who bitterly criticized him did not hesitate to admit that no other man could take his place in Bengal. He was fearless. He was brave. His love for the young men of Bengal was boundless. There is not a young man but has told me that never had his request to Mr. Das for help gone in vain. He earned lakhs and gave away lakhs to the young men of Bengal. His sacrifice was matchless. And who am I to talk of his great intellect and his statesmanship?

On more than one occasion at Darjeeling, he told me that the freedom of India depends on non-violence and truth. The Hindus and Mussalmans of India should know that his heart knew no difference between the Hindus and the Mussalmans. I would like to tell all Englishmen in India that he bore no ill will to them. "If I live I live for swaraj; if I die I die for swaraj," that was his vow to his motherland.

What shall we do to perpetuate his memory? It is easy to shed tears, but no tears can help us or his nearest and dearest. Only if everyone of us, Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis and Christians, all who call themselves Indians, pledge ourselves to do the work in which he lived, moved and had his being, shall we have done something. We are all believers in God. We should know that the body is ever perishing. The soul is imperishable. The body that held Mr. Das has perished, but his soul will never perish, not only the soul, but even the name of him who had served and sacrificed so much will remain immortal and every one, young and old, who follow his example to ever so little an extent will help to perpetuate his memory. We have none of us his intellect, but we can imitate the spirit in which he served the motherland.

Mr. Das tried to learn spinning in Patna, and in Darjeeling I gave him spinning lessons and he promised me that he would try to learn spinning and spin so long as his body allowed. He had converted his Darjeeling House into a spinning club. His good wife pledged herself to spin at least for half an hour every day, excepting when she was ill, and his daughter who was there, his sister and sister's daughter were all regularly spinning. Often would he say to me : 'I think it is essential to go to the Councils, but spinning is equally essential and not only is it essential, it is impossible to make Council work effective without spinning.'

It is not for me to say how much he had done to bring the Hindus and Mussalmans together; and as to his love for the untouchables, I need only tell you what I heard last night from a *Namasudra* leader at Barisal. He said that the first to help him with

money was Mr. Das and the next was Dr. Ray. You cannot all go to the Councils, but you can do all the three things that were dear to him.

I regard myself as a loyal servant of India and a loyal brother and colleague of the late Mr. Das and as such I publicly declare that I shall, consistently with my principle, try to give hence-forward, if it is possible, even more help to the followers of Mr. Das than I have up to now done in their Council programme. I pray to God that He may ever keep me from doing or speaking aught calculated to injure his work. Our differences regarding the Council-entry remained, but our hearts were one. Differences in political methods will remain until the end of time, but they should never separate people or make of them mutual enemies. The same love of the motherland which prompted me to do one thing prompted him to do something else and such honest difference means no detriment to the cause of the country. Not differences in methods, but insincerity is the curse.

During my stay at Darjeeling, I could see that Mr. Das's tenderness towards his political opponents was every day increasing, but I must not attempt to describe those sacred memories. Mr. Das was one of the jewels among the servants of the country. His service and his sacrifice were matchless. May their memory ever remain with us and may his example inspire us to noble efforts! Our way is long and dreary and nothing will stand us in good stead as our own reliance on ourselves. Self-reliance was Mr. Das's watchword and may it long inspire us! May his soul rest in peace!

*The Hindu*, 18-6-1925

## 14. NOTES

### SPINNING IN DARJEELING

But for the presence of Deshbandhu Das in Darjeeling, I hardly think I would have gone there though the sight of the snowy range was a temptation. I had thought that, for me, to deliver the message of the charkha to the fashionable people of Darjeeling would be simple folly. My fear was wholly unjustified. I was privileged to address a meeting of ladies who listened to the message of the wheel with sympathy. Mrs. Blair, the late W. C. Bonnerjee's daughter, was to start a spinning class for the fashionable ladies. I was privileged, too, to deliver my message to a small meeting of missionaries. Of this, however, perhaps more later. Nor did I know that I should have the good fortune to see so



many Nepali, Bhutia and other people. They evinced the greatest interest in the massage. But my keenest joy was to see Shrimati Basanti Devi Das learning spinning and taking a vow religiously to spin every day for at least half an hour except in cases of illness. Her daughter knew it already. But she had neglected it. She has now returned to it and added spinning by the *takli* which she picked in ten minutes. Shrimati Urmila Devi and her children have been spinning regularly for some time now. And Deshbandhu himself took lessons on the *takli*. But he finds spinning harder than giving defeats to the Government or winning cases for clients. "My husband can hardly turn the key of his box right; I have always to help him", pleaded Basanti Devi on behalf of her husband. "You can, therefore, understand why it is so difficult for him to learn spinning." But Deshbandhu has assured me that he is going to insist on learning spinning. He had lessons in spinning at the wheel in Patna. They were interrupted by his illness. He told me that he thoroughly believed in the charkha and wanted to help it in every way possible. It was a perfect pleasure to me to see the whole house-hold of the Mayor of Calcutta plying the charkha in fashionable Darjeeling creating a charkha atmosphere there. Needless to say, they were all dressed in khaddar. For Deshbandhu khaddar is not ceremonial wear. It is habitual with him. He tells me it would be difficult for him to revert to the foreign or mill-made cloth even if he wished to.<sup>1</sup>

#### WANTED A SECRETARY

Those who are interested in cow-protection will not, I hope, think that I am neglecting the trust imposed upon me. At the time of accepting it, I warned the members of the Committee that I should be perfectly useless for any work for the Association if I did not succeed in finding a good secretary. I regret to inform them, and others interested, that I have as yet failed to find one to my satisfaction. He must have a competent knowledge of English and at least a working knowledge of Hindustani. He should be a whole-time worker with no other calls upon his time. He must be a lover of the cow and have faith in the programme sketched by the Association to achieve its object. He must have a pure character and a healthy body. He will be paid according to his needs so long as they are not extraordinary. Lastly, he must be a student capable of application; for he will be expected to study the literature connected with cow-protection. Will those who think they possess

<sup>1</sup> Here *Young India* has the following note: Since the above was set in type, we have received the sad news of the passing away of the Deshbandhu on Tuesday, at 5.30 p. m. at Darjeeling, owing to heart-failure. Asstt. Editor, *Y.I.*

the foregoing qualifications please write to me giving full particulars including the salary required?

#### TILAK SWARAJ FUND

What use has been made of this fund is a question that still continues to worry people. A Punjabi correspondent says that, in the course of his khaddar tour, he finds people inquiring about the disposal of the fund. I have repeatedly stated in these columns that full and certified balance-sheets have been published from time to time. Let the public also realize that the fund was distributed among twenty-one provinces and that several lacs were earmarked. Not only has the A.I.C.C. published an all-India balance-sheet, but the Provinces too, have done likewise. Though there has been here and there misapplication of the funds and even defalcation, on the whole I am satisfied that the money has been spent for the purpose intended. Any patient student of Congress affairs can, whenever he wishes, study the printed figures and find out for himself how the money was used.

#### WHAT OF PURSES?

The same Punjabi correspondent asks how the purses presented to me at the different places are utilized. As a rule, the money is left at the places where it is given with instructions for its use in the khaddar propaganda. Only, where I find no one whom I want to entrust with the use of the money given, I keep it with me and use it through the Ashram for khaddar propaganda. Where the money is earmarked, naturally, I have nothing to do but to hand the contents for the earmarked purpose to the persons concerned.

#### HAS NO USE NOW

The correspondent writes :

During my hawking tours I find people saying: "As the Congress is on the wane, why are you giving yourself the useless trouble of hawking khaddar? When the Congress becomes strong again, we will buy khaddar; now we wear foreign cloth. Let us give ourselves the pleasure of using it for the time-being." Thus talked to me several pleaders. This is one side of the picture. I met a pleader who bought some himself and took us to people and promised to hawk khaddar twice every week among all sorts of people.

The instances of steady work can be multiplied. But I have never yet met anyone to say what these pleader friends in the Punjab are reported to have said. Surely, they do not need to be told that khaddar is not for temporary use. It is a permanent article of wear as wheat and rice are permanent article of food. And they

could only have been joking when they said that they wanted the pleasure of wearing foreign cloth. Is there pleasure in wearing it? Is it not the same thing as saying that there is pleasure in slavery? It was not an uncommon experience, when slavery was abolished in the Southern States, to find slaves refusing freedom; slavery had become second nature with them.

#### ‘FEED THE MILLIONS’

A member of the 49 Bengal Regiment writes:

It is admitted on all hands that you are the greatest leader of the world. What is the greatest leader for? The greatest leader is for providing the starving millions of India! Isn't it? So long as you are not able to feed and clothe the thirty-two crores of Indians, you can't expect swaraj. I can give you swaraj in no time, if you can give me one hundred crores of rupees. You speak of swaraj, you speak of charkha, etc., but you do not speak of feeding the starving people. The man who does not get proper food, cannot take to charkha. First of all "belly" then cloth. I can remain stark naked for a day, but I cannot remain without food even for a couple of hours. If you can feed and give money to the Indians, the Indian masses will at once respond to your call, otherwise not.

In the first place, let me repudiate the "greatest man" title though I do not need to do it, as I have never claimed or accepted it. Daily do I feel both my littleness and helplessness. I have never yet realized my greatness. But if 'providing the starving millions' can make me great, I am on the way to greatness. For I claim nothing less for my prescription, the charkha. It is designed to feed and clothe the starving millions. Clothing, I admit, is a secondary consideration. But the charkha is intended to feed first and then to clothe. I have proposed to give not merely one hundred crores of rupees once for all. My proposal is to give sixty crores at least every year. I gladly accept the formula that the famishing masses will respond to the call only of those who give them food and money. My gift includes both. But who will bell the cat? A physician can prescribe an infallible remedy, he cannot compel the patient to adopt it. The disease of the masses is not want of money so much as it is want of work. Labour is money. He who provides dignified labour for the millions in their cottages, provides food and clothing or, which is the same thing, money. The charkha provides such labour. Till a better substituted is found, it must, therefore, hold the field.

#### NATIONALISM V. INTERNATIONALISM

A gentleman met me in Darjeeling and related to me the story of a nurse who preferred not to serve her nation to the injury

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

#### HINDI IN BENGAL

Some lovers of Hindi are not satisfied that I insist on speaking in Hindi to the audiences in Bengal and that I plead for it in season and out of season at public meetings. By the permission and kindness of the member who were all English scholars, I spoke, even to the select audience I had at the Bengal Sahitya Parishad's meeting, in Hindi. But these lovers of Hindi would have me to open Hindi classes in Bengal and carry on propaganda as I was instrumental in doing in the Southern Presidency. I am sorry I cannot respond. I have come to the limit of my resources. Moreover, there is a large Hindi-knowing population in Calcutta. There are even Hindi newspapers published in that city of palaces. It is, therefore, up to the lovers of Hindi in Calcutta to shoulder the burden. They have both money and scholars. It is possible for them to have Hindi classes in all the chief centres of Bengal. My sympathy would naturally be with any such movement. But the organization must be conducted by local enthusiasts. If the South and Bengal can be induced to take up Hindi, the question of a

common medium for all India is easily solved. Nowhere else have I ever found any difficulty in making myself understood through my broken Hindi or Hindustani.

#### TAMILNAD

The reader will recall that, in the list of Congress membership under the new franchise, Tamilnad figures were given in a lump at 1,400. I have now received a wire from the Secretary saying that, till the end of May, there were 989 enrolled as A class and 802 as B class members. Encouraging as this is, Tamilnad can easily do much better.

#### V. V. S. IYER

The readers of *Young India* will share my regret over the death by drowning of Sjt. V. V. S. Iyer<sup>1</sup>. I had the pleasure of meeting him in London years ago. He was then a fierce anarchist. But he gradually mellowed down. The fire of patriotism burnt none the less brightly in him. He was a staunch Non-co-operator and, latterly, he had intended to devote himself entirely to conducting the Shermadevi Gurukul. I always regarded him as a fine, sincere and persevering servant of the nation. May his soul rest in peace.

*Young India*, 18-6-1925

#### 15. ARE WE READY?

Mr. Bharucha<sup>2</sup> has made a public appeal to me to call an all-parties conference again because, in his opinion, time is now favourable for it. Deshbandhu Das has placed in my hands a copy of *The Mahratta* in which also I observe a similar appeal. I am aware that Sarojini Devi holds similar views. But my position is much the same on this suggestion as on that of calling an A.I.C.C. meeting. If I get a requisition, say from Mr. Jinnah, Sir Mohamad Shafi, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji, Lala Lajpat Rai, Mr. Srinivasa Sastri, Sir Surendra Nath, the orthodox non-Brahmin leaders, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Sapru<sup>4</sup> and others, I shall gladly the conference. Personally, I think that we are not more ready today for coming together than we were in Delhi. If it is

<sup>1</sup> Barrister-at-law, Tamil scholar; translated the *Kural* into English; wrote commentary on *Kamba Ramayanam*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> B. F. Bharucha

<sup>3</sup> 1880-1941; editor of *The Leader*, English daily from Allahabad

<sup>4</sup> Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru (1875-1949); eminent lawyer, constitutionalist and politician; Law Member in Viceroy's Council, 1920-22; President of the Liberal Federation in 1923 and 1927

about swaraj that we are to meet, we shall quarrel over the Hindu-Muslim question. If it is about getting all parties on the Congress platform, then the A.I.C.C. is the proper body first to consider or devise new plans. For unless the present Congressmen are fairly united in the desire and the plan of execution, a general conference must prove futile. If it is the spinning franchise alone that stands in the way, the method is simpler still. The original party to the franchise pact should first consider the suggestion to revise it. They are the Swaraj Party—not the individual Swarajists—and myself. The pact was between the Party and myself, representing no party but still representing an indefinite number of men holding my views. I want to do nothing in the Congress without the consent of the Swaraj Party. If that party, therefore, desires a revision of the franchise, it can have it even now for the asking, so far as I am concerned. And when the party has made up its mind, the A.I.C.C. meeting can be called to give effect to its desires. I regard myself as nothing in the Congress. I admit that I do not carry educated India with me in my views on spinning as on several other things. Educated Indians brought the Congress into being and they must dominate and shape its policy. I feel that I represent the mass-mind however inadequately it may be. But I want to act upon the Congress only indirectly by carrying conviction to individuals by argument and facts,—not by taking votes which might be given for considerations not based on merits. So long as the masses do not think for themselves and are likely to be swayed by those who, for the time being, exercise influence on them, it will be wrong to use their votes. If, therefore, the Swaraj Party, which undoubtedly represents the bulk of educated India, desires to reject the spinning franchise, it can do so today without any opposition from me. Only, then it will be improper to expect me to lead the Congress. I am unfit just now for any other work but that of the triple constructive programme. For me success in it is swaraj, and swaraj without it is an impossibility. I must, therefore, make room for those who take what has been called a broader view of things.

Mr. Deshmukh is said to have suggested that I should retire from public life if I cannot revise my views. I have not seen his Satara address. But if he has said so, I think he had a perfect right to do so. I would say the same thing of one who, I may think, was, by his activity, doing harm to the country. Did not all non-co-operators call upon councillors to resign? Mr. Deshmukh may be wrong, but his right to correct a public man may not be questioned; nor has he said anything strange or new. Indeed, there was a time when I seriously thought of retiring, but I found that it

was no use. I believe with Maulana Mahomed Ali that a public man may not give up his trust so long as he believes in it. He must be relieved of it. He said that if I retired prematurely I would be putting an undue strain upon political opponents and on the country. I must cease to be popular before I could retire in spite of confidence in my message. And even then, it often becomes a point of extreme delicacy to decide between persistence and withdrawal. The fact is, retirement at the bidding of another from service voluntarily taken up is not so simple as it may appear. But Mr. Deshmukh has courageously paved the way for the public to think out the question. Those who would have me to leave the field should at least create public opinion against my methods and views which they regard as unsound. My mahatmaship is no passport for the currency of bad coin.

But the charkha is no bad coin for me. I have faith in it to defend it against the whole world. I want freedom for all. I can think of it only in non-violent terms. If we are to get our freedom by strictly non-violent means, we can get it only through the charkha, which necessarily includes Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and several other things which I need not mention here. In my opinion, the Congress will commit a terrible mistake if it abolishes the franchise. But my belief in democracy is worth nothing if it does not include the right to commit even terrible mistakes. I, therefore, know that my belief, though right in my estimation, must be rejected if the others do not feel it within them. I want a living faith in the charkha and consequent active co-operation. Mere mechanical assent without corresponding action can do no good to anybody. And in coming to a conclusion on the subject, my personality must be dismissed from consideration. No man is indispensable for the evolution of this great and ancient land of dharma. Let India live, though a hundred Gandhis have to perish.

*Young India*, 18-6-1925

## 16. A DOMESTIC CHAPTER

A *vakil* from Layallpur sends the following letter addressed to the Editor, *Young India* :

About three or four years ago, a company, "All-India Stores Ltd.", was started at Calcutta with Mr. H. M. Gandhi, son of our Mahatmaji, as one of the directors, as advertised by a representative of the said company at Rawalpindi. A client of mine was persuaded to pay certain sums to the said representative and also to the company in pursuance of his having

been so persuaded to become a shareholder. I have written to the known and notified address, 22 Amratalla Street, Calcutta, of the company and so has my client. My client fears that perhaps it was a bogus affair and he has been done out of his money. In the interests of your (Mahatma's) good name and the economic welfare of this poor country, I fondly hope and wish and even pray, my client's fears may be unfounded. The post office has returned all our letters back through the Dead Letter Office. So, some ground at least exists for my client's suspecting that the company is no more. Is it a fact that Mahatmaji's son was a Director in it, and is it a fact that such a company came into being and is still existing, and where?

Please excuse my writing to you about it. My client who is a Mohammedan gentleman and whose respect for Mahatmaji led him to become a shareholder in the company, wants to verify these facts. Hence the query.

But for some important principles involved in the letter, I would have satisfied myself with a private reply, though the letter is meant for publication. It was necessary to publish it also, because it is highly likely that many shareholders feel like the *vakil's* client. They too should have such satisfaction as I could render to them. I do indeed happen to be the father of Harilal M. Gandhi. He is my eldest boy, is over 36 years old and is father of four children, the eldest being 19 years old. His ideals and mine having been discovered over fifteen years ago to be different, he has been having separately from me and, since 1915 has not been supported by or through me. It has been my invariable rule to regard my boys as my friends and equals as soon as they completed their sixteen years. The tremendous changes that my outer life has undergone from time to time were bound to leave their impress on my immediate surroundings,—especially on my children. Harilal who was witness to all the changes, being old enough to understand them, was naturally influenced by the Western veneer that my life at one time did have. His commercial undertakings were totally independent of me. Could I have influenced him, he would have been found associated with me in my several public activities and earning, at the same time, a decent livelihood. But he chose, as he had every right to do, a different and independent path. He was and is still ambitious. He wants to become rich and that too, easily. Possibly he has a grievance against me that, when it was open to me to do so, I did not equip him and my other children for careers that lead to wealth and fame that wealth brings. He started the Stores in question without any the least assistance of any kind whatsoever from me. I did not lend my name to them. I never recommended his enterprise to



anybody either privately or openly. Those who helped him did so on the merits of the enterprise. No doubt his sonship must have helped him. As long as the world lasts, and in spite of its protest against *varnashrama*, it will give credit to heredity. Being my son, he must be good and straight, cautious in his pecuniary affairs and as reliable as his father. So must many have argued. They have my sympathy, but beyond that nothing more. I must disclaim all responsibility, moral or otherwise, for the doings of even those who are nearest and dearest to me except those wherein they act with me or, I permit them to act in my name or with my certificate. I have enough to be responsible for myself. I alone know my sorrows and my troubles in the course of the eternal duel going on within me and which admits of no truce. I ask the reader to believe me when I say that it taxes all my energy, and if I feel as a rule stronger for the combat, it is only because I remain wide awake. I make the reader a present of the thought that even my swaraj activity has a bearing on that duel. It is for the supreme satisfaction of my soul that I engage in it. "This is selfishness double distilled," said a friend once to me. I quickly agreed with him.

I do not know Harilal's affairs. He meets me occasionally, but I never pry into his affairs. I do not know that he is a Director in his Company. I do not know how his affairs stand at present, except that they are in a bad way. If he is honest, limited or unlimited though his Stores were, he will not rest till he has paid all the creditors in full. That is my view of honest trade. But he may hold different views and seek shelter under the law of insolvency. Sufficient for me to assure the public that nothing crooked will have countenance from me. For me, the law of satyagraha, the law of love, is an eternal principle. I co-operate with all that is good. I desire to non-co-operate with all that is evil,—whether it is associated with my wife, son or myself. I have no desire to shield any of the two. I would like the world to know the whole of the evil in us. And in so far as I can, with decency, I let the world into all the domestic secrets so-called. I never make the slightest attempt to hide them, for I know that concealment can only hurt us.

There is much in Harilal's life that I dislike. He knows that. But I love him in spite of his faults. The bosom of a father will take him in as soon as he seeks entrance. For the present, he has shut the door against himself. He must still wander in the wilderness. The protection of a human father has its decided limitations. That of the Divine Father is ever open to him. Let him

seek it and he will find it.

Let the *vakil* and his client know that my good name is not worth keeping, if it suffers because of the errors of a grown-up boy who has no encouragement from me in them. "The economic welfare of this poor country" will be fairly safe in spite of failures of private firms, if the President for the time being of the Congress and the members of the various organizations remain true to their trust and never mishandle a single pice. I pity the client who, out of respect for me, became a share-holder in a concern whose constitution he evidently never cared to study. Let the client's example be a warning against people being guided by big names in their transactions. Men may be good, not necessarily their children. Men may be good in some respects, not necessarily, therefore, in all. A man who is an authority on one matter is not, therefore, an authority on all matters. *Coveat emptor*.

*Young India*, 18-6-1925

### 17. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU

CALCUTTA,  
*June 18, 1925*<sup>1</sup>

PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU  
HURST LODGE  
DALHOUSIE

AM OFFICIATING FOR YOU. WILL DO NOTHING CON-SCIOUSLY THAT YOU MAY NOT ENDORSE. AM CONSTANTLY BY WIDOW'S SIDE. PRAY TAKE REST AND NO RISK. YOU MUST DESCEND TO PLAINS IN FULL VIGOUR. STAYING CALCUTTA TILL MEMORIAL SERVICE AT LEAST. WIRE PROGRESS HEALTH. IS JAWAHARLAL STAYING THERE.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10644

<sup>1</sup> The body of C. R. Das reached Calcutta on this day.

## 18. TELEGRAM TO K. KELAPPAN NAIR <sup>1</sup>

[CALCUTTA,

On or after *June 18, 1925* ]

WE MAY NOT AGREE ANY HALF SETTLEMENT BUT SATYAGRAHIS MAY POST THEMSELVES WHERE COMMISSIONER DOES NOT OBJECT. YOUR WIRE NOT EXPLICIT. ANYWAY ROADS MUST BE FULLY OPEN.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10691

## 19. LONG LIVE DESHBANDHU !<sup>2</sup>

[*June 19, 1925* ]

Calcutta demonstrated yesterday the hold Deshbandhu had on Bengal, nay, India. Calcutta is, like Bombay, cosmopolitan. It has people from all the provinces. And all these people were as hearty participators in the procession as the Bengalis. The wires that are pouring in from every part of India emphasize the fact of his all-India popularity. It could not well be otherwise among a people known for their gratefulness. And he deserved it all. His sacrifice was great. His generosity had no bounds. His loving hand was opened out to all. He was reckless in his charities. And only the other day, when I gently remarked that he might have been

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the telegram from Kelappan concerning the Vykom Satyagraha received on June 18, 1925, which read : Government tacitly permitting use half roads. No proclamation. Closing remaining roads means perpetuating unapproachability. Solution unacceptable. Abandoning satyagraha means acquiescing in unapproachability. Wire. Kelappan also wrote in detail on the same day; *vide Appendix* "Letter from K. Kelappan Nair", 18-6-1925. Along with the letter, he forwarded to Gandhiji a sketch of the Vykom roads access to which was the subject of satyagraha. Gandhiji wrote again, *vide* "Letter to K. Kelappan Nair", 28-7-1925.

On June 21, W. H. Pitt wired Gandhiji, at Calcutta, thus; "Please telegraph to your Vaikom friends not to cross original boundary without your permission. Situation is complicated by doubts as to action satyagrahis may take. Anything they do cannot possibly advance matters and may retard them. So they had better stand still." In reply to this Gandhiji seems to have sent either a copy of his telegram to Kelappan or some other message which is, however, not available. It was to this that Pitt evidently referred to in his further telegram dated June 22 : "Thanks wire. Satyagrahis have already broken pact and advanced. Police picquets therefore restored. But will be withdrawn again on your enforcing discipline."

At about the same time Gandhiji sent a telegram to Kelappan; it is likely that Gandhiji sought C. Rajagopalachari's view of the matter. On June 20, Gandhiji received a telegram from him reading : "My opinion partial opening not acceptable. Modified satyagraha may continue for prohibited roads."

<sup>2</sup> This was also published in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 20-6-1925.

discriminate, prompt came the reply, "I do not think I have lost by my indiscriminations." His board was free to the prince and the pauper. His heart went out to everyone in distress. Where is the young man in all Bengal who does not owe a debt of gratitude to Deshbandhu in some shape or other? His unrivalled legal talents were also at the disposal of the poor. I understand that he defended many, if not all, political prisoners without charging them a pie. He went to the Punjab inquiry and paid his own expenses. He carried a princely house-hold in those days. I had it from him that he spent during that stay in the Punjab Rs. 50,000. This large-heartedness towards all who sought his help made him the undisputed ruler of thousands of young hearts.

He was as fearless as he was generous. His stormy speeches at Amritsar took my breath away. He wanted immediate deliverance for his country. He would not brook the alteration or removal of an adjective—not because he was unreasonable but because he loved his country so well, only too well. He gave his life for it. He controlled enormous forces. He brought power to his party by his indomitable zeal and perseverance. But this tremendous outpouring of energy cost him his life. It was a willing sacrifice. It was noble.

Faridpur was his crowning triumph. That utterance of his is a demonstration of his supreme reasonableness and statesmanship. It was a deliberate, unequivocal and, for him (as he said to me), final acceptance of non-violence as the only policy and, therefore, political creed for India.

In constructing together with Pandit Motilal Nehru and the disciplined stalwarts from Maharashtra the great and growing Swaraj Party out of nothing, he showed his determination, originality, resourcefulness and contempt of consequences after he had once made up his mind that the thing to be done was right. And today the Swaraj Party is a compact, well-disciplined organization. My differences about the Council-entry were and are fundamental, but I never doubted the usefulness of Council-entry for the purpose of embarrassment and continuously putting the Government in the wrong. No one can deny the greatness of the work done by the Party in the Councils. And the credit for it must predominantly belong to Deshbandhu. I entered into the pact with him with my eyes open. I have since done my little best to help the Party. His death renders it doubly my duty to stand by the party, now that the leader is gone. I shall do nothing to impede its progress where I may not be able to help.

But I must hark back to the Faridpur speech. The nation will

appreciate the courtesy of the acting Viceroy in sending a message of condolence to Shrimati Basanti Devi Das. I note with gratefulness the warm tributes paid by the Anglo-Indian Press, to the memory of the deceased. The Faridpur speech seems to have impressed most Englishmen with its transparent sincerity. I am anxious that this death should not end with a mere display of courtesy. The Faridpur speech had a great purpose behind it. It was a generous response to the Anglo-Indian friends who were anxious for the great patriot to make his position clear and make the first approach. He made it. The cruel hand of death has removed the author of the gesture from our midst. But I would like to assure Englishmen who may be still doubtful about the sincerity of Deshbandhu's motive that, throughout my stay in Darjeeling, the one thing that struck me most forcibly was his utter sincerity about that utterance. Can this glorious death be utilized to heal wounds and forget distrust? I make a simple suggestion. Will the Government, in honour of the memory of Chittaranjan Das, who is no longer with us to plead the cause, release the political prisoners who he protested were innocent? I am not now asking for their discharge on the ground of innocence. The Government may have the best proof of their guilt. I simply ask for their discharge as a tribute to the deceased and without prejudice. If the Government mean to do anything to placate Indian opinion, there can be no more opportune time and no better inauguration of a favourable atmosphere than the release of these prisoners. I have travelled practically all over Bengal.

Public feeling, not all necessarily Swarajist, is sore on the point. May the fire that burnt yesterday the perishable part of Deshbandhu also burn the perishable distrust, suspicion and fear. The Government may then call a conference, if they will, to consider the best means of meeting Indian demand whatever it may be.

But we will have to do our part, if the government are to do their. We must be able to show that we are no one-man show. In the words of Mr. Winston Churchill, uttered at the time of the War, we must be able to say : 'Business as usual.' The Swaraj Party must be immediately reconstructed. Even the Punjab Hindus and Mussalmans appear to have forgotten their quarrels in the face of this "bolt from the blue". Can both parties feel strong and sensible enough to close the ranks? Deshbandhu was a believer in and lover of Hindu-Muslim unity. He held the Hindus and Mussalmans together under circumstances the most trying. Can the funeral fire purge us of our disunion? But perhaps the prelude

to it is a meeting of all the parties on a common platform. Deshbandhu was anxious for it. He could be bitter in speaking of his opponents. But, during my stay in Darjeeling, I don't remember a harsh word having escaped his lips about a single political opponent. He wanted me to help all I could to bring all parties together. It is then for us, educated Indians, to give effect to the vision of Deshbandhu and realize the one ambition of his life by immediately rising a few steps in the ladder of swaraj, even if we may not rise to the top just yet. Then may we all cry from the bottom of our hearts : 'Deshbandhu is dead, Long live Deshbandhu.'

*Young India*, 25-6-1925

## 20. SUGGESTION FOR MEMORIAL SERVICE

CALCUTTA,

*June 19, 1925*

India has honoured herself by holding demonstrations of grief all over the country. But people had hardly time to give adequate expression to the affection they bear towards Deshbandhu. I, therefore, suggest that a memorial meeting be held all over India in every town and every village that has come under Congress influence, where suitable resolutions should be passed. I hope that people belonging to all parties, including Europeans, will be invited to take part in the memorial service.

As I have already remarked elsewhere, Deshbandhu's dying wish was to see all parties united for the common purpose. May this All-India Memorial Service pave the way for such a real union of parties and races.

I have consulted the leaders who are in Calcutta as also the members of Deshbandhu's family as to the date of the service. They recommended first of July as the day to be fixed, as that is the "Shraddha" day, being the 16th day after the tragic event. The solemnity of the service will be heightened if the hour of service is also the same all over the Country. I suggest, therefore, 5 p. m. (standard time) on the 1st July next.

*The Searchlight*, 24-6-1925

## 21. LETTER TO THE PRESS<sup>1</sup>

*June 19, 1925*

It is due to the public for me to tell them that Shrimati Basanti Devi Das has had enormous strain put upon her ever since the death of her great husband. During the two days I have been watching the continuous strain of mourners coming to her. Her unfailing good nature will not permit her to say 'no' to anybody. The result today has been an almost utter collapse. The public should know that she has a very weak constitution and she suffers from a weak heart. It is her wonderful courage that is keeping her up during the crisis that has overtaken her in common with the nation. But even under normal circumstances it would not be possible for even a healthy person to bear the strain of visitors coming in from morning till late at night. After much persuasion she has permitted me to regulate the time for receiving visitors and after consultation with friends including her medical advisers I have suggested with her consent 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. for receiving visitors. May I respectfully urge all those who may wish to see the stricken lady to do so during the hours mentioned. If this request is respected, it will be possible to avert what threatens to be a complete collapse.

May I ask the vernacular Press to translate this note?

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10592

## 22. CHITTARANJAN DAS

*June 20, 1925*

A giant among men has fallen. Bengal is like a widow today. A critic of the Deshbandhu remarked to me some weeks ago, "I find fault with him, it is true, but I must candidly confess to you that we have absolutely no one to replace him." When I related the anecdote at the meeting at Khulna where I first heard the stunning news, Acharya Ray exclaimed, "It is but too true. If I could tell who can take Rabindranath's place as a poet, I could tell you who can take Deshbandhu's as a leader. There is no man in Bengal even anywhere near Deshbandhu." He was a hero of a hundred battles. He was generous to a fault. Though he earned lacs of rupees from his practice, he never permitted himself to be

<sup>1</sup> The message, released to the Press from Calcutta, is in Gandhiji's own handwriting.

rich. And even gave up the mansion he had.

I came to know him personally for the first time in 1919 in connection with the Punjab Congress Inquiry Committee. I approached our meeting with suspicion and awe. I had heard from a distance of his roaring practice and his still more roaring eloquence. He had come with his motor car and with his wife and family and was living like a prince. My first experience was none too happy. We had met to consider the question of leading evidence before the Hunter Inquiry. I found in him all the legal subtleties and a lawyer's keen desire to "floor" witnesses by cross-examination and to expose the many wickednesses of the Martial Law administration. My own purpose was to do something different. I reasoned. The second interview put me at rest and dispelled all my fears. He was all reasonableness and gave a willing ear to all I said. It was my first intimate contact with so many public men in India. We knew one another from a distance. I had taken practically no part in Congress affairs. They merely knew me as a South African warrior. But all my colleagues at once made me feel at home with them, none more so than this illustrious servant of India. I was supposed to be the Chairman of the Committee. "I shall say my say on points wherein we may differ, but I give you my assurance that I shall yield to your judgment." We had come near enough, before this assurance was volunteered, to embolden me to discover my previous suspicions to him. So, when he gave the assurance, I felt proud of a comrade so loyal but at the same time I felt a little humiliated; because I knew that I was a mere novice in Indian politics and hardly entitled to such implicit trust. But discipline knows no rank. A king who knows its value submits to his page in matters where he appoints him as the sole judge. I occupied a place analogous to that of the page. And I record it with grateful pride that, among all the loyal colleagues I had the privilege of being associated with, none was more loyal than Chittaranjan Das.

At the Amritsar Congress, I could no longer claim the rights of discipline. There we were warriors, each holding in trust the welfare of the nation according to his ability. Here there was to be no yielding but to pure reason or party exigencies. It was a perfect treat for me to put up first fight on a Congress platform. All courteous, all equally unyielding; the great Malviyaji trying to hold the balance evenly, now pleading with one and now with the other. The President of the Congress, Pandit Motilalji, thought the game was all over. I had a rare time between Lokamanya and Deshbandhu. They had a common formula for the Reforms



resolution. Each party wanted to convince the other. But there was no conviction. There was a stalemate and a tragedy behind as many thought. The Ali Brothers whom I knew and loved, but did not know as I do now, pleaded with me for Deshbandhu's resolution. "You must not undo," said Mahomed Ali with his persuasive humility, "the great work you have done in the inquiry." But I was unconvinced. Jairamdas<sup>1</sup>, that cool-headed Sindhi, came to the rescue. He passed me a slip containing his suggestion and pleading for a compromise. I hardly knew him. Something in his eyes and face captivated me. I read the suggestion. It was good. I passed it on to Deshbandhu. "Yes, if my party will accept it," was his reply. Mark the loyalty again! He must placate his party,—one secret of his wonderful hold on his people. It passed muster. Lokamanya with his eagle eyes was watching what was transpiring. Pandit Malviyaji's Gangetic stream was pouring from the rostrum—his one eye looking towards the dais, where we manikins were deciding a nation's fate. Lokamanya said, "I don't want to see it, if Das has approved, it is good enough for me." Malviyaji overheard it, snatched the paper from my hands and, amid deafening cheers announced that a compromise had been arrived at. I have given a detailed description of the incident because it epitomizes the reasons of Deshbandhu's greatness and unquestioned leadership, firmness in action, reasonableness in judgment and loyalty to party.

I must pass on. We come to Juhu, Ahmedabad, Delhi and Darjeeling. At Juhu he and Motilalji came to convert me. They had become twins. We had different view points. But they could not brook any difference with me. Could they do so, they would go fifty miles if I wanted them to go only twenty-five. But they would not surrender an inch even to the dearest friend where the country's interest was at stake. We had a kind of compromise. We are unsatisfied, but not in despair. We were out to conquer one another. We met at Ahmedabad. Deshbandhu was in his element, watching every thing as a tactician would. He gave me a splendid defeat.<sup>2</sup> How many such defeats I would not have at the hands of friends like him now, alas, no more in body. Let no one consider that we had become enemies because of the Saha resolution.<sup>3</sup> We believed each other to be in the wrong. But it was a difference

<sup>1</sup> Jairamdas Doulatram (b. 1892); Secretary, Sind Provincial Congress Committee; later became Minister for Food and Agriculture, Government of India; Governor of Bihar and Assam; member, Rajya Sabha, since 1959

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the A.I.C.C. meeting which was held in Ahmedabad from June 27 to 30, 1924; *vide* "Defeated and Humbled", 3-7-1924.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "The Acid Test", 19-6-1924.

between lovers. Let faithful husbands and wives recall scenes of their sacred differences and in their differences giving themselves pain in order to heighten the pleasure of a reunion. Such was our condition. So we must meet again at Delhi, the polished Pandit with his terrible jaws, the docile Das in spite of the exterior which, to a passing on-looker, might appear rough. The skeleton of the pact was made and approved there. It was an indissoluble bond which one party has now sealed with death.

I must postpone Darjeeling for the time being. He used often to claim spirituality and used to say that he had no differences with me in religion. But though he never said it, he probably implied that I was too unpoetic to see the fundamental identity of our belief. I own that he was right. He demonstrated during these precious five days in every act of his that he was deeply religious. That he was not merely great, but he was good and growing in goodness. But I must reserve a description of the precious experiences of those five days for a later day. I felt forlorn when cruel fate snatched away Lokmanya from us. I have not yet got over the shock, for I am yet wooing his dearly beloved disciples. But Deshbandhu's withdrawal leaves me in a worse plight. For, when Lokmanya left us, the country was full of hopes. Hindus and Mussalmans appeared to be united for ever. We were on the eve of battle. Now?

*Young India, 25-6-1925*

### 23. NEED FOR PROTECTION

The history of the world shows that no business has prospered in the past without protection or help. Help is of three kinds; it can come from the State or society or the individual himself. In any new venture started with the intention of making money, the rich man invests his money without any hope of immediate return on his capital. In a trade venture started for the benefit of society as a whole, the latter bears the material. Where the Government is well organized and run for the benefit of the people, it will protect the new industry by subsidizing it.

The propagation of khadi is not for the benefit of any single individual and, therefore, it cannot receive protection from one person; even if it does, beyond a certain point such protection will be ineffective, for propagation of khadi cannot be achieved with money only. If we can get the enthusiastic and unstinted support of the Government in this popular cause, what more could we want? That would be evidence of change of heart on its part and

we would gladly co-operate with it.

Now about the support of society. Without it, we cannot expect the use of khadi to become universal in the immediate future. We have been trying to secure this support in three ways, the aim being to make khadi cheaper and to improve its quality. In the first place, we reduce the cost of khadi by obtaining monetary help from the wealthy. Next, it is being helped through the franchise qualification. One of the aims behind the inclusion of spinning as a qualification for the franchise is that people may donate half an hour's daily labour to spinning and help reduce the cost of khadi and improve its quality. The third way of helping the movement is to increase the number of khadi experts. Efforts to help the cause in all three ways are going on simultaneously. During my tours I could see that there is enough love for khadi among the people, or in other words, they are ready to wear it; but are not prepared to suffer the inconvenience of looking for it, or to spend more on it than they do on foreign cloth. We have thus reached a stage when we can say that, if we can reduce the cost of producing khadi or sell it at cheaper prices, people will use it.

We have not received enough help from the wealthy. Spinning has been included as a qualification for the franchise, but it has not been sincerely welcomed by the people so that the yarn produced in consequence may influence the price. Thus, if society is not prepared to do even this for Mother India, how can we spread the use of khadi as widely as we would like? Besides, as long as voluntary workers who are experts in spinning are not available in large numbers, the quality of yarn and of khadi cannot be improved. All the three aims can be realized with the help of the middle class, that is, by a minority of the people. If they are realized, people will take to khadi very soon. It is, therefore, the middle class which is to blame, whether for a serious lapse or for inadequate effort. If this class—the educated class—understands the importance of khadi it will not be difficult to spread its use; for then we shall be able to lower the price of khadi as much as we wish.

If we have a sufficient number of experts in spinning, we can have, in the same time, double or one and a half times the quantity of yarn we get now and of correspondingly better quality. In their absence, we work on spinning-wheels of indifferent quality and accept yarn of any quality we get. These experts will repair defects in the spinning-wheels and so help in increasing the out put of yarn and removing defects in its quality. As a result, weaving will also cost less. Handspun yarn, being of uneven quality, takes a

longer time to weave and so the weaving charges are higher than for the mill yarn. Unfortunately, in the whole country we have only a limited number of spinning experts. With the scanty preparation with which we started propaganda for spinning, we could have made no progress in any other activity. The progress we have made despite our inadequate preparation is evidence of the power of khadi and its great importance for the country. It is my firm belief that the khadi work is the most important among the activities going on in the country. No other countrywide activity aiming at people's welfare has involved as much circulation of money as khadi during the past four years, or has as many workers engaged in it and earning an honest livelihood through it or working for it honorarily. The number is daily increasing. If such a beneficial activity which requires only a modest effort to yield results receives help in all the three ways we have explained and in the right measure, I am sure that the country would become khadi-minded in no time. Let the wealthy give money, yet all men and women—Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians—give at least half an hour [to spinning] and let khadi-lovers become experts in its science and give the benefit of their knowledge. The country will then become khadiminded, the flow of sixty crore rupees from it to foreign countries will stop and the money will be distributed among the poor, and, lastly, the country will acquire confidence in its own strength.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 21-6-1925

## 24. PURIFYING FLAME

“At sight of the purifying flame in the path of love, people run away in fear.” So sang Pritam<sup>1</sup>. The path of love requires that we should not mind touching the so-called untouchable, that we should honour the despised. This path is strewn with difficulties. That alone is love which endures even when one is abandoned by one's father, turned out of home by the mother, shunned by society and forbidden by the priest to enter the temple.

In a small region like Kathiawar, the movement for the abolition

<sup>1</sup> A Gujarati poet

of untouchability has created a stir in the *Vaishnava* world. The gates of *havelis* are being closed against those who do not honour the practice of untouchability and regard it as wrong. Will it not be hard for them to be prevented from visiting the *haveli*? What should they do? There can be only one reply : they should give up the thought of the *haveli*.

After all, it is we ourselves who install the image in the temple. The image which comes to be associated with an evil practice will do more harm than good to us. The ultimate *haveli* is one's own heart. The *haveli* walls are what crutches are to the lame. They are merely a support. When they cease to be a support and instead become a burden, we should throw them away. The gates of the physical *haveli* can be closed, but the doors of the heart-temple are open for all the twenty-four hours. The all-knowing God dwelling in it protects us all the time. May those who tread the path of love realize the presence of that God installed in that shrine and be blessed.

"But the *haveli* is a public place. Supposing we do not respect the prohibition against us? Is it necessary to respect an unreasonable prohibition?" May not some people reason thus? May it not be a sin to respect this prohibition? We can imagine situations in which it will be a sin to respect a prohibition. I do not think that the prohibition against entering *havelis* is of that category. But those who think that it is, will certainly visit *havelis* and suffer the consequences. There is no one single rule in such matters. The general rule should be that, if a small minority regard the practice of untouchability as sinful, but hundreds of others look upon it as virtuous, then the minority should have patience and respect the prohibition against them. They should try to educate public opinion. They should see the priest and talk with him respectfully. They should plead with the *mahajan* of their community, but, so long as a majority of the *mahajan* has not come round, it would be best for them to respect the prohibition. If public opinion is against the prohibition, one may disregard it after respectfully informing the authorities of one's intention to do so.

I would respectfully submit to the priests that, if they want to become and remain protectors of religion, they should wake up. If, in violation of divine laws, they insist on building walls of superstition and evil, they will not survive long. I believe that, being myself a child, however weak, of the Vallabha sect<sup>1</sup>, I have a right to say this. The

<sup>1</sup> *Vaishnava* cult founded by Vallabhacharya, 15th-16th century

hereditary seat of honour which they occupy is in danger. I do not want them to cherish untouchability and become untouchables themselves. The idea of untouchability as it is practised today has no place either in the *Bhagavata* or in the *Gita* or in the Vedas or in the Upanishads. Why, it is not even honoured in practice. *Vaishnavas* of their own free will touch people who are regarded as untouchables when their business makes it necessary for them to do so. The law does not recognize untouchability. When *Vaishnavas* go to courts and mills, they touch the untouchables and eat, and even go to *havelis*, without first taking a bath. To keep up this idea of untouchability which has ceased to be followed in practice just in order to harass and show our contempt for the men and women who are regarded as untouchables is neither commonsense nor farsightedness, neither spiritual knowledge nor decency. I describe myself as a *Vaishnava* because I believe that Vaishnavism has a place for all these virtues. In my opinion, the *Vaishnava* way of life had its very origin in compassion, in spiritual knowledge and in the desire to purify the fallen. I see this in Bengal. What Vallabhacharya achieved in the western part, Chaitanya<sup>1</sup> did in the eastern. In Bengal Chaitanya lifted up thousands of peoples who were regarded as untouchables. He weakened the hold of the idea over people's minds and today untouchability is practised in Bengal in a very mild form. The idea of being defiled by touch is altogether unknown there. Untouchability as practised in Bengal only means not accepting water from the "untouchables" and denying them the services of washermen and barbers. Even this ignorant notion has lost much of its strength, and there are today many "untouchables" who are doctors and lawyers. Education is spreading among them. In few parts of Bengal do we come across special areas where untouchables live.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 21-6-1925

<sup>1</sup> 1485-1533; a Hindu religious reformer who created a casteless society of *Vaishnavas* in Bengal and Orissa which afforded asylum to low-caste Hindus

## 25. APPEAL FOR DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL FUND

CALCUTTA,

*June 22, 1925*

The public may be aware that the late Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das gave, during his lifetime, his mansion at Russa Road, situated on over 4 bighas of land, in trust for several public objects. We are informed by the trustees that the present value of the property is estimated at Rs. 3,25,000 and that it is burdened with a debt of Rs. 2,20,000. The net value of the donation is therefore about Rs. 1,05,000.

We the undersigned feel sure that Bengal would desire to erect a Memorial worthy of the deceased patriot. Indeed, the unexampled manifestation of grief witnessed in Calcutta on the 18th instant and the public meetings held all over the country to honour the memory of the deceased are positive proof of such a desire. We think that the best way to carry out what appears to us to be the central idea of Deshbandhu in creating the trust referred to by us would be to help in the uplift of the womanhood of Bengal. The founding of a hospital for women irrespective of caste or creed and an institution for the training of nurses is, we believe, a project eminently calculated to promote Deshbandhu's intention.

It is estimated that nothing less than Rs. 10,00,000 would meet the requirements. We believe, too, that 10 lakhs is in no way an extravagant sum for a Memorial to our deceased countryman. We, therefore, appeal to the public of Bengal for the sum. Our desire is to make this a non-party Memorial so that all who know the worth of Deshbandhu, although they might not have shared his politics, might take part in subscribing to the memorial. The present trustees are :

Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy

Sj. Nirmal Chunder Chunder

Sj. Tulsi Ch. Goswami

Kumar Satya Mohan Ghosal

Sj. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar

They have consented, in order to give the trust a non-party character and under the powers reserved to them, to take two more

trustees, namely : Dr. Sir Nilratan Sarkar and S. Satish Ranjan Das.

Sir Rajendra Mukherjee of No. 7, Harington Street, has kindly consented to act as Treasurer.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23-6-1925*

## 26. APPEAL FOR DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL FUND

CALCUTTA,

June 22, 1925

I trust that the appeal signed by Lord Sinha and others for an All-Bengal Deshbandhu Memorial Fund will find an enthusiastic and quick response from the public of Bengal. I hope that ten lakhs would be made up by contributions from all the Bengalis and all those who have made Bengal their domicile and are earning their livelihood or making money in Bengal. Above all, my appeal is to young Bengal which, perhaps, more than any other class, is indebted to Deshbandhu. Whilst ten lakhs may come from ten millionaires, it is desirable that the amount is made up chiefly from the poor who can afford even a few pice. The lakhs of men who made the mourning procession in Calcutta on the 18th instant can and should pay their quota.

It should be remembered that ten lakhs is the minimum required, by no means the maximum. After paying Rs. 2,20,000/- for the debts due on the property, there will be available only Rs. 7,80,000/- —not a large sum—for a hospital and a training school for nurses.

Shall we aim at finishing the collection before the first of July? I know that the time is short, but if all the centres organize at once and all work methodically, it is not beyond Bengal's ability to collect the sum. As a somewhat experienced collector of funds, let me say to the public that they must not pay to any but the collectors whom they know and trust. There is not a moment to spare, if we are to finish the collection in eight days. It is possible only :

1. if all who can, give and induce others to give;
2. if all give now;
3. if all give the utmost they can ;
4. if the mofussil centres take up the work at once.

The public should remember that



1. this is an All-Bengal Memorial without distinction of race, creed, caste or party;
2. that it is intended to perpetuate the memory of one of the greatest of India's sons;
3. that it is to be for a purely humanitarian purpose.

I understand too that a private hospital exclusively for women and an institution for training nurses are wanted in Calcutta.

I need hardly point out that the names of the Trustees are a guarantee of a proper use of the monies that might be given by donors.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24-6-1925

## 27. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

*Ashad Sud 1 [June 22, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I can understand monetary help from the Princes. I hesitate however to entrust all the work to their officials. But I shall be able to come to a definite decision after all of you meet and think about it. We have to think how we can reduce our expenses every year and put the people on their own feet.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : C.W. 6205. Courtesy : Narandas Gandhi

## 28. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Ashad Sud 1 [June 22, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. VASUMATI,

I got both your letters at almost the same time. At present I will have to stay in Calcutta itself for one month. Then I shall start touring. I wish you to be settled both in mind and in your place of residence. As to your being fit for work, it is for me—is it not?—to consider. But

<sup>1</sup> The postmark is "Calcutta June 23, '25". *Ashad Sud 1* fell on June 22.

<sup>2</sup> The postmark is "June 23, '25". In the year 1925 *Ashad Sud 1* fell on June

we shall think of this later. Though I am at present settled in one place, I am very much engrossed in work.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : C.W. 464. Courtesy : Vasumati Pandit

## 29. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*Ashad Sud 1 [June 22, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter covering reports of all the branches. It seems Devchandbhai has put too much reliance on others. Where accounts are not well kept, we shall have cause to regret. I wrote to . . .<sup>2</sup> that he should show the books which he considers private. From the reports of the branches you have sent, prepare a summary that would be instructive and interesting to people and send it for publication. Also mention therein how many in this activity are meeting their own expenses, how many at reduced pay and how many at their market-price and also how much all of them together receive. You will also give the total number of spinning-wheels plying. What had happened to Jamnadas? My regards to Khushalbhai and Devbhabhi.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I shall be here in Calcutta for some time to come.

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 6193. Courtesy : Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> The postmark is "June 23, '25". In the year 1925 *Ashad Sud 1* fell on June

<sup>2</sup> Omission in the source

### 30. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS <sup>1</sup>

CALCUTTA,

June 23, 1925

I have much pleasure in announcing to the public that the following subscriptions have been handed to Sir R. Mookherjee already :

N. N. Sircar	Rs. 10,000/-
S. R. Das	„ 5,000/-
Rai A. N. Bose	„ 1,000/-
C. C. Law	„ 1,000/-
S.	„ 1,000/-
K.	„ 1,000/-
A.	„ 1,000/-
Suprava Devi	„ 100/-
Anonymous	„ 10/-
Maulvi Abdul Hakim	„ 100/-
Total	Rs. 20,210/-

And I have one cheque of Rs. 1,000/- and a gold ring to be delivered to Sir Mookherjee. I know, too, that Sir Rajendra has small amounts directly sent to him.

Thus the beginning has been well made.

To collect ten lakhs before first July means a collection per day of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lakhs. The average can only be kept up by strenuous labour on the part of every worker. I hope, therefore, that no worker will wait for invitation, but collect from friends.

The concrete response should be as spontaneous as the attendance on the 18th. I was called to attend the meeting at the Municipal Market tonight. It was a huge meeting. I had gone merely in the hope of collecting subscriptions for the Memorial. But the meeting was too large and unwieldy for the purpose. Organizers of meetings will render service if they will spare me during the period of collection from having to attend a single meeting where there is no collection possible.

Much is to be expected from the mofussil. Telegrams have been

<sup>1</sup> Received for the All-Bengal Deshbandhu Memorial Fund

sent to prominent men in the various districts. I trust that they will all collect and send to the Treasurer before first July.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 24-6-1925*

### 31. INTERVIEW TO "THE STATESMAN"

[Before June 24, 1925]

In the course of an interview which he granted to a representative of *The Statesman* in Calcutta he said :

I shall remain here as long as I feel that I am required, or as long as the trusted lieutenants of Mr. Das want me. I have placed myself unreservedly at their disposal.

I have already suggested that Memorial services should be held throughout India on July 1. I am hoping that people representing every variety of opinion will attend in every important centre in India and I am likely to remain here at least up to that date.

Asked for his opinion regarding the future, Mr. Gandhi said :

It is very difficult to say as a man of the world what the future will be, but as a man of faith I can say that the virtues which I was privileged to see in the late Mr. Das will be an asset, resulting in nothing but good. How it will work out I do not know.

Referring to a suggestion which he had previously made that the death of Mr. Das should be marked by a union of parties, Mr. Gandhi said :

If the union can be brought about, not mechanical, but real, it would be for that united party to formulate its demand. It is no use myself personally saying what it should be, but I can say this that, whatever I may wish, I shall not stand in the way of what the majority may wish.

"What is your definition of swaraj?" Mr. Gandhi was asked.

My definition of swaraj is the will for the time being of the people of India, as expressed through their representatives. There cannot be any hard and fast definition of swaraj, as you have, for instance, of a straight line in geometry. It has a varying value according to the variation in the temperament of the people dominated by various circumstances. Therefore, the immediate definition of swaraj is "Dominion Home Rule".

Mr. Gandhi was asked whether he would advise the abandonment of obstructive

tactics with particular reference to Bengal.

“If there is an expressed desire for a Ministry when the Bengal Council next meets, would you advise the Council as a whole to oppose it?” Gandhiji replied with a smile :

I would prefer not to answer that question. I would like Bengal not to be despondent, not to lose faith, because that would be betrayal of the great leader who has passed away. I know that he believed often, when there was absolutely no valid reason for belief, and yet his belief was justified by events. No good cause has ever prospered by taking a despondent view.

Bengal has great imagination and it has got great powers of endurance, as I have discovered during my tour. I would ask them to add to this an inexhaustible faith and all will be well.

Incidentally, Mr. Gandhi said that he regarded it as a privilege to be by the side of Mrs. Das at this juncture. She was bearing her grief nobly.

He also paid a tribute to the young men who helped him in the crowd at Mr. Das’s funeral.

I might certainly have been crushed to atoms, were it not for their strong arms. This was particularly the case at the burning-ghat.

*The Searchlight*, 24-6-1925

### 32. INTERVIEW TO “THE SEARCHLIGHT”

[Before *June 24, 1925*]

Mr. Gandhi, when informed of the reported result of the conversations [in England] between Lord Reading and Lord Birkenhead, said :

The statement, if true, would not surprise me, because I did not expect anything better. However, it will create a sensation in India and deeply hurt the feelings, not merely of the Swaraj Party, but of all parties. Personally, I do not understand what the meaning of Indianization having gone far enough means.

*The Searchlight*, 24-6-1925

### 33. TELEGRAM TO S. K. RUDRA

June 24, 1925

SUSHIL KUMAR RUDRA<sup>1</sup>  
SOLAN

MY DEEPEST LOVE AND PRAYER WITH YOU FOR PERFECT PEACE TO YOUR  
SOUL. SO GLAD CHARLIE WITH YOU.

GANDHI

From the original : C.W. 6048. Courtesy : Mrs. S. K. Rudra

### 34. INTERVIEW TO "THE ENGLISHMAN"

CALCUTTA,  
June 24, 1925

Mr. Gandhi in the course of an interview to *The Englishman* said :

There is no split in the Swaraj Party and there will be none.

Much speculation, he added, was rife and rumours afloat as to the future of the Swaraj Party, but these were mere conjectures and had no foundation at all.

Asked whether he was prepared to accept the leadership of the Party, if it was offered to him, Mr. Gandhi replied in the negative. It was absolutely essential, said Mr. Gandhi, that the leader of the Swaraj Party in Bengal must be a Bengali. As regards actual leadership, there was more than one Bengali Swarajist who was qualified for that high honour but, in his opinion, the best fitted, so far as combined ability, experience and knowledge of the Swarajist working went, was Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, the late Mr. C. R. Das's lieutenant.

Regarding the suggested fusion of the Nationalists and the Swarajists, Mr. Gandhi said that it would be in the best interests of the country if the two parties could unite on honourable terms.

Mr. Gandhi stated that he was in the best of health and would stay in Calcutta for a month more.

*The Hindu*, 26-6-1925

<sup>1</sup> Principal, St. Stephen's College, Delhi. He was seriously ill and passed away on June 30.

## 35. NOTES

### NO INJUSTICE MEANT

When you say you have not attracted educated India to your message, are you not doing an injustice to educated Indians? Look at Rajagopalachari, your right-hand man, not to mention the band of selfless educated Indian workers scattered throughout the length and breadth of India whom you rarely even mention in *Young India*! Where would you have been but for them? It is all very well to talk of village work, but you are doing that too by their aid!

This question raises a false issue. One swallow does not make a summer. The handful of selfless educated Indians who are silently serving and spreading the message of the spinning-wheel are, indeed, a credit to themselves and the country. Without them I should be perfectly helpless. But they are no more representatives of educated India than I am. As a class, educated Indians stand aloof, not because they are unwilling, but because they are unconvinced. When I wrote the passage<sup>1</sup>, I had in my mind such men as Messrs Sastri, Jinnah, Chintamani, Sapru and a whole host of our distinguished educated countrymen. The rank and file, though they like me personally, have a horror for my views and methods. Some of them occasionally but earnestly plead with me to mend my ways so as to make it possible for them to work with me. Nor did I write the passage referred to by way of complaint. I have simply stated the fact with the object of my showing limitations and showing, too, that they are as necessary for the national uplift as the tallest among those who represent the spinning-wheel with all its implications. I own again that the leadership of the Congress should be rightly theirs and that I must not force the issue by a mere shuffling of votes. On the contrary, I must patiently wait till I have convinced them of the supreme necessity of the spinning-wheel and khaddar even for the political emancipation of India.

### INSTITUTIONS BEFORE PARENTS

During my Bengal tour, I heard the astounding statement that the inmates of a public institution claimed to prefer the maintenance of their institution to that of their parents. This was said to command my approval. If anything I have written in these pages has given any such impression, I apologize to the readers. I am

<sup>1</sup> The reference presumably is to the article "Are We Ready?", 18-6-1925.

not conscious of any such guilt. I owe all I am to my parents. I felt towards them as Shrivana is said to have done towards his parents. So, when I heard the statement, it was with greatest difficulty that I could curb the anger that was rising in me. The young man who took up the position was hardly serious about it. But nowadays it has become the fashion with some young men to adopt the superior attitude and pose as paragons of perfection. In my opinion, the maintenance of one's aged and infirm parents is a first charge upon grown-up sons. They may not marry if they are not in a position to support their parents. They may not take up public work till this primary condition is fulfilled. They must starve so that their parents may be fed and clothed. What, however, young men are not expected to do is to comply with the demand of thoughtless or ignorant parents. Parents have been known to demand money for things not required for sustenance, but for false show or for uncalled-for marriage expenses of daughters. In my opinion, it is the duty of public workers respectfully to refuse to meet such demands. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember having met a single deserving case of starvation of a public worker. I have found some living in want. I have found a few who should get more than they are able to give themselves. But, as their work prospers and their worth is known, they will not suffer from want. Difficulties and trials make a man. They are a sign of healthy growth. If every young man found himself in plenty and never knew what it was to go without anything necessary, he may be found wanting when the trial comes. Sacrifice is joy.

It is, therefore, not right to parade one's sacrifice before the public. I was told by several workers that they did not mind any sacrifice. On cross-questioning, I was told that the sacrifice consisted in living by begging, in other words, on donations. I told them that there was no sacrifice in living on donations. Many public workers did so, but they did not on that account claim to have sacrificed anything. Many young men have sacrificed lucrative careers. That is certainly to their credit. But even there I should respectfully suggest that praising can well be overdone. No sacrifice is worth the name unless it is a joy. Sacrifice and a long face go ill together. Sacrifice is "making sacred". He must be a poor specimen of humanity who is in need of sympathy for his sacrifice. Buddha renounced everything because he could not help it. To have anything was a torture to him. The Lokamanya remained poor because it was



painful for him to possess riches. Andrews regards the possession of even a few rupees a burden, and continually contrives to lose them if he gets any. I have often told him that he is in need of a care-taker. He listens, he laughs and repeats the same performance without the slightest contrition. *Madar-i-Hind* is a terrible goddess. She will exact the willing, aye, even unwilling sacrifice of many a young man and young woman before she deigns to say, 'Well done, my children, you are now free.' We are as yet playing at sacrifice. The reality has still to come.

#### SPINNING IN AFFILIATED SCHOOLS

During this Bengal tour of mine, I am coming upon many revelations—many pleasant, some unpleasant. There is a village called Upashi, not far from Madaripur. A High School is being conducted in this village. It is affiliated, but takes no aid from the Government. Spinning for one hour has been compulsory for all the boys since the revival of spinning. Weaving was introduced as an optional subject on the arrest in 1921 of Maulana Mahomed Ali. Weaving has been still recently confined to half-khaddar. It was only a few months ago that full-khaddar weaving was introduced. Now the management has undertaken to do away with half-khaddar and confine their attention only to pure khaddar. It was a perfect pleasure to watch about a hundred boys spinning all at the same time. Upon inquiry, I found that the attendance had not suffered by reason of compulsory spinning. The head master told me that he could not have continued it if the parents had disapproved of it or the boys resented it.

The head master put the visitors' book before me for my remarks. On turning over the pages, I read a long report from the Inspector of Schools. Whilst he had no prejudice against spinning, his experience of the experiment, wherever made, went to show that they were a failure as at this school. The Inspector thought that the experiment to be called a success should be self-supporting. I do not know why a spinning class should be self-supporting any more than a geometry class. The success of the latter would be measured by the progress made by the boys in geometry. The success of a spinning class should be measured by the proficiency of the boys in spinning. And that the boys of the High School could show any day. But I am quite prepared to accept the Inspector's challenge and show that, whilst the literary classes cannot be made self-supporting except in certain cases, a spinning class can always be made self-supporting. In

the first instance, a separate spinning master is not a necessity. By small inducements the existing staff can be induced to acquire sufficient knowledge in spinning and they can teach their respective classes. It is even enough to train willing school boys themselves to learn the science so as to be able to teach. The extras to be paid will be easily covered after the first month's tuition. Boys will earn on an average no less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  pice per hour. They should really earn one pice each. A class of thirty-two boys will earn four annas per day. That means Rs.  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per month. The increase given to the teacher will be no more than Rs.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per month, thus leaving a margin of Rs. 5 per month as saving. This presupposes that yarn spun by the boys will sell. There is no difficulty about selling well-spun yarn. And the boys spinning under supervision must turn out good yarn. Indeed, so far as this particular institution is concerned, Khadi Pratishthan has offered to advance enough cotton and take over yarn at a stated price. The fact is that enough interest is not taken by the teachers in this national art. Hence the apparent failure judged by the Inspector's standard.

#### A VILLAGE EXPERIMENT

Thus writes Sjt. Rajagopalachari about the work that is being done at Pudupalayam, a village in the District of Salem :<sup>1</sup>

The reader will note that the actual work began only in August last. The progress reported for so short a time as nine months is most encouraging. The reader will note, too, that though one village has been made the centre, twenty villages are actually being served. It is no small matter to know that ten *Panchama* boys have already received training at this Ashram. And let it be remembered that this is not the only activity of its kind in India. I have already noted several such attempts in Bengal. I have omitted from the letter all reference to finance and audited balance-sheets which are certified by two Chartered Accountants. From these I observe that the khaddar department is not run at a loss.

#### ‘ON THE VERGE OF IT’

I have read your closely written fifteen sheets of note paper. In reply I can only advise you to read my answers in this connection

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here

again and again. You will then find that everyone of the points raised by you is covered by my previous answers. If they do not convince I must wait and pray. Nothing that I write further is likely to carry conviction to you. I have observed that there comes a time in our lives when argument makes no appeal to us; we are ready with a counter-argument. I find it even with friends who agree with me on most points. But there are others on which we agree to differ. I must do likewise with you. But I appreciate and honour your striving. You must find me out somewhere in my wanderings. I shall gladly discuss the whole of your philosophy with you. Sometimes a conversation answers when the cold print fails. One thing, however, I may say here. Why do you think that we cannot spin and wear khaddar or remove untouchability or be friends with the Mussalmans till we get swaraj? How will the withdrawal of Englishmen help Hindus to trust the Mussalmans or *vice versa* or open the eyes of blind orthodoxy and better the lot of the oppressed people or induce the idle to work the spinning-wheel and those whose tastes are degraded to revise them and revert to khaddar? Surely if we cannot do these things now under the pressure of adversity, we are not likely to do them when we are lulled into a sense of false security by nominal swaraj? What is there to prevent us now from attempting or accomplishing all or any of these three things if it is not our own unwillingness, lethargy or worse? I invite you and your friends to give your undoubted ability and energy to this constructive programme and you will see swaraj coming nearer every day. Whether you see it or not, I tell you that it is coming nearer exactly in the same proportion as we are accomplishing the three objects above named. The Bastille of untouchability is becoming more and more undermined daily. The pleasing hum of the spinning-wheel is growing more and more audible, and, though seemingly Hindus and Mussalmans are preparing for a pitched battle, they are realizing that it is a useless enterprise. But the battle may be inevitable. If it comes, it will be the dawn of peace.

#### HUMBLED PRIDE

The General Secretary to the Congress writes :

I am sorry that I made a mistake in the membership chart sent to you on the 16th. The last month's total for Burma should be 75 instead of 70. But the Burma P.C.C. in furnishing this later figure 75 has given no details under classes A and B.

It will be noticed from the chart under reference that only 6 out of 20

provinces furnished information during the current month. Kerala never sent any at all. For the remaining 13 provinces last month's figures only are available. Adding the last month's totals for these 13 and the current month's figures for the 6 provinces the grand total of membership comes to 15,355.

I reproduce this letter not merely for the sake of the correction, but for confessing my failure to command discipline even in such a simple matter as the getting of monthly returns. I used to talk at Belgaum<sup>1</sup> of being exacting in enforcing discipline. I see that I have failed to secure the co-operation of the provincial committees. The Congress constitution provides no sanction against recalcitrant committees. Even if it did, I should be loath to enforce it. But though my pride is humbled, I must still plead and hope. Will the committees please wake up to a sense of their duty and respond to the request of the General Secretary for returns?

*Young India*, 25-6-1925

### 36. PLEA FOR HUMILITY

In my talks with public workers in Bengal, I came across a young man who among his claims for public recognition, mentioned his and his fellow-workers' *brahmacharya* or celibacy. The manner of presenting the claim and the self-assurance with which the young man spoke repelled me and I felt that he was talking about things he little knew. His fellow-workers repudiated the claim. And the young man himself, when I cross-questioned him, admitted that the claim could not be sustained. A man who consciously sins with his mind, even though he may not sin with his body is not a celibate. One who cannot remain unmoved at the sight of a woman, however beautiful she may be, is not a celibate. One who keeps his body under control from sheer necessity, does well but is not a celibate. We may not degrade sacred words by a loose use of them. True celibacy has important results which can be verified. It is a difficult virtue to practise. Many attempt it but few succeed. Those who walk about the country in the garb of sannyasins are often no more celibates than the ordinary man in the street. Only the latter is often a better man as he makes no pretension to virtue. He is satisfied that his Maker knows

<sup>1</sup> At the annual session of the Indian National Congress, in December 1924; *vide* "Speech at Subjects Committee Meeting, Belgaum", 25-12-1924.

his trials, temptations and his century of triumphs in resisting temptations as also his few falls in spite of heroic attempts. He is satisfied to be judged by the world for his falls. His successes he treasures secretly like a miser. He is too humble to make them known. Such a man has hope of redemption. Not so the self-satisfied sannyasin who does not even know the A B C of restraint. There is danger of public workers who do not wear the garb of sannyasins, but who prate about sacrifice and celibacy, making both cheap and discrediting themselves and their mission of service.

When I drew up the rules for the guidance of the Ashram at Sabarmati, I circulated copies among friends for advice and criticism. One was sent to the late Sir Gurudas Banerjee. In acknowledging his copy he advised me to add humility to the vows mentioned in the rules. In his letter he said that young workers lacked humility. I told the late Sir Gurudas that whilst I valued his advice and fully recognized the necessity of humility, the mention of it as a vow would derogate from its dignity. It must be taken for granted that those who cultivate truth, ahimsa, *brahmacharya*, must be humble. Truth without humility would be an arrogant caricature. He who wants to practise truth knows how hard it is. The world may applaud his so-called triumphs. Little does the world know his falls. A truthful man is a chastened being. He has need to be humble. A man who wants to love the whole world including one who calls himself his enemy knows how impossible it is to do so in his own strength. He must be as mere dust before he can understand the elements of ahimsa. He is nothing if he does not daily grow in humility as he grows in love. A man who would have his eye single, who would regard every woman as his blood sister or mother, has to be less than dust. He stands on the brink of a precipice. The slightest turn of the head brings him down. He dare not whisper his virtue to his very own. For he knows not what the next moment has in store for him. For him “pride goeth before destruction and haughtiness before a fall.” Well has the *Gita* said, “Passions subside in a fasting man, not the desire for them. The desire goes only when man sees God face to face.” And no one can see God face to face who has aught of the I in him. He must become a cypher if he would see God. Who shall dare say in this storm-tossed universe, ‘I have won’? God triumphs in us, never we.

Let us not lower the values of these virtues so that we may all be able to claim them. What is true of the physical world is true of the spiritual. If in order to gain a worldly battle, Europe sacrificed several

million lives during the late War, itself a transitory event, what wonder that, in the spiritual battle, millions have to perish in the attempt so that one complete example may be left to the world. It is ours merely to make the attempt in the uttermost humility.

The cultivation of these higher virtues is its own reward. He who cashes anyone of them loses his soul. Virtues are not to trade with. My truth, my ahimsa, my *brahmacharya* are matters between myself and my Maker. They are not articles of trade. Any young man who dares to trade with them will do so at his peril. The world has no standard, no means, wherewith to judge these things. They defy scrutiny and analysis. Let us workers, therefore, cultivate them for our own purification. Let the world be asked to judge us only by our work. An institution or an Ashram that claims public support must have a material object, e.g., a hospital, a school, spinning and khaddar propaganda. The public have the right to know the worth of these activities and if they approve of them, they may support them. The conditions are obvious. There must be honesty and ability about the managers. An honest man who knows nothing of pedagogy has no claim to public support as a teacher. These public institutions must keep proper and audited accounts which should be subject to inspection by the public. These are the tests which conductors have to satisfy. Their private character must not obtrude itself upon public attention for admiration and patronage.

*Young India*, 25-6-1925

### 37. *FALLEN SISTERS*

At Madaripur the reception committee had arranged a spinning demonstration by the fallen sisters. I felt pleased at the sight, but I drew the attention of the organizers to the dangers attendant upon handling the question. But, at Barisal, where the movement for their reclamation first took definite shape, instead of its having taken a healthy course, the appearance of it was decidedly ugly. These unfortunate sisters have been organized there. A misleading name has been given to the organization. Its 'present aims and objects' are stated as follows :

1. To help the poor and nurse the sick brothers and sisters.
2. (a) To spread education amongst themselves;

(b) to promote spinning, weaving, tailoring, needle-works and other handicrafts, by establishing a *Nari Silpasram*;

(c) to give higher musical training.

3. To join with all other institutions, which have satyagraha and non-violence at their creed.

To say the least, this is putting the cart before the horse. These sisters are advised to do humanitarian work before re-forming themselves. The idea of giving higher musical training will be accounted as extremely funny if it was not tragic in its consequence. For let it be understood these women do know how to dance and sing. And they may join all organizations which have satyagraha and non-violence as their creed all the time they are, by their trade, doing violence to truth and non-violence!

The document before me says further that they have been enrolled as Congress members and have also been allowed to “do other national work befitting their humble position”. They have been even elected as delegates. I have seen what I regard as an obscene manifesto written in their name.

Whatever be the motives, I cannot but regard the whole of this development as disgraceful. I appreciate spinning, but it must not be used as a passport to vice. I like everybody to subscribe to satyagraha, but I would prevent by all the power at my command an unrepentant professional murderer from signing the creed. My whole heart is with these sisters. But I am unable to identify myself with the methods adopted at Barisal. These sisters have acquired a status which, for the sake of the moral well-being of society, they must not have. We will not incorporate an association of known thieves for the purpose for which these women have formed their association. There is less warrant for this association, for these are more dangerous than thieves. The latter steal material possessions, the former steal virtue. Whilst man is primarily responsible for the existence of these unfortunate members of society, it must not be forgotten that they have acquired tremendously dangerous powers for mischief. I was told in Barisal that the corporate activity of these women had made them unhealthily forward and that they were already producing a corrupt influence upon the Barisal youths. I wish that the association could be disbanded. I am firmly of opinion that, so long as they continue the life of shame, it is wrong to accept donations or services from them or to elect them as delegates or to encourage them to become members

of the Congress. There is no legal bar against their entry into the Congress, but I had hoped that public opinion would keep them off the Congress and that they themselves would have the modesty to refrain from seeking Congress membership.

I wish that my words could reach them. I would urge them to withdraw their names from the Congress, forget that they had an association, but quickly and resolutely give up their immoral trade. Then and not till then, they may take up spinning as discipline, and weaving or any other remunerative and clean occupation for a living.

*Young India*, 25-6-1925

### 38. *THREE QUESTIONS*

A gentleman sent me the following three questions for answer at Barisal :

1. Are our fallen sisters entitled to be returned as delegates to the district and provincial conferences or the like representative bodies? If not, how could such delegates be sent from Barisal to the conferences at Perojpur and Jessore?

Under the present constitution of the Congress, even a moral leper *is entitled* to be returned as a delegate, if he can find electors to elect him. But I should not think much of electors who would elect 'fallen sisters' knowing them to be such and whilst they are carrying on their sinful trade. I know nothing of the conferences mentioned.

2. If any individual person or an organized body misappropriates Congress funds or refuses to make over the papers and account-books along with the funds and other properties of the District Congress Committee to the newly elected executive committee duly approved by the B.P.C.C., what steps should be taken to realize the funds and get back the Congress properties?

Although I am still a confirmed non-co-operator, I should have no hesitation, if my entreaty failed, in taking legal proceedings, civil or criminal, against the wrongdoer even though he may be my own father or son. The Congress constitution and resolutions are not designed to defeat the Congress end.

3. How do you account for the fact that Indians and Europeans not excluding high Government officials, that were and still are opposed to the noble cause you espouse and did not join the functions you attended (except to hinder them) during your last Bengal tour, are so very enthusiastic this time over your reception? Is there any reason to believe that these people have since been imbued with the noble spirit of non-violent non-co-operation or does it prove that your power as the greatest



political leader of India is on the wane, if not altogether extinct?

I am not aware of the hindrances the Government offered during my last Bengal tour, but the correspondent is entitled to draw the inference if, during the present tour, the authorities are enthusiastic about my receptions now, that “my power as the greatest political leader of India is on the wane, if it is not altogether extinct.” But I hope the correspondent will not make the mistake that the authorities, according to him, seem to be making. For the power of a civil resister is like that of the fabled bird that has the capacity of rising from its own ashes.

*Young India*, 25-6-1925

### 39. DUTY OF SATYAGRAHIS

CALCUTTA,

*June 25, 1925*

We have been asked what is the duty of satyagrahis in view of the recent judgment of the District Court of Hooghly, appointing a Receiver for all the properties including the Temple at Tarakeshwar and purporting to belong to the Mohunt.

In our opinion, it is impossible for satyagrahis to resist the possession by the Receiver when he comes to take it, nor is there any meaning in resisting his possession. The satyagraha was offered against the Mohunt or rather his methods. He is not in possession and the Court's order does not put him in possession. On the contrary, the judgment makes it clear that the Mohunt could not succeed, though he tried in gaining whole or partial possession.

The object of satyagraha was to get rid of abuses in connection with the temple and to secure public entry to the Lakshmi Narain Temple. There is no question under the Court's order of any reversion to the old abuses or prohibition to temple entry. It is a matter of no moment to satyagrahis who has possession so long as the Temple management is pure and it is not the Mohunt who has the management.

The satyagrahis' duty will, therefore, be to hand [over], on demand, the possession to the Receiver. It will be time to reconsider the position when and if abuses creep in. It does not matter who become trustees of the Temple so long as there is a public trust

properly managed. If the plaintiffs collude with the Mohunt, it will be again a matter for consideration as to what the satyagrahis should do.

The foregoing was finally approved by Deshbandhu on 8th June at Darjeeling and it was to be published over our joint signatures, if it was considered necessary. I understand that the publication of the statement is necessary. I have therefore no hesitation in permitting its publication as our joint statement. I have seen nothing since to alter my opinion.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 9-7-1925*

#### 40. LETTER TO MAHARAJA OF BURDWAN

*June 26, 1925*

I could not be a true friend, as I regard myself, of Rajas and Maharajas, if I did not tell you that I was hurt by your letter conveying your decision about your subscription to the Memorial Fund. It betrays, may I say, a weak faith in your own countrymen and an incorrect attitude. You have graciously permitted your name to appear as one of the signatories to the appeal. If it signifies anything, it ought to mean a fixed determination on your part to make the collection a success. But the conditions you impose are calculated to defeat the collection. If you, a Maharaja and signatory, have the right to make payment conditional upon the collection reaching a certain total, how much more the humbler signatories? And if they all impose such conditions, how can the collections proceed at all? In all the many subscriptions I have had the privilege of collecting, I have known the signatories to be sureties for the success of funds for which they made themselves sponsors. Will you not revise the wholly incorrect position you have taken up, let me hope, quite unconsciously.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

#### *41. LETTER TO SHUAIB QURESHI*

*June 26, 1925*

All you say about Hindu-Mussalman quarrels is too true! I am following the course adopted by the Prophet's companions in Osman's time. They withdrew to the caves when Islam was split up into rival factions. We may figuratively retire into ourselves whilst the two may be fighting like cats and dogs.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

#### *42. SPEECH AT CONDOLENCE MEETING, CALCUTTA<sup>1</sup>*

*June 26, 1925*

Mahatma Gandhi then said that the Gujarati community simply did their duty in framing the resolution and nothing more. The 18th day of June was a day when it was an occasion to show mourning at the death of Deshbandhu and he believed most of them present in the meeting had attended the funeral procession of Deshbandhu. He said he had already appealed for raising of a fund of at least ten lacs of rupees to commemorate the memory of Deshbandhu on the lines laid down by him in the document which might be called the will of Deshbandhu. He was at present absorbed in the task and when Seth Anandji Hari Das and other friends approached him requesting him to preside over this function, he had distinctly given them to understand that he expected a response from the Gujarati community to his appeal in a befitting manner. He enquired if they had made any collection to contribute their quota, but was disappointed to see that no such previous arrangement was made. He was a practical man and he did not like to waste a single minute he had at his disposal to raise the fund, and he hoped in the meeting he had come to receive the quota of the Gujarati community to Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. In conclusion he said that it was always his habit to speak frankly and even harshly to his Gujarati brethren, but he was glad his words always met with a kind response from Gujaratis. It was his habit to create rivalry not in bad things but in good things between the different provinces. He was not sure which province would be the first to unfurl the standard of swaraj when swaraj was established. But he felt sure that that province which would perform its duty in its real sense towards the whole country would have the good fortune. It

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held at Alfred Theatre in the evening, to mourn the death of C. R. Das. Gandhiji presided and spoke after a condolence resolution had been adopted unanimously.

was Gujaratis who had responded splendidly when he had made an appeal for Tilak Swaraj Fund of one crore of rupees and he was glad his appeal this evening to the Gujaratis of Calcutta would not go in vain. He knew the very great depression in trade at present; he, however, had to ask for at least ten lacs of rupees from the Gujarati community and he hoped that the deficit would be made up within the next three or four days left for collection.<sup>1</sup>

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 27-6-1925*

### **43. APPEAL REGARDING DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL SERVICE**

I hope that the public will bear in mind the 1st of July. Those who are organizing the Deshbandhu Memorial Service in Calcutta have come to the conclusion that it is necessary to have three meetings—one, a mass meeting in the Maidan, north of Victoria Memorial, another exclusively for ladies at Mirzapur Park, and the third at the Town Hall, where admission would be by tickets. As the functions all over India on the 1st of July are designed to be of a non-party character and as many who did not share Deshbandhu's political opinion have signified their intention of being present at the Memorial Service and of showing their respect for his memory, it has been thought advisable, apart from the mass meeting, to hold the meeting at the Town Hall, which can be attended by people belonging to different parties and where suitable speeches can be made. The difficulty that faces the organizers is to choose names for sending tickets of admission to the Town Hall. There is, I understand, accommodation in the Town Hall only for 1,200 people. A certain number of seats will necessarily have to be reserved. For the balance, applications should be made to S. N. C. Sen at 98, Beltola Road, Bhawanipore. They will be received up to Sunday next. And if the number exceeds the accommodation available, lots will be drawn for deciding upon the names of those who should receive admission cards. I know the prejudice that exists against regulating attendance at such public meetings. But I hope that the public will realize the difficulty of the organizers who are anxious to have a representative gathering at the Town Hall. It will not be possible to have many or any speeches at the mass meeting. And yet, it will be a pity if those

<sup>1</sup> After the speech was over, a collection for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund was made. The cash and promises to pay amounted to some Rs. 7,000.

who wish to express their sentiments are not provided with a platform. This can be had at the Town Hall.

I hope, therefore, that the public will heartily co-operate with the organizers in making the Town Hall function a success. Maharajadhiraj of Burdwan has kindly consented to preside at the Town Hall meeting.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 27-6-1925*

#### 44. FIRST OF JULY

I have suggested that a public meeting should be held in every town and village in memory of Deshbandhu on the occasion of his *shraddha*<sup>1</sup>. On that day people religiously inclined may fast the whole day, or eat only one meal. All the usual ceremonies are being performed in Deshbandhu's family. He loved *kirtans*<sup>2</sup> and, therefore, these are being conducted every night. Those who would like to bathe may do that as well. The important thing, however, is that a meeting should be held exactly at five (standard time, i.e., Madras time) and resolutions should be passed. It would be a good thing to hold a meeting in every place in Gujarat where the message of the Congress can reach. It will be enough to send copies of those resolutions by post to *Ganga-swarup*<sup>3</sup> Basanti Devi. If, in addition, a telegram is despatched from the Provincial Congress Committee giving the names of the towns, she will know where and in how many places meetings were held. The meetings should of course pass condolence resolutions extolling Deshbandhu's virtues. But they can do more than that. We revere Deshbandhu for his services to the cause of swaraj. Deshbandhu's soul will rest in perfect peace if we secure swaraj today. That, however, is beyond our capacity, though it is not beyond our capacity to bring it nearer.

What can all people, the prince and the pauper, capitalists and workers, the old and the young, men and woman, Hindus and Muslims, do to bring swaraj nearer? Is there anything which everyone can do? There is certainly one such thing, and that is khadi. Everyone can resolve to wear pure khadi and can take a pledge to spin for half

<sup>1</sup> The thirteenth and concluding day of the ceremonies which follow the death of a person

<sup>2</sup> Devotional songs sung in chorus

<sup>3</sup> The term prefixed to the name of a widow, among Hindus; literally, in a state like that of the holy Ganga

an hour daily by way of *yajna*<sup>1</sup> for the service of country. This is not at all difficult for anyone to do. Having taken such a pledge, everyone should daily remind himself of Deshbandhu's services. If hundreds of thousands of people take this pledge, is there anything we cannot achieve? We can bring about complete boycott of foreign cloth and acquire self-confidence. Deshbandhu wanted us to have that. We should become self-reliant, for Deshbandhu wanted us to be so. He wanted all of us, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, etc., to unite, and this also we can bring about through the spinning-wheel. I, therefore, wish that everyone should take a pledge to wear khadi and to spin.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 28-6-1925

#### 45. SOME MEMORIES

What else could I think of for this issue?

The rock-like Deshbandhu having fallen, the newspapers are full of him. They are even ready to give the smallest details about him. *Servant* has brought out a special issue. *Vasumate*, Bengal's newspaper with the largest circulation, is also preparing to bring out a special issue. Smt. Basanti Devi has received more than a thousand telegrams, and more are pouring in from distant countries. Meetings are being held everywhere. There was hardly any village under Congress influence which did not hold a meeting.

On the 18th, Calcutta was swept by a wave of emotion. Statisticians estimate that not less than two lakhs must have assembled. Men and woman stood on the roads, climbed the electric poles and perched on roofs of trams, not to mention the men and women waiting on balconies to catch a glimpse [of the procession].

There were *bhajans* and *kirtans*, it goes without saying. People rained flowers. Deshbandhu's body had been kept open to view, but it lay buried under a mountain of flowers.

At the head of the procession were volunteers, carrying a *fulwari*<sup>2</sup>, in which was kept a spinning-wheel decorated with flowers. The procession started from the station at 7.30 [a.m.] and reached the burning-ground at 3 [p.m.]. The cremation began at 3.30.

There were swarming crowds on the burning-ground. It was

<sup>1</sup> Sacrifice

<sup>2</sup> Floral frame

very difficult to check the crowds pressing from behind. I think that, had not some strong persons lifted me up on their shoulders and placed me in front of the crowd pressing forward, something terrible might have happened. Two or three strong men held me up by turns on their shoulders and from that position I struggled to check the surging crowd and went on entreating them to sit down. They would comply as long as they could see me, but they took me from spot to spot where there was fear of disturbance and, as soon as my back was turned, the crowd would stand up. The people had lost their senses. Thousands of eyes were fixed on the bier. As the pyre was lit, the people lost all self-control. Involuntarily, the whole crowd stood up and pressed towards the pyre. It was feared that, in a moment, people would be falling on the pyre. What was to be done? I told the people : “Now it is all over, please go back to your homes.” I then told the man who was carrying me to take me out of the crowd. I kept on telling the people, suggesting by signs and shouting at them loudly that they should follow me. This succeeded very well with the crowd of thousands and we were saved from a grave danger. The pyre was made up entirely of sandalwood.

It looked as if people had come for a picnic. There was seriousness on their faces, but they did not seem to be distressed. The grief of relatives and of persons like me seemed selfish. My philosophy was found wanting, but the people’s had remained unaffected because they were unattached. They were filled with the highest respect [for Deshbandhu], but their devotion had no element of selfishness in it. They had come there to testify to the greatness of a son of the country, of their brother. They seemed to say with their eyes and their movements, “Well done! May there be a thousand others like you.”

Deshbandhu was as kind as he was noble. I realized this fully in Darjeeling<sup>1</sup>. He talked about religion, about the things which had impressed him most. He was very keen on having direct spiritual experience. “Whatever may be true about other countries, in this country only the path of non-violence can save us. I will show the young men of Bengal that we can win swaraj by non-violent means.” “If we are good, we can make the British Good.” “In this atmosphere of darkness and hypocrisy, I can see no way except that of truth. Nor do we need any other.” “I wish to bring together all the

<sup>1</sup> Where Gandhiji stayed with C. R. Das from June 3 to June 6, 1925

parties. The only obstacle is the timidity of our people. In trying to bring them together, we run the risk of becoming timid ourselves.” “You should try to bring all of them together, meet—<sup>1</sup>, see the editor of—<sup>2</sup> and ask him what he gains by abusing the Swaraj Party in your presence. He may point out to me any error or wrong I may have been guilty of. If I do not satisfy him, then he may abuse me to his heart’s content.” “I am daily growing more convinced about your spinning-wheel. If my shoulder did not ache and if I were not such a bad pupil in spinning, I would have learnt it sooner. Once I have learnt it, I would not find it boring to do it every day. But I am bored when I try to learn it. See how the thread snaps again and again.” “But how can you say that? Is there anything you will not do for swaraj?” “That is true of course. It is not that I refuse to learn. Only, I point out to you my difficulties. Ask Basanti Devi how bad I am at such things.” Basanti Devi agreed : “That is true. If he wants to open his box, I have to come to turn the key”. I said : “That is your cleverness. In this way you have made him helpless, so that he will have always to flatter you and be dependent on you.” The room was filled with laughter. Deshbandhu intervened : “You may examine me after a month. I shall not be drawing ropes then.” “All right”, I said, “Satish Babu will even send a teacher for you. If you pass [the test], take it that swaraj is at hand.” There are so many pleasant incidents like this that, if I tried to describe all of them, I should never end.

There are some memories which I simply cannot narrate.

I would be ungrateful if I did not try to give some description of the love I had been receiving at [Darjeeling]. He took personal interest in the smallest matters. He would himself order dry fruits from Calcutta. As it would be difficult to secure goats or goats’ milk in Darjeeling, he had got five from the plains and kept them where he was staying. He would not let me manage without any of the things to which I was used. There was only a wall between our two rooms. Every morning, he would wait for me as soon as he was free. He would be in bed, for he could not leave it. He knew my manner of sitting cross-legged, and so would not let me sit on the chair, but would make me sit on his bed facing him. He would get some more mattresses spread and also have cushions placed for me. I could not

<sup>1</sup> Names omitted in the source

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*



help joking : “This scene reminds me of a day forty years’ ago when I got married, the bride and I sat like this on a plank. All that remains is holding each other’s hands.” I had hardly finished this when the whole house rang with Deshbandhu’s laughter. Whenever he laughed, the sound of his laughter could be heard from a great distance.

Deshbandhu was daily becoming gentler. Custom did not forbid him meat or fish. But when the non-co-operation movement started he gave up meat eating, drinking and smoking, all three. Later these things came back, but his inclination was always for giving them up. Recently, again, he had come into contact with a sadhu of the Radhaswami sect and after that his eagerness to adopt vegetarian food had increased. When, therefore, I visited him at Darjeeling, he again started the experiment of vegetarian diet, and while I was there, he did not allow meat and fish in the house. He told me several times : “If I can manage, I will never eat meat or fish now. I do not like eating them, and I realize that they obstruct our spiritual growth. My guru was very particular about this matter and told me that, in the interest of the spiritual effort I have undertaken, I must give up meat-eating.”

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 28-6-1925

#### 46. EXPERIMENT IN KATHIAWAR

Writing about the experiment which is being conducted in Kathiawar, the Secretary of the Conference says :<sup>1</sup>

From my experience in Bengal, I see that if we had there the means of making the experiment which is being made in Kathiawar, people would flock to buy slivers on these conditions. No, I forget. There is no need at all to supply slivers in Bengal, for there are many people who spin, card cotton and make slivers themselves. We should only have to give them cotton at half price and weaving charges would have to be at half the usual rate. Many of them are ready to produce yarn if they are supplied cotton pods, since they know ginning and actually do it. In Kathiawar, the entire stock of slivers has been sold off. Let us wait for the results.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 28-6-1925

<sup>1</sup>The letter is not translated here. It gave particulars of the progress made in the scheme of khadi production undertaken by the Kathiawar Political Conference.

#### 47. LONG LIVE DESHBANDHU!

I had the good fortune of being in Bombay when the Lokamanya passed away. Providence favoured me also on the day when Deshbandhu was cremated, or, rather, Fate seemed to have waited for the first lap of my tour to be over, for had the cremation taken place one day earlier, I would not have been able to witness the scene which I did in Calcutta.

Just as the citizens of Bombay had abandoned themselves to grief on the day of the Lokamanya's death, so did the people of Calcutta on this day. At that time, countless men and women had come out to have *darshan*, to weep and express their love. Now, as then, there was no community or race whose members were not present to honour the departed. When the train arrived at the station, there was not an inch of space on the platform. People vied with one another for the honour of carrying Deshbandhu's bier, as they had for the Lokamanya's.

On both these occasions, it was the people's rule. The crowds were not ruled by the police, but the latter of their own free will were ruled by the people. The authority of the Government was voluntarily suspended and the people's rule was in force. On that day, people did what they chose. What Deshbandhu wanted to see people doing when he was alive, they did on the day of his leaving this world for the next.

Is this an object-lesson of small value? Is there anything which the bond of love will not make people do? On that day, they "endured hardships, bore hunger and thirst, cold and heat", and did it all cheerfully. It was not necessary to plead with them and persuade them to suffer what they did.

No such crowds collect on the death of an emperor. People do not notice the death of a sannyasi, nor do newspapers and news agencies. Urged by what sense of duty, then, had the old and the young, men and women, the rich and the poor, Hindus and Muslims gathered there, uninvited, in the twinkling of an eye? It was their sense of duty to the nation. People will in these days describe only those who do this duty as men imbued with the spirit of dharma. They are even ready to forget the weaknesses of those who follow this dharma. There is some mean-ing in this. People are not foolish in acting thus. God alone is perfect. Every human being is liable to err. If, however,

any person does his own proper duty to the best of his ability, his weaknesses will not be noticed and, as he goes on doing his duty, they will ultimately disappear.

National service is the only dharma today, for unless we follow that we can follow no other. The power of the State has penetrated every aspect of national life. In countries where the power of the State is the power of the people, the subjects are happy on the whole, and where the State is hostile to the people, the latter are miserable and utterly weak. In such countries the people lead a sinful life and call it good, for those who live in fear are incapable of goodness. To free ourselves from this paralysing fear, i.e., to learn the first lesson in self-realization, is what we call the dharma of national service. What have our patriotic leaders been teaching us? That we should not fear even a king, that we are men and men need fear God alone. Neither King George V nor his representatives can inspire fear in them. The Lokamanya had abandoned all fear of the State's machinery of law and order and, therefore, he was the adored of the people, even of learned men, for he inspired them with courage. Deshbandhu had also completely shed fear of the Government. To his mind, the Viceroy and the gate-keeper were equal. He had seen with his inner eye that, everything considered, there was no difference between the two. If it is unmanly to fear the Viceroy, so is it to try to overcome the gate-keeper. There is a profound spiritual vision behind this attitude, and that is the meaning of the dharma of national service. For this reason, consciously or unconsciously and even against their will, people look with reverence upon those who follow this dharma. The Lokamanya was a Brahmin. His knowledge of the scriptures was such as humbled the pride of pundits. But he was not adored for that knowledge of his. Deshbandhu was not a Brahmin. He was a Vaisya. But people never thought about what caste he belonged to. Deshbandhu did not know Sanskrit and had not studied the scriptures. He merely followed the dharma of national service. He had made himself completely fearless. That is why even learned men bowed to him and, on that unforgettable day, they mingled their tears with the people's. The dharma of national service means all-embracing love. It is not universal love, but it is an important facet of it. It is not the Dhavalgiri of love, but its Darjeeling. From Darjeeling, the visitor has a golden vision of Dhavalgiri and thinks to himself : 'If the Darjeeling of love is so beautiful as this, how much more beautiful must be its Dhavalgiri, which shines in the distance before me.' Love of one's country is not

opposed to love of mankind, but is a concrete instance of it. It ultimately lifts one to the highest peak of universal love. That is why people shower blessings on those who are filled with patriotic love. People know love of family, and are not, therefore, moved to admiration by it. To some extent they also understand love of the village. But love of the country only a Deshbandhu or a Lokamanya understands. People adore such men because they themselves want to be like them.

Deshbandhu's liberality knew no restraints. He earned lakhs and spent lakhs. He never refused to give, even borrowed and gave. He fought for the poor in courts without charging any fees. It is said that in Aurobindo Ghosh's<sup>1</sup> case he exhausted himself and his resources for nine months. He spent from his own pocket and did not charge a single pie. This large-heartedness, too, was the result of his patriotism.

If he opposed me, it was certainly not that he wanted to harass me or undermine my position; he did so only for the sake of national service. He, who did not fear the Viceroy, was not likely to be afraid of me. His attitude was that if the activities of even his brother obstructed the progress of the country, he would oppose him. This should be the attitude of all of us. Our differences were like the differences between brothers. Neither of us wanted to part company with the other for ever. If we did, we would have shown ourselves wanting in patriotism. Hence, even when we seemed to drift away from each other, we were drawing closer. Our situation was a test of the quality of our hearts. Deshbandhu has passed that test, but I have still to show that I have passed it. I must keep undiminished my love for Deshbandhu and for other co-workers. If I fail in that, I shall have failed in the test.

Deshbandhu's progress, during the last three or four months of his life was marvellous. Many must have had experience of his hot temper. His gentleness of which I had experience at Faridpur<sup>2</sup> went on increasing. The Faridpur speech was not written without due thought. It was a beautiful flower of mature thought. I observed him making progress even beyond that point. In Darjeeling, he had reached the

<sup>1</sup> 1872-1950; mystic, poet and philosopher; since 1910 lived at Pondicherry where he established an ashram. He was one of the 23 accused in the Alipore Bomb Case for which the regular trial started in October, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> Where Bengal Provincial Agricultural Conference was held in May 1925 under the presidentship of C. R. Das

fullest limit on this new direction. I never weary of describing my experiences during those five days. Everything that he did and said seemed to breathe love. His optimism was becoming stronger. He could be caustic about his enemies but I found no evidence of this during those five days. In fact he spoke about many of them but I found no bitter word in anything he said. Sir Surendranath's opposition had remained unchanged, but even for him Deshbandhu had nothing but regard. He wanted to win over Sir Surendranath's heart. He wished that I, too, should try to do that. His advice was : "Try to win over as many as you can."

We talked at great length about how to carry on the struggle henceforward, what the Swaraj Party should do and what place the spinning-wheel occupied in the programme. We also drew up a plan of work of Bengal. That may even be put into execution. But where are the men to carry it out?

I left Darjeeling with a light heart. My fears had disappeared. I could see my path clearly before me the path of swaraj. But now the horizon is overcast with clouds. I was in a fright when the Lokamanya passed away. So far I had to plead only with one, but from now on, I thought, I would have to plead with many. I could explain my problems to him and seek his help to solve them. Instead, I would now have to discuss them with several leaders, and even then, I knew, they would not be able to solve them. The time had come when I had to wipe their tears.

The passing away of Deshbandhu has left me in greater difficulties. Deshbandhu meant Bengal. His consent was as good as a draft in my hand which I could cash without further difficulty. So far, my difficulties at the passing of Deshbandhu are similar to those at the passing away of the Lokamanya. But when the latter died, the path before us was clear. People had been filled with new hopes. They wanted to try their strength and make new experiments. Hindus and Muslims seemed to have become united.

But what is the position now? The sky overhead and the earth below. I have no fresh ideas to put forward. Hindus and Muslims are getting ready to fight each other. In the name of religion, they seem to have forgotten the dharma of national service. Brahmins and non-Brahmins are also fighting with each other. The Government believes that it can now do what it likes in the country. Civil disobedience seems to be far away. At this time, one would feel the passing of any

great soldier, but that of Das with his ten hands is a loss impossible to bear.

However, I believe in God and therefore, have not lost heart. God may sport with us as He wills. Why should we be miserable or happy because of anything He may do? Why should it make any difference to us if events over which we have no control end in one way rather than in another? I understand my duty. Maybe my understanding of it is wrong, but so long as I am convinced that it is my duty I should do it, and when I have done it my responsibility is over. I console myself with such attempts at philosophical reflection. My selfishness simply does not let me forget that I shall see Deshbandhu no more.

But how can Deshbandhu die? His physical frame has passed away. But can his virtues die? They still live. If we but cultivate them in ourselves, he lives in all of us. One who has served the world can never die. It is wrong to say that Rama and Krishna have left this world. Both live in the hearts of the thousands of their devotees. The same is true of Harishchandra<sup>1</sup> and others. By Harishchandra we do not mean his physical body; we mean truth. He still lives in countless Harishchandras who serve truth. So does Deshbandhu. His mortal body has perished. His spirit of service, his liberality, his love of the country, his self-sacrifice, his fearlessness—can we say that these, too, have perished? They will go on increasing in strength among the people, whether in greater or smaller measure.

And so Deshbandhu lives, though dead. As long as India lives, Deshbandhu lives. Let us, therefore, say, “Long live Deshbandhu!”

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 28-6-1925

#### 48. “GANGA-SWARUP” BASANTI DEVI

Some years ago I described my meeting<sup>2</sup> with the late Ramabai Ranade. I had known her as an ideal widow.

This time Fate has decreed that I should describe a great hero’s wife beginning to lead a widow’s life.

<sup>1</sup> Legendary King of Ayodhya who gave up his wife, son, kingdom and wealth for the sake of truth

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* More thoughts about Widows”, 16-5-1920.

I have known Basanti Devi since the year 1919. I came closer to her in 1921. I had heard a great deal about her goodness, her intelligence and her hospitality, and also had some experience of them. As I drew closer to Deshbandhu in Darjeeling, so did I to Basanti Devi. In her widowhood, I have come much closer to her. I have been practically by her side from the day they came from Darjeeling to Calcutta with Deshbandhu's body. My first meeting with her as a widow was in her son-in-law's house. She sat surrounded by a number of women. In the old days, as soon as I entered the house she herself would come out to receive and welcome me. Now that she was a widow, who would talk to me? I had to recognize her in the midst of all those women sitting as still as statues. For a minute, my eyes searched for her. Vermilion at the parting of the hair, *tika* on the forehead, betel-leaf in the mouth, bangles on the wrists, a bordered sari and a smiling face—without any of these signs how could I recognize Basanti Devi? I went and sat where I thought she should be and scanned the face. The sight was too much. Yes, I recognized the face. I found it difficult to keep back my tears, let alone hardening my heart and offering consolation.

Where was today the usual smile on her face? I tried in many ways to console her, to cheer her up and make her speak. After a long time I succeeded a little.

Devi smiled faintly.

That gave me courage and I said, "You cannot weep. If you do, others also will weep. We have quietened Mona (elder daughter) with the utmost difficulty. As for Baby (younger daughter) you know her condition. Sujata (daughter-in-law) has been crying uncontrollably and has barely stopped. You should have compassion on these. We want you to do many things yet."

The brave woman replied with great firmness of mind : "I will not weep. How can I, when tears don't come?" I understood what this meant and was satisfied. Crying lightens the heart. But this bereaved sister did not want to lighten her grief. She wanted to bear the burden. So, why should she weep? How could I say, now : "Come, let us brother and sister weep and pour out our grief to each other?"

A Hindu widow is an image of suffering. She has taken upon herself the misery of the world. She has learnt to find happiness in suffering, has accepted suffering as sacred.

Basanti Devi had no objection to eating any type of food. In the

period of her life up to 1920, all manner of delicacies were cooked in her kitchen and hundreds of people feasted in her house. She could not go without *pan* even for an hour. A box containing betel-leaves was always to be found with her.

And, now, she has given up all adornment, given up betel-leaves, sweet dishes and meat and fish too. All the time, her thoughts are fixed on her husband and on God.

I plead with many women to pay less attention to adorning their person, ask many of them to give up addictions. Rarely does any give up these things. But think what a widow does? The moment a Hindu woman becomes a widow, she gives up addictions and lays aside jewellery and other adornments as the snake casts off its slough. She needs neither persuasion nor help from anyone for doing that. Is there anything which custom does not make easy?

Is it a virtue or a sin to suffer in this way? We do not find this practice among the followers of any other religion. Could the authors of the Hindu Shastras have made a mistake? When I see Basanti Devi, I do not think they have; I see in the practice the purest spirit of dharma. The widow's manner of life is the glory of Hinduism. Let the world say what it will, the life of dharma has its glory in renunciation, not in enjoyment.

But what is that widow's life which the Hindu Shastras admire and praise? Certainly not that of the fifteen-year-old girl who does not know even the meaning of marriage. For a girl married and widowed in childhood, a widow's life means not virtue, but sin. If the god of love should himself try to tempt Basanti Devi, he would be burnt to ashes. Basanti Devi has a third eye, like Siva's. But what does a fifteen-year-old girl know about the beauty of widowhood? For her, such a life is cruelty. In the increasing number of such widows, I see the destruction of Hinduism. In women like Basanti Devi leading the customary life of widows, I see a source of strength for dharma. There is no inviolable law that in all circumstances, in all places and at all times a widow must remain a widow and lead a widow's life. This is a dharma only for a woman who can follow it.

It is good to swim in the waters of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide.

There should be the same rule for men as for women. Rama acted in this manner. He could not bear separation from Sita, whom



he had sent away. He himself sent her away and yet suffered for what he had done. After she had left, he gradually lost the light and power which were his. He abandoned Sita physically, but installed her as the queen of his heart. From that time onwards, he felt no interest in dressing himself well or in other kingly pleasures. He attended, disinterestedly, to the affairs of his kingdom as a matter of duty and lived a peaceful life.

Hinduism will remain imperfect as long as men do not accept suffering as Basanti Devi did and, like her, withdraw their interest from the pleasures of this life. Sweets to the one and thorns to the other—such perverted justice can never be, and is not, acceptable in God's court. But among the Hindus at present, disregarding the divine law, men have ordained perpetual widowhood for women and conferred on themselves the right to fix marriage with another partner, on the cremation-ground itself.

Basanti Devi has not till now shed a drop of tear in anyone's presence. Even then, the light on her face has not returned. It seems as dull as if she had recovered from a long illness. Seeing her in this condition, I requested her to go out with me for a little fresh air. She did come along with me and sat in the car but did not speak a word. I talked about many things. She listened, but hardly said anything in reply. She had a drive, but felt miserable afterwards. She could not sleep the whole night. "Cursed that I am, I enjoyed today what was so dear to me. Is this all that my grief comes to?" She spent the whole night in such thoughts. Bhombal (her son) came and told me about this. Today is my silence day. I simply wrote on a piece of paper : "We must cure mother of this madness. There are many things which our beloved one may have loved and which we have no choice but to do. Mother did not have a drive for enjoyment, she had it for the sake of her health. She was in great need of fresh air. We must strengthen her and take care of her health. We must keep her alive so that we may be worthy of the legacy of Father's work and carry it forward. Convey this to Mother."

He said : "Mother had asked me not to tell you this. But I could not help telling you; so I have come. It would be better if, for some time, you did not ask her to go out in a car."

Poor Bhombal! He who would not be controlled by anyone, God bless him, has become today as meek as a lamb.

But what should we think about this good widow? Widow-hood

may be cherished but it appears unbearable. Sudhanva<sup>1</sup> kept dancing in the cauldron of boiling oil but a person like me, watching the scene, would tremble with the thought of his agony. May chaste and virtuous women ever cling to their suffering. Their suffering is not suffering, but happiness. Thinking of them, many have found deliverance and many more will find it in future.

Jai Basanti Devi!

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 28-6-1925

#### 49. WHO IS TO BLAME?

A volunteer writes :<sup>2</sup>

I realize the truth of these words everywhere here in Bengal. It is only recently that we thought of going into the villages. At first, we wanted things from the village people. It is only now that we are going to the villages in order to give the people something. How can we expect to win their confidence in such a short time? It often happens that a father takes years to win his son's confidence. We have to win back our honoured place among the village people, and will get nothing through impatience. Some persons serve their own interests under the guise of service. What other means do the village people have, except experience, to distinguish between such persons and genuine workers? Public workers, therefore, must cultivate patience, forbearance, selflessness and such other virtues. The masses can have no other knowledge but experience to guide them.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 28-6-1925

<sup>1</sup> Son of King Hansadhvaj of Champavati in the *Mahabharata*. He was thrown into boiling oil for disobeying his father, who was an atheist, but he came out unscathed because of his devotion to God.

<sup>2</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated on the basis of his experience that, if villagers did not trust workers, the fault lay with the latter.

## 50. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

*June 29, 1925*

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letter<sup>1</sup> and the article on “Father Forgive Them” passage. I must have the original letter before I can make use of your article. Please search and send. I am fixed up in Bengal till the end of July. I hope Barasaheb<sup>2</sup> is suffering less pain.

Pray give him my love and tell him I constantly think of him.

*Yours,*

MOHAN

C. F. ANDREWS, ESQ.  
C/O PRINCIPAL S. RUDRA  
SOLON  
SIMLA HILLS

From the original : C.W. 6049

## 51. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

*Monday [June 29, 1925]<sup>3</sup>*

CHI. DEVDAS,

If I do not write this postcard, I am afraid, I may not be able to write at all. I have your beautiful letter. Your style and Gujarati both are excellent. It would be nice if you start writing something for *Y. I.* and *N. J.* I am busy collecting funds. Krishnadas has not received the letters. It is good that Ba spins. I too cannot tell you the names and particulars of all the progeny of Ota Gandhi. It is well that you have started collecting this literature. I have heard that Uttamchand Bapa had six sons. Khushalbhai may be able to give you more information. Tell Bal Gangadhar that I am very happy that he has come. I have no misgivings whatever about him. Doing good to others never harms anyone. Even the mistakes of Balkrishna lead ultimately to his advancement.

<sup>1</sup> This is not available.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, Sushil Kumar Rudra, who was ailing

<sup>3</sup> The postmark is “Kalighat, June 30, ’25”. Monday was June 29.

I am celebrating the *shraddha* of Deshbandhu in the most fitting way.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : G.N. 2045

## 52. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

*Monday [June 29, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have your letter. I have written something quite differently about Alwar this time. I am afraid it will take a little time to decide about my going there. I think it will be possible to go only in the beginning of August. I intend to pass the last week of July in the Ashram and then start the tour. I am sure you will come on the 16th. I hope you received the wires I sent there to you and to Sabarmati.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : original : G.N. 2854

## 53. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*Monday [June 29, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. You should look out for various occasions to serve Father. As a matter of fact you hardly have to search for them. Nevertheless I understand what you say. Since Dahyabhai attends Navajivan office let him work there diligently. He will derive much benefit by working under Swami's<sup>3</sup> discipline. That is good education; even if he is asked to work as a labourer, he should do it conscientiously. I shall drop in some time at Ahmedabad, but God knows when I shall be able to do so. Do keep me informed about

<sup>1</sup> The postmark is "Calcutta, June 30, '25". Monday was June 29.

<sup>2</sup> As in the source

<sup>3</sup> Swami Anandanand; then manager of Navajivan Press

Father's health. If Father is weak in spelling, should you too be so?  
One must emulate one's father's virtues, never his weaknesses.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne, p. 26*

#### 54. TELEGRAM TO SUDHIR RUDRA<sup>1</sup>

CALCUTTA,

*June 30, 1925*

MY HEART, MY PRAYERS WITH YOU IN YOUR GRIEF. GOD WILL GIVE  
YOU ALL STRENGTH BEAR LOSS. LOVE.

GANDHI

From the original : C.W. 6050. Courtesy : Mrs. S. K. Rudra, Allahabad

#### 55. SPEECH AT UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, CALCUTTA<sup>2</sup>

*June 30, 1925*

Mahatmaji . . . paid a glowing tribute to Deshbandhu. He said that Deshbandhu was always a warrior from top to toe. He had been engaged in many a battle and had never spared his adversaries. He had never, so far as he remembered, taken undue advantage of anybody. He would never forget his last five days' stay with Deshbandhu at Darjeeling because he came to realize what was noble in his life. He had no ill will towards any of his opponents. Deshbandhu was always anxious to co-operate with everybody in working for the good of his country. Chittaranjan Das conquered the whole country with sincere love and he was decorated with the title "Deshbandhu". The country had shown to him a sincere respect for his great sacrifice which he did for the good of his countrymen. Throughout his tour in East Bengal Mahatmaji came in contact with thousands of people young and old and by their feeling he could understand what affection, love and respect they had for Deshbandhu Das. He was still receiving hundreds of letters daily from the students who paid homage to his sacred

<sup>1</sup> This was sent on S. K. Rudra's death. It was delivered to the addressee at Solon on July 1.

<sup>2</sup> A large number of students and leading citizens of Calcutta attended the meeting at which Gandhiji presided.

and loving memory. Deshbandhu was a father to the young men of Bengal, and always took every one of them under his protection for life. In his death Mahatmaji thought that whole student community had lost their true leader who could lead them to their goal if God had kept him alive for a few days more. His generosity was boundless and his love for the students was also boundless. Proceeding, the speaker said he did not come to the meeting to sing the praises of that great son of Mother India, but he wanted the youth of Bengal to realize with gratitude what Deshbandhu had done for them. He was confident that the youth of Bengal would help him in raising a suitable memorial for Deshbandhu Das. The speaker did not want them to come forward with their money but he advised them to go to their parents, friends and relations and collect money for the purpose. In conclusion, the Mahatma asked the young men of Bengal to finish the work which Deshbandhu had left unfinished to attain swaraj.<sup>1</sup>

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1-7-1925*

## *56. APPEAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL FUND<sup>2</sup>*

*July 1, 1925*

My capacity for writing original articles on the same subject is strictly limited. I must, therefore, turn to good account the request of the editor to write something on Deshbandhu. I am more concerned with making the best use of the wonderful appreciations that have already appeared than adding one more from me. As heirs to the great legacy left by him, we must deserve it by our action. I gratefully acknowledge the response from hundreds of men and women to the memorial fund. But it has got to come from thousands and tens of thousands if we are to reach ten lacs, as we must, within a short time. I hope that those who see these lines will not wait for a call, but will quickly send their subscription—not the least they can, but the best that is possible. They may collect, too, from their friends. Then they need no authority. They can become self-appointed volunteers. Here there is economy of time, maximum of results and minimum of chance of fraud.

I know that people are impatient to attain swaraj. Some think

<sup>1</sup> A sum of about Rs. 2,500 was collected on the spot and the purse was handed over to Gandhiji as the first instalment of the contribution of the members of the Institute.

<sup>2</sup> This was reproduced from the special “Deshbandhu Number” of *Forward*, 1-7-1925.

that a hospital as a memorial to Deshbandhu is a poor honour done to the memory of one who gave his life for swaraj. These do not know Deshbandhu. For him every noble deed done by an Indian was a step towards swaraj. Every successful corporate effort is a big step towards swaraj. We must have political power. It cannot long be withheld from us. But that power, whenever it comes, will be the ripe fruit of the labours of many for a common end. The collection of the fund, especially if it comes from lacs, be it in ever so small a coin, will be a striking demonstration not merely of the genuine love of the people but also of our organizing ability. To contribute therefore to the fund is for the time being the best appreciation of Deshbandhu.

*The Hindustan Times*, 14-7-1925

57. *SPEECH ON THE “SHRADDHA” DAY*  
*OF C. R. DAS*

CALCUTTA,  
July 1, 1925

I speak often in the Ashram, but then it is before my own people; they understand and bear with me. Moreover, as occasion arises, I quote something from the *Gita*, and even then the talk would not be called a religious discourse. To me religion means living in the way prescribed by religion. A discourse may be in place occasionally, but not every religious man can give one. It is true, though, that anyone who gives such discourses should himself be a man of dedicated religious life.

The *Gita* is for me a perennial guide to conduct. From it I seek support for all my actions and, if, in a particular case, I do not find the needed support, I would refrain from the proposed action or at any rate feel uncertain about it. So, when despite my embarrassment I accepted the invitation to speak, I decided to say something about the meaning of birth and death. Every time I have suffered the loss of a relative or friend, I sought consolation in the *Gita*; and the one thing it teaches is that death is nothing to be mourned. If ever I have shed tears, it has been through weakness, it was in spite of myself. When I think how I was shocked at the news of Deshbandhu's death and how tears welled up in my eyes, I ascribe all that to my weakness. Let us look in the *Gita* today for some comfort.

I have often stated that the *Gita* is a great allegory. I simply cannot think that the battle it describes was an actual battle between two armies, and this belief of mine was confirmed when I read the *Mahabharata* in jail. The *Mahabharata* itself seems to me to be a great treatise on dharma. It contains historical incidents, but it is not history. When, for instance, we read about *sarpasatra*<sup>1</sup>, can we rest in its literal meaning ? We should, then, have to swallow enough superstitions to choke us to death. The poet himself has warned us so emphatically, that he is not a historian. The *Gita*, then, describes the conflict within us; it is true that for this purpose it has used some historical incidents, but the aim behind them is to kindle a light in our hearts and impel us to examine them with its help. When you reach the concluding part of Chapter II, it becomes impossible even to suspect that the poem describes a historical battle. It seems strange that Arjuna should want to know the marks of a man firmly established in spiritual vision and that the Lord should explain them to a person all set for a battle.

But what I want to do is to explain to you the meaning of death. If you believe with me that the *Gita* is an allegory, you will also be able to understand the meaning of death as explained in it :

What is non-Being is never known to have been, and what is Being is never known not to have been. Of both these the secret has been seen by the seers of the truth.<sup>2</sup>

This verse contains the whole meaning. Verse after verse states that the body is *asat*. *Asat* does not mean *maya*<sup>3</sup>; to say that the body is *asat* does not mean that it never came into existence at all; the statement simply means that it is transitory, perishable, that it is subject to change. And yet, we live our life as if it would last for ever. We worship it, we cling to it—all this is contrary to the teaching of Hinduism. If Hinduism has asserted anything in the clearest possible terms, it is that the body and all that we behold is *asat*. But there are probably no other people who fear death and cry and grieve over it as much as we do. In the *Mahabharata*, in fact, it is stated that lamentation after someone's death gives pain to the departed soul, and the *Gita*, too, was composed to remove the fear of death. Man's body

<sup>1</sup> Serpent sacrifice

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagawad Gita*, II, 16

<sup>3</sup> Illusion



wears out through continuous activity and death releases it from suffering. The more I think about the ceaselessly active life of Deshbandhu, the more I feel that he is alive today. While he lived in the body, he was not fully alive, but he is so today. In our selfishness, we believed that his body was all that mattered, whereas the *Gita* teaches—and I understand the truth of this more clearly as days pass—that all worry about a perishable thing is meaningless, is so much waste of time.

Non-Being simply does not exist, and Being never ceases to exist. Shakespeare was wrong when he said that the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones.<sup>1</sup> The good and the true alone live for ever. The world remembers only those who did some good while they lived in it. It readily forgets that which was false and evil, and preserves only what is good. Take the example of Ramachandra. Personally, I believe him to be an incarnation of God, but I do not believe that he was guilty of no error while he lived in the body. Today, however, we regard him as perfect. Krishna, too, we regard as the plenary incarnation of Godhead. Among the millions of Hindus, you will not find today a single person who will see error in anything which Rama or Krishna did. This fact, too, reveals the meaning of the verse “What is non-Being is never known to have been”. The world has preserved only what was imperishable in them, and no one knows anything about the perishable elements—their errors, if they committed any. We want to follow Deshbandhu’s example. Is it his life in the body which we should follow as an example? Was it his body we adored? If that was so, would his dear, dear son light the fire which consumed it?

And so, in that verse, the *Gita* declares in the most emphatic language that we should follow truth in our lives and keep away from the unreal and the false, from deception. Very often our words do not express the truth, they become a form of deception. Anger is a form of untruth, desire, attachment, pride; all these are forms of untruth. We have to perform the *satra* of all these snakes. A living snake harms only the body, but these snakes infect every fibre in our being and threaten to harm even the *atman*. This, however, is never harmed. It never dies. If we know what is meant by *sat*, we shall also understand the real meaning of birth and death. The chemists say that when a

<sup>1</sup> *Julius Caesar*, III, ii. 75-6

candle burns nothing is destroyed; similarly, when the body dies and is consumed by fire, nothing is destroyed. Birth and death are two conditions of the same reality. It is wholly because of our selfishness that we lament the death of our dear one. When on that day I saw the crowds on the cremation-ground and observed no sigh of grief on their faces, for a moment I felt irritated, angry because they seemed to lack sense and did not even understand the gravity of the hour. But a little later I realized that it was they who were right. They had come there not with any selfish motive but merely to honour a noble life, to bear testimony to Deshbandhu's services and express their admiration for the supreme achievement of his life. Their joy had more truth and meaning in it than our grief. All admiration to the revered Basanti Devi, whom I did not even recognize when I first met her [after Deshbandhu's death], because she shed no tears before me. However, even one's face should not be touched with grief, one should have no feeling of sadness or gloom. Only if we have such a faith can it be said that we have understood the transitoriness of the body. It is not to the body that one is married. In marriage, two souls come together not to seek bodily pleasure but to strive for their own growth and refinement. When the body of one partner disappears, the union becomes all the closer. We have assembled today, therefore, not to shed tears. Let us, rather, think of Deshbandhu's virtues, the substance of his which will never die, and take them into our own lives.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 12-7-1925

## 58. A STRING OF QUESTIONS

1. In the account of your interview with some gentlemen belonging to the untouchable class at Faridpur, published in the issue of the *Young India* dated 14th May, 1925, you have asked them to do things by way of self-purification. Now what do you think by self-purification? What are the outer manifestations of self-purification? Does the self-purification consist in *kayik*, *manasik* and *vachanik* purification<sup>1</sup> or one of them alone?

Self-purification means cleansing oneself of all impurities whether of the mind, speech or body. The 'untouchable' friends were asked to think no evil, speak no untruth or abuse and to keep the

<sup>1</sup> Purification of the body, mind and speech

body pure by careful wash, pure food and avoidance of carrion or other impure food or intoxicating liquors or drugs.

2. If any class or individual attains that standard, can they or he be treated as untouchable?

Even if a person does not attain the standard and it is unattainable at once by most of us, he may not be regarded as an untouchable. It would go hard with us if that standard was applied to us.

3. There is no unity in food, drink or worship among all the Hindu classes. What do you think to be the first step to bring about that unity?

I am doing nothing to achieve such unity. Unity I hanker after is one of heart. It transcends these barriers and can subsist in spite of them. We worship the same God under diverse forms and names.

4. It is suggested that if entrance into public places of worship and confectionery shops be opened to sanitary, clean Hindus, that will be the first step to bring about unity. What is your opinion about it?

Places of public worship should be open to all who obey the laws of common decency. Who shall judge the standard of cleanliness in dress? These things are regulated not by law but by public opinion. A confectioner, if he is himself clean, would undoubtedly refuse to sell to those who are dirty. If he did not, he would lose his custom. But a confectioner who refuses to sell to an untouchable because he is so called, forfeits his right to carry on his business.

5. Your sense of untouchability is a difficult one. Even among higher-class Hindus, they do not drink water and eat cooked food from the hands of their *asanskrit* children. Do you call this untouchability?

I do not call that untouchability. I have explained scores of times that there is no such thing as a fifth *varna* in Hinduism. The untouchable, therefore, should have all the rights common to the four *varnas*.

6. Some suggest that instead of putting too much stress on the drinking of water, it is better to try to remove the sense of superiority and inferiority from the heart of higher-caste Hindus and increase mutual love and help. Do you approve of this suggestion?

I do approve of the suggestion where it is not made to cover hypocrisy. You shall judge a tree by its fruit. I never lay stress on drinking and eating. But I do and would when a man refuses to drink

at the hands of an untouchable because he is so called. For, then, the refusal is a sign of arrogation of superiority.

7. To that end spread of *Vaishnava* teaching by religious *kirtans* and religious feasting in a body irrespective of creed and caste is an easy and simple method. This method has been in vogue for more than four centuries. What is your opinion about this suggestion?

I have not studied the effect of these *kirtans*. But I would welcome any good method that will break down the wall of insolent superiority.

8. It is almost admitted that the Hindus of Bengal are a dying race. What do you think to be the principal causes of this gradual decay? What are the preventives of this decay? It is also admitted that there has been physical deterioration among the Hindus in height, strength and vitality. How to revive them?

I have seen the statements but I have seen no proof of Hindu deterioration. I should, however, believe the assertion that we are becoming physically weaker. The reasons are obvious. Our growing poverty and early marriages are two substantial causes for the decay. The one can be remedied by the charkha and the other by individuals resolutely refusing to marry their children, whether male or female, till they are over sixteen and nearer twenty. The later the better. I would run almost every imaginable risk and postpone marriage till a boy or girl is well advanced and is capable of shouldering the burden and is perfectly healthy. The way to do it is for those who feel the necessity of reform to initiate it themselves and advocate it among their neighbours. Those who desire the reform and would minimize chances of risk must bring up their children in healthier and purer surrounding than they have at present.

*Young India*, 27-7-1925

### 59. MY INCAPACITY

It would be most comfortable for my pride if I could give every applicant for help the satisfaction he may desire. But here is a sample of my hopeless incapacity.

Of what use is your leadership or Mahatmaship if you cannot stop cow-killing by asking the Mussalmans to stop it? Look at your studied silence on the Alwar atrocities and your criminal silence about the affront put by the Nizam upon Panditji whom you delight to call your respected elder brother and

one of the first among the public servants and whom you have yourself acquitted of any malice against Mussalmans.

Thus have argued not the same but several persons. The first rebuke mentioned was the last to be received and it has proved the proverbial last straw. There is a telegram before me asking me to request the Mussalmans not to kill cows as sacrifice on *Bakr-Id*. I thought it was time for me at least to offer an explanation over my silence. I was prepared to live down the charge regarding Panditji, although it was a charge brought by a dear friend. He was almost apprehensive about my fame. He thought I would be accused of fear of Mussalmans and what not. But I was firm in my resolve not to take any public notice of the ban on Panditji. There was no fear of his misunderstanding me. And I knew that he stood in no need of my protection. He will survive all the bans that can be declared against him by any temporal power. His philosophy is his stay. I have watched him at close quarters amid many a crisis. He has stood unmoved. He knows his work and prosecutes it without elation or perturbation in fair weather or foul. I, therefore, laughed to my heart's content when I heard of the ban. Strange are the ways of potentates. Nothing that I could write in the pages of *Young India* would, I knew, induce H.E.H. the Nizam to recall his fiat. If I had the honour of a personal acquaintance, I would have straightway written to the ruler of Hyderabad respectfully telling him that the ban on Panditji could do no good to his State, much less to Islam. I would have even advised him to offer Panditji his hospitality when he went to Hyderabad and could have cited such example from the lives of the Prophet and his companions. But I do not possess that honour. And I knew that a public reference by me might not even reach his ears. Save, therefore, for adding to the acerbity already existing, it could have served no purpose. And as I could not add to it, even if I could not diminish it, I chose to be silent. And my present reference I propose to use for the sake of advising such Hindus as would listen to me not to feel irritated over the incident nor to make it a cause of complaint against Islam or Mussalmans. It is not the Mussalman in the Nizam that is responsible for the ban. Arbitrary procedure is an attribute of autocracy whether it be Hindu or Mussalman. We must devise means of checking autocratic vagaries without seeking to destroy the Indian States. The remedy is cultivation of enlightened and forceful public opinion. The process must begin, as it has begun, in British India proper; because it is naturally freer, being

administered directly, unlike the States which are administered through the vassals of the Emperor. They, therefore, reproduce the evils of the British system without containing the few safeguards that direct British administration provides for its own sake. In the Indian States, therefore, orderliness depends more upon the personal character and whims of the chiefs for the time being than upon the constitution or rather the constitutions under which the States' government is regulated. It follows, therefore, that real reform of the States can only come when the chilling control of the British Imperial system is at least tempered by the freedom of British India secured by the disciplined power of the people. Not that, therefore, all the journals have to observe silence. Reference to abuses in the States is undoubtedly a necessary part of journalism, and it is a means of creating public opinion. Only, my scope is strictly limited, I have taken up journalism not for its sake but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission in life. My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of satyagraha which is direct corollary of non-violence and truth. I am anxious, indeed I am impatient, to demonstrate that there is no remedy for the many ills of life save that of non-violence. It is a solvent strong enough to melt the stoniest heart. To be true to my faith, therefore, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion. The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is a training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds. The reader sees the pages of *Young India* fairly well dressed up and sometimes with Romain Rolland, he is inclined to say 'what a fine old man this must be'. Well, let the world understand that the fineness is carefully and prayerfully cultivated. And if it has proved acceptable to some whose opinion I cherish, let the reader understand that when that fineness has become perfectly natural, i.e., when I have become incapable of evil and when nothing harsh or haughty occupies, be it momentarily, my thought-world, then and not till then, my non-violence will move all the hearts of all the world. I have placed before me and the reader no impossible ideal or ordeal. It is man's prerogative and birthright. We have lost the paradise only to regain it. If it takes time, then it is but a speck in the complete time-circle. The

Divine Teacher of the *Gita* knew when he said that millions of our days are equal to only a day of Brahma. Let us not, therefore, be impatient and in our weakness think that non-violence is a sign of soft brains. It is not.

But I must hasten to the end. The reader knows now why I have been silent about Alwar. I have no data to go upon. Alwar can laugh with as much disdain as the Nizam at anything I may say or write. If all the reports that are published are true, they are proof of Dyerism double distilled. But I know that I have for the moment no remedy. I watch with admiration the effort to the Press to secure at least a decent public inquiry into the awful allegations. I note the silent movement of Panditji's diplomacy cutting its gentle way. Why need I bother then? Let those who appeal to me for prescriptions know that I am not an infallible *kaviraj* with an inexhaustible pharmacopoeia. I am a humble, groping specialist with hardly two indistinguishable drugs in my little pocket. The specialist pleads present incapacity to deal with the evils complained of.

And to the lovers of the cow, have I not already said that I no longer profess, as I did only a short time ago, to claim any influence over Hindus or Mussalmans? Till I have regained it, *gomata* will forgive her humble child that I claim to be. My life is wound up with hers. She knows I am incapable of betraying her. But she understands my incapacity if her other adorers do not.

*Young India*, 2-7-1925

## 60. NOTES

### ALL-INDIA MEMORIAL

I have been asked to inaugurate an All-India Deshbandhu memorial as I have, in consultation with the Bengal friends, inaugurated an all-Bengal memorial. I can assure the reader that the matter has not escaped my attention at all. I have been conferring with the friends who are by me. But we have not yet evolved a formula. For the all-Bengal memorial there was no difficulty in arriving at the conclusion. Deshbandhu's trust-deed was there as the pole-star. But the all-India memorial is not quite so easy a matter. The delay is unavoidable. Probably, by the time this is in print, a conclusion will have been reached. For the present, I must ask everybody to accept my assurance that there will be no unnecessary delay in making the

announcement. That there should be an all-India memorial I have not a shadow of a doubt. The universal testimony of grief received from every nook and corner of India is the most eloquent proof of Deshbandhu's universal popularity.

FROM 'A REVOLUTIONARY'

Shrimati Basanti Devi has handed me an anonymous letter received by her from 'a revolutionary', from which I take the following :

Tears roll down and blur my sight in my attempt to write to you at this moment. I tried to go for a visit to 148, but could not sum up my courage to stand before you. The sight is heart-rending.

In the death of Deshbandhu Das a great man has fallen—perhaps the greatest the country has produced. There is none to fill up the gap. I am one of those who came to know him not when he gave up his extensive practice at the Bar and its princely income, but long before that when out of his seclusion—as it were—he came out to defend Sreejut Aurobindo Ghose in the Alipur Bomb Case, and from that time came to love him, came to have the highest regard and admiration for and devotion to him. He, too, always had a very soft and warm corner for us in his heart though he has not seen eye to eye with us in politics. For I am one of those who were, in the Partition days, wrongly called Anarchists and who are now very wrongly called the "Revolutionaries". He knew we were much misunderstood and misrepresented and much maligned because of our love of freedom for our common Motherland. To everyone of us he always extended a brother's hand, always trying to guide us in the right path. We sadly miss him today. We are overwhelmed with grief today to his death, for we know there is no man in the country whom we can turn to in our hour of sore need.

Leaders will come and leaders will go; but Deshbandhu Das will never come. He was the hope and inspiration of the people. He was the idol of the nation. His help and guidance were always, as it were, at our disposal and our services, nay our very lives, he knew, were at his command. And here I need only assure you, my dear sister, that our services—nay our lives—are, and shall ever continue to be, at your command.

The portion omitted is a reassurance of sympathy. This letter is an unsolicited testimonial of Deshbandhu's views on revolutionary activities. The reason for his hold on young Bengal is to be sought in his fatherly care of them in spite of their faults. He loved them not because he liked their methods but because he wished to wean them from their ways. Will those who did not listen to him whilst he was



alive listen to the voice of his spirit which says to them ‘not through violence lies the way to India’s freedom’? Will they trust to his ripper judgment rather than their own?

#### AN ERROR?

Here is a letter from the Secretary, District Congress Committee, Pabna :<sup>1</sup>

I appreciate the letter as it expects from me the utmost accuracy of statement and scrupulous impartiality. I am anxious to live up to the expectation as far as it is humanly possible. But, in spite of all my care, I may do an injustice to some and may be unduly biased in favour of others; after all both are injustices in the long run. A man or an institution that is undeservedly belauded may even suffer more than the one unjustly decried. But in the case in point I have been most guarded. And whilst almost everything that the secretary says may have been true at one time, it was not true at the time I wrote. I was not adjudging the relative merits of the institutions named nor comparing their account. I merely stated that, at the time of writing there were so many khaddar-producing institutions which I had visited. I included in these Satsang Ashram, though it was the latest recruit. I saw more than 40 wheels going when I visited the Ashram. Among those spinning were the relatives of the founder, including his wife. I was shown too, khaddar woven at the place. But above all, Deshbandhu, at whose instance I visited the Ashram, had told me that the founder had decided to make spinning and production of khaddar one of its principal activities. The manager who was my guide during my visit confirmed that statement. I would have been unjust if I had not, after all this evidence before me, included the Ashram as one of the khaddar centres. I admit that, at the present moment, there can be no comparison between the Satsang Ashram and the Abhoy Ashram. The letter is as old as, if not older than, the Khadi Pratishthan and was founded chiefly for khaddar and the wheel. Its production is only next to that of Khadi Pratishthan, and [it] has branches in several parts. But my purpose in writing the article in question was not to examine the relative merits, but to bring to the notice of the public the

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. This drew Gandhiji’s attention to an error in the article “Khadi Pratishthan”, 12-7-1925, in which he wrote of a Satsang Ashram at Pabna as a khaddar manufacturing centre comparable to the Abhoy Ashram at Comilla. According to the correspondent, the Ashram did little work of this kind and actually helped to promote sale of foreign cloth.

possibilities of Bengal for khaddar propaganda and its premier khaddar organization as a model. I should certainly be pained, if it is true that there is a store conducted in Pabna under the aegis of Satsang Ashram for the sale of foreign cloth.

#### ‘A REVOLUTIONARY IN THE MAKING’

You are too philosophical and too abstruse for me. We must for the time being, therefore, agree to differ and pray for each other till we meet some day in the course of my wanderings. Your decision to add carding to spinning appeals to me most forcibly. I hope that you will make discoveries of the hidden powers of the spinning-wheel and the carding-bow. You can infect your surrounding, too, with your zeal for spinning and, if it becomes successful, as it can be, when all who are ready-made revolutionaries or who are on the verge of it or are in the making, devote their undoubted talents and energy to the great task, they will find that a bloody revolution is not necessary for our country's salvation. Let these friends of mine help me to make the spinning-wheel hum, let them help me to make the villagers busy and happy and, if even then, we have not succeeded in bringing the Englishmen to book, they will catch me in my weakest moment and may possibly claim me as their convert. And then, like all converts, they may expect me to outstrip them in my red activities.

#### AN ANCIENT ON UNTOUCHABILITY

When I was at Santiniketan, Mr. Andrews handed me the following extracts from a celebrated Tamil poet, Vemana<sup>1</sup>, on untouchability :

##### BOOK II

135. Consider not him a pariah who is so by birth; he who breaks his word is far viler. He who reproaches the pariah is (go to) worse than him (*sic*).

156. Why should you revile a pariah when you see him? This is merely unmannerly language. Of what caste is He who speaks in the pariah?

##### BOOK III

111. “Thou art defiled and unclean, touch me not!” they cry. What limits are there to defilement? What is its source? All human bodies are equally unclean; defilement is born with ourselves in the body.

162. They that are born Sudras, and yet revile Sudras; who hold themselves twice-born and rely on their title; still, if unable to restrain their

<sup>1</sup> Vemama was a Telugu poet who flourished in the early part of the fifteenth century.

hearts, are the lowest of Sudras.

164. If a man still has in his heart the principles of a pariah, and yet scorns pariahs, how should he become twice-born, while devoid of every good quality?

217. If we carefully observe and examine the universe, we shall see that all castes equally originated therein; then all are equal; surely all men are brothers.

223. There is not a viler wretch in the earth than the man who scorns other men, calling them Sudras. After his death he shall fall into hell.

227. Why should we constantly revile the pariah? Are not his flesh and blood the same as ours? And of what caste is He who pervades the pariah (as well as all other men)?

231. Though a man be by birth an outcaste, if he orders his heart aright he is no outcaste; he who can [not] govern his affections is the vilest of the vile.

234. His mother was a prostitute and his wife a pariah, yet Vasishtha was the tutor to the noble Rama : by austerities he became a Brahmin, but if you look to his caste, what is it like?

The extracts show that the Hindu heart was sorely distressed over the inhuman treatment of the so-called untouchables. There is no equivocation about Vemana's emphatic denunciation of the practice of degrading and suppressing our own kith and kin.

*Young India*, 2-7-1925

### **61. DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL FUND**

Friends have pressed it upon me that, in the interest of the Memorial Fund that is being collected, it is necessary for me not to leave Calcutta at the present moment for the projected tour. Whilst I recognize the usefulness of my presence, after comparing notes with Satcowri Babu, I have come to the conclusion that the tour already advertised ought not to be abandoned. After all, the collections that are pouring in come from thousands of grateful hearts. Personally I have never entertained the slightest doubt about the response of Bengal. We are not an ungrateful nation, and Bengal is not [to] be surpassed by any province in gratefulness. Given the proper cause, Bengal is capable of rising to the highest height. And what cause can be more proper and sacred, more insistent, than a memorial in honour of Deshbandhu? I do not, therefore, regard my presence in Calcutta as essential for ensuring the continuous flow, and shall carry out the tour in the full confidence that the subscriptions will continue with

unabated perseverance, until the whole of the sum of ten lakhs is made up. I see that, at the time of writing this note, the total collections amount to over Rs. 2,40,000, of which over Rs. 61,000/-, being today's collection, has to be still delivered to the treasurer. If anything like the present rate of progress continues—and there is no reason why it ought not to—we shall reach ten lakhs by the middle of this month. That we were not able to collect the whole sum by the end of June means no reflection on Bengal. It was possible, but only just possible, to complete the collection in the eight days that were available. It pre-supposed a perfect organization or ability and willingness on the part of a few to find the whole sum. I can almost say that, where ever I have gone, I have gone, I have found the will to pay, but owing to the great depression in trade, the ability to pay large sums has been lacking. And it must be frankly confessed that nowhere in India are we sufficiently organized to reach the names for small collections amongst them in a short time. It is a magnificent tribute to Deshbandhu's memory that, with the very imperfect organization that the Committee have been able to bring into being, small sums are pouring in such a manner as to keep at least six workers at work, receiving monies from early morning to 10 o'clock at night and even later, not to mention a number of clerks that Sir Rajendra Nath has put on the work of receiving subscriptions and copying the very long lists, containing the names of subscribers, of annas, pice and even half pice. Whilst, therefore, I shall undertake to finish the balance of the Bengal tour without any misgivings, I wish to notify it to the friends who have invited me to different places mentioned in the tour programme, that my principal work in the tour will be to deliver the living message of the late patriot and to collect subscriptions for the memorial. And I hope that they will so arrange the programme in the respective places as to enable maximum amounts to be collected. I trust that they will not spend much money on reception arrangements. I suggest that all decoration will be carefully eschewed and the collections made for reception be saved to the utmost extent possible and be devoted to the Memorial Fund, as is already being done in North Calcutta. I would like here gratefully to mention the fact that telegraphic and postal money orders are pouring in from all parts of Bengal and all other parts of India where Bengalis are domiciled.

I may add that those who are at present receiving monies at 148, Russa Road, will continue to do so in my temporary absence which will begin from part of next Saturday to Wednesday following. I

expect to return to Calcutta on Thursday week, the 9th instant, leaving for Serajganj and other places the same day and returning again Sunday morning, the 12th instant.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2-7-1925*

## 62. RAINING BANGLES

It was a grand sight—the mass meeting on the Maidan. The arrangements made by the volunteers were perfect. Not a man moved from his seat up to the time of the passing of the resolution in solemn silence, the whole of the great audience standing for full one minute. I have never witnessed in Bengal a meeting so dignified, so solemn and so respectful. I tender my congratulations to those who gathered at the Maidan and the volunteers who carried out the arrangements. I am sorry that I was unable to attend the Town Hall meeting, much as I had intended to. I was detained for over an hour, i.e., up to 7.45 at the ladies' meeting. This meeting was a wonderful sight. In response to the appeal made to them, they rained gold bangles, rings and necklaces. Besides over Rs. 500/-, sixty gold bangles, six chains, sixteen rings, some of them studded, and over twenty ear-rings were given by these devoted daughters of India. I hope that the ladies of Calcutta will continue the work begun at the meeting and those who had no chance of attending the meeting will send in their quota. The simplest of collecting among the ladies is for those who care to collect only amongst friends. I understand that there has been on previous occasions a great deal of fraudulent collection on the part of unauthorized persons; and as even authority has been found to have been manufactured, the Committee has not shouldered the responsibility of issuing letters of authority to ladies. It is for that reason that I lay emphasis upon those who will, collecting only amongst their friends, so as to avoid all possibility of fraud.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2-7-1925*

### 63. ADVICE TO HINDUS <sup>1</sup>

CALCUTTA,  
July 2, 1925

At the Hindu quarters, where Mr. Gandhi spoke to the Hindus, Maulana Azad was also present. Mr. Gandhi asked the Hindus to leave their lathis and purify their minds. He said that the Hindus had done wrong by molesting their Mohammedan brethren. His information was that no *kurbani* (slaughter) took place before the eyes of the Hindus. Even if there was a *kurbani* the Hindus had no right to kill men. As it was the injunction of the Hindu Shashtra to protect the cow, it was also the injunction to protect men in order to protect the cow. They had no right to kill men. To kill men was a greater crime than killing cows. If Hinduism meant righting a wrong by committing a greater crime then his religion was not Hinduism. Mr. Gandhi said :

I have come to help you, if you have committed any crime. I would ask the culprit to come forward and say : 'I have killed or wounded men'. Let him confess to the police and go to jail or be hanged.

*The Hindu*, 3-7-1925

### 64. STATEMENT TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

CALCUTTA,  
July 2, 1925

At about 4 p.m. whilst I was attending a meeting of signatories to the Memorial, Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta gave the meeting the information that , there was a man waiting outside with a report of a serious riot in the coolie lines at Kidderpore dock. We immediately asked the man to come inside and, hearing his report, I suggested to Mr. Sen Gupta that he might telephone and enquire what the matter really was. He, however, preferred to motor himself and find out the situation and on reaching there, the scene of trouble, he sent a telephone message to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Saheb asking him to go there and take me with him. Maulana Saheb came and we immediately motored. This was about 5.30 p.m. On the way, we found a large number of Mussalmans in an excited state saying that

<sup>1</sup> Riots had broken out in Calcutta on the occasion of *Bakr-Id*. Vide also the following item.

many Mussalmans had been killed. They had lathis with them. Maulana Saheb pacified them and told them that he and I were going to investigate and that, whatever had happened, they must not think of taking revenge for what they might consider wrong done by Hindus. They listened to Maulana Saheb and consented to disperse. On reaching the gate, we met Mr. Sen Gupta who told us that when he arrived there, there was a free fight going on which was stopped with some difficulty. Police were guarding the approaches and the compound seemed to have been cleared of strangers. We then went to Coolie barracks and on the way met a large crowd of Hindus armed with lathis. Upon enquiring, they said they had gathered there in self-defence as they were afraid of being attacked by Mussalmans. I spoke to them at some length and told them that the information at our disposal went to show that Hindus had mercilessly assaulted Mussalmans who were numerically much weaker than they. And I told them that, if they had done wrong, they should apologize. One of them said that a cow was killed in the lines contrary to custom and that enraged the coolies. We then went to the spot where the cow was said to have been killed. Upon reaching, we found there was no trace whatsoever of any cow having been killed on the spot that was shown to us. There were parts of a carcass without the skin. Mussalmans present told us that the cow was killed in a mosque and the meat, after the skinning, was brought to their homes in their carriage. There was no blood or any other mark of slaughter. The Commissioner of Police, Mr. Tegart, was present whilst we were making enquiry. So far as I can judge the blame appears to me to be wholly that of Hindus. I told accordingly, and I did not find any serious contradiction. The Hindus even asked for forgiveness of Mussalmans and said that they would not repeat the wrong. Up to that time, according to information in the possession of the Commissioner of Police, no deaths had occurred, though, among many injured Mussalmans, two were in a serious state. Maulana Saheb pacified the Mussalmans and told them that they ought not to give any credence to exaggerated reports and up to that time no one had died. He asked them all to disperse quietly which they consented to do. Assuming the truth of what we heard and saw, there is no doubt that Hindu coolies were entirely in the wrong and that they had hurt innocent Mussalmans and made themselves responsible for at least one death which, as I now understand, has occurred. It is terrible to contemplate that, according to information given to me by the Associated Press representative, there is not a single

Hindu wounded amongst those who were sent to the hospital. I can only hope that wrong-doers will deliver themselves to the authorities.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-7-1925*

## 65. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KHARAGPUR

*July 4, 1925*

From the Indian Institute Mahatmaji was taken to the Indian Recreation ground where about 20,000 persons had assembled all sitting on the ground. Several European officials of the B. N. Railway were seen present at the meeting and eagerly watching Mahatmaji who addressed the people in Hindi. He referred to the deplorable Hindu-Muslim riot at Kidderpore on the *Bakr-Id* day and said that the blame was entirely on the side of the Hindus. He very eloquently pleaded for Hindu-Muslim unity and expected the Hindus not to interfere with the observance of the religious rites by the Muslims. He also requested the latter not to wound the feelings of their Hindu brethren by anything they did.

At the conclusion he appealed for contribution in cash to the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund and a large sum of money was collected on the spot.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 7-7-1925*

## 66. DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

A friend writes :<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to correct the language of this letter. I do not remember to have said that we need not be concerned even if a satyagrahi is unjustified in his satyagraha. There is risk of harm in every wrong step. But I have certainly said that, if a satyagrahi is in the wrong, he himself will have to suffer, and he will deserve to suffer. A satyagrahi is not to be held responsible for the suffering which may be caused to the person against whom his satyagraha is directed, for a satyagrahi never wishes to inflict suffering on the other party. If the latter feels hurt or suffers, the satyagrahi need not blame himself. If I start a fast with a pure motive and the fast causes suffering to my co-workers, I must resign myself to that.

In the case imagined [in the letter], a father is said to be angry. A satyagrahi will never become angry and, if he does become in spite of himself, he will, till his anger has subsided and he has recovered his composure, take no step which may have an effect on the person who

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here.



is the cause of his anger. Should the satyagrahi, after long and careful deliberation, still think that what his parents have done is wrong, he may certainly try to rectify it, maintaining the utmost respect towards them while doing so; if, in spite of his respectful behaviour, they commit suicide, he need not feel troubled in his conscience. The parents alone would be to blame if in their folly they kill themselves. Why should a son hold himself responsible if his parents invite suffering on themselves by their own actions? If they ask him to do something which is a sin and, on his refusing to obey, they commit suicide, how is he to blame? Prahlad continued to repeat the name of God. This enraged Hiranyakashipu who in the end was destroyed. Prahlad is in no way to be held responsible for this result. Rama honoured his father's word and in the event Dasharatha died; the former is not, on that account, to be held guilty of Dasharatha's death. The subjects were submerged in a sea of grief but Rama hardened his heart and kept his pledge. So did Bhishma despite the intense suffering of Satyawati.<sup>1</sup> The main thing to be borne in mind about this matter is that the urge for satyagraha does not come from anyone. It must be spontaneous. Rama did not consult his elders and gurus before deciding to go and dwell in the forest. In fact, there were enough priests who told him that he would be committing a sin by going to dwell in the forest, and would commit none by refusing to go. But he followed what he thought was his duty, and went to the forest, and thereby won immortal fame. In this unhappy land of ours, people have become impotent to such an extent that on the flimsiest excuse persons threaten to kill themselves or fast unto death. We must not submit to such threats, even when we have reason to believe that they are likely to be carried out. I have often explained in *Navajivan* the difference between a fast which is satyagraha and a fast which is *duragraha*<sup>2</sup>.

The same friend gives another instance as follows :

A husband's duty is to provide shelter, food and clothing to his wife appropriate to their circumstances and within his means. A man who has grown poor cannot provide for his wife the luxuries which he could when he was better off. A husband who lives in ignorance may

<sup>1</sup> In the *Mahabharata*, to facilitate the marriage of his father, King Santanu, with Satyawati, Bhishma had taken a vow that he would never accept the throne, nor marry.

<sup>2</sup> Firmness in a wrong cause

lead, and help his wife to lead, a life of pleasure with dancing and drinking and foreign things to wear. Likewise, on awakening he will reform his life and also want the wife to reform hers. One needs to exercise discretion in this matter. The accepted idea in society is that the wife should follow the husband. But a husband has certainly no right to compel his wife or a father his children in matters like this. Anyone who, having himself adopted khadi, forces his wife and adult sons and daughters to do the same commits a sin. The person is not bound, however, to buy foreign cloth for them to wear. Grown-up sons, if they are not happy with the situation, may separate from the father. The wife's position is difficult. It is not so easy for her to leave the husband. She is generally incapable of supporting herself. I can, therefore, conceive situations in which, if the wife is not ready to follow the husband, it may be the latter's duty to buy foreign cloth for her. Giving up the use of foreign cloth is like changing one's religion. There is, and can be, no rule that every time the husband changes religion the wife too should change hers. The husband should let his wife follow her own religion or way of life, and *vice versa*. In such a case, therefore, the husband will agree to buy foreign cloth for his wife not because he has submitted to her threat, but because he knows it would be wrong to compel her to do anything against her own wishes. Suppose that the wife not only wants foreign cloth for herself, but also wants the husband to wear it and threatens to kill herself if he does not agree. The husband must not submit to such a threat.

The third instance is as follows :

I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that the son should not respect the practice of untouchability even if his conduct causes the utmost suffering to his father. The caution I gave when discussing the first case is relevant here too. This hard-hearted advice is not meant for one who has come to believe that the practice of untouchability is a sin because he has read it so described in my articles. It is meant only for those who are themselves convinced of its being a sin. The point is that so long as one holds an idea as an intellectual belief and no more, one must not disregard the duty, which has reference to the heart, of obeying one's parents. If Prahlad had learnt to repeat Rama's name at someone's suggestion, it would have been his duty to stop repeating it when forbidden by his father.

The fourth, and the last, instance is as follows :<sup>1</sup>

I do not believe that it is the duty of a husband or a wife to gratify his or her partner's desire. It is a kind of coercion for either partner to compel the other to share in his or her weakness. A husband and a wife have no right to use coercion in their relations with each other. Desire is like fire. It consumes human beings as fire consumes hay. Light one blade in a stack of hay and the whole will be on fire. We need not take the trouble of lighting all the blades one by one. When one partner is overcome with desire, the other is bound to be affected. I bow in all reverence to the husband or the wife who is not so affected.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 5-7-1925

## 67. *LEARNING AND ENJOYING*

Pupils are taught astronomy in schools which teach English, — or they were in my time. It was not to be expected that the subject should figure in schools which taught only Gujarati. In teaching it, however, it never occurred to the teacher to point to the stars in the sky. Even if a teacher thought of doing so, what could he teach? If asked by someone to point out the planet Mars, I certainly doubt whether he could have done so. As, however, the study of astronomy means learning to recognize the planets and the stars moving in the heavens, the subject should be taught by directly pointing these out.

But nothing of the sort was done in those days. I knew, of course, that astronomy could be a very interesting study if the subject was taught through direct observation of the heavens, but this became especially clear to me while I was spending my days in the holy Yeravda Jail.<sup>2</sup> We were permitted there to sleep in the open and, therefore, my desire to converse with the stars became very strong. But, not knowing their language, what was I to talk with them about? I wished to learn their language with the help of books, but could not do so. For I had busied myself with work there, and knowing that I had to spend six years in jail, I had thought that I would learn to

<sup>1</sup> The extract is not translated here. It described the difficulty of a husband who had taken the vow of *brahmacharya*, but had to consider his wife's desire for a son, the couple having lost all the four sons born to them.

<sup>2</sup> From March 1922 to February 1924

converse with these denizens of the sky after completing the study of the Upanishads which I had undertaken.

But I was destined to be a witness to the death of Chittaranjan<sup>1</sup> and so did not remain in Yeravda as long as I would have been happy to. The God who rules our fate sent me out, providing a reason in my illness, and so I remained without the knowledge of the solar system. I envy Shri Shankerlal, for, a book in hand, he had started every night making the acquaintance of the stars. I have before me an illustration, in a handwritten newspaper, of how one may enjoy learning this subject; I quote from it here :<sup>2</sup>

If the reader would taste the joy described in this passage, let him look at the sky on a cloudless night. If he is altogether ignorant about the planets, he would be in the same plight as I am. Let him come out of it without delay. He should get hold of a book which will teach him astronomy interestingly, and go through it. If necessary, he may write to the Gujarat Vidyapith to inquire from where he may order it. If he does not get the required information from that source, or is told that no such book is available, he may stop contributing money to the Vidyapith if he has been doing so. If, on the other hand, he succeeds in finding the book, he should contribute something now even in case he has hitherto contributed nothing.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 5-7-1925

## 68. MY NOTES

### DESHBANDHU'S LAST JOURNEY

The scriptures say that, as a man abandons an old house and goes to live in a new one, so the *atman* dwelling in a body abandons it when it grows old, builds another and lives in that. As one does not feel happy when leaving one's old house, because of long association with it, likewise the soul is not happy when leaving the body because of the association, even if the legs are swollen and look like pillars, the body is emaciated into a mere skeleton and the man struggles for breath. But one forgets the old house when the new one is ready and the soul, too, when it has a new home to dwell in, retains no memory at all of the old—such is the mystery of death and birth. If this is so,

<sup>1</sup> C. R. Das

<sup>2</sup> The passage is not translated here.

what cause do we have for fear or grief? It is more correct to think of death as the last journey than as mere extinction.

If we wish Deshbandhu's soul to have peace in its last journey, there is only one thing we can do, and that is to develop in ourselves as many of his virtues as we can. Some of them we certainly can. All of us cannot command English like his or be lawyers of his calibre or do the work he did in legislatures, but we can all have his patriotism and cultivate generosity like his. We may not be able to give as much money as he did, but anyone who gives to the best of his means will have given enough. A copper coin given by a widow counts far more than the thousands a Maharaja may give from the crores in his possession. After he had started wearing khadi, Deshbandhu never used any other cloth for his dress either at home or in public. Shall we not start wearing khadi? Deshbandhu never demanded fine khadi. He preferred coarse khadi. He tried to learn spinning. Will those who have not started spinning do so?

#### ALL-INDIA MEMORIAL

At present, money is being collected for a memorial to him in Bengal. But will it be right not to have an all-India memorial? Since all of us are busy here with the collection for Bengal, I have not been able to consult friends. But I have been thinking about the matter in my own mind. As for the kind of memorial it should be, I have Deshbandhu's trust-deed with me. This is not written down, as the written will for the memorial in Bengal, but it is as good as a written testament. I shall say no more about it in this issue; my appeal will have come out before the next issue.

The reader should get ready to loosen his purse strings. Since people will be asked to contribute only as much as their means permit, no one need get nervous. Deshbandhu gave money not out of fear but of his own free will; he enjoyed giving. If he threw up a practice worth millions, it was with no painful effort of will; he did so because he found it unbearable to continue it. Let no one, therefore, feel nervous at my suggestion. With the progressive awakening in the country, every time there is a calamity, people will have to part with some share of their earnings; they should be ready to do so willingly. That is not love which merely sheds tears and does no more. Profession without action, is no love; it is but empty words. Love gives, and acts, without talking. One who loves his father does not go about, like a bard, praising the father's virtues; he preserves his legacy,

improves upon it and adds to it. A father's best property consists in his virtues, which the son cultivates in himself and so brings credit both to the father and to himself. In the same way, we who are Deshbandhu's heirs must contribute what we can to enhance what he has left behind.

#### GUJARATIS IN CALCUTTA

There is a special bond of regard between the Gujaratis and me. I have a way of saying harsh things, and the country has put up with it. It is to the Gujaratis, however, that I say the harshest things. They do not misunderstand me, but take my words in the right spirit, regard them as the salutary doses of a *vaid*<sup>1</sup> and love me all the more for them. I had this experience with the Gujaratis in Calcutta last week. They had called a meeting to express condolence on the death of Deshbandhu.<sup>2</sup> I was invited to attend and preside over it. The organizers had also promised me that they would make a collection. I saw that there had been no collection. I was, therefore, forced to say a few harsh things. We do well in holding a condolence meeting; but there should be only one, not too many. There had been one on the day on which Deshbandhu died, and again on July 1 there will be meetings in the whole country. There can be, therefore, only one reason for holding a meeting in between, confined to a particular community and that reason must be to start some constructive activity, namely to collect contributions for the fund. Some activity of this kind is the best thing which Gujaratis, Marwaris and other outsiders living in Bengal can take up. This is what I said in my speech. It did not make the Gujaratis angry; on the contrary, they understood my point and there was a shower of rupees from the galleries in the theatre in which the meeting was held, and a sum of more than Rs. 6,000 was collected on the spot. If anyone offered less than he should, there was no dearth of persons to rebuke him. I have been told that there are still many persons who have not given as much as they can. If it is so, I should like such persons to make good the deficiency.

In this Note, however, my aim is to thank my Gujarati brothers in Calcutta.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 5-7-1925

<sup>1</sup> Physician practising Ayurvedic system of medicine

<sup>2</sup> The meeting was held at Alfred Theatre on June 26, 1925.

## 69. LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU

MIDNAPUR,  
July 6, 1925

MY DEAREST MIRABAI,

I have your letter of sweet rebuke. May your striving succeed. Do you think that I am wilfully holding back? Nothing will keep me, not even you, from a forward movement when I have the call from within. Do I not remember those pearl drops you shed from your big eyes when you peremptorily asked me to go to the Punjab? I could not go then. But I did not stop a moment when I felt the call. No doubt those hot tears had their inevitable melting effect on some snowy parts lurking unconsciously within me. By all means therefore continue to strive and deliver your non-violent blows. I shall never misunderstand you or be angry with you. I want you to act on me. Believe me, I am as impatient as you are to go forward. I feel that we are going forward, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. Only I have not the immediate hope of 1921. That was a new birth and the joyous hope of it. Today the hope is there but it is based on mature experience and calculation. However I am watching every movement in the Indian sky. Above all I am praying. Yes, the self-deprecation is there. We do need to be humble and purify ourselves.

Your estimate of Deshbandhu is perfect. I am thankful to God for those precious days at Darjeeling. Having put the cup to my lips cruel fate has dashed it before me as if to mock me.

With love to you and Padmaja,

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

My right hand refuses to work any more after a good day's labour. Hence this effort with the left hand.

Are you coming on 16th?

From the original: Padmaja Naidu Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 70. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[July 6, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MAHADEV,

I do understand your grief at our separation. Will that not become permanent one day? So bear this much which is inevitable.

I had Motilalji's wire. Meet Basanti Devi. Consult her and then send a wire directly from there. Let her stay with us if she can be well looked after at 148 [Russa Road]. However, this depends entirely upon Basanti Devi.

I have also received your letter here. The thing must have been given to the *Forward*. It is bound to appear some day. Send a copy to Shyambabu.

Rs. 500/- have been collected at Khadagpur and Rs. 500/- at Contai. Some more have been promised. Let us see how much we get here at Midnapur. Rajendra Babu parted from us here. He has gone to Purulia.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Meet Basanti Devi every day. I wrote two more columns for *Young India* in the train.

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : S.N. 11432

## 71. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

*Ashad Vad 1* [July 7, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MAHADEV,

I must write something to you. I have your mail. I have not received any addressed to Khadi Pratishthan. I shall write about the collection after going there. I hope the summaries of my speeches appear in the papers. That article was all right. Here in Midnapur I gave the Rani a lesson in spinning. She had taken a vow too. I shall certainly examine the Chinaman. If we can keep him, I would

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*



certainly do so. You may keep him under your shelter. It would be better if he learnt Hindi. Yesterday I went to sleep four times. The desire for sleep is not yet satisfied. Many a one has taught me to eat off silver utensils. Here I had a lesson in eating off gold utensils. Just imagine a gold bowl upon our wooden plate! How to accept such worshipful hospitality? I was stunned. Said not a word to the Rani. Could God be tempting me? But how long? What faith this country has! May God save me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 11430

## 72. *LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI*

MIDNAPUR,

*Ashadh Vad 1 [July 7, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. ANASUYABEHN,

I have overworked my right hand, so I am using the left hand. You will get an idea of my preoccupations from *Navajivan* and *Young India*. I have now resumed the unfinished tour of Bengal. It will be completed in eight days.

A woman gave me a present. It will be fitting to send it to you. Hence I do so.

My entire programme has become disarranged for the present. So I cannot write anything about my movements with certainty. I shall be here the whole of this month. The programme afterwards will be finalized after the 16th.

I hope you and Shankerlal are keeping well. This time neither Mahadev nor Krishnadas is with me. I have left Mahadev behind for the collection of funds and have sent Krishnadas for improving his health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Satis Babu is with me.

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32788

<sup>1</sup> In 1925 Gandhiji was in Midnapur on this date which corresponded to *Ashadh Vad 1*.

### *73. SPEECH TO STUDENTS, MIDNAPUR<sup>1</sup>*

*July 7, 1925*

He said that he was pleased that the function at Midnapore began with a welcome from the students. His present tour, he said, was meant for the realization of the teachings of Deshbandhu Das and for the raising of a subscription for his memorial. He said that Deshbandhu sacrificed his property and life for the welfare of the young men and that he hoped and depended much on them, specially the students. Mahatma said that the life of that illustrious patriot might be divided into two parts—external and internal. The external only tended to help the internal. Deshbandhu wanted to increase the strength of the nation and free the country. So far as the external was concerned, it was only for the rich and the educated to follow, but as to the internal, it might be cultivated alike by the rich and the poor, by the educated and the illiterate, by the boy and the girl, by the young and the old. For the last 6 or 9 months of his life, Deshbandhu tried to hold before the public the ideal of village reorganization or village reconstruction in which males and females of every age and grade in society might take part.

Mahatmaji directed the attention of the students to this and said that the foremost and easiest way of beginning work in the village is the introduction of charkha in every household. He had long discussions with Deshbandhu over this at Darjeeling and both of them agreed as above, and the latter communicated the same to Babu Satcouripati Roy only a few days before he expired. It is a pity, said the Mahatma, that Deshbandhu was not among them to complete the programme he had chalked out for his countrymen. He said that, if they had any love or admiration for their Deshbandhu, they would take a vow to spin for at least half an hour every day, never use any foreign cloth and take up the work of village reconstruction in right earnest. In conclusion, he appealed to the students to take the permission of their parents and contribute whatever they could to the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. He asked them to give any gold buttons or articles of luxury they had with them or curtail their daily expenditure, even by fasting, for one, two or three days, if necessary, and contribute the savings to the fund. This sort of sacrifice, he said, was not new to the students, and that, during the last 30 or 40 years of his political activity, he received such help from them on many occasions, notably during the last Malabar flood relief. He, however, warned them that, if this sacrifice on their part was not done with pleasure, he would not accept a farthing from them. He asked them to choose one of

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was presented with an address by the students, to which he replied in Hindi.

them or one of their elders as their leader and collect subscriptions through him and take a vow to spin regularly and never to use foreign cloth.<sup>1</sup>

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 8-7-1925

#### 74. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BANKURA<sup>2</sup>

July 8, 1925

Mahatmaji said that, after his arrival in the district, he had heard of the many activities of Anil Babu and the hold he had on the affection of the people. Mahatmaji exhorted the people to carry on the work of Anil Babu and hoped that Anil Babu would soon be back from jail. Then he said that he was carrying the message of Deshbandhu and the lessons the departed hero taught us—the lesson of sacrifice, of intense activity, of extreme devotion to the motherland and of love of the poor.

He asked the people to accelerate the work of the Swaraj Party, not by paying a mere subscription or enlisting the name, but by reconstruction of the village. It was not possible for everyone to enter the Councils, but it was possible for everyone to help in the work of reconstruction. Mahatmaji said that, at Darjeeling, he and Deshbandhu were in complete conformity so far as charkha and village reconstruction were concerned. How was it possible to attain swaraj unless the village life was revived? The charkha was the emblem of the unity of the village and the town. The root of all famines, diseases and other calamities was India's poverty. That was the lesson he was taught from the early days of the Congress from the pages of the Dada of Hindusthan, Dadabhai Naoroji.<sup>3</sup> And how could we get rid of that poverty? By taking to the charkha. He asked the people to reflect upon the immense possibilities of the charkha. He then concluded by appealing for collections for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Coins and ornaments now began to pour in and the meeting dispersed.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11-7-1925

<sup>1</sup> Later in the day Gandhiji addressed a women's meeting and in the evening, a largely-attended public gathering, where he was presented addresses by several institutions and spoke emphasizing the need for rural reconstruction, spinning, Hindu-Muslim unity, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was presented with addresses by the public, the District Board, the Municipality and Bankura Sammilani. He replied to them in Hindi.

<sup>3</sup> Reference to *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*

## 75. NOTES

### TWO DIFFICULTIES

A distinguished countryman has sent me through a common friend the following questions for answer in *Young India* :

1. You admit that untouchability is a blot not only upon Hinduism but upon humanity. Why then do you restrict the circle of reformers to Hindus only? Why may not Mussalmans take up the reform the same as Hindus?

2. You insist continuously upon Hindu-Muslim unity, will you please point out anything concrete you have done for Islam or Mussalmans?

As to the first question, although the evil of untouchability is not merely a blot upon Hinduism, but is also a blot upon humanity, it is a question which Hindus must solve for themselves, even as they are solving several other questions regarding Hinduism. There is the question of *devadasis*, for instance. Their existence is not a small evil. The institution is a blot upon humanity. But no non-Hindu thinks of meddling with it in the same sense in which Hindus are. The reason is obvious. Removal of these abuses has to come from within, not imposed upon Hindus. This can only be brought about by Hindus. Mussalmans, Christians and other non-Hindus are at perfect liberty to criticize untouchability as any other evil in Hinduism. They can lend the reform their moral support. But they may not go further without exposing themselves to the charge of having designs upon Hinduism.

As to the second charge, I must content myself with having noted it. I cannot answer it without committing a breach of propriety. If I have to prove to Mussalmans my concrete contribution to unity, it follows that there is none. And I must, therefore, submit to the condemnation that the question carries with it, till such time that my *bona fides* are self-proved. But, in fairness to the Mussalmans in general, I must say that it is for the first time that I have been called upon to produce a certificate of service. Let me say, however, that they also serve who wait and pray. And if there are many Mussalmans like the distinguished inquirer who want to inspect my record of service, I ask them not to bother their heads about it, but to be content with the assurance that I am at least watching, waiting and praying, if I am not actively serving.

#### “VAIDYAS” COMPLAINT

The *vaidyas* have been deeply hurt by my criticism of Ayurveda

and Unani physicians. They accuse me of softness of brain and denial of ahimsa. I am sorry to have caused so much hurt to them. But I cannot plead guilty. I have not criticized Ayurveda. I have criticized those who have professed to follow it. I have not criticized all of them, but I have criticized the large number who make the pretensions I have accused them of. There is no contradiction between my endorsement of proposition to promote research in the indigenous drugs and plants and my condemnation of the method adopted by some to these physicians, even as there is none between my laying the foundation of the Ayurvedic College in Calcutta and my warning to the *kavirajas*. It is open to the *vaidyas* of Poona to reject the criticism offered in a friendly spirit. I shall be sorry for the decision, but the rejection will not alter my opinion which is based on experience. I have chapter and verse for every statement I have made. I do like everything that is ancient and noble, but I utterly dislike a parody of it. And I must respectfully refuse to believe that ancient books are the last word on the matters treated in them. As a wise heir to the ancients, I am desirous of adding to and enriching the legacy inherited by us. Let me inform the protestants that some *kavirajas* have welcomed my criticism, which has set them thinking. Needless to say that it was not directed against those who are carrying on scientific research in a spirit of humility and without counting the cost. Only, they are too few to be counted. I plead for an appreciable increase.

#### SPINNING RESOLUTION

The reader will recall the spinning resolution of the A.I.C.C. at Ahmedabad. The following figures have been supplied to me by the A.I.K.B. of the use made of the yarn received in terms of the resolution :<sup>1</sup>

This brief report has its own moral. The output is nothing compared to what it should be or can be. But the effort shows how the slightest inattention to detail hampers progress in every direction. An organization is like machinery; just as, if the smallest screw becomes loose, the whole machinery becomes loose and may even break down, so in an organization the least looseness affects its smooth working and the results expected. The brief experiment of three months has a lesson for those who are dealing with the spinning franchise.

<sup>1</sup> The report, which spoke of the inferiority of much of the yarn spun, is not reproduced here.

The price of this khaddar has not been reduced for the simple reason that the quantity is too small to warrant reduction. And it was a difficult thing to determine who should receive the benefit of the cheapness. Spinners beware! On you, as you can see from the report, depends the question of exclusion of foreign cloth and the production of khaddar enough to clothe the whole country.

#### SPINNING A NEW HABIT

An esteemed American friend who has been practising spinning writes :

May I take the liberty of making a suggestion, growing out of my temporary failure some time ago to keep up my spinning regularly? (I have reformed now.) It is this : that in asking people to spin or in talking with them after they have promised to spin, might it not be worth while to get them to realize that they are about to establish a *new habit*; that new habits must be very assiduously tended until they get firmly established; that one failure in regularity, one omission will undo the work and strivings of many days in the early stages of formation of the habit; that new channels of nervous and muscular action and control have to be worn by *constant, regular* practice; that probably the habit is not safely established until one can spin and at the same time talk with people and discuss matters entirely different, while keeping the hands going. Then the control and response have become automatic. People ought to realize that mere emotional enthusiasm does not always carry through the labour of firmly establishing the habit; that they should reinforce their emotions by their minds, by clearly thinking out the values, meaning, applications of charkha and khaddar to themselves, their family, their village and nation, —politically, economically, morally and spiritually. Those who can afford to ought to buy your “Wheel of Fortune” and read all the discussions of the subject they can.

Personally I feel that people, especially intellectuals unused to hand-work and simple realities, need to reinforce their enthusiasm by their minds. I feel that one of the reasons for much of the back-sliding since 1920 may have been due to this lack of realization by new converts of how they should go about the establishment of such a new habit, what are the dangers to guard against, how they can provide in advance to keep themselves in a favourable frame of mind of free from distractions or interruptions at the chosen spinning hour each day, how they can provide favourable surroundings and atmosphere, how to get a due sense of what is really important, etc.

Maybe, you always do give them advice, or maybe I am reasoning wrongly out of experience of American character and in ignorance of the

Indian nature. Those were some of the things which caused my failure for several weeks, so I pass them along to you for whatever worth they may have.

The friend need not have apologized for relating his experience, for human nature at bottom is the same even as the American sky as a matter of fact is the same as the Indian. Only the presentation is different from what the readers of *Young India* are accustomed to. The voluntary spinners who have become accustomed to spinning have had the same difficulties that have faced the American friend. What is wanted is resolution at the back of one's mind. It anticipates and overcomes all difficulties. The value of the friend's analysis of his difficulties lies in the fact that he has made plain to us what most of us have felt without perceiving.

*Young India*, 9-7-1925

#### 76. PAINFULLY ILLUMINATING

This letter<sup>1</sup> was handed to me at Chittagong and has been in my jacket, awaiting attention at the first opportunity. The reader is aware how the attempt to wean the fallen sisters from their error has apparently resulted in giving a passport to vice. Prostitution I knew was a tremendous and a growing evil. The tendency to see virtue in vice and excuse evil in the sacred name of art or some other false sentiment has clothed this debasing indulgence with a kind of subtle respectability which is responsible for the moral leprosy which he who runs may see. But I was unprepared for the terrible state the correspondent declares to exist. I fear that he has not exaggerated the evil. For, during my tour, I have had corroboration from various sources. Great as the evil is in this age of unbelief or a mere mechanical belief in God and an age of multiplicity of comforts and luxuries, almost reminding one of the degradation to which Rome had descended when she was apparently at the zenith of her power, it is not easy to prescribe a remedy. It cannot be remedied by law. London is seething with the vice. Paris is notorious for its vice which has almost become a fashion. If law would have prevented it, these highly organized nations would have cured their capitals of the vice. No amount of writing on the part of reformers like myself can deal with

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. It spoke of the evils of brothels, cinema-houses, drinking and smoking.

the evil in any appreciable form. The political domination of England is bad enough. The cultural is infinitely worse. For, whilst we resent and, therefore, endeavour to resist the political domination, we hug the cultural, not realizing in our infatuation that, when the cultural domination is complete, the political will defy resistance. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not wish to imply that, before the British rule, prostitution was unknown in India. But I do say that it was not so rampant as now. It was confined to the few upper ten. Now it is fast undoing the youth of the middle classes. My hope lies in the youth of the country. Such of them as are prey to the vice are not vicious by nature. They are helplessly and thoughtlessly drawn to it. They must realize the harm that it has done them and society. They must understand, too, that nothing but a rigorously disciplined life will save them and the country from utter ruin. Above all, unless they visualize God and seek His aid in keeping them from temptation, no amount of dry discipline will do them much good. Truly has the Seer said in the *Gita* that “desire persists though man may by fasting keep his body under restraint. Desire goes only when one has seen God face to face.” Seeing God face to face is to feel that He is enthroned in our hearts even as a child feels a mother’s affection without needing any demonstration. Does a child reason out the existence of a mother’s love? Can he prove it to other? He triumphantly declares : “It is.” So must it be with the existence of God. He defies reason. But He is experienced. Let us not reject the experience of Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Ramdas and a host of other spiritual teachers even as do not reject that of mundane teachers.

The correspondent has inquired whether Congressmen may do the many things he has enumerated, such as theatre-going, etc. I have already remarked that man cannot be made good by law. If I had the power of persuasion, I would certainly stop women of illfame from acting as actresses, I would prevent people from drinking and smoking, I would certainly prevent all the degrading advertisements that disfigure even reputable journals and newspapers and I would most decidedly stop the obscene literature and portraits that soil the pages of some of our magazines. But, alas, I have not the persuasive power I would gladly possess. But to regulate these things by law, whether of the State or the Congress, would be a remedy probably worse than the disease. What is wanted is an intelligent, sane, healthy and pure public opinion. There is no law against using kitchens as



closets or drawing rooms as stables. But public opinion, that is, public taste will not tolerate such a combination. The evolution of public opinion is at times a tardy process but it is the only effective one.

*Young India*, 9-7-1925

### 77. 'THE SCIENCE OF SURRENDER'

Exception has been taken to my remarks at a meeting in Calcutta that Deshbandhu, in his relations with the Mussalmans, brought "the science of surrender to perfection". The exception has been taken because my critics impute to me the implication that by surrender I mean that Deshbandhu conferred on Mussalmans favours, that is, things they were not entitled to. The critics opine that the Hindus are acting towards the Mussalmans much the same as Englishmen are acting towards us all—having first taken away everything and then offering us doles in the name of favours.

I know what I said at the meeting in question. I have not read the reports of my speech, but I desire to abide by all I said at that meeting. I make bold to say that without mutual surrender there is no hope for this distraught country. Let us not be hyper-sensitive or devoid of imagination. To surrender is not to confer favour. Justice that love gives is a surrender, justice that law gives is a punishment. What a lover gives transcends justice. And yet it is always less than he wished to give, because he is anxious to give more and frets that he has nothing left. It is libellous to say that Hindus act like Englishmen. Hindus cannot even if they would, and this I say in spite of the brutality of the labourers of Kidderpore. Both Hindus and Mussalmans sail in the same boat. Both are fallen. And they are in the position of lovers, have to be, whether they will or no. Every act, therefore, of a Hindu towards the Mussalman and *vice versa* must be an act of surrender and not mere justice. They may not weigh their acts in golden scales and exact consideration. Each has to regard himself ever a debtor of the other. By justice, why should not a Mussalman kill a cow every day in front of me? But his love for me restrains him from so doing and he goes out of his way sometimes even to refrain from eating beef for his love of me, and yet thinks that he has done only just what is right. Justice permits me to shout my music in the ear of Maulana Mahomed Ali when he is at prayer, but I go out of my way to anticipate his feelings and make my talks whispers whilst he is praying and still consider that I have conferred

no favour on the Maulana. On the other hand, I should become a loathsome creature if I exercised my just right of playing tomtom precisely at the time of his prayer. Justice might have been satisfied if Deshbandhu Das had not filled certain posts with Mussalmans, but he went out of his way to anticipate Mussalman wishes and placate Mussalman sentiment. It was his sensitiveness to placate them that hastened his death. For I know what a shock it was to him to learn that law, i.e., justice, would compel him to disinter certain remains buried in unauthorized ground and he was trying to find out means of avoiding any the slightest offence to Muslim sentiment, even though it may be unreasonable. This was all going out of the way—not his way, but the way of the world. And yet he never considered that he was conferring any favour on the Mussalmans by delicately considering their feelings. Love never claims, it ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, never revenges itself.

This talk, therefore, of justice and nothing but justice is a thoughtless, angry and ignorant outburst whether it comes from Hindus or Mussalmans. So long as Hindu and Mussalmans continue to prate about justice, they will never come together. ‘Might is right’ is the last word of ‘justice and nothing but justice.’ Why should Englishmen surrender an inch of what they have earned by right of conquest? Or why should Indians, when they come to power, not make the English disgorge everything which their ancestors robbed them of? And yet when we come to a settlement, as we shall some day, we will not weigh in the scales of justice so called. But we shall introduce into the calculation the disturbing factor of surrender, otherwise called love or affection or fellow-feeling. And so will it be with us Hindus and Mussalmans when we have sufficiently broken one another’s heads and spilled a few gallons of innocent blood and realized our foolishness. The scales will then fall off our eyes and we shall recognize that vengeance was not the law of friendship; not justice but surrender and nothing but surrender was the law of friendship. Hindus will have to learn to bear the sight of cow-slaughter and the Mussalmans will have to discover that it was against the law of Islam to kill a cow in order to wound the susceptibilities of Hindus. When that happy day arrives, we shall know only each other’s virtues. Our vices will not obtrude themselves upon our gaze. That day may be far off or it may be very near. I feel it coming soon. I shall work for that end and no other.

It is scarcely necessary for me to add by way of caution that my

surrender does not mean surrender of principle. I made the point clear at the meeting and I wish to emphasize it here once more. But what we are just now fighting for is not any principle at all, but vanity and prejudice. We strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

*Young India*, 9-7-1925

### 78. A SILENT SERVANT

I would ask the reader to share my grief over the death of an esteemed friend and silent servant—I mean Principal Sushil Rudra, who died on Tuesday, 30th June. India, whose chief disease is her political servitude, recognizes only those who are fighting publicly to remove it by giving battle to a bureaucracy that has protected itself with a treble line of entrenchment—army and navy, money and diplomacy. She naturally does not know her selfless and self-effacing workers in other walks of life, no less useful than the purely political. Such a humble worker was Sushil Rudra, late principal of St. Stephen's College. He was a first-class educationist. As principal, he had made himself universally popular. There was a kind of spiritual bond between him and his pupils. Though he was a Christian, he had room in his bosom for Hinduism and Islam which he regarded with great veneration. His was not an exclusive Christianity that condemned to perdition everyone who did not believe in Jesus Christ as the only saviour of the world. Jealous of the reputation of his own, he was tolerant towards the other faiths. He was a keen and careful student of politics. Of his sympathies with the so-called extremists, if he made no parade, he never made any secret either. Ever since my return home in 1915, I had been his guest whenever I had occasion to go to Delhi. It was plain sailing enough so long as I had not declared satyagraha in respect of the Rowlatt Act. He had many English friends in the higher circles. He belonged to a purely English Mission. He was the first Indian principal chosen in his college. I, therefore, felt that his intimate association with me and his giving me shelter under his roof might compromise him and expose his college to unnecessary risk. I, therefore, offered to seek shelter elsewhere. His reply was characteristic: "My religion is deeper than people may imagine. Some of my opinions are vital parts of my being. They are formed after deep and prolonged prayers. They are known to my English friends. I cannot possibly be misunderstood by keeping you under my roof as an honoured friend and guest. And if ever I have to make

a choice between losing what influence I may have among Englishmen and losing you, I know what I would choose. You cannot leave me.” “But what about all kinds of friends who come to see me? Surely, you must not let your house become a caravansera when I am in Delhi,” I said. “To tell you the truth,” he replied, “I like it all. I like the friends who come to see you. It gives me pleasure to think that, in keeping you with me, I am doing some little service to my country.” The reader may not be aware that my open letter<sup>1</sup> to the Viceroy, giving concrete shape to the Khilafat claim, was conceived and drafted under Principal Rudra’s roof. He and Charlie Andrews were my revisionists. Non-co-operation was conceived and hatched under his hospitable roof. He was a silent but deeply interested spectator at the private conference that took place between the Maulanas, other Mussalman friends and myself. Religious motive was the foundation for all his acts. There was, therefore, no fear of temporal power, though the same motive also enabled him to value the existence and the use and the friendship of temporal power. He exemplified in his life the truth that religious perception gives one a correct sense of proportion resulting in a beautiful harmony between action and belief. Principal Rudra drew to himself as fine characters as one could possibly wish for. Not many people know that we owe C. F. Andrews to Principal Rudra. They were twins. Their relationship was a study in ideal friendship. Principal Rudra leaves behind him two sons and a daughter, all grown up and settled in life. They know their grief is shared by the numerous friends and admirers of their noble-hearted father.

*Young India*, 9-7-1925

### 79. CHANCE OF PEACE<sup>2</sup>

I do not read the Faridpur message as Mr. Chatterji does. Deshbandhu made his position clear to the extent that he was prepared to wait for full responsible government till 1929, provided an honourable compromise was offered by the Government making it possible for the people’s representatives to work the Reforms. What those terms should be was a matter of friendly discussion at a round-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Viceroy”, 22-6-1920.

<sup>2</sup> This was Gandhiji’s rejoinder to B. C. Chatterji’s letter dated July 3; *vide* Appendix “Letter from B. C. Chatterjee”, 9-7-1925.

table conference. It was impossible for Deshbandhu to accept, in advance and without accurately knowing them, the minority recommendations of the Muddiman Committee. My own position is incredibly simple. I am interested in the Reforms through my accredited agents, the Swarajists. They have specialized in the matter and I shall endorse whatever they recommend. I have nothing to offer the British Government save my weakness at the present moment. In my weakness, I can only wait for England to make a sincere gesture. When she does, I shall close unconditionally. Even in my weakness, I feel strong enough to know what is and is not life-giving and to reject what is not life-giving. I cannot deceive myself. I expect nothing substantial till my poor country is strong. I must, therefore, gather strength. And since I eschew violence from my selection of means, I have to fall back upon the spinning-wheel and such like or the more comprehensive term given by Deshbandhu—village reconstruction, and if and when necessary, civil disobedience.

As to union of parties, I fear the differences between the Liberals and the Swarajists are in some respects fundamental. A mere acceptance of Reforms under improved conditions does not necessarily destroy the difference. If I may state the difference as it appears to me, in one sentence, it is this : the Swarajists expect to be able to retaliate within a measurable distance of time if the Government do not accept the reasonable demands of the people, the Liberals expect to secure what is possible merely by reasoning with the Government. Liberals will, therefore, march with the Swarajists only up to a certain point. But I may be, I hope I am, mistaken. Like Barkis, I am ever willing.

*Young India*, 9-7-1925

## 80. NOT TWO RACES

The following will be read with interest :

I have many times noted that you have referred to the Hindus and the Muslims as two 'races' in India. In my humble opinion, it is only less mischievous to speak of these two religious communities as 'races' than it is to call them two 'nations' as a Mussalman correspondent of yours once did. (See *Young India*, 24-7-'24, p. 244).<sup>1</sup> The fact is that about 90 per cent of the

<sup>1</sup> Vide "A Gloomy Picture", 24-7-1924.

Mussal-man Indians (I would call them so, and not Indian Mussalmans, as they are wont to call themselves) are of the same 'race' or races as the Hindus,—having been descended from Indian ancestors who embraced Islam in India itself. As for the remaining 10 per cent of the Mussalman Indians, though they may have some drops of Turkish, Tatar, Arab, Pathan, Persian or Abyssinian blood in their veins, yet it is so much intermixed with native Indian blood by inter-marriage down through the generation that those 10 per cent may safely be designated as 90 per cent native by race. In fact, the Hindus and Mussalmans in India no more represent two races than do the Protestants and Catholics in England. It is a question upon which history, ethnology and anthropometry can fairly accurately pronounce. But above all, whatever the racial constitution of their blood, the fact cannot be denied that *all* of them (cent per cent) were born in India, are living in India, will die in India and be buried in India, like their fathers before them. And India is one country, and therefore they are all of one nation with Hindus. If only they were to regard themselves in Indian politics as Mussalman Indians, and not Indian Mussalmans!

All the above applies *mutatis mutandis* also to Christian Indians, the third important religious community in India. (Perhaps no religious community in India or outside is of one race. Certainly not the Hindus. Then why speak of any community as a race?) Let our Christians, too, in their country's politics treat themselves as Christian Indians, even as their fellows in faith are doing in Egypt, Palestine, China, Japan and the Philippines.

The correspondent's position is historically accurate. It is difficult to get out of the habit of using words which have passed current with a definite meaning. Even "two communities" is open to the same objection. I can only promise to be careful in future. The watchful correspondent must not relax his effort to make the language of *Young India* accord with facts.

*Young India*, 9-7-1925

## 81. SPEECH AT SWARAJIST COUNCILLORS' MEETING, CALCUTTA<sup>1</sup>

*July 9, 1925*

The Mahatma said that they should not indulge in the petty question whether Mr. Sen Gupta was a resident of Calcutta or not. The great point was that he was the leader of the Swaraj Party and the President of the Bengal Congress Committee. The Mayoralty should be associated with the man whom they had appointed leader the other day. They ought not to indulge in acrimonious discussions and, given fair trial, Mr. Sen Gupta would prove an asset to the Corporation. His hands should not be tied and it was up to the people to follow him in all matters, whether political or municipal. By associating himself in almost all the activities of the Deshbandhu, Mr. Sen Gupta had possessed a heritage from which he would never falter. He assured that Mr. Sen Gupta's administration would be happy and prosperous, with the co-operation and good will of his colleagues.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hindu, 10-7-1925*

## 82. AT DARJEELING

*[July 10, 1925]*

I have almost promised the reader the sacred recollections of the five days I had with Deshbandhu at Darjeeling. I have called them among the most precious in my life. As time passes, the preciousness increases. I must tell the reader why. Though I had lived under Deshbandhu's roof before, ours was then a purely political meeting. We were both engrossed in our own allotted tasks. But in Darjeeling it was different. I had Deshbandhu wholly to myself. He was resting and I had gone solely to have communion with him. My going to Darjeeling for rest was a mere excuse. But for Deshbandhu's presence

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held to elect a Mayor for the Municipal Corporation from among the two contestants—Sarat Chandra Bose, Swarajist Alderman, and J. M. Sen Gupta. Gandhiji and Abul Kalam Azad were deputed by the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee to persuade the Councillors to elect the latter. The point was raised in objection to Sen Gupta's candidature that he was not a resident of Calcutta, as he came from Chittagong. After an hourlong speech by Gandhiji, the full report of which is not available, Sen Gupta was elected by 31 votes to 6.

<sup>2</sup> For Gandhiji explanation as to his motives in espousing Sen Gupta's mayoralty, *vide* "Calcutta's Mayor", 16-7-1925.

there I would not have gone in spite of the attraction of the snowy range. But in one of his pencil notes, which he had lately taken to writing to me, he said, "Remember, you are under my jurisdiction. I am Chairman of the Reception Committee. You have to include Darjeeling in your tour. This is a command." I wish I had kept those sweet notes of his, but, alas! they have gone the way hundreds of such documents in my possession have gone. I pleaded that I had the Working Committee to take. "Then bring the whole Committee. I shall arrange for their accommodation. The B.P.C.C. shall pay the fares of the members. I am wiring to Satcouri accordingly," was his telegraphic reply. I was unable to take the Working Committee to Darjeeling, but I promised to go as soon after that meeting as possible. And so I went. I had gone there for only two days. He kept me with him for five. He got Basanti Devi to ask

Sjt. Phookan to postpone the Assam tour and himself postponed the Bengal tour by three days. I am mentioning these details to show the eagerness we had to be with each other. As it has turned out, Deshbandhu's approaching long sleep was preparing us for a close communion.

He was on a convalescent if not on a sick-bed. He had need to be taken care of. But he insisted on attending to every detail regarding my comfort and that of my companions. His appointment must be on a lavish scale. He had ordered five goats to be brought from the plains. He would not have me miss my milk for a single meal. I had often come under Basanti Devi's sisterly care, but at Darjeeling I was the object of Deshbandhu's personal attention. Nor was there any artificiality about it. Hospitality was the badge of his clan. He related several striking anecdotes about their lavish hospitality. It was at Darjeeling that I came to know his great regard for strangers or political opponents. At his instance, Satish Babu of Khadi Pratishthan was sent for to discuss with him the plan we had settled of working hand-spinning and khaddar in Bengal. I asked him where he would like Satish Babu to stay. "Of course in this house," he said. "But we are over-crowded here," I said. "Certainly not. He can have my room for that matter," was the retort. Whilst I was thinking of him and his over-worked partner, he thought of Satish Babu's comfort. "Besides," he said, "I know that Satish Babu thinks I am prejudiced against him. He is a comparative stranger to me. You know that I do not worry about my other friends. They cannot misunderstand me. Satish Babu must stay in this house."



We talked of different political groups in Bengal and, incidentally, I told him of the charges of bribery and corruption brought against the Swaraj Party. I mentioned to him the fact that Sir Surendranath had invited me to go to his house again before leaving Bengal. He said, "Do go and tell him all about our conversations and my emphatic denial of all charges of bribery and corruption. I am prepared to retire from public life if one such charge against the Party can be proved to be true. The fact is that Bengal political life is one of mutual jealousy and back-biting. The phenomenal rise and success of the Swaraj Party have become unbearable to some people. I want you, therefore, thoroughly to go into all the charges that may be brought against the Party and give your considered judgment. I assure you I do not believe in dishonesty any more than you do. I know that my country cannot be free by dishonest means. You will be rendering a distinct service if you can bring all the parties together or, at least, rid the air of mutual recrimination. You should specially speak to Shyam Babu and Suresh Babu. Why do they not come to me if they distrust or suspect anything? We may hold different views, but we need not swear at each other." "What about a similar charge against *Forward*? I do not know, because I do not read these newspapers; but I have heard complaints of that nature against *Forward* also", I interposed. "Yes, *Forward* may have been guilty. You know that I do not write for or supervise *Forward* as you do in case of *Young India*. But if people will bring such things to my notice, I will gladly investigate and set matters right. You will, I think, find *Forward* always on the defensive, but one may cross the boundary line even in putting up a defence. As you know, I am investigating a serious case of unpardonable exaggeration in *Forward* if the facts are as they have been put before me. I assure you I have written most strongly about it. I have even sent for the writer." Thus the conversation went on. I found, throughout it all, a scrupulous care about justice to opponents and an honourable meeting of all parties.

"What do you say to convening an All-Parties meeting, or, as Mr. Kelkar suggests it, of the All-India Congress Committee?" I asked. "I do not want it at present," he replied. "The A.I.C.C. is useless, because we Swarajists must play the game and give the fullest trial to the new franchise. I tell you, I am more and more coming round to your position about the charkha. I am afraid we have not played the game everywhere. Here in Bengal, as you have said, you had no opposition from any party. But had I not been laid up, I would

have shown the charkha to be a swinging success. I tell you I intended to work the charkha whole-heartedly and I wanted you to help me in the organization; but, as you see, I have been helpless. No revision can take place this year. On the contrary, we must all give the new franchise the fairest trial. I am going to write to the Maharashtra friends about it.”

Of the proposed All-Parties Conference he said, “We must not have the conference just yet. I expect big things from Lord Birkenhead. He is a strong man and I like strong men. He is not as bad as he speaks. If we hold the meeting, we must say something on the situation. I do not want to embarrass him by pitching our demands higher than he may be prepared to grant at the present moment. I do not want to disappoint him by understating our demands. We must watch and wait. We can lose nothing by so doing. If his statement is not satisfactory, that may be the time for calling a meeting of all parties to decide upon a common course of action.” This was to me novel reason for not convening the proposed meeting, so I said, “I shall not call the meeting unless you and Motilalji want it or unless I get a representative requisition. But I must confess to you that I do not share your faith. Look at the Hindu-Muslim differences which are widening. Contemplate the Brahmin and non-Brahmin quarrels. See the political parties in Bengal. We have apparently never been so weak as now. And don’t you agree with me that Englishmen have never conceded anything to weakness? I feel that we must make ourselves irresistible before we may expect anything big from England.” Deshbandhu became impatient and said, ‘You are arguing like a logician. I am speaking to you what I feel. Something within me tells me we are in for something big.’ I argued no more. I bowed my head in reverence before a faith so robust. I told him I had great regard for English character, I had inestimable friends among them, but I saw that his faith in them was greater than mine. Let Englishmen know what a great friend they have lost in Deshbandhu.

The Pir question at Calcutta troubled him a great deal. He was anxious that I should do what I could for its settlement. He said: “I want to placate the Mussalman feeling. I had hoped that, after the walling-in of the tomb, there would be nothing more heard about it. But now that there is a strong agitation about the disinterment, I cannot resist it. The law seems clearly against the burial on unauthorized ground. Neither Subhash nor Suhrawardy had any authority to grant the permission. But I must carry the Mussalmans

with me in all I do. I am trying to induce them to remove the body themselves. I have every hope that they will listen to me.”

We discussed the Tarakeshwar affair and the result was embodied in a statement<sup>1</sup> which was to be signed by him and me if it was necessary. We discussed, too, Dr. Besant's manifesto. It was the first in point of time to be discussed as he had promised an early reply to her. The result of that discussion was a letter<sup>2</sup> that he despatched to Dr. Besant.

But the thing that most occupied our time was a discussion of the charkha and khaddar especially in their bearing on village reorganization on which he had set his heart and for which he had collected nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lacs of rupees. I told him that his scheme was much too ambitious to be put into force all at once, that I had studied the skeleton which was shown to me by Pratap Babu and that I had strongly disapproved of it as wholly impractical. Deshbandhu had not seen it. He agreed that it was unworkable. In fact, Pratap Babu had himself admitted its unworkability. I told Deshbandhu that he should make the wheel the centre of all other village activities and that the latter should be made to revolve round the wheel and that they could be added wherever the charkha obtained a footing. I suggested, too, that this village organization should be independent of all political turmoil and, therefore, it should be entrusted to an expert committee with permanent powers sole function would be to carry on the village work. I suggested that he should invite Satish Babu to form a committee and take charge of the work on behalf of the Congress. I have reproduced merely the substance of the argument. Deshbandhu not only agreed with it all, but he took down notes and was eager to enforce the scheme at once. He said that he would like to discuss it fully with Satish Babu whilst I was in Darjeeling, and then give instructions for passing the necessary resolution by the Congress Committee. Satish Babu was, therefore, immediately sent for. He came. At first we three had discussions and then I was freed for other work and Deshbandhu had various chats with Satish Babu alone. The latter was to be the first member of the Board. Satcouri Babu was to be the second member and they two were to select a third. They were to have a part of the village fund at once placed at their disposal and I

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Duty of Satyagrahis”, 25-6-1925.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Draft of Letter to Annie Besant”, 4-6-1925.

was to give to the Board or Committee a part of the purse that was to be presented to me at Jalpaiguri. This committee, in order to place it on a firm footing, was even to be registered if necessary under the Benevolent Societies Registration Act which Deshbandhu said he would study for the purpose. Deshbandhu told Pratap Babu of the discussions and decision with instructions to carry out the decision.

Such was his passion for the wheel and therethrough of village organization. "If Lord Birkenhead disappoints us," he said, "I do not know what we should do in the Councils. But this I know that we must prosecute your programme of the charkha and organize our villages. We must become an industrious nation once more. We must bring power in the Councils. I must control the young men of Bengal. I must demonstrate, with the aid of the Government if possible and without if necessary, the possibility of achieving swaraj without violence. Non-violence has become as much my final creed as yours for the deliverance of our country. We can have no civil disobedience without non-violence. And without the ability to offer civil resistance, there is no swaraj. We need not have to offer it in fact, but we must have the ability. I must find work for my impatient young men. I agree with you that there is danger of corruption creeping into our camp if we do not take care. I have learnt from my guru the value of Truth in all our dealings. I want you to live with him for a few days at least. Your need is not the same as mine. But he has given me strength I did not possess before. I see things clearly which I saw dimly before.

But I dare not carry on this part of the conversation any further. I can only tell the reader that it developed into a spiritual discussion or rather discourse, for it was all an endless stream on his part of what he was then doing and what he proposed to do when he was stronger. The discourse gave me an insight into his deeply spiritual nature which I did not possess before. I did not know that it was his ruling passion as it is that of so many distinguished Bengalis. When he first talked, now four years ago, of building a hut on the banks of the Ganges and repeated it at Sassoon Hospital when he came to see me, I laughed within myself at the idea and jocosely said that, when he built his hut, I must share it with him. But I discovered my error at Darjeeling. He was more in earnest about it than about his politics on which he had entered only by force of circumstances.

Nor need the reader consider that I have exhausted all the topics we discussed. I have endeavoured to recall only the principal things. I

have omitted his pictures of men both European and Indian.

But if our main conversation always turned round the charkha, our daily routine was not otherwise. The whole household had become a spinning club. Mahadev, Satish Babu and I had become expert teachers. We all had our share of teaching Deshbandhu. He had begun his lessons seriously at Patna. He had asked Rajendra Babu for a teacher. But he was too ill then to make much progress. At Darjeeling he had better hope. His left shoulder was aching, but when the ache was gone, he would do much better, he said. "But mind, I am very stupid with my hands. Ask my wife how helpless I am." "Yes," said Basanti Devi, "he calls me in even for unlocking his little box." "You women are too cunning for men. You keep your husband helpless even in small matters, so as to have your complete mastery over him," I said. The whole house seemed to come down with the ringing of Deshbandhu's laughter. He had both the capacity for heartily weeping and laughing. His weeping he did in secret, like his wife. During this overwhelming grief, Basanti Devi has disdained to weep even before his dearest ones. But Deshbandhu could laugh before crowds of people and cover them with the sunshine of his laughter. Our serious discussion started with laughter which the whole of that big household heard. He knew that I liked sitting cross-legged. He was reclining in his bedstead. I was in a chair. He could not bear the sight of my sitting in the chair with my legs dangling uncomfortably or attempting to cross them in the chair. So he had a pillow put opposite him on his bedstead and a handspun rug arranged on the bedding to make a gadi. He seated me on it. "Do you know, what this reminds me of," I said, as I sat comfortably on it just face to face with him, "My memory goes back to over forty years ago. It was thus my wife and I sat when we were married. The only thing now lacking is the hand-clasp. I wonder what Basanti Devi has to say to all this." And the house rang with a laughter, alas!, no more to be heard.

\* \* \*

The foregoing recollections were written at Bankura on the 8th instant. Lord Birkenhead's speech was published at Calcutta on the 9th and I glanced at it on the same day. I am writing this note on the 10th. I have now carefully read the speech. It gives an added value to the recollections. I know what a shock Lord Birkenhead's speech would have proved to Deshbandhu. Somehow or other he had made up his mind that Lord Birkenhead was going to do something big. In

my humble opinion, the speech is a severe disappointment not so much for what it does not give as for the utter inactualities for which the Secretary of State for India has made himself responsible. Every fundamental position that he takes up is challenged by almost every educated Indian, no matter to what party he may belong. The pity of it is that probably he believes all he says. Englishmen have an amazing capacity for self-deception. It no doubt saves them many an uncomfortable situation, but it does infinite harm to the world, a large part of which they rule. They delude themselves into the belief that they do so chiefly if not wholly for its benefit. I must endeavour to examine this curious performance if possible next week. Meanwhile, we owe a duty to the dead man who is one of the parties responsible for making English politicians think about India more than they did before. How would he have acted if he had been alive? There is no cause for despair. There is less for anger. We had no data for expecting anything from Lord Birkenhead. What he has said in praise of English rule in India is not new. A diligent sub-editor has only to take up his scissors and paste to find out parallel passages in almost identical words from his illustrious predecessors. The speech is a notice to us to set our own house in order. I for one am thankful for it. I have also Deshbandhu's prescription before me. I have shared it with the reader.

*Young India*, 16-7-1925

### 83. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

ON WAY BACK FROM SIRAJGANJ

*Friday [July 10, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MAHADEV,

The train is jolting very much.

I am writing this with nothing particular to say. I may have to despatch directly from here the matter for *Young India*. It is not yet ready. It will, therefore, be sent perhaps by the Assam Mail. Take the Trust-deed and keep it with you.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

The collection here will be about three thousand.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 11431

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji visited Sirajganj on July 10, 1925.

## 84. GURDWARA LEGISLATION<sup>1</sup>

[July 11, 1925]

Both the Punjab Government and the Sikhs are to be congratulated upon the happy ending of the Akali movement. It has required the self-immolation of hundreds of the bravest in the land. It has required the imprisonment of thousands of brave Akalis. The public is familiar with the tale of their sufferings in the jails. Such marvellous sacrifice could not go in vain. Let us hope that the gurdwara reform will now proceed steadily and without a hitch. The Government deserve the congratulations, too, on their release of Akali prisoners and relaxation in the stringency of conditions regarding the *Akhand Path*<sup>2</sup>. I note that the conditions imposed by the Government regarding the release and the *Akhand Path* have caused some dissatisfaction. It is difficult to pronounce an opinion on them. At the time of writing this note (11-7-25), I have only the meagre Press telegram before me. But, if the conditions are not humiliating but merely precautionary or designed to save the prestige of the Government, I hope that the Akali friends will not raise unnecessary objection. Their chief aim was to attain the reform of the gurdwaras. This has been completely attained. The rest I regard as a matter of subsidiary, if not trivial, importance. The Akalis will, therefore, be well advised in not being strict in their interpretation of the conditions the Government may have imposed upon the release of prisoners and the performance of the *Akhand Path*.

*Young India*, 16-7-1925

## 85. THIS IS SELF-CONTROL UNDER COMPULSION

A child-widow, who has given her name and address, laments her condition as follows :<sup>3</sup>

Not only do I get such letters often, but I also come across

<sup>1</sup> This was reproduced in *The Hindustan Times*, 17-7-1925.

<sup>2</sup> Continuous reading of a holy book, here the Granth Saheb, the Sikh scripture

<sup>3</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent requested Gandhiji to take up the cause of widows with the same earnestness with which he championed that of the untouchables.

child-widows wherever I go. I have known countless women and, therefore, can understand their suffering. I have made myself a woman—am always trying to be ever more like one—in order to share women's suffering as best as a man can. I try to fill the place of a mother to many a girl. Hence I fully understand the suffering of this sister.

I feel more and more strongly that there should be no such phenomenon as a child-widow, a contradiction in terms. It is not in remaining a widow, but in self-control that dharma consists. Compulsion and self-control are mutually exclusive terms. The former degrades a human being, whereas the latter is uplifting. Remaining a widow under compulsion is a sin, but doing so of one's own free will is virtue, lends beauty to the soul and acts as a shield for the purity of society. To say that a girl of fifteen remains a widow voluntarily is sheer impudence and ignorance. How can such a girl ever know the misery of a widow's life? It is the duty of her parents to give her every facility to marry again. It is cowardice to submit to a cruel custom, and manliness to defy it.

I have heard a great deal about the way in which marriages are arranged among *Patidars*<sup>1</sup> and the customs which prevail among them. I see no element of exaggeration in this sister's letter.

When I consider what advice I should give to widows who are young, I realize my utter helplessness. It is easy to ask such a girl to marry again. But whom should she marry. Who will find a husband for her? Should she marry outside her caste? Can a girl find a husband by looking for one? Should she marry by advertising for a husband? Is marriage a business arrangement? Where social opinion is hostile or indifferent to her, it is almost impossible for a child-widow to find a husband. And how can I advise a girl to bind herself to any kind of fellow if she fails to find a suitable partner?

I can, therefore, only appeal to the guardians of childwidows. But I doubt if *Navajivan* is ever likely to find its way into their hands. Persons of their class generally do not read newspapers. This is the difficulty in which I find myself. But I can give this advice to child-widows. They should suffer in patience. They may pour out their suffering before their elders, men or women, and tell them everything they want. If the elders do not understand their feelings or do not

<sup>1</sup> A community in Gujarat



agree with them, they should not worry, and, if and when they find suitable partner, should get married. To find a partner, one should like Damayanti, Savitri<sup>1</sup> and Parvati<sup>2</sup> in the past, do *tapascharya* appropriate and possible in this age. That *tapascharya* is study. For a widow, there is nothing better than intellectual and spiritual studies and physical activity to steady the mind. They can do physical *tapascharya* by devoting every moment of their time to the spinning-wheel, intellectual *tapascharya* by devoting themselves to literary studies and spiritual *tapascharya* by purifying themselves inwardly, by striving to realize the *atman*. The elders cannot come in their way in any of these pursuits; and, even if they try, they cannot succeed. Everyone has a right to do these three things. If a widow is denied this right, she should certainly resort to satyagraha.

I know that this course, too, is difficult. But the right course always seems difficult at first; we have the Lord's assurance, however, that in the end we shall not find it difficult.

The elders of such widows will have reason for regret afterwards if they refuse to follow the course of wisdom now, for I witness immorality everywhere. By placing restrictions on a widow, we do not protect either her or the family or dharma. I see the degradation of all three before our very eyes.

Let the guardians of child-widows follow the course of wisdom.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 12-7-1925

## 86. STOP PUBLISHING "NAVAJIVAN"

A reader has written a long letter to me, which I summarize in my own words since his language does not admit of compression. He says :

Readers are tired of reading all the time about the spinning-wheel in *Navajivan*. If you bring out a separate Spinning-wheel Number every month as you publish an Education Number, that will save money and you may also get readers for it. This advice may be offered to you since you do not publish *Navajivan* for profit. If you want that the weekly *Navajivan* must continue,

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Satyavan; whom she retrieved from Death

<sup>2</sup> Who performed severe penance to secure Shiva as her husband

you should use it to tell the people about other activities of the kind which will inspire fear in the British. Look at what Turkey has done. In the world as we find it, there is no love but what is inspired by fear.

I am never without such advisers. Since in answering their questions from time to time, I can also explain the aim of *Navajivan*, a discussion of the subject is not without purpose. It is not true to say that *Navajivan* discusses only the spinning-wheel, but it may be said that the spinning-wheel gets the first importance. However, I can see from the subscribers that still remain that they do not mind exclusive attention to the spinning-wheel.

*Navajivan* is not run for making money, nor is it intended for promoting any and every kind of activity : it is only a medium for the propagation of my ideas. *Navajivan* will not continue publication with the help of loans, or seek to meet its expenses by accepting advertisements. Nor will it be brought out and offered free to readers, with the help of donations from a few friends. Its readers should regard themselves as its proprietors. *Navajivan* is my weekly letter to them. They will spend money on it, subscribe to it and keep it alive so long as the ideas presented through it appeal to them, for every week I pour out my soul in it and I know that nothing but good can result from studying a thing which expresses the very heart of its author, even though he may be an illiterate person.

*Navajivan* is an organ for telling the people about the invaluable method of satyagraha. If I may say so, I live only to teach its use. The idea is not new. I am convinced that I am only putting before the people an old thing in a somewhat new language and a new garb. I believe that we can secure swaraj only through satyagraha. Swaraj is our life-breath and, deprived of it, we are in the condition of a man choking without air. I am quite clear in my mind that, if I succeed in explaining to the people the basic principles of satyagraha, an easy path will have been discovered, which the country and the world can follow. It is possible, of course, that I may die before I have succeeded in leading the people to this royal road.

Even if that happens, nothing will have been lost. It is an immutable law that a good deed done is never wasted.

This path of satyagraha cannot be followed except with the help of the spinning-wheel. God, for the hungry, is food. This is why the Upanishads, even describe food as *Brahman*. Food is produced by the

labour of man's body. Since we do not work enough with our bodies, we get less food. People remain unemployed during four months in a year. The net result of this has been that the nation has lost its vitality. The spinning-wheel is an unrivalled means of restoring strength to it and ending its hunger. One drop of rain is of no consequence, but an infinite number of them have such power of nourishing that they give new life to the whole world every year. In the same way, it may be that one spinning-wheel will seem to achieve nothing, but a multitude of them have as much power, at least, as a mass of rain drops. In one sense, it has more. One drop of water by itself will be wasted; a mass of them out of season may do harm. But even one spinning-wheel will bring some gain to the person who works on it. There is no time of the year when the spinning-wheel will be out of season. That is why "Here no effort undertaken is lost, no disaster befalls. Even a little of this righteous course delivers one from great fear."<sup>1</sup>

These being my convictions, *Navajivan* would have no work left if it did not give the highest place to the spinning-wheel.

It is, moreover, a lesson in peace, and a potent means of self-purification. There are other means, too, of self-purification which *Navajivan* discusses, and will continue to discuss, from time to time. All articles, in the final analysis, are concerned with one idea, namely, self-purification, swaraj, satyagraha. *Navajivan's* aim is to increase our inner strength and help us to win swaraj through it. If, therefore, it discusses subjects like Council-entry, it is only with the aim of promoting self-purification, of developing spiritual strength. *Navajivan* can give nothing exciting just now, for there is no gain in doing so. Time spent in criticizing others is merely wasted. Criticism has some meaning only when it is backed by strength. Those who understand this point will appreciate the policy followed in *Navajivan* and will not stop reading it. The paper will continue as long as it has a fair number of subscribers. When the number falls below a certain limit, I will not lose a moment, nor shall I feel one pang of heart, in stopping its publication.

And even if *Navajivan* stops publication, my spinning-wheel will not stop, for I do not even need friends to help me in keeping it going.

The other piece of advice which the correspondent gives is that I

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II, 40

should suggest something which will inspire fear in the hearts of the British. That thing is against my very nature and I can never bring myself to do it. I want to win over the British through love. It may be that this is beyond the capacity of the country to attempt. It can adopt the path of violence. But it will not, in that case, need my services, since I am not a worthy soldier in such an effort. Every weapon which I find it possible to employ has its roots in love or truth. My plan may be wrong; my intention is never unworthy.

This is *Navajivan*'s limitation and mine.

Another reader has made a different suggestion, which also I shall discuss here. He says that people find the price of five pice much too high. If the price is kept at one pice, he says, there will be a large number of subscribers and *Navajivan* will not have to draw from its own resources. Those who understand something about accounts will see that, if a thing is priced below a certain level, the larger its sale the greater will be the loss. That is, increase in sales will be a gain only if the thing is sold at profit. If a paper is published at a loss, as the sales increase the loss will increase. At first *Navajivan* used to be published at a loss. After due calculations, the subscription has been fixed at a suitable rate. It certainly yields some profit, which increases when the sales increase. If anyone feels inclined to suggest that the price should be fixed so as to eliminate this profit, he should know that the profit is not large enough for its elimination to make a difference to the rate of subscription.<sup>1</sup> *Navajivan* is not in such a position that it can be offered at one or two pice. But I may say, at the same time, that it is sent altogether free whenever this seems justified. I do not know many persons who find the price of *Navajivan* too high, but who would be glad to read it if they got a free copy. If there are any such persons, I should certainly like to have their names and addresses, for some friends have offered help to enable us to send free copies of *Navajivan*, and I would certainly avail myself of this offer for the sake of the readers. If there are such persons, they should write to the

<sup>1</sup> On June 30 it was resolved to effect the following two changes in regard to *Navajivan* : 1. When the present stock of paper is exhausted, paper of better quality should be used for *Navajivan*. 2. At present, subscribers are charged separately for the supplements to *Navajivan* brought out periodically whenever there is excess of matter; this should be stopped and, with effect from the commencement of *Navajivan*'s seventh year (September 1925), whenever there is excess of matter, extra pages should be printed and given free to the readers as was done formerly.

Manager, who, if he thinks it proper, will send them *Navajivan* free or at a reduced rate of subscription. But readers should understand that the cost of such copies will be borne by some friend or other, and not by *Navajivan*, for it is no longer in a position to do so.

This correspondent also seems to believe that *Navajivan* still meets the loss incurred on *Young India*. This is not true. *Young India* does not now run at a loss. *Hindi Navajivan* may still be said to be in that position. Its sales have not become so regular that it can be considered to be self-supporting. They still rise and fall. But the loss on its account is also not being borne exclusively by the subscribers of *Navajivan*. It is borne by the institution as a whole, i.e., by all its departments jointly. Friends could have borne the loss, but, knowing that this family was not likely to give up its pledge to accept no help from outside, they did not press the offer.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 12-7-1925

### 87. KHADI PRATISHTHAN

Readers of *Navajivan* know how deeply I have been impressed by the work of the Bengal Khadi Pratishthan. After reading my report, Shri Lakshmidas<sup>1</sup> sent Shri Mathuradas to inspect its work; the latter has written down the conclusions which he has arrived at after personal inquiry and given me a copy of the report. However careful my examination might have been, it could not be treated as scientific. Shri Mathuradas's inquiry, on the other hand, was scientific, for he has specialized in this field, has conducted careful inquiries into the working of other such establishments and is so well informed about the finances of some of them that he can reel off precise figures. I, therefore, attach greater value to his inquiry than to mine. In my report the reader would find my conclusions, but, little of the evidence on which they are based, whereas in the report of this scientific inquiry he would get the evidence as well. Shri Mathuradas's inquiry being of this character, its results are given elsewhere in this issue.

I should like khadi workers to read the report very carefully. The distinguishing feature of the Khadi Pratishthan is that it takes

<sup>1</sup> Laskhmidas Asar, an inmate of the Sabarmati Ashram who specialized in khadi and village industries

work from its employees like any business establishment and pays them adequately. But, even then, it has on its staff men who work in a spirit of self-sacrifice, and the reason is that the two chief workers, Acharya Ray and his right-hand man, Satish Babu, are men of this type. Another reason is that, though the methods of work followed are those of a business establishment, selfish motives find no place in it.

I told the merchants in Jalpaiguri<sup>1</sup> that this was the key to the country's freedom. Our merchants helped in the enslavement of India for the sake of their trade, and so the country will come into its own again only when this class learns to think less of self-interest and more of public interest. It is not enough that they should contribute crores. They are doing that. We shall reach our goal when they dedicate their intelligence to the service of the country. A merchant who has done this will not think of amassing wealth for himself; he will earn it for the country. He will not, moreover, consider which business will earn most for the country; he will rather think which trade will help the largest number among the masses to earn most by working in their own villages. We have got a few business men of this type, and that is why we are making the progress we see today. Anyone of us can measure this progress by making an elementary calculation. I praise Satish Babu's work because, though he has sacrificed his business worth millions and dedicated his intelligence, the services of the members of his family and his resources to the propagation of khadi, he is not in the least conscious of his self-sacrifice, or rather he has no trace of pride for having done all this. This is because he has found joy in self-sacrifice. It would be impossible for him to live without it.

The reader need not conclude from my eulogy that, from a business point of view, Satish Babu's work is above criticism. If there is anything in it deserving of criticism, it is due to no fault of his. He lacks, to that extent, knowledge of business matters. This ignorance will disappear with experience. Let us hope that many more such business men of intelligence will sacrifice their all and come forward to do business in khadi not with an eye to profit but for the sake of the country.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 12-7-1925

<sup>1</sup> In Bengal, where a public meeting was held on June 10, 1925

## 88. MY NOTES

I give below the summary of a statement<sup>1</sup>, sent to me by the All-India Khadi Association, relating to the disposal of the yarn received by it in virtue of the resolution on the subject passed last year by the All-India Congress Committee.

These facts teach us some important lessons. An organization is like a machine. If in a machine one screw becomes loose, it slows down or, sometimes, even breaks down; the same thing happens to organizations, especially organizations doing constructive work. If attention is not paid even to the minutest details of their working, production will fall. Weak yarn, carelessly wound bundles of yarn, bundles of yarn not stored properly—any such negligence will bring down the quality of khadi, raise the cost of weaving and reduce its speed. We observe, too, that the slow progress in work was wholly due to negligence at the spinning stage.

SPINNERS, BEWARE!

The khadi produced has been priced at market rates, for the quantity available was so little that there was no meaning in selling it at reduced price. It would also have been a problem, if the khadi were offered at reduced price, to decide who had the prior right to buy it. That such a problem should not arise over a small stock of khadi was one reason for my advice that it should be sold at market rates.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 12-7-1925

## 89. ENTRY IN VISITORS' BOOK<sup>2</sup>

*July 12, 1925*

It is good to read clean books, but it is better to weave into our lives that which we read in ennobling literature.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 6051. Courtesy : Public Library, Allahabad

<sup>1</sup> The statement is not translated here.

<sup>2</sup> Of the Rajshahi Public Library

## 90. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, RAJSHAHI <sup>1</sup>

July 12, 1925

After thanking those who gave him addresses and for the presents<sup>2</sup> made to him, Mahatmaji explained that he had only two objects in view in making his tour. His first object was to secure 10 lakhs of rupees for Deshbandhu Memorial. He hoped to receive suitable donation towards the Memorial Fund from the people of Rajshahi, where there were many big zamindars, pleaders and business men. He asked everyone to contribute his mite to this fund. He told that millions of people were lamenting the death of Deshbandhu Das and he wanted to utilize this feeling of deep love for Deshbandhu to increase the strength and power of Hindustan. He pointed out that our first duty was to render our utmost help for the Memorial of Deshbandhu and then to carry out the wishes of late Deshbandhu.

Mahatmaji then spoke about his meeting with Deshbandhu at Darjeeling, when Deshbandhu impressed it clearly that nothing could be done without organizing the villagers and that charkha was the main centre of work for this village organization. He asked the people to act in accordance with the wishes of late Deshbandhu, viz., (1) to work on charkha for at least half an hour a day, (2) to wear khaddar and (3) to maintain Hindu-Muslim unity, which he said occupied the first place in Deshbandhu's talk with him at Darjeeling.

Mahatmaji also told the people that Deshbandhu had no feeling of hatred for any man and that Deshbandhu had by his own life demonstrated that untouchability had no place in religion. Mahatmaji again asked the people to act up to the wishes of Deshbandhu and win swaraj if they really loved and felt for Deshbandhu.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17-7-1925*

## 91. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

July 13, 1925

DEAR MOTI BABU<sup>3</sup>,

I have just got your letter. I am off again tomorrow morning. The whole of the week I shall be very busy. Could you please come or send Nirmal Babu Tuesday next week early morning, say, 7 a.m.?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 11018

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji received addresses from the Reception Committee, the Municipality, the District and Local Boards, and other public organizations. His reply in Hindi was translated into Bengali by Satish Chandra Das Gupta.

<sup>2</sup> Set of brass utensils made at Kalam and a charkha that could be folded into a small box

<sup>3</sup> Of the Pravartak Sangh, Chandranagore



## 92. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

[CALCUTTA]<sup>1</sup>

*Ashad Vad 4 [July 13, 1925]*

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. You say you don't know what to write. Does it mean that you are worried? If so, please stop worrying. There is no cause whatever for it. One should not be upset because of the loss of money. If there is any other reason for worry, let me know. You should not feel nervous to go to the Ashram.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

PS.

My programme is uncertain. I shall have to spend the whole of this month here.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S. N. 9216

## 93. REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE <sup>2</sup>

ON TRAIN TO JESSORE,

[On or before *July 14, 1925*]<sup>3</sup>

Q. (1) Do you think that the Congress creed should be changed for your being its member? If you think change is essential, will you define the creed acceptable to yourself?

A. If it is changed, the alternative of buying and paying yarn should be done away with.

(2) If there is an annual money contribution as well as the yarn quota in the alternative, as the franchise qualification, will it be acceptable to you?

Anything will be acceptable to me that is acceptable to the Swaraj party.

<sup>1</sup> The postmark shows that the letter was posted at Calcutta on July 13.

<sup>2</sup> Which *The Bombay Chronicle* had addressed to leaders of various political parties

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji was in Calcutta on July 13 and in Jessore on July 14. It is not clear whether he left Calcutta for Jessore on July 13 or 14.

(3) If the Congress revokes the yarn franchise and, instead of delegating to the Swarajists the power to determine political work in the legislatures, frames a political programme of its own, including work in the Councils, will you co-operate in carrying it out?

So far as I know myself at present, I think I would not be able to lead such an organization.

(4) What, in your opinion, should the Congress programme inside as well as outside the Councils be?

The present programme.

(5) Do you think by constitutional agitation alone the British people will be persuaded to give us Home Rule?

I am inclined to think not.

(6) If extra-constitutional agitation is essential, what form or forms of direct action will you suggest and will you recommend to the Congress, the contesting of elections to the legislatures on the issue of non-payment of taxes?

Civil disobedience at present excluding non-payment of taxes is the only form of direct action feasible.

(7) Are you prepared personally to give up the use of foreign cloth? If you are still using it, will you help the swadeshi movement by giving it up?

I do not use foreign cloth. For me khaddar is the only swadeshi essential.

(8) If you are elected an M.L.C.<sup>1</sup> in your province, will you, under the present circumstances, accept a ministership?

Thank God I am legally barred.

(9) If the Reading-Birkenhead negotiations are disappointing to you, what course will you advise the public to take in addition to vigorous vocal protest and will you support the programme of persistent refusal of supplies before redress of grievances?

If I have the power, I would use the disappointment for achieving the only possible thing, viz., exclusion of foreign cloth.

(10) If the essential provisions of the Commonwealth of India Bill are satisfactory to you, will you in the event of its non-acceptance by Parliament before October 1926, recommend to the Congress the contesting of elections to the legislatures on the issue of non-payment of taxes?

This is answered elsewhere.

<sup>1</sup> Member of the Legislative Council

(11) Do you think the Swarajists are actively working in the country in furtherance of the constructive programme?

Not everywhere; not all.

(12) Do you think the differences in the mental attitudes and political methods of Congressmen on the one hand and the Independents or liberals on the other are too vital to be harmonized by mutual adjustments and to make united action on their part possible?

They appear to be so. I hope that the appearance is deceptive.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 21-7-1925

#### 94. A PLEA FOR TRUTH

I have not worried the readers of *Young India* with an account of the Kidderpore Hindu-Muslim riot on the *Bakr-Id* day, although I happened to be on the scene of the riot only a few hours after it had taken place. I did, however, give a long interview<sup>1</sup> to the Associated Press almost after my return to Russa Road from Kidderpore. In the interview, I gave it as my deliberate opinion that the Hindu labourers were wholly in the wrong. This statement has enraged some of my Hindu correspondents who have favoured me with most abusive and offensive letters protesting against my having found fault with the Hindus. One of them would have me adopt a Muslim name. I take notice of this correspondence in order to show to what pass some of us have come in our blind zeal for our respective faiths. We refuse to see anything wrong in ourselves. When such becomes the normal state of a majority of people belonging to a particular faith, that faith is dying. For nothing based on a lie can persist for any length of time.

I venture to suggest that I have rendered a service to Hinduism by exposing without any reservation the wrong done by the Hindu labourers in question. They, the labourers themselves, did not resent my plain speaking. On the contrary, they seemed to be grateful for it. They felt penitent, admitted the wrong done and sincerely apologized for it.

What was I to do, if I was not to speak out about what I saw with my own eyes and felt within me? Was I to prevaricate for the sake of protecting the guilty? Was I to refuse to give the interview when the

<sup>1</sup> For the interview of July 2, *vide* "Statement to Associated Press of India", 2-7-1925.

ubiquitous Press man sought me out at mid-night? I would have forfeited the right to call myself a Hindu, been unworthy of holding the office of President of the Congress and sullied my name as a satyagrahi if I had hesitated to tell the truth when the telling of it had become relevant. Let Hindus not be guilty of the charge they do not hesitate to bring against Mussalmans, viz., that of committing a wrong and then seeking to hide it.

One correspondent says when Hindus sought help in Delhi, I pleaded helplessness, when my presence is sought in Lucknow I evade it, but when it is a matter of condemning Hindus, I hasten to the scene of action and thoughtlessly judge them. Let it be known that I went to Kidderpore on the strength of an invitation received from a Hindu on behalf of the Hindus and upon a call from Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta who had preceded me. In spite of my helplessness, if I heard of an actual fight and especially if I found that I was wanted by either party, I should hasten to the rescue. It is when one party only calls me to adjust a quarrel or prevent it, I should plead helplessness because of loss of influence among a certain class of Hindus and Mussalmans. The difference between the two positions is too obvious to need pointing out.

But it is urged by the correspondents, as it was urged by a deputation that waited on me, that by my severe condemnation of the Hindus, I had encouraged the Mussalmans to commit assaults on innocent men and exposed the Bazar Hindu shopkeepers to looting and worse by Mussalman *goondas*. I should feel sorry if my condemnation of a Hindu misdeed should give rise to a Mussalman misdeed. But I could even then be not deterred from doing the right thing. And why should Hindus be afraid of Mussalman reprisals? Surely it would be right for Hindus, if they cannot follow my method of non-violence and resignation—and I admit that it is most difficult for propertied men to do so—to defend themselves by every means at their disposal. To be men we must shed cowardice, whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans, and learn the art of self-defence. No amount of hide and seek can avert the certain danger that awaits those who will not learn to defend themselves, although they would like to be defended by others. My condemnation of Hindus of Kidderpore does not carry with it condemnation of those who defend themselves when attacked. Had the Hindus instead of being the aggressors been found defending themselves against heavy odds and had died in the attempt, I would have praised their valour. But at Kidderpore, so far as I know

they were in an overwhelming majority, they were the aggressors. The Mussalmans had given them no cause for quarrel. I wouldunhesitatingly condemn unprovoked violence as I had no difficulty about condemning the Mussalman misdeeds in Kohat and Gulbarga which I thought were utterly uncalled for. I can even understand two blows against one, but I cannot reconcile myself to any blow without the slightest provocation or provocation worked up for the occasion.

*Young India*, 16-7-1925

### 95. WHAT IS TAMMANY HALL ?

Exception has been taken to my defence at a Memorial meeting of the memory of Deshbandhu against the charge of Tammany Hall meth-ods. It has been taken on the ground that such a reference at a Memorial meeting was a jarring note. I believe that I have the sense of the delicate. I knew what I was doing. I was presenting Deshbandhu's life to the students of Calcutta. I had in my mind audible whispers about Tammany Hall methods alleged to have been adopted by Deshbandhu. And as I had a most vivid recollection of my conversation with him on the matter, I felt that I would have been false to the sacred memory of a comrade if I had not assured the students of the baselessness of the charge. After all, we will not make the memory of our distinguished countrymen sacred by covering their blemishes. It should be permissible to cherish the memory of our heroes at the same time that we acknowledge their proved blemishes. False delicacy is no delicacy. If Deshbandhu was guilty of Tammany Hall methods, let us own the fact and, whilst treasuring all that was noblest in him, let us beware of his particular methods. But believing as I did that he was not guilty of those methods, I could not conceive a happier occasion than the one I had at the University Institute.<sup>1</sup>

But what are Tammany Hall methods? If I know them correctly, it is a name given to the machinations secret and open resorted to by a class of men in America for seizing for their selfish end corporations and offices in which they do not hesitate to make use of fraud, bribery and every form of public corruption. I had the most emphatic repudiation from Deshbandhu's most trusted lieutenants and, then, at

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at University Institute, Calcutta", 30-6-1925.

Darjeeling, from Deshbandhu himself, with the invitation to investigate such charges and publicly denounce every proved charge of bribery or corruption. The first indispensable test of Tammany Hall is obviously lacking. Neither Deshbandhu nor his lieutenants to his knowledge had any selfish ends to serve. Indeed, such people could not long remain with him. So if any one bribed anybody else, it was for an unselfish end. But, personally, I draw no distinction between the two forms of bribery. Nor did Deshbandhu draw any. He said to me emphatically that he could not, even if he would, free his country by corrupt methods, if only because the Government had reduced bribery or corruption to a perfect science. The truth is that for the first time, within the experience of the present generation we have a well-drilled, disciplined and compact political party functioning in the Councils and the Assembly. It, therefore, seems unthinkable to some that such a party could be kept together without bribery and corruption. The Government has done their best to discredit the party by all the means at its command. Rival political parties have lent a ready ear to every rumour or talk about bribery. There is no doubt that some people honestly believe that bribery was one of the means resorted to by Deshbandhu for keeping the Party together and gaining other support at crucial moments in the Council.

So far as I know, there is no foundation for the charge. The memory of Deshbandhu will not suffer by anyone who can clearly establish the charges of his having done so. It is better that the public know definitely what is said in inaudible tones. After all, the charge was not merely against the Deshbandhu, rather it was more against his party than against him personally. Though he is no more among us, the Party survives. And if I know it, I know that it is capable of standing the searchlight of investigation if anyone had proof of corruption against it.

*Young India*, 16-7-1925

## 96. CALCUTTA'S MAYOR

Some friends in Bengal have resented my interference<sup>1</sup> in the matter of the choice of the Mayor of Calcutta. Perhaps common courtesy requires an explanation from me. Whilst after the national

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Swarajist Councillors' Meeting", 9-7-1925.

loss I decided to stand by Bengal in the hour of her greatest need and, so far as was possible, to wipe her tears and to comfort Basanti Devi as also the fatherless children, I had also decided not to force myself on any of them, but humbly to hold myself at their disposal. It was a simple duty I owed to the memory of a departed friend and comrade. The inauguration of an All-Bengal Deshbandhu Memorial Fund for which I was chiefly responsible made my stay in Bengal peremptory. Events have justified the wisdom of my decision.

But I had little expected that I should have to give any advice or guidance in the selection of the Mayor of Calcutta in the place of Deshbandhu. It was a task I would gladly have avoided. But for a soldier there is often no choice. The matter was referred to me by parties interested in the selection, and I could not shirk the responsibility, as I could not conscientiously plead incapacity. Having been drawn into the vortex, there was no escape from it till the matter was formally decided by the Congress Municipal Party.

Whether the advice I tendered was sound or not, whether it was in the interest of the city or not is undoubtedly a matter which is capable of many opinions. I can only say that I gave the advice that, in my opinion, was the best for the country and for the City of Palaces. I had before me a tradition and a policy as my measure. My duty lay in doing that which, in my opinion, Deshbandhu would have done if he was with us in the flesh, in so far as it was in no way in conflict with known and recognized ethical principles. The Congress has for the past four years decided to capture municipalities and local boards in its own interest and for the furtherance of its constructive programme. The idea behind the capture was not better care of sanitation, but acquisition of greater political power. There was nothing wrong in this ambition. The Government itself has used these institutions of its creation more for the consolidation of its power and enhancement of its prestige than for better sanitation. I have known London county council elections fought on political issues. And when political fever has run high, a municipal election has been used as an index for gauging the political barometer. And if it has been considered necessary to use municipalities in England for political purposes, much more is it so in a country where a whole nation lies under the political domination of another. Once grant the advisability of utilizing the machinery created by the Government, the capture of municipal institutions for gaining political power is an inevitable step. Deshbandhu captured the Corporation of Calcutta to that end and he

used it most effectively for the consolidation of the power of the Congress or, which is almost the same thing in Bengal, the Swaraj Party. Did he thereby neglect the interest of the corporation? I venture to say emphatically no. On the contrary, his municipal ambition was as high as the political.

Who was then to be the Mayor in his place? It was a gift within the power of the party of his creation. It must be bestowed upon him who could best carry out the tradition bequeathed by the great chief and who could gain additional prestige for the Party, it being understood that he was also, in the Party, the best person considered from the purely Municipal standpoint. In my opinion, Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta was the fittest person answering these requirements. And if he was good enough to lead the Swaraj Party, he deserved all the adventitious support that could be given to him in order to enable him to wear Deshbandhu's mantle with grace and dignity.

But could he do justice to the triple burden? He was already elected President of the Provincial Congress Committee. Could he lead the Swaraj Party, and, at the same time, carry out the constructive programme of the Congress and discharge the heavy responsibility of the Mayoralty of Calcutta? What was the use of the triple honour if the burden was to break him? My answer was that Mr. Sen Gupta alone was the best judge of his own capacity. The power should be given him if he needed and wanted it. It should not be thrust upon him. It was, undoubtedly, a dangerous experiment if Mr. Sen Gupta was a schemer, putting his own interest before the country's. In that case, it was dangerous even to make him leader of the Swaraj Party. If he was above suspicion, he should have the Mayoralty if he needed it for his work and if he could creditably discharge the burden. No Congressman worthy of the name, much less the successor of Deshbandhu, could dare seek honour for honour's sake. For me, Mr. Sen Gupta occupied the position of MacSwiney, who wanted to become the Lord Mayor of Cork, not so that he might gain any honour for himself, but so that he might face the danger that was then in store for him who occupied the exalted position. The position of the successor of Deshbandhu is, if possible, fraught with greater danger than MacSwiney had to face. MacSwiney put his life at stake. Deshbandhu's successor had to put his whole reputation at stake. The slightest deviation from the standard of sacrifice and honour bequeathed by Deshbandhu might blast his successor's reputation for life,—a living death worse than the death of the mere body. Thus I



reasoned to myself and my friends in pressing Mr. Sen Gupta's claim to the Mayoralty of Calcutta. And I am thankful to be able to record that both the Congress Party and the Congress Municipal Party understood and appreciated my argument and, with but few dissentients, accepted the nomination of Mr. Sen Gupta. I only hope that they will make his burden as light as it is possible for them to make. I have no doubt in my mind that Mr. Sen Gupta will try to live up to the high standard set by Deshbandhu.

But let no one regard this as a precedent for all time. On pure principle it is wrong to combine three important functions in one person, no matter how able he may be. No man can do full justice to three heavy tasks. The temptation, too, for self-aggrandizement for any man is too great. It is unfair to expose anyone to avoidable temptation. Moreover, even though political parties may capture municipal bodies, it would be wrong to give municipal responsibilities to active politicians. We must, even in our bondage, treat municipal matters on their own merits and create municipal specialists who would refuse to be guided by political considerations in the discharge of their municipal duties. If we do not take all these precautions, our experiment of capturing municipal bodies is foredoomed to failure. Municipal life requires a training which a busy politician is not always fitted for. A municipal councillor, therefore, best serves his political party by divesting himself of the politician whilst he is occupying the municipal chair, even as a judge, on assuming office, ceases to be an advocate or a politician. The reason why, in spite of my love of municipal life and my knowledge of its utmost importance, I have permitted myself to advise the dangerous combination of three functions in one person is because I conceive the present to be an extraordinary occasion requiring a drastic, nay, a dangerous step. Dases are not born every day. Deshbandhu has left a gap which it is impossible for any man to fill. He who has to shoulder the burden left by him needs, therefore, extraordinary props. And on the assumption of average ability and honesty, he should have them. But, so far as I am concerned, this experiment, I hope, is the first and the last in my life. I have countenanced it with a full sense of my responsibility and the danger attendant upon it. May God grant the necessary wisdom and the power to Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta. Let the citizens of Calcutta rest assured that the election of an active politician is not intended to be a menace to the healthy growth of the municipal life of Calcutta. We have precedents for it in the brilliant example of Pherozechah Mehta

than whom we never had a better President of a corporation or a better councillor. His tradition was kept up last year by Vithalbhai Patel, who, even his opponents admitted, discharged the burden of his high office with great ability and equally great impartiality. And Vithalbhai Patel is nothing if he is not a fiercely active politician. In stating my position, I have really dealt with the highest form of municipal life. That type has yet to be evolved by us in India. And I am hoping that it would be the privilege of the Congress to do so. It will not be till we have men whose ambition will be more than fully satisfied if they can keep the gutters and closets of their cities scrupulously clean and supply the purest milk at the cheapest rates and rid them of drunkenness and prostitution.

*Young India*, 16-7-1925

## 97. NOTES

### A MEMORIAL TOUR

The tour that I am now making in Bengal has been turned into a Memorial tour. I was disinclined to tear myself away from Calcutta at the present moment and whilst the ten lacs are uncollected. But I had not the heart to disappoint the people of the respective Districts which I was under promise to visit. But I had warned the people that my tour this time would be for collecting the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund and deliver-ing his message. And even from the Memorial standpoint, I am glad I am touring. The response of the Poor people, both men and women, has been marvellous everywhere. They have needed no coaxing. They have given to the fullest measure for the asking. It has been a common experience to find old widows undoing the little knots of the corners of their saris and giving up all they had in them. Often have I felt like returning such donations. But, on second thoughts, I have not only reconciled myself to them, but felt it to be a pleasing duty to receive them. Had not Deshbandhu given his all? And was not the hospital to be for women in distress? Were not some poor widows destined to receive training as nurses at the institution that will soon be founded? Why should I doubt the law of God which says that He rewards tenfold those who give their all for a good cause? Nor have the well-to-do been unwill-ing to pay. I was not prepared for ornaments at women's meetings in the *mofussil*. But in no place have the good sisters failed to give their orna-ments. At Serajgunj two of them gave away their heavy gold chains. It is remarkable too that, in

all the four places I have visited at the time of writing these notes, the collections at the women's meetings, though naturally attended by hundreds against men's thousands, have been as much as at the men's.

#### SIGN OF POVERTY

These collections have been a study in more ways than one. They have been an ocular demonstration of the poverty of the masses. I am collecting from thousands of them. At every meeting coppers have abounded. In many cases, they have given even half pices. Not because the people have been unwilling to give more, but because to my knowledge they had no other coins. They undid their knots or emptied their pockets in my presence.

#### SILENT WORKERS

From Serajgunj to Ishurdi we have been travelling in a slow train. It is a branch service. There are stations every ten minutes. Villagers have attended the stations in their hundreds and, at several places, in their thousands and have paid their pice. The whole of this great demonstration has been arranged by the silent, selfless youth of Bengal. Their names will never be noted in the newspapers. They probably do not even want themselves to be advertised. Their sterling work is their advertisement. Without them the villagers would have known nothing. They, the young men, are their walking newspapers. For they neither read nor write. And those few that do are too poor to buy newspapers. All honour to these brave, sacrificing servants of India. Every one of the meetings at these stations has been most orderly, noiseless, solemn and business-like. Swaraj will certainly come through these young lovers of their country. Nor must I omit to mention the railway officials. The railway authorities from the highest to the lowest have been exceptionally courteous and attentive throughout my previous tour, but I am undoubtedly more in need of their help now than before. The task of collection from thousands at wayside stations within a few minutes is no light task. And yet it has been achieved because they too conspired with the people and the volunteers to make my task as light as possible. Be it noted that I had to alight at all the stations and pass through crowds, make the collection and return to my compartment in time. Deshbandhu dead is a more powerful force for drawing the best out of men than he was when he was alive. His countrymen realize the debt they owe him and, therefore, to their country.

## WHAT OF THE HOUSE ?

Doubts have been raised as to whether the proposed hospital is to be opened in the very mansion that has belonged to his family for two generations. I thought that the matter was absolutely clear in the appeal signed by Lord Sinha and others. That mansion is already in the hands of the trustees for such purposes as a hospital and the like. Its value is over three lacs. It is burdened with a debt of over two lacs. The debt will be paid naturally out of the collections being now made. But the trustees of the Memorial will then acquire a property worth three lacs for two lacs. In other words, the trustees will have eleven lacs of capital when they have finished their collection of ten lacs.

### TO DOUBTERS

There are still people who ask me whether I am really serious and sanguine about collecting 10 lacs. All I can say is that I do not know Bengal at all if it does not give 10 lacs for this Memorial towards which I have not yet met a single person who has refused to give something. The question of collecting the amount is merely a question of time and organization. I do not entertain the slightest doubt about the success of the collection.

### NOT INSPIRING ?

I have answered locally the charge that the object of the Memorial is not inspiring. The sceptics imply thereby that the object should have been political. But let me remind them that the signatories to the appeal had no choice. Those who want to revere Deshbandhu's memory cannot do so if they do not respect his own wishes. I hold that his wishes must be a first charge upon any collection that may be made by us, the survivors, to perpetuate his memory. Deshbandhu knew what he was doing when he made over his property to a trust. He deliberately chose to give it for a charitable, not a political, purpose. The survivors are not only, therefore, bound to acquire the house for the nation, but also to use it for the purpose intended by the donor. Bengal is, therefore, in my opinion, in honour bound to use the mansion as a hospital for women and an institution for training nurses. I hear that in some places Bengalis are collecting funds for local memorials. I hope that every city will have a memorial worthy of the great patriot. But that time is not yet. In my humble opinion, the honour of every Bengali who cherishes Deshbandhu's memory is pledged to finish the collection of 10 lacs for the All-Bengal Memorial before diverting a single pice for a local memorial.

The Bengalis outside Bengal, beware. They have not all yet made their returns. If all the Bengalis who have known Deshbandhu will not exert themselves, the collection is likely to be unduly prolonged. I hope, therefore, that those Bengalis who read these notes will exert themselves to the utmost within their own circles to secure the best subscriptions.

*Young India*, 16-7-1925

### 98. TO REMOVE A MISGIVING

I have lately been calling on a number of rich people to collect donations for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. One of them was Shri Sadharam Tularam. There I not only secured a generous donation, but also had occasion to talk to those present about religious matters. Untouchability was mentioned and it was said that something had appeared in the newspapers attributing to me the view that we should interdine and intermarry with the so-called untouchables. What I said to disabuse them regarding this only seemed to surprise those who had raised the point, and they suggested that I might publish a summary of what I told them in the *Hindi Navajivan*. I have accepted the suggestion and give here the required summary.

I must make it clear to the people, in the first place, that I do not as a rule read newspapers and on the rare occasions when I do, I find it impossible to repudiate all the false things that are attributed to me. If, therefore, anyone at any time has a doubt, he should ask me what I had said on any given occasion. Now, if someone has said in the newspapers that I stand for or encourage interdining and intermarrying with our untouchable brethren, he has made a mistake. I have stated categorically a thousand times that abolition of untouchability does not mean the abolition of the social restraints governing eating and marrying. With whom shall one eat or marry is an entirely different question and I do not find it necessary at the moment to pronounce upon it. I believe on the contrary that our mixing the two questions may impede the reform we wish to bring about. It is the duty of everyone who considers himself a Hindu to work for the eradication of untouchability. By mixing it up with other issues we shall be harming our cause.

Yes, about accepting water to drink I shall say something. If we accept clean water from a Sudra, as we should and as we do, we should

also accept water at the hands of an untouchable. I recognize only four *varnas*. There is to me no fifth *varna* called the untouchables. We must, therefore, eradicate untouchability, and the sufferings of the Hindus considered untouchable, and purify Hinduism as well as ourselves. In other words, there is no room for hatred and contempt in religion. Hatred is implicit in untouchability. We must do away with this hatred. Hinduism is a religion which holds service to be of the highest importance. Why should those considered untouchable be denied service?

[From Hindi]

*Hindi Navajivan*, 16-7-1925

### 99. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

July 16, 1925

MY DEAR C. R.,

Somehow or other I need your letter to feel that all is well with you. My position is this. My body and mind are living in a world by which I remain unaffected, but in which I am being tried. My soul is living in a world physically away from me and yet a world by which I am and want to be affected. You are a part of that world and perhaps the nearest to me. My innermost being wants your approbation of what I am doing and thinking. I may not always succeed in getting it, but it craves for your verdict.

Now you understand exactly why I want to hear from you apart from many other reasons. You must let me have if it is only a postcard every week. Mahadev, Devdas, Pyarelal<sup>1</sup> should keep you posted with what is going on.

And you must keep well.

Your *sadhana* is the development of the place where you are and a scientific test of our theory of the value of hand-spinning. Even if it proves untrue in the end, neither we nor the world will have lost anything, for I know that we are true in the sense that we have full faith in the programme and, if it is intrinsically not immoral, our theory can be claimed to be true, when a fairly large number of villages sustain hand-spinning and khadi without protection as the whole of India sustains home cookery without protection.

<sup>1</sup> Pyarelal Nayyar; Gandhiji's secretary, 1920-48, and biographer

Surely this is a long introduction to what I want to say. Here is Pitt's letter and the letters from Kelappan. I am simply saying that we must keep nominally a satyagrahi at the Eastern gate unless the local men think otherwise. But you may come to other conclusion. You should write to Kelappan. He seems to be a nice, useful man.

With love,

*Yours,*

BAPU

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

### *100. LETTER TO W. H. PITT*

ON TOUR,  
*July 16, 1925*

DEAR MR. PITT,

I thank you for your long and interesting letter<sup>1</sup>. In view of your letter, I am just now writing nothing publicly. But I fear that the posting of a satyagrahi at the point of prohibition is necessary as a matter of principle and discipline. In my opinion, an unequivocal declaration by the State is necessary. The condition of the untouchables should not be precarious. But, as before, I shall do nothing in a hurry and shall correspond with you before taking any step forward. I hope, however, that the prohibition that still exists in reality will be removed very soon and without the necessity of direct action. What about the other temple?<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 11098

<sup>1</sup> This is not available. Prior to it Pitt appears to have sent Gandhiji a telegram : "Am writing in detail. Please suspend judgment."

<sup>2</sup> For Pitt's reply *vide* appendix "Letter from W. H. Pitt", 22-7-1925. Earlier Pitt seems to have received a copy of a telegram which Gandhiji sent Kelappan "to picquet the Eastern gate only of Vaikom temple." But this message is not available.

### 101. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Thursday [July 16, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. If you want the other bangles just now, let me know and I shall send them by post. Will Dahyabhai like to study in the National Medical College of Calcutta? It seems to be working well. Or what is Dahyabhai's real desire in the matter? I am so busy that I cannot possibly write long letters.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*, p. 27

### 102. RESOLUTIONS AT SWARAJ PARTY MEETING <sup>2</sup>

CALCUTTA,

July 16, 1925

1. The General Council of the Swaraj Party, whilst sharing with the country the deep grief universally expressed over the sudden and premature death of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, feels that the Party has lost its founder and infallible guide who kept it from harm in the midst of difficulties and led it in Bengal from victory to victory and set to the Party a standard of courage, self-sacrifice and discipline for which the Party owes to the memory of the deceased Chief a debt which it can never hope to repay. The Council tenders to Shrimati Basanti Devi and the family its respectful condolences.

2. The meeting of the General Council of the all-India Swaraj Party wholly endorses the sentiments regarding violence and the strong condemnation thereof contained, and the offer of honourable co-operation with the Government and the conditions thereof laid

<sup>1</sup> As in the printed source

<sup>2</sup> The General Council of the All-India Swarajists Party met at 148, Russa Road under the presidentship of Motilal Nehru. Gandhiji and Sarojini Naidu attended on special invitation. According to a report in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17-7-1925, the second resolution was drafted by Gandhiji. Presumably the first resolution too was drafted by him.



down, in the Faridpore speech, dated the 2nd day of May, 1925, of the late President of the Party, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das.

The Council, however, regrets that the recent pronouncement of the Rt. Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India in the House of Lords is not only no response to the late President's offer, but, on the contrary, is calculated by reason of its tone and language to make the chances of honourable co-operation difficult, if not impossible. The Council, therefore, sees in that pronouncement no reason for a revision of the policy of the Swaraj Party, but will be pre-pared to reconsider it if the final declaration to be made by the Government of India, and referred to by Lord Birkenhead, is found to be at all adequate to meet the requirements of the existing situation in the country.

*Forward, 17-7-1925*

### *103. SPEECH AT SWARAJ PARTY MEETING <sup>1</sup>*

CALCUTTA,  
*July 16, 1925*

When the business of the meeting was finished, Mahatmaji addressed the gathering with reference to the question of giving up the spinning franchise. He said that many Swarajists were present there. To them he would submit that, if they wanted to drop the spinning franchise, he would call a meeting of the A.I.C.C. for that purpose. Personally, he believed that much work had been done in regard to the spinning franchise in the course of the last six months and he expected that much would be done in course of the re-maining half year. But, still, if they wanted to drop it, he would no longer make delay in the matter.<sup>2</sup>

*The Searchlight, 19-7-1925*

<sup>1</sup> Those present included Sarojini Naidu, V. J. Patel, N. C. Kelkar, M. S. Aney, Dr. Moonje, T. Prakasam, S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Rangaswami Ayengar and J. M. Sen Gupta.

<sup>2</sup> On this point J. M. Sen Gupta and Motilal felt that the Swarajists must abide by the pact they had made with the Congress, and breach of it would imply breach of the Congress policy by the Swarajists who were all Congressmen.

## 104. SPEECH AT SWARAJ PARTY MEETING<sup>1</sup>

CALCUTTA,  
July 17, 1925

Mahatmaji, who was present at the meeting, declared clearly that if they wanted to abolish the said franchise he would at once accede to their demand and convene a meeting of the A.I.C.C. But for him personally the only course open would be to resign the Presidentship of the Congress Working Committee and work separately for spreading charkha and khaddar. He said that he was ready to do away with the pact with the Swarajists and thereby make them completely independent of any obligation regarding Congress mandate. The pact had made it obligatory to the Swarajists to abide by the spinning franchise for full one year and for this reason many of them were inclined to observe it for the full term. But if the majority were for abolition, he must dissolve the pact in due deference to their wishes. In conclusion he declared that, if the Congress would abolish the spinning franchise, he would, while remaining within the Congress, form a separate organization for spinning and would work it up just as Deshbandhu Das and others formed and worked up the Swaraj Party.<sup>2</sup>

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18-7-1925

## 105 A DECEPTIVE SPEECH

[July 18, 1925]

Lord Birkenhead's pronouncement is deceptive in a double sense. It does not read as harsh on second reading as it did on first, but it disappoints more on the second than it did on the first. The

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held in the morning at the residence of S. C. Roy, son-in-law of C. R. Das, to discuss the abolition of the spinning franchise.

<sup>2</sup> The meeting of the A.I.C.C., it was decided, would be held late in September or early October to discuss the question of spinning franchise fully. According to the report : "At the conclusion of the sitting, Mahatmaji sent a note to Pandit Motilal Nehru saying that since the Swarajists had majority in the Congress and since Panditji was the President of the Swaraj Party, he should also assume the Presidentship of the Congress Working Committee. He did no longer like to be the President of this body. This note had created a sensation in the Swarajists' camp most of whom did not like to lose Mahatmaji's counsel. However, it was finally arranged that for at least the remaining period of this year, Mahatmaji will remain as the President of the A.I.C.C. But if the spinning franchise be dropped at the next meeting of the A.I.C.C., he will resign and set up a separate spinning organization."

harshness of it is unintended. The Secretary of State could not help himself. He has spoken as he has felt or rather been coached to feel. But his promises are only apparently alluring. A closer perusal leaves one under the impression that the maker of them knows that he will never be called upon to fulfil them. Let us take the most tempting of them. It says, in effect, 'produce your constitution and we will consider it.' Is it not our thirty-five years' experience that we have made petitions that we have considered to be perfect, but that they have been rejected "after careful consideration"? Having had that experience, we dropped the beggar's bowl in 1920 and made up our minds to live by our own exertion, even though we should perish in the attempt. It is not draughtsmanship that his Lordship really asks, it is swordsmanship he invites, with the full knowledge that the invitation will not be and could not be accepted. The evidence is in the speech itself. He had before him the Minority report of the Muddiman Committee, i.e., of Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jinnah, two among the cleverest lawyers we have in India and who have never been guilty of the crime of non-co-operation, and one of whom has been Law Member of the Viceregal Council. They and their colleague have been told that they did not know their business. Has then a constitution framed by Pandit Motilal Nehru and endorsed by, say, the Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri and Mian Fazli Hussain<sup>1</sup> a better chance of favourable reception? Is not Lord Birkenhead's offer a trap for the unwary to fall in? Supposing an honest constitution is drawn up just to meet the present situation, will it not be immediately regarded as preposterous and something infinitely less offered in its stead? When I was hardly twenty-five years old, I was taught to believe that, if we wished to be satisfied with 4 annas, we must ask for 16 annas in order to get the 4 annas. I never learnt that lesson because I believed in asking for just what I needed and fighting for it. But I have not failed to observe that there was a great deal of truth in the very practical advice.

The silliest constitution backed by force, whether violent or non-violent, will receive the promptest consideration especially from the British, who know only too well the value of at least one kind of force.

There is the Bill taken to England by that tireless servant of India, Dr. Besant. It is signed by many eminent Indians. And if some others have not signed it, it is not because they will not be satisfied

<sup>1</sup> A member of the Viceroy's Executive Council

with it, but because they know that nothing but the waste-paper basket is its destiny. It has not been signed because those who have refrained do not wish to be party to the insult of the nation which its summary rejection will imply. Let Lord Birkenhead say that he will accept any reasonable constitution that may be prepared by a party or parties overwhelmingly representative of Indian public opinion and he will have a constitution in a week's time. Let him publicly assure Dr. Besant that her Bill will have every chance of acceptance if it is endorsed by Pandit Motilal Nehru and others whom he may name, and I shall undertake to secure those signatures. The fact is that there is no sincere ring about the offer.

It is no fault of the Secretary of State for India that his offer does not read sincere. We are not ready as yet to demand anything. Therefore, naturally, it is for the British Government to give and for us to reject, if what is offered is not deemed enough for the time being. For us that the new Commander-in-Chief considers as unattainable is the only thing worth living for, fighting for and dying for. One's birthright is never unattainable and Lokamanya taught us that swaraj was our birthright. The definition of that swaraj is to rule ourselves, although we misrule ourselves for the time being. We, the English and the Indians, are in a hopeless muddle. Lord Birkenhead thinks the British Government are trustees for our welfare. We think that they hold us in bondage for their own benefit. Trustees never charge as their commission seventy-five per cent of the income of their wards. His Lordship says we cannot be a nation with our 9 religions and 130 languages. We contend that, for all practical purpose and for protection from outside the Indian border, we are one nation. He thinks that Non-co-operation was a dreadful mistake. The vast majority of us think that it alone awakened this sleeping nation from its torpor, it alone has given the nation a force whose strength is beyond measure. The Swaraj Party is a direct result of that force. He says that in Hindu-Mussalman dissensions the British Government have "kept their hands unsullied". It is the certain belief of almost every Indian that they, the British Government, are principally responsible for most of our quarrels. He thinks that we must co-operate with them. We say that, when they mean well or when there is change of heart, they will co-operate with us. He says that no gifted leader arose to make use of the Reforms. We say that Messrs Sastri and Chintamani, not to mention others, were gifted enough to make

the Reforms a success but, in spite of all the good will in the world, they found that they could not do so. Deshbandhu showed a way out. His offer stands.

But what hope is there of his offer being responded to in the spirit in which it has been made? There are the different viewpoints which make us English and Indians see things contrarywise. Is there any chance, then, of finding a common meeting ground?

Yes, there is.

We, the two peoples, occupy an unnatural position, i.e., of rulers and ruled. We Indians must cease to think that we are the ruled. That we can only do when we have some kind of force. We seemed to think we had it in 1921 and so we fancied that swaraj was coming inside of a year. Now no one dare prophesy. Let us gather that force—the non-violent force of civil resistance—and we shall be equal. This is no threat, no menace. It is a hard fact. And if I do not nowadays regularly criticize the acts of our ‘rulers’, as I used to before, it is not because the fire of the civil resister has died down in me, but because I am an economist of speech, pen and thought. When I am ready, I shall speak freely. I have ventured to criticize Lord Birkenhead’s pronouncement to tell the bereaved people of Bengal in particular and of India in general that I feel the unintended prick of Lord Birkenhead’s speech just as much as they do, and that, whilst Motilalji will be fighting in the Assembly and leading the Swaraj Party in the place of Deshbandhu, I shall be leaving no stone unturned to prepare the atmosphere needed for civil resistance—a vocation for which I seem to me to be more fitted than for any other. Has not the singer of the *Gita* said, “Better by far is the performance of one’s own dharma (duty), however humble it may be, than another’s, however loftier it may be?”

*Young India*, 23-7-1925

### 106. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

[July 18, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. RAMDAS,

This postcard has been lying with me. I had thought of using it for writing to you, and that too not on the day fixed for

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

writing to you but whenever I happened to get two minutes.

BAPU

CHI. RAMDAS GANDHI

KHADI KARYALAYA

AMRELI

KATHIAWAD

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy:  
Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### *107. MY NOTES*

#### HONOUR AMONG THIEVES

I never thought that I would have to write a note with this heading, and that too in connection with national activity in Gujarat. But the unexpected has happened. The Gujarat Khadi Mandal has resolved as under :

As it has become difficult to collect some of the outstanding dues of the Mandal and it has become necessary to file a suit to realize them, it is resolved that a statement containing the facts about these dues should be sent to Gandhiji through the Provincial Committee and, after his reply is received, necessary steps be taken to recover the dues in question.

The resolution has been occasioned by one or two particular cases. I have got the name and address of one party, but I do not wish to publish them just now, nor do I intend to advise the Khadi Mandal to file a suit in a court. I have already stated my view on this subject, to the effect that the resolutions of the Congress were not intended to harm its own interests. When they were proposed, it was taken for granted that its members would not break their promises to one another at any rate, that they would be honest among themselves in the matter of Congress work. But I find from the papers before me that Congressmen themselves—workers trusted by the Khadi Mandal—have been refusing to return the money advanced to them by the Mandal. Some persons who offered to mediate between the parties have also failed to keep their promise. If in dealing with such persons, we follow the Congress resolution on the boycott of courts, the Congress itself will have to declare bankruptcy. Will a Gujarati refuse to follow even the code of conduct which thieves recognize? ‘Honour among thieves’ means the morality which thieves respect. Their thieving is, to be sure, violation of morality, but they do not

thieve among themselves. If one of them lends a sum to another, the latter scrupulously returns it. Are there really Gujaratis who will not observe morality even to this extent? I would urge those who have kept back the Khadi Mandal's money to pay up, at any rate, the amounts which they have admitted as due from them.

#### ALL UNMARRIED

Through pride, maybe, or ignorance, or both, I thought that myself and my co-workers were the only people who tried to keep all their sons and daughters unmarried. But my pride has been humbled and my ignorance has been dispelled. One of the volunteers attending on me is a nephew of the Secretary of the local Congress Committee. Not only is he himself unmarried, but his father wants all his brothers to remain unmarried. If the young men themselves wish to marry, he will agree to find suitable brides for them; he has no intention to force them to remain unmarried against their will. But he is, at the same time, so training his sons that they will resolve to remain unmarried. All his sons are grown-up young men and settled in some profession or other, but so far they have remained unmarried of their own free will. I observe that in Bengal even girls are being trained to remain unmarried. The number of such girls is very small, but the movement does exist; it does not owe anything to Western influence; the parents of the girls who are trying to train their daughters in this manner are inspired solely by religious motives.

#### RIGHT v. LEFT

No one can say definitely why people came to make a distinction between the right hand and the left hand and how it became customary to avoid using the left hand for doing certain things and to use, instead, the right hand. But the result, as we know, is that for want of practice the left hand has become useless for many purposes and also remains weaker than the right hand.

It is not so in Japan. There people are taught to use both hands equally well from their early years. As a result, their physical efficiency is greater than ours.

I place this suggestion before the reader for his benefit in the light of my present experience. It is more than twenty years since I read about the practice in Japan. When I came to know of it, I started learning to write with my left hand and acquired tolerable proficiency in it. I now regret that I did not acquire the same speed in writing with the left hand as I had with the right, thinking that I could not afford

the time required for that. Now my right hand does not give the desired service in writing. It starts paining when I have written for some time with it. Being anxious to retain as long as possible the ability to write with the right hand, I have again started using the left hand. I do not have time enough now to do all my writing with the left hand and learn to write with it as fast as with the right hand. But it has been serving me well whenever I am in difficulty; I have, therefore, placed my experience in this matter before the reader. Those who can spare the required time and are keen enough should train themselves to write with the left hand too. Everyone who does so will discover in the course of time the value of this ability. Besides writing, it is useful to learn to do other things too with the left hand. Most of us have come across many persons who cannot even manage to eat with the left hand when the right hand has become unserviceable for some reason. I hope that this note will make no one go crazy about using the left hand. My only purpose in writing it is to advise people to keep the left hand in practice as much as they can in the ordinary course. It may be worth while for teachers to follow this suggestion and train children in this manner.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 19-7-1925

### 108. WHEN CAN WE RISE ?

A public worker writes :<sup>1</sup>

I have omitted here the details about Indian States given by the correspondent.

Faith cannot be a gift from anyone and, therefore, “Sevak” must himself acquire or feel the faith which he wants. I can, however, explain the flaw in his thinking. What a society deserves by way of reward and punishment for its actions is determined by the sum total of its activities. Moreover, we have been using the term “swaraj” in a restricted sense. It means the transfer of the reins of government from the hands of the British rulers into our hands. In this connection, we should compare the deserts of the two [the British and the Indian

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had described the evils prevalent in the country and asked how, in view of those evils, they could expect the country to prosper.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondent's pseudonym; literally, servant



people] on the basis of their social and political ethics. Social morality will include such virtues as our capacity for organization, fearlessness in social life, and so on. When our people have these virtues we shall be able to secure the reins of government in our hands. Moreover, at present swaraj means the freedom of British India only. No doubt freedom will have the profoundest effect on Indian States, but their problem will remain a separate one and will in all probability solve itself when British India has won its freedom. However evil the rule in Indian States, British India can be free today if it is strong enough. Hence, in judging what the country deserves, we should take into account the actions of the people in British India only. If we take into account the conditions in Indian States as well, our conclusion will go wrong. Really speaking, the Indian States represent British authority. They are subject to that authority, are responsible to it and yet are not. Their responsibility is limited to paying the tribute and remaining loyal to it. In regard to their relation with their subjects, they are almost independent. In any case, they are not responsible to the subjects. This makes them more susceptible to the evil influences in their environment. To put it in other words, they have many temptations to rule oppressively. If they respect justice as much as they do, it is because they still have some independent policy of their own. The wonder is that, though the Indian States are free from any control and though the British Government would welcome their following a policy of oppression, they manage to preserve the decency which they do. The credit for this goes to the ancient civilization of India.

By saying this, I am not defending the Indian States. I am only trying to assess the situation as it is and am pointing out to “Sevak” the flaw in his thinking, so as to help him to overcome his feeling of despair. However bad the Indian States may be, if the millions in the country who are directly under British rule display the social virtues which a nation must possess, they can secure control of the government. If they choose, the Indian States can help the people to cultivate those virtues. But even if they do not help, or actually obstruct our efforts, the people can acquire them.

We have often examined in the past what these requirements are—the spinning-wheel, i.e., khadi, Hindu-Muslim unity and eradication of untouchability. These things are necessary if we wish to secure swaraj through peaceful means. None of them would be required if we wished to win it with the sword. But, then, the freedom

we should then win would not be the people's freedom; it would be freedom for those with strength of arms. The people would have merely exchanged one form of slavery for another : a brown-skinned Dyer would not be more acceptable than the white-skinned one was. The plight of the subjects of Indian States which "Sevak" bemoans would then be the plight of the whole country, for the body of men which would have wrested power from the British with the help of the sword would hardly regard itself as responsible to the people. *Asi, talwar, shamsher*, "sword"—all these terms denote the same thing.

At present British rule would certainly seem milder than the rule of the Indian Princes. That indeed is the beauty of British rule. The Government must please some people in order to run the administration. The middle classes, therefore, do not have to submit to perpetual injustice. Since British tyranny has a much wider field, it is felt by a few individuals to be relatively mild and, because of long familiarity, we do not even recognize it as tyranny. The slaves in the southern States in the U.S.A. had come to love their condition so much, because of their long familiarity with it that, when they were set free, some of them broke into tears. They were faced with serious problems such as where to go, what to do and how to earn their livelihood. Many of us are in a similar condition. We do not feel the subtle but nonetheless deadly tyranny of British rule. Many victims of tuberculosis, though warned by doctors about their condition are deceived by the flush on their cheeks, not knowing that it is unnatural. They do not pay attention to the paleness of their legs.

Let me warn the reader that I offer no plea for the Indian States; I am only describing the country's sad plight. The Indian States may be bad, but their badness is shielded by the British Government. On superficial examination, British rule may seem better than the rule of the Indian Princes, but in reality it is by no means so. The British system of Government ruins the people physically, mentally and spiritually. Indian Princes ruin their subjects physically for the most part. If British rule gives place to people's rule, I believe the reform of the Indian States will follow as a matter of course. If the rule of force by white British arms is replaced by similar rule by brown arms, the change will bring no benefit to the people nor reform the Indian States. Any thoughtful person will be able to convince himself or herself of the truth of these two statements.

Though the atmosphere at present is confusing, I clearly

visualize progress of the spinning-wheel and khadi movement. The practice of untouchability is disappearing, and the Hindus and the Muslims are bound to return to the path of sanity, if not through reason, then, after fighting with each other. Hence, my faith that we can win swaraj remains unshaken.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 19-7-1925

### 109. NATIONAL EDUCATION

I give below the substance of what a Gujarati friend, after first describing the present unhappy state of national education, writes :

When students are leaving the national schools and colleges, when the workers grow slack and send their own children to Government schools for education, when the pupils who still remain wear khadi only when attending the national schools and the students who have obtained the *snataka* degree do not know what profession to take up—in these circumstances, how can we expect the national education movement to survive? I hope you will not say that the *snatakas* should go on spinning.

Every movement has its periods of ebb and flow before it succeeds in its aim. It is the same with the national education movement. Only those whose faith in it remains unshaken even during the periods of ebb will in the end bring glory to it. Having faith in the cause of national education, I am not afraid of a period of ebb but know that ebb will surely be followed by flood. Hence those who have faith should not lose it. The problem of employment for *snatakas* is a complicated one. The national education movement has not yet reached a stage when we can say that no *snataka* is in the slightest worried about employment. Some of them will be absorbed in the field of national education itself, but for the majority of them there should be something else, and the only field is that of khadi. That is the one field of national activity which throbs with life and can employ the largest number of young men. *Snatakas* in good numbers should come forward to work in it. Spinning as a means of earning one's livelihood is meant for the poorest. The work which middle-class people can take up as a means of livelihood is popularizing spinning. I see in Bengal that hundreds of young men can make a modest living through such employment. I am collecting the figures relating to this. I am sure people will be pleasantly surprised by them.

But this work is only for those young men who have faith in the power of khadi and have the necessary patience to learn the various processes connected with it. I concede that those who have no faith in the spinning-wheel and in khadi will serve no useful purpose by hanging on to national education.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 19-7-1925

### *110. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU*

CALCUTTA,

*July 19, 1925*

DEAR PANDITJI,

During these few days I have been taxing myself what special exclusive contribution I can make to the memory of Deshbandhu and the situation created by Lord Birkenhead's speech, and I have come to the conclusion that I should absolve the Swaraj Party from all obligations under the Pact of last year. The result of this act is that the Congress need no longer be a predominantly spinning association. I recognize that, under the situation created by the speech, the authority and the influence of the Swaraj Party need to be increased. I would fail in my duty if I neglected a single step within my power to increase the strength of the Party. This can be done if the Congress becomes a predominantly political body. Under the Pact, the Congress activity is restricted to the constructive programme mentioned therein. I recognize that this restriction should not continue under the altered circumstances that face the country. Not only do I, therefore, personally absolve you from the restriction, but I propose to ask the forthcoming meeting of the A.I.C.C. to do likewise and place the whole machinery of the Congress at your disposal so as to enable you to bring before that body such political resolutions as you may consider necessary in the interest of the country. In fact, I would have you regard me at your disposal in all such matters in which I can conscientiously serve you and the Swaraj Party.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India*, 23-7-1925

<sup>1</sup> For Motilal Nehru's reply, *vide* Appendix "Letter from Motilal Nehru", 21-7-1925.

### 111. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

*Monday [July 20, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. DEVDAS,

Thank God that I am able to write even a postcard to you. You have imagined too many things in my assistance. I do not see the necessity of reserving you for the kind of assistance you talk of. Let everyone go to the Assembly if he likes. I would neither go myself nor send anybody there. The charkha alone is our work. If Deshbandhu had lived on, he would have done mainly this work; he was interested in the charkha so much. But all this when we meet. Just now all my time goes in collecting ten lakhs and in meeting Panditji. Hardly to I get any time to write for the weeklies.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 2132

### 112. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

*July 21, 1925*

DEAR RAJENDRA BABU,

I must write to you in English to save time. My right hand refuses to work. To write with the left would take much time. I am, therefore, just now taking shorthand assistance. In fact, I commenced it only today. I am afraid it will not be possible to hold the meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Patna.<sup>2</sup> The people from Maharashtra and Madras, and especially the latter, complain bitterly, and there is much truth in their complaint. So all fixed upon Bombay. This time we want a full meeting. Very important resolutions to be taken making changes in the constitution and policy. I would like the resolutions, whatever they are, to be taken in a full house. But if you can have me in Bihar in the beginning of September, I could come and I would like to take as little as possible for Bihar. But if you must have a whole month, you can have it. As a matter of fact, as you will be having me in Purulia, and as all the workers will be coming there, perhaps it would be unnecessary for you to take me to many centres at the present

<sup>1</sup> The postmark is dated "Calcutta, July 21, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> The meeting came off on October 1, 1925.

moment. But you shall be the sole judge. I have sent word with the messenger who came with your first note that you will find me in Purulia on the 12th. If, however, you will have me earlier, please let me know in any case. You must so arrange as to enable me to reach Bombay on 30th September. And all the members from Bihar should attend the A.I.C.C. meeting. As to the circular about the charkha, I have not yet read it, but I hope to do so in the course of a week and write about it for next week's *Young India*. Yes, all-India Memorial notice will be now out. Jawaharlal has already written about it. It will be solely devoted to the propagation of the spinning-wheel and khaddar and, though it is not stated in the appeal, naturally the monies collected in the provinces will be disbursed in those provinces so far as possible. But the operation will take place through the All-India. . . .<sup>1</sup>

From a microfilm : S.N. 10679

### 113. AN ALL-INDIA MEMORIAL

[On or before *July 22, 1925*]<sup>2</sup>

We the undersigned are of opinion that an all-India fund is as much a necessity as an all-Bengal one to perpetuate the memory of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. He was as much an all-India man as he was an all-Bengal man. Just as we knew what Deshbandhu would have himself wished us to do as an all-Bengal Memorial, so do we know what he would have wished us to do regarding an all-India Memorial. His idea was clearly expressed over a year ago and repeated in his Faridpur speech that village reconstruction was the thing dearest and nearest to his heart for the regeneration of India and for the attainment of swaraj along peaceful and evolutionary lines. We know, too, that he believed that the beginning and the centre of such activity lay in the revival and development of hand-spinning in villages and universalization of khaddar. It is the one activity that can be made common to all India and yet can be handled with the least cost. It is the one activity that is calculated to yield immediate results, be they ever so small. All people, rich and poor, young and old, men and women, can personally help and engage in it if they will. It can, as nothing else

<sup>1</sup> The letter is incomplete.

<sup>2</sup> This joint appeal was evidently drafted and signed before July 22, when Gandhiji issued another appeal referring to this; *vide* the following item.

can, bind the city people to the villagers and introduce the educated class to them in a most useful manner. It is the one activity that can be common to all the provinces and all the sects of India and produce the largest economic results. Lastly, though it has a political side, it is in its nature so obviously social and economical that it should enlist the support of all, without distinction of party, who believe in the spinning-wheel as a great economic factor and as a factor in village reconstruction.

We, therefore, cannot conceive a more fitting Memorial than the universal propagation of the spinning-wheel and khaddar and, therefore, invite funds for that purpose. We refrain from naming the sum required for this Memorial as it can absorb all it can receive. The subscription given by the public will be the measure of their regard for the memory of the deceased patriot, of their belief in the usefulness of the form the Memorial is to take and of their trust in those who are to handle and operate on the funds. They will be Sjt. M. K. Gandhi, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ray, Shrimati Sarojini Devi, Sjt. Jamnalal Bajaj and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, with power to add to their number. Pandit Jawaharlal has consented to act as Hon. Secretary for the Trustees and Sjt. Jamnalal Bajaj as Treasurer. Remittances should be sent to Sjt. Jamnalal Bajaj, 395, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay, or to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, 107, Hewett Road, Allahabad. A full list of donations will be sent to the Press for publication from week to week.

M. K. GANDHI

MOTILAL NEHRU

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

A. K. AZAD

P. C. RAY

JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SAROJINI NAIDU

NIL RATAN SIRCAR

J. M. SEN GUPTA

C. F. ANDREWS

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

B. F. BHARUCHA

SHYAMSUNDAR CHAKRAVARTI

BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY

SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

NALINI RANJAN SIRCAR

SATYANAND BOSE

(More signatures to follow.)

*Young India*, 23-7-1925

#### *114. APPEAL FOR ALL-INDIA DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL*

148, RUSSA ROAD,

CALCUTTA,

*July 22, 1925*

I hope that the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial appeal will not in any way disturb the all-Bengal Deshbandhu collection. The all-India collection will last a considerable period, seeing that Bengal will have paid a heavy sum for the All-Bengal Memorial. The collection in Bengal for the All-India Memorial need not be made for three months or a longer period if necessary. The attention of Bengal should not be diverted from the all-Bengal collection. It must be a point of honour with every Bengali and everyone domiciled in Bengal to make the Bengal collection a full success. Over five lakhs have now been already paid. Though the balance, I take it, is assured, it is likely to take longer than the first five lakhs unless the workers will concentrate their effort on quickness in collection.

Sjt. Manilal Kothari has shown what can be done in the direction by specialists. In view of his success in inducing some of those who have already paid to double and even to quadruple their subscriptions, there is perhaps a possibility of some of the others, who have already subscribed, paying a second and substantial instalment. But, apart from this possibility, there are schools and colleges left untouched. Will the Principals of these institutions or the students themselves move, as I was told at the beginning of the month that they would, as soon as these institutions were open after the vacation? There are all the Bengal merchants and traders in the busy centres of Calcutta mostly untouched. I could see, when I was taken to some of these shops, that it was possible to collect, if not the whole sum, at least a large part of it from these merchants. Again, all the districts have not yet sent in their returns, nor have the Bengalis from the other provinces, except in some cases. Will all these friends respond in good time?

I would like to plead a little for myself. I had hoped to be able to leave Bengal by the middle of this month. I see no hope of doing so before the end of the month. I ask for the assistance of those who revere the memory of Deshbandhu and who are able themselves to



subscribe and induce others to do so in finishing the collection as early as possible.

M. K. GANDHI

*Forward, 23-7-1925*

*115. LETTER TO SHAUKAT ALI*

CALCUTTA,  
*July 22, 1925*

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I have your two letters.<sup>1</sup> I must not try to write myself just now. My right hand refuses to bear any strain. It insists upon rest. Hence this dictating. I had a long chat with Shuaib<sup>2</sup>. He thinks that he is utterly incompetent for *Comrade* work not because of his inability as editor, but because of incompatibility of temperament. He says what is the use of going there only to prove a dismal failure. Knowing Shuaib as I now do, I see considerable force in what he says. I am quite clear in my mind that, if immediate and definite assistance is not procurable, Mahomed Ali should give up both the papers or at least one. A good soldier, when he knows defeat to be a certainty, takes to an orderly retreat and does not wait for completion of the disaster or annihilation. But you know best, not he. I have the same faith in your robust common sense that I started with. You must, therefore, exercise your judgment and lay down the law for Mahomed Ali. I am following the movements of both of you as much as it is possible for me to do without reading newspapers. With us, or better still, with you, the battle has only now begun. I say 'with you' for the simple reason that I am now inured to difficulties and dangers and defeats so called. My heart and my prayers are with you.

I must still remain in Calcutta to finish the ten lakhs.<sup>3</sup> It is an uphill job, but it delights my heart to see the poorest of Bengal giving their pice and even their half-pice. You must have seen what I am doing and I have done regarding the Swarajists. I am trying to give them all help that I am capable of rendering, and personally I am certain that the Congress must be wholly theirs, and we who do not

<sup>1</sup> These are not available.

<sup>2</sup> Shuaib Qureshi

<sup>3</sup> Target for collection of funds for the Deshbandhu Memorial

believe in Council-entry should remain in the Congress on their sufferance. But this time I have avoided any understanding. The All-India Congress Committee will be absolutely free to take any decision it likes unhampered by me or anybody else. So far as I am concerned, I am becoming more and more convinced that, when there is a wreckage of everything else, hand-spinning and khaddar will survive. It is only safe and potent constructive activities which can remain unaffected by any storm however violent. Shuaib knows, I think, the goal of my mind and so does Shankerlal<sup>1</sup>, who was here. I must refer you to them for the balance and then to the pages of *Young India*, which is more and more becoming my weekly letter to my friends.

*Yours sincerely,*

MAULANA SHAUKAT ALI

From a photostat : S.N. 19339

### 116. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS

*July 22, 1925*

MY DEAR KRISHNADAS,

I have asked Satis Babu to send one hundred rupees to Hardayal Babu. My right hand is causing some trouble. I am, therefore, dictating this.

I continue to hear about you from Satis Babu. You must become healthy and strong as early as possible. All mental worries must be put aside. I hope you are going to Comilla as early as possible. Jamnalalji is going to Atrai. He will be there a few days perhaps before he proceeds to Chandpur. Will you not go at once therefore to Comilla and recuperate yourself.

*Yours sincerely,*

B. KRISHNADAS

C/O RADHA MADHAB SINGHA

CHANDPUR

From a microfilm : S.N. 19338

<sup>1</sup> Shankerlal Banker

117. LETTER TO NISHITHNATH KUNDU

148 RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,

July 22, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I did discuss the conditions of the committee at Dinajpur with Deshbandhu. He told me that at the present moment it was difficult for the provincial committee to help a district like yours. There are no funds with the committee. What it is now possible for me to suggest is that workers who have full faith in khadi should put themselves in correspondence with Khadi Pratishthan and work under it.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 8021

118. THE SPINNING FRANCHISE

There was an informal meeting of the Swarajists and others on the 17th instant.<sup>1</sup> It was a representative gathering. All including myself felt that a revision of the franchise was necessary and all felt that the self-spinning as an alternative should be permanently retained, and not merely by way of trial, in the Congress franchise. That means permanent recognition of the right of labour to be directly represented in the Congress. All agreed that yarn as distinguished from spinning franchise must be abolished. It had given rise to hypocrisy and even dishonesty. The question of quantity to self-spun yarn or cash sub-scription was held in abeyance. There was a divergence of opinion. An overwhelming majority favoured also the retention of khaddar-wearing as a permanent part of the franchise. This is, in my opinion, a decided gain. The third proposition unanimously agreed to was that an All-India Spinners' Association should be formed to be an integral part of the Congress, with absolute powers, which would control the spinning part of the Congress activity and act as the Congress Agency for receiving and testing spinning subscriptions. The result, if the recommendations are accepted, would

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Swaraj Party Meeting", 17-7-1925.

be that the Swarajists will 'run' the Congress and the A.I.S.A. will take the place analogous to the Swaraj Party.

The A.I.C.C. will meet on the 1st of October to consider the proposal. It will meet without any restriction on the freedom of the members. Not even those who were present at the informal meeting will be bound by the vote they gave at it. If, on further consideration, they think differently, they will be free to vote against the proposals that will be submitted to the meeting. The members of the A.I.C.C. will be free also to move amendments and criticize as they please. Each one will vote as a Congressman or, better still, as an Indian without any party obligation. As the reader will observe from my letter to Panditji,<sup>1</sup> I have as a matter of duty absolved the Swaraj party from any obligation under last year's Pact. The propositions to be submitted to the A.I.C.C. must be examined on merits. I do not desire that any member, Swarajist or No-changer, should vote to placate me. We are trying to evolve a democratic constitution. It is one's conscience alone which needs placating and no person, however great he may be. For me there are no No-changers and Pro-changers. Those who advocate Council-entry and those who do not equally serve the nation if their action or inaction is prompted by love of the country. Indeed, I urge those who have no absolute scruples against Council-entry immediately to join the Swaraj Party and strengthen its hands.

I hope that every member of the A.I.C.C. will attend the forthcoming meeting, take part in the proceedings and register his opinion. Personally I do not want the matter to be decided by a majority of votes. Whatever is done must be done by almost absolute unanimity.

What is proposed is a vital change in the constitution. Ordinarily the A.I.C.C. should not interfere with it. But there are moments when it will be disloyal not to do so. If the overwhelming opinion in the country requires a change that admits of no delay, it is the most proper thing for the A.I.C.C. to make the change and take the consequences of having its decision revoked and its action censured by the Congress. An agent has always the right to anticipate the unexpressed wish of his principal when he acts in the latter's interest and at his own peril. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that, if an overwhelming majority of the members of the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Motilal Nehru", 19-7-1925.

A.I.C.C. desire the change above fore-shadowed, it would be wrong on their part by hesitation to waste precious three months of the nation. The Cawnpore Congress should be relieved of the necessity of a prolonged discussion over a matter which could well be decided by the A.I.C.C. Its time should be left free for tackling larger problems.

Let it be also noted that the Congress will, under the scheme sketched by me, become a predominantly political body, taking the adjective in its generally accepted sense. Swarajists will become, as they ought to be, the Congress, instead of being its chief and only political agents. That is the least answer that the A.I.C.C. can make to Lord Birkenhead.

*Young India*, 23-7-1925

### *119. FRUIT OF SUPPRESSION*

An esteemed American friend sends me the following illuminating passage from Dr. Miller's *Races, Nations and Classes* :

Within a suppressed group there grow up many bitter factions. This has become notorious among the Irish. The dissension within all the suppressed nationalities is an illustration of the same thing. Each has focussed on its own struggle for freedom and selected particular outlet for the struggle, and when these factions find it necessary to work together to accomplish a common end, there is the immediate tendency to call attention to the differences, which, though subsidiary, are considered of prime importance. Under the conditions of freedom, both for the individual and the group, this particular aspect of the psychosis will gradually wear off, but it must be accepted as an inevitable consequence of restricted freedom.

The friend observes, "This illuminates the situation in India. Doesn't it?" It does, indeed, and it is for that reason that people like Dr. Besant persevere in their attempt to secure freedom in spite of the communal dissensions. There is room for both—those who seek freedom despite differences and those who seek to remove differences for the sake of paving the road to freedom.

*Young India*, 23-7-1925

### *120. NOTES*

#### *'ALWAR ATROCITIES'*

What has been known as "Alwar atrocities" came before the Congress Working Committee that met in Calcutta, in the form of a

motion by Sjt. Jamnalal Bajaj for the appointment of a committee of inquiry. Now it has been long a tradition of the Congress not to interfere in the internal affairs of Indian States. The members of the Committee felt that it was a healthy tradition which it would be unwise to break. Sjt. Jamnalalji then did not press his motion. I told him, however, that I should discuss the question in these pages and give my reasons for my personal opinion that the Congress should not interfere in the internal administration of the Indian States. This may, if one chooses to put it so, be regarded as a virtue of necessity or a matter of policy, It is both and perhaps a little more. It must be frankly admitted that the Congress possesses no authority for enforcing its will in Indian States even to the extent it does in British India proper. Prudence, therefore, dictates inaction where action would be waste of effort, if not folly. But if inaction is prudential, it is also benevolent. The Congress seeks not to embarrass the States, it desires to help them. It does not wish to destroy them, it wishes to reform them. And this the Congress for the moment does by abstention as an earnest of its goodwill.

But abstention by the Congress does not mean absence of effort on the part of Congressmen. Those who have any relation with the States will no doubt use their influence. The local committees can help and guide the distressed people so long as they do not come in clash with authority. Nor does the Congress regulate or control the action of individual Congressmen. But when they take action, they do so not as Congressmen. The position of the Congress must not be compromised.

May the subjects of Indian States then expect no relief from the Congress which claims to be a national institution? I fear the answer must be partly in the negative. They may not expect any direct assistance. But indirect assistance they do get. For, to the measure that the Congress becomes powerful and efficient, to that measure also is levelled up the condition of the subjects of the Indian States. The moral pressure of the Congress must be felt all over the land either directly or indirectly. I hope, therefore, the afflicted people will realize that, if the Congress does not offer any direct help, it is not for want of will, but it is entirely due to want of ability and opportunity.

## FOR ANGLO-INDIANS

Dr. Moreno has handed me the following questions for answers :<sup>1</sup>

1. The present distress of the Anglo-Indians is deplorable and is becoming more acute as the days go on. The unemployed themselves do not desire charity, they want work. In my mind, industrial occupations would suit them best. What is your suggestion?

I am glad the unemployed do not desire charity. I must be pardoned for saying that the unemployed can find industrial occupation in hand-weaving. But I am free to confess that the Anglo-Indian with his present training may be ill-fitted for weaving unless he is gifted with an exceptionally strong will. It is difficult to give advice on a hypothetical question. It is for an enterprising and philanthropic Anglo-Indian to prepare a census of the unemployed and then think out occupations for which the community is best fitted and prepare for training them therein.

2. To bring such a community, as the Anglo-Indians go to form, to your way of thinking as regards spinning and khaddar would require an active propaganda spread over a considerable length of time. Would it meet your wishes if the Anglo-Indians showed a mind not inimical to the programme you have set out?

I agree that the Anglo-Indians as a class may take time before they grow to like spinning even as a sacrament; but there is no reason to delay over the use of khaddar. A jacket made of khaddar is as serviceable as the one made of foreign cloth and bed-sheets of khaddar are better to the touch than the ordinary mill manufacture. It is the feeling of kinship with the masses that is needed to induce Anglo-Indians to use khaddar. That is, in my opinion, the first step to a real spirit of nationalism.

3. The Anglo-Indian community goes to form one of the minorities of India. How would your programme go to include them in your all party combination?

The Anglo-Indians will be treated precisely in the same manner as the other minorities.

4. In your desire to secure a Unity Congress for the future in India, how would you include Anglo-Indian representatives, bearing in mind (a) your spinning franchise and (b) the non-inclusion of Anglo-Indian representatives hitherto in the Congress?

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Interview to Dr. H. W. B. Moreno", 31-5-1925.

Under the proposed change, a cash subscription will be accepted in lieu of yarn. If hitherto Anglo-Indians have not joined, it is largely due to their unwillingness. If it is suggested that the Congress should have made a special effort to enlist their support, I can only say that it is difficult in respect of those who regard themselves superiors and strangers to Indians, as I fear Anglo-Indians have hitherto done.

5. You are aware that there is in the Anglo-Indian community a desire among some to lean on the European side, and among others to go to the Indian side. What would you advise the Anglo-Indian community as a whole to do (a) for their own benefit and (b) for the benefit of India?

I know the existence of the painful attitude. The only dignified attitude, in my opinion, is for Anglo-Indians to throw in their lot with those in whose midst they are born and among whom they have to “live and move and have their being”. Their fruitless attempt to hang on to the coat-tails of Englishmen only retards their settling down to a permanent and progressive condition. To aspire to be European is unnatural. To return to their Indian parentage and surroundings is the most natural and dignified condition for them. And the doing of that which is natural and dignified must benefit both them and India, their motherland, in every sense of the word.

#### PREVENTIBLE WASTE

It was an ennobling sight, the meeting of ladies at Rajshahi. Like their sisters in the University Institute, they poured in their rupees and their ornaments. They have, indeed, done so everywhere. But at Rajshahi it was a never-ending flow. They had also a grand spinning competition in which over two hundred ladies must have taken part. One of them was an accomplished spinner of fine yarn, possibly finer even than that of Aparna Devi who only the other day came first-class first. She showed on her own person a sari of exceedingly fine yarn which she said she had spun herself. But almost every one of the wheels, including this lady's, was a useless noise-making toy, yielding poor results in quantity. The maker of these wheels, Babu Taraknath Maitra, is an enthusiast. But he is a blind enthusiast. He knows something of mechanism, but knows nothing of spinning-wheels. I do not think he knows even the principles of spinning. I must plead with him to desist from inflicting his machines on these cultured and patriotic sisters of Rajshahi. If he makes these wheels for profit, let him withdraw them and make proper wheels. If he makes them from love of service, let him destroy the useless things, study the science of



the wheel and not make another till he has acquainted himself with the best wheel. I have known in Bengal only three patterns which can at all be claimed to be good wheels. Of these three, the Khadi Pratishthan pattern has appealed to me as the best. The second is what is used by the workers at Duadando. Its speciality is that the spindle is kept slanting. A third is the old Bengal pattern with a short platform and a heavy revolving wheel and a long spindle. The tests of a good wheel are: (1) noiselessness, and (2) yield of at least 400 yards of yarn of ten counts per hour by an ordinary spinner. I have heard that the other two patterns have been known to yield 600 yards of at least ten counts per hour. I have seen the Khadi Pratishthan wheel yield over 850 yards per hour. All its workers can spin 400 yards per hour on the Khadi Pratishthan pattern. Let the manufacturers of wheels know that they are injuring the cause when they put on the market a noisy charkha that will not yield the average quantity. I warn the workers, too, against putting below-standard wheels in the hands of spinners, professional or voluntary, when they know that they can get wheels that answer the standard that I have laid down. If any man in Bengal has a better wheel, let him send it on to me. I promise to test it and report the result without undue delay. Spinning is a matter of life and death for the masses. Let not those who are engaged in spreading it indulge in waste that a little knowledge can easily prevent.

*Young India*, 23-7-1925

# 121. *SPEECH AT MARWARI AGRAWAL CONFERENCE, CALCUTTA*

[Before July 24, 1925 ]

MR. PRESIDENT, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am grateful to you for inviting me to this conference and asking me to speak. I have gone through the booklet containing the resolutions to be taken up today. The question of remarriage of widows has been raised and, from the allusions made to me, I understand that you expect me to say something about it. I shall, however, prefer not to say anything now on the matter. I have said what I had to say in *Navajivan* and *Young India*, and those who wish to know my views on this question should look for them in these journals. In this way your time will be saved and you can satisfy yourself on the point.

What I wish to say to you today about the numerous reforms

that the Hindu society needs will be of a general nature. I shall merely enunciate a principle. With many of you I am closely acquainted. What I feel on the question of remarriage of widows I have said in the columns of *Navajivan* and *Young India*. What I should like to make very clear here is that, though a reformer, I accept nothing against dharma.

I am convinced that I am not a Westernized reformer. There are critics who say that I am an apologist of the Western ways. I consider them childish. For they have not understood my views, nor by living with me understood my life. If I once accept something, as a satyagrahi I stubbornly cling to it. Satyagraha here does not mean what it is commonly understood to mean. Satyagraha, in its correct meaning, is holding on to truth. I openly proclaim any Western ideas that I wish to propagate. For instance, with reference to *Ayurveda* I said once that, in the matter of health, we have far less to teach the West than we have to learn from it.

I consider myself a *sanatani* Hindu. It increases our anguish when we have to suffer at the hands of outsiders. I have repeatedly said that I accept the system of *Varnashrama*. But I wish to cleanse it of the caste distinctions that have crept into it. It is my belief that Hinduism is non-violent.

Please sheathe the sword of ostracism. This is not the time for it. If a man marries off his very young daughter, you at once apply ostracism against him, but, if a man is a libertine and eats flesh, you do nothing to ostracize him. Practice of ostracism in this manner will ultimately lead to the ostracized becoming a separate caste and to an increase of discord in the community. Thus, when I went to England in 1887, I found on my return that, while some of my caste accepted me, some others ostracized me. I, however, have no grievance against my caste on that account. My policy is one of non-violence. I have no desire to cause them pain. I eat with untouchables. I also eat with Muslims. There has been no protest from my caste over this. They do not invite me to communal meals, but they invite my people. We should not condemn anyone for his being a reformer. We should not ostracize him. If you want to unite the Hindus, do not exaggerate small things nor make light of big things. Now when castes have become so hybridized and immorality is so widespread, when we are not able even to guard our own honour, whom can we ostracize? The better course would be to ostracize ourselves; that is the way of self-

purification. Yes, I must tell you not to misuse the weapon of ostracism.

I am happy that, among the Hindus, the Marwari community enjoys affluence. I know also that it know how to make money and that it does so. I am not unaware either that your community is well-known for its generosity. The Marwaris know equally well the art of making money and of spending it. I know all this well enough. But, with all this, they have a failing, and that failing is very marked : they waste money. The Marwaris, it is true, earn money and also spend it on good works; it is usually their desire to have some religious cause to support. But generally they do not spend their money properly. I would, therefore, say to the Marwaris that they should keep certain things in mind when they spend money, thinking they are putting it to a good use. It is necessary to give great thought to the question of spending money. You should make quite sure, before you spend money, that you are making good use of it. Since you are charitable and generous, it is all the more necessary for you to be thoughtful in spending. You must be aware that in America there are millionaires and multi-millionaires who are far richer than you. There used to be a millionaire called Carnegie there (I do not know whether he is alive now). It was his peculiarity that he would be guided in his actions entirely by his own ideas. He paid absolutely no attention to the ideas of others. One day it occurred to him to spend his money for some good cause. And lo and behold—he started shipping his wealth to Scotland. He did it to support libraries in Scotland. The teachers of Scotland, however, wrote him a letter requesting him to spare Scotland his charitable attentions. So we must be very careful how we disburse money. We must think hard before we undertake anything. You have necessarily to exercise care and discretion while spending money. You must understand that, unless you do so, you will not be making the right use of your money. Therefore, for a community so generous as yours care and discretion are of great importance.

I have fallen in love with the Parsi community. I should like to state here that the Parsis occupy the first place in generosity. The Jews come next. And I feel sad to say that the third place is that of the Marwaris among Hindus. I have myself seen how generous Parsis are and what great care they exercise in spending even the smallest sum. I shall, therefore, say here no more than that you Marwaris should show that among Hindus, too, there is at least one community that knows both how to earn money and how to spend it.

My views about cow-protection are well known. I have repeatedly stated that it is a very noble work. But I cannot help saying also that it needs to be improved. I myself dabbled in it, but I did not get any great response. I have a fair amount of experience of this work. I have been at it for some thirty years. I have also done some *tapasya*. As for the response from people, I once requested a Marwari friend to accept the treasurership of a cow-protection fund, but he refused, although my intention in making him the treasurer was not to ask him for any excessive financial assistance. All the same, I must emphatically assert that, if the Marwari community cannot take up this work of cow-protection, if it cannot save the cow, I do not see which other community can. In other words, if Marwaris cannot save the cow, then no one among the Hindus can. But, for cow-protection a number of things are needed. It needs application and time quite as much as money. So, when considering this question, we must keep in mind these three requirements as well as other things. Then alone can we make any satisfactory progress in this work.

In the end, I must express my gratitude to all of you for giving me a calm and patient hearing. I pray to God that He may bestow his grace on you.

[From Hindi]

Aaj, 24-7-1925

## 122. LETTER TO MADELEINE SLADE <sup>1</sup>

148 RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA

July 24, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I was pleased to receive your letter<sup>2</sup> which has touched me deeply. The samples of wool you have sent are excellent.

You are welcome whenever you choose to come. If I have advice of the steamer that brings you, there will be someone receiving you at the steamer, and guiding you to the train that will take you to Sabarmati. Only please remember that the life at the

<sup>1</sup> b. 1892; Gandhiji gave her the name Mirabehn; joined Gandhiji's Ashram in November 1925; accompanied Gandhiji to London for Round Table Conference in 1931; suffered several terms of imprisonment during India's struggle for freedom.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the letter, *vide* Appendix "Letter from Madeleine Slade", 29-5-1925.

Ashram is not all rosy. It is strenuous. Bodily labour is given by every inmate. The climate of this country is also not a small consideration. I mention these things not to frighten you, but merely to warn you.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

As my right hand requires rest, I am dictating my correspondence.

From the original : C.W. 5182. Courtesy : Mirabein

*123. LETTER TO KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA*

148 RUSSA ROAD,

CALCUTTA,

*July 24, 1925*

MY DEAR VENKATAPPAYYA,

I like your letter<sup>1</sup> for its fullness and frankness and for your determination to keep as healthy as it is possible for you to do.

My own position is clear. The Congress has appointed the Swarajist Party its agents for conducting the political campaign, therefore, every individual Congressman can say that the Swarajist Party is its agent for the political work. When he finds that he cannot endorse the sum total of the Swarajist activity, he can secede from the Congress or he can resist in the Congress. My own individual position is neither the one nor the other. If I must have any political representative on behalf of the Congress in the Councils, I can only appoint the Swarajist Party because of its fighting capacity and this I can say in spite of my being against Council-entry on principle. As an Indian I have to make a choice between thieves and the police, and though both are alike unacceptable to me as a believer in ahimsa, I cannot divest myself of responsibility as a social being and, therefore, must continually make my choice. It is because of this difficulty that our sages have made room for the cave-dwellers who do not want to share the responsibility for the actions of their fellow-men. They not only shun the haunts of men, but refuse to eat the corn grown by human labour. They only eat the fruits and root[s]

<sup>1</sup> This is not available.

which grow without human agency. I do not consider my se[lf] fit for that state. I remain in human society and, therefore, consistently with my individual views make myself responsible, where it is inevitable, for many acts which I cannot otherwise approve. Similarly, I have not yet bee[n] brought to the pitch of saying I do not want to [be] in the Congress. The agency of the Swarajist Party is strictly limited in its scope. I recognize its agency so far as the general political work is concerned. I do not make myself responsible for the character or the conduct of individual Swarajists. I wonder if I have made myself intelligible. You know the further step I have taken in view of Lord Birkenhead's speech and, of course, Deshbandhu's death. I must no longer prevent the Congress from becoming a predominantly political body by the force of my person; hence the letter to Punditji. But my decision need not affect that of a single Congressman unless it commends itself to his reason. I have simply stated my own personal opinion and, as I do not consider it to be binding on anybody in any shape or form and as I though[t] that an announcement of that character at the present moment would strengthen the Swarajist Party, I wrote the letter without any hesitation. For yourself, you know the local circumstances, and if you find that your indirect endorsement of the Swarajist Party will be to me your endorsement of the views and character of individual Swarajists, you will not hesitate to sever your connection with the Congress, while still retaining the resolute determination not to say anything against the Swarajist Party. More from the pages of *Young India*.

I expect you to be in Bombay on the 1st October; meanwhile, by all means write whatever you feel. My right hand requires rest; hence, for the last three days I am falling back upon shorthand assistance.

From a photostat : S.N. 19340

## 124. SPEECH ON KRISTODAS PAL<sup>1</sup>

July 24, 1925

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I want to tender a double apology to you first because I have not arrived in time, but you know the difficulties that beset me at the present moment. I have not a minute that I can call my own. Hence the delay. I want to apologize to you also for interrupting the proceedings and my apologies are due to Mr. Wordsworth whose speech has been suspended in order to make room for me. I am deeply grateful for these facilities which everywhere my countrymen and others afford to me, realizing as they do my situation.

I must confess to you that I know very little of the life of Kristodas Pal. The best years of my life have been spent outside India and, as a busy man that I was in South Africa, I was not able to keep myself in touch with all that was going on in India. It is a humiliating confession, but I must make that confession to you. At the same time, I feel honoured in that I was invited to be present at this function. It is a matter of privilege to me that I can associate myself with you in the tributes that will be paid, this evening, to the memory of that great and illustrious countryman of ours. His grandson has been kind enough to place at my disposal some literature dealing with his writings and, during the spare moments I could get yesterday, I came upon a passage in one of his writings bearing upon Home Rule. I little thought that, even in his bad time, that great man thought out things which we are today endeavouring to the best of our ability to reduce to practice. He gave us those ideas of freedom which we are today endeavouring to translate into action. I have read also something else from his writings. As a youth I knew this much that he was one of the greatest journalists of his time, that he was a fearless patriot, but with his fearlessness he combined a polished and cultured courtesy which never left in anything that he wrote a sting behind. We of the present generation, in our attempt to attain our freedom, need to treasure the lesson that we have inherited from the great man; we need also to copy his fearlessness and gentleness, because fearlessness without gentleness is mere brag and bluster.

<sup>1</sup> A meeting to pay tribute to the memory of Kristodas Pal was held on his 41st death anniversary at the University Institute, Calcutta.

The young men who have gathered together to do honour to the memory of that great patriot should remember this one lesson from his life that, even at his time of day, he has lost nothing for having been courteous. On the contrary, we are enabled to treasure his memory because he never lost sight of the fact that a man, who has to deal with opponents, and who has to wring freedom from unwilling hands, has still need to be gentle and courteous. May I translate it in my own language and say that fearlessness is only true when combined with it is non-violence. I have summed up all these gentle virtues in that oneword which we have inherited from the *rishis* of old. If it be true that our religion, Hinduism, is saturated with ahimsa, then, in every walk of life, it is the one thing that we must exhibit most prominently.

Speakers who will follow me, from their greater acquaintance of his life, I have no doubt, will tell you many things of his other virtues. But, in my humble opinion, they will not be able to pick out a single one of his characteristics which will excel the one thing I have the honour to present to you for your acceptance and treasuring. It is well that we have gathered here together to do honour to the memory of that great man, but it will be better if we translate some part of those virtues into our own life.

May God help you and help me to do so that we may become better and fitter instruments for the task that lies before us.

*Forward, 25-7-1925*

## 125. SPEECH AT EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION MEETING<sup>1</sup>

CALCUTTA,

*July 24, 1925*

Mahatma Gandhi then addressed the meeting.

He apologized for not standing up to do so, and explained the cause—a severe attack of dysentery some 5 or 6 years ago, which had incapacitated him physically. He thanked the European Association for extending such an invitation to him. Mahatma Gandhi said :

I am dying to co-operate.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Held at the Grand Hotel; the meeting was presided over by W. W. page, after whose introductory remarks Gandhiji addressed the gathering.

<sup>2</sup> According to the report in *The Englishman*, 25-7-1925, Gandhiji said that “some time ago an English friend wrote to him that although he proposed to be a non-co-operator, he (Mr. Gandhi) was dying to co-operate. He wrote back that his English friend was right.”



He went on to say that he was glad whenever he got an opportunity of meeting Europeans anywhere or on any pretext, and that as a non-combatant, he was never afraid of getting hurt.

You are at liberty to ask whatever you like and to say whatever you like and I will take it with good grace. The destinies of England and India have been thrown together and have been thrown together for a good purpose, namely, the service of humanity, and I personally never miss the opportunity of understanding the European viewpoint. It is in that mood that I approach you this evening and ask you to reciprocate. I expect Englishmen to make the advance to Indians and not Indians to Europeans.

Mahatma Gandhi said he frankly confessed that the subject proposed to him was not very attractive, chiefly because it was not of so much importance as many other subjects—the subject, “Why did I intervene in the election of the Mayor of Calcutta?”<sup>1</sup> Mahatmaji said he had heard that his action was resented both by Europeans and Indians. But the intervention was not of his seeking. He said :

Why did I support Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta’s nomination and not that of somebody else? As you know, for some months past I have been saying that the Swarajists hold my general power of attorney so far as the politics of India are concerned. I have found them capable of sacrifice, lovers of their country, but not haters of Englishmen. I have thrown in my lot with the Swarajists. I have studied your (European) history. I have seen some of your institution grow, those in South Africa, for instance, under my very gaze. The Swarajists are today the most powerful political party in India. Not because we do not know, but because we do not care to know is why Europeans and Indians find themselves so far apart.

One of the greatest friends of Englishmen has gone from us. The throne is left vacant. His followers do not possess his magic. They are unequal to shoulder his burden.

This was how Mahatmaji referred to the late Mr. C. R. Das.

Mahatma Gandhi then said that his first impression was that the Mayor of Calcutta should be a Mussalman and asked the gathering to remember how interested he was on the question of Hindu-Muslim unity.<sup>2</sup>

If you have got an honest and able Mohammedan, of which two

<sup>1</sup> Vide “Calcutta’s Mayor”, 16-7-1925.

<sup>2</sup> The two paragraphs which follow are taken from a report in *The Englishman*, 25-7-1925.

facts you shall be the sole judges, and if he can serve the corporation with a single-minded purpose, then, it shall be my duty to recommend him for the chair.

The very next day, however, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a Mohammedan leader, came and told him that there was no Mohammedan fit for the office and asked him to recommend Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta. Now Maulana Abul Kalam Azad did not belong to the Corporation or to the Swaraj Party, but was one of the most capable Mohammedans in India. He asked the Maulana why he wanted Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta, and the latter replied, "Do you want the Swaraj Party to hold together?" Mahatma Gandhi said he had had the honour of meeting Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta in Chittagong. Mr. Sen Gupta had made a mark in the Legis-lative Council, he was leader of the Bengal Swaraj Party and President of the Provincial Congress Committee. Mahatma Gandhi said he must confess that he thought Mr. Sen Gupta could carry a triple burden on his shoulders if he had able lieutenants. And if Mr. Sen Gupta could do justice to the Mayoral chair and serve Calcutta's citizens consistently, then Mr. Sen Gupta was the man for the job.

I think I have given you the whole reason why I put forward Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta's name for the Mayor's chair. I knew of some objections that have been raised in the Press. I want to put before you with candour and truth what it was that guided me. If you think Mr. Sen Gupta has gone to the Corporation as Mayor to advance his own interest or those of his party, it is not so. I assure you that you are mistaken. I have heard the expression "Tammany Hall" applied. Dismiss it from your minds. I should be the first to renounce such methods. The only methods that my country can rise through are methods which are above board. If I have thrown my lot into the affairs of Calcutta, I have done so in order to serve you. I have examined this question from every point of view. Mr. Sen Gupta has got the ability to fill the Mayoral chair, and I would have been unjust if I did not advocate that, if there was nothing against Mr. Sen Gupta, then he should be elected Mayor of Calcutta.<sup>1</sup>

He said he did not like Sir Hubert Carr's expression "political jobbery" because it was current coin in the world's politics.<sup>2</sup> An objection had been raised that

<sup>1</sup> Sir Hubert Carr, Harry Hobbs and some other members who spoke criticized Sen Gupta's election to the Mayoralty. Gandhiji replied to them in brief.

<sup>2</sup> *The Englishman*, 25-7-1925, reported Gandhiji as saying here : " . . . if this was political jobbery, then this had been going on throughout the world on the most extensive scale and, seeing that it had been current coin in the political world such a long time, it would be better to call it by a less bad name."

Mr. Sen Gupta was a perfect stranger to Calcutta. Mr. Gandhi said he did not know this before. Mr. Sen Gupta was educated in Calcutta and had spent the best part of his life in that city.

I would lay down the principle that all other things being equal, a political party has the right to elect whomsoever they consider to be the best man.<sup>1</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi reminded his audience that Mr. Sen Gupta had promised that he was not going to make use of his political views while occupying the Mayoral chair, and asked who was better for the post than a trained lawyer. Mahatma Gandhi would up by referring to the late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, who was chairman of the Bombay Corporation as well as the leader of his political party.

No one has run the Bombay Municipality with such distinction. The Swaraj Party has done no violence to any principle followed in India.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 25-7-1925*

## 126. MY DUTY

In all this universe, God alone is changeless and ever the same. Everything else rises for a time and then declines. An organization which does not change when circumstances demand is nearing its death. The Congress is still young; it aspires to grow to a far greater height still and, therefore, it will continue to change. The defects in its constitution which experience has revealed ought to be remedied.

Moreover, the passing away of Deshbandhu and Lord Birkenhead's speech have created a situation in which it is necessary that any changes which seem desirable are made without delay.

I have been observing since the Belgaum session<sup>2</sup> that there is an unceasing demand for a change in the franchise clause.<sup>3</sup> I also notice that the educated class is dissatisfied with my method of work. Many of them wish that the various Congress committees should interest themselves in what are known as political matters, i.e., matters

<sup>1</sup>*The Englishman* report here has : "Further, that political party would be doing violence to itself if it did not seize the opportunity to better its position so long as that interest was not in conflict with the best interest of the Corporation. . . . He asked them to put aside Sir Hubert Carr's proposition that this was political jobbery, because Government itself had resorted to political jobbery."

<sup>2</sup> Held in December 1924, under the presidency of Gandhiji

<sup>3</sup> Which made spinning, instead of a small subscription, a qualification for Congress membership

connected with work in legislatures.

I do not wish to stand in the way of either of these demands. This does not mean that I myself want these changes. But I appreciate popular opinion, believe in its importance and respect it. When that opinion seems unacceptable to me, I believe it my duty to oppose it at my cost—not at the cost of people's interests. In this case, I have no ground for opposing it. Popular opinion with the Congress means the opinion of the educated class. The Congress is the creation of this class. It, which means the educated class, has rendered many services to the country. I cannot forget these merely because of my differences with that class. As I look at the matter, I must carry the educated class with me in my attempt to convert the Congress into a mass organization. We cannot be true representatives of the masses so long as we do not do physical work to qualify ourselves for membership of the Congress. But I have not been able to convince the educated class of this. A few individuals have understood it, but the class as a whole has not responded. I must have patience and make it as easy as possible for the educated class to join the Congress. While Deshbandhu lived, my responsibility in this matter was, I felt, not so heavy. He and Motilalji served as a link between the educated class and me. With the passing away of one of them, I see that it has become my clear duty to understand the predicament of Motilalji. I see that educated people feel it as a burden even to buy hand-spun yarn and offer it as a subscription, for they lack faith in spinning. The result has been that the work of the Congress suffers from hypocrisy and insincerity. One and the same bundle of yarn has sometimes done duty for several numbers. The danger of such abuse had been pointed out to me even at Belgaum, but I had made light of it. I thought that everyone would obey the rule and, in any case, no one would practise deception. My reasoning has been proved wrong. I think, therefore, that the rule about buying yarn and giving it must be dropped. Panditji and other Swarajists felt that, in view of the pact<sup>1</sup> between them and me, they could not ask me to agree to the repeal of the rule even though they wanted it to be repealed. Hence I decided that I should free them from their feeling of being bound, but that I myself should not endorse the change which they desire. I have already written to him to this effect.

As far as I understand, all Swarajists want the revival of the old

<sup>1</sup> The Gandhi-Nehru-Das pact finally ratified at the Belgaum session

practice of paying money instead of buying yarn and giving it. It seemed to be their unanimous view that those who preferred to give their labour to the people should have a permanent place in the Congress. I was very happy indeed about this. I welcome this measure of tolerance. This decision means that spinning will always have a place in the Congress programme. It remains to be seen how many people with faith in spinning we get. If the All-India Congress Committee<sup>1</sup> adopts this change, we shall know who are sincere about spinning.

The second requirement of the franchise clause is the obligation to wear khadi. A majority of the Swarajists do not want this rule to be repealed. If the educated class sincerely allows this condition to stand, I would regard it as the greatest good fortune of the country. It is desirable that the change which is made now should be made and the conditions which are retained should be retained not as experimental measures but as permanent features and because members want them.

The third issue is about the Swaraj Party getting the leadership of the Congress instead of remaining its representative or an intermediary [between the Congress and the Government]. I think that, in the situation which faces us, it is not proper to continue a kind of boycott of the Swarajist movement in the Congress. It seems desirable, instead, that the particular work of the Swarajists should become the main activity of the Congress and that spinning and propagation of khadi should be carried on through people who function as intermediaries [between the Congress and the people]. The spinning-wheel movement does not need the prestige of the Congress name as much as the Swarajists need it. The former depends for its success entirely on constructive work, whereas the success of the latter's activities depends on cultivation of public opinion. I, therefore, intend to propose at the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee that it should accord the Swaraj Party the dominant place and set up a separate body to promote spinning, make this body a part of the Congress and entrust it with the responsibility of carrying on the movement. If this is done, it will also make the propagation of khadi easier in a way, and the body set up to promote spinning, not being dependent on votes, will also be free from the uncertainty resulting from changes in public opinion. Once a public opinion in favour of spinning has come into existence, the spread of the movement depends wholly on money and management, that is, on

business ability. Hence the body to be set up should be the business wing of the Congress. The leaders assembled<sup>1</sup> in Calcutta seemed to be in favour of this too.

My duty is as clear to me as daylight. I should help the Swaraj Party to the best of my ability and within the limits of my principles, should not oppose political work becoming the principal activity of the Congress and advise the All-India Congress Committee to amend the franchise clause so as to permit members to pay money instead of their being required to buy yarn and give it. This is also the duty, it seems to me, of others in A.I. C.C. who are, like me, No-changers. There is, however, no intention to present a formal compact to the forthcoming A.I.C.C. Every member may exercise his freedom I have not bound anyone in any way. I have freed the Swaraj Party from its obligation<sup>2</sup> and, therefore, both the Swarajists and the No-changers will be able to vote according to their inclination, and I want them do so.

One issue remains to be examined. Can the A.I.C.C., a body with powers delegated by the Congress, amend a rule laid down by the latter? Ordinarily, it cannot do so, but in extra-ordinary circumstances and in the interest of the Congress itself, it certainly can. A person holding a power of attorney from someone, or an agent, has no authority at all to exceed the limits prescribed by his employer. But he can venture a great deal at his own risk and in the interest of the latter. The risk he will run is that the employer may revoke the power of attorney. If any loss results from the agent acting at his own risk, he is bound to bear it, since no agent can, without his employer's permission, do anything which might put the latter to loss. In short, the employer is entitled to receive the benefit of anything done by the agent in excess of his authority, but has no obligation to bear the loss. According to this principle, if the A.I.C.C., at its own risk, makes any changes without specific authority, it will run two risks: one of them is the possibility of the Congress condemning its action as improper; the other is, if the A.I.C.C., when faced with a difficult situation, does not disregard the constitution and take necessary action to meet it, it will have proved its timidity and incompetence.

But, then, such changes are generally made only when they are

<sup>1</sup> For the meeting of the Congress Working Committee and of the Swaraj Party held on July 16 and 17, 1925

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Letter to Motilal Nehru", 19-7-1925.

approved almost unanimously. When a fairly good number of members oppose them, it will be improper to adopt them, besides being unconstitutional.

Members should do nothing under the influence of my suggestion or recommendation. The A.I.C.C. may unanimously make any changes it thinks best in the interest of the Congress, that is, of the people. I wish that no member attends as a Swarajist or a No-changer. Everyone should attend as a Congressman, or, better still, as an Indian. I hope that all the members will attend this important meeting. I have never troubled members of the A.I.C.C. unnecessarily; I trouble them in the present crisis because I am helpless.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 26-7-1925

### 127. ALL-INDIA DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL

Just as Bengal has decided to collect a sum of Rs. 10 lakhs for a memorial to Deshbandhu and to start, in his ancestral home, a hospital for women to be named after him and an institution for training nurses, so the country as a whole should also decide to do something to perpetuate his sacred memory. I had been consulting Bengali friends what should be done, but being of the view that I should make no suggestion before the advice of Motilalji, I did not publicly express my ideas on the subject. I have now had discussions with Panditji, the revered Basanti Devi and Deshbandhu's close associates and followers, and have issued an appeal under some signatures, a translation of which the reader will find on the first page.

I have showed clearly that Deshbandhu had finally come to believe so firmly in the spinning-wheel and khadi that, leaving these, we should think of no other means of perpetuating his memory.

If anyone asks why we should not have a statue or some other similar form of memorial, the reply is that such local memorials will be put up in many cities. We should think of something through which Deshbandhu will be remembered even by growing boys and girls, by the rich and the poor, something which will be in the nature of a permanent blessing for the country and which is not beyond our means. The only thing of this kind is the spinning-wheel and khadi.

But, what about the parliamentary activities? It is doubtful if Deshbandhu's memory can be kept alive for ever through these. The work will certainly go on, but we know Deshbandhu himself has said

that these activities are of passing importance and that their field is limited. Khadi work is the only activity which can engage everyone and which concerns everyone.

Such questions were also raised when, after the Lokamanya's death, there was a proposal for a memorial to him. But afterwards it was admitted by all that he had spent his life in giving to the country the message : "Swaraj is my birthright." Deshbandhu's task and ours was to take up that message and think out universal and enduring scope for carrying it into effect. Among these, we gave the first place to the spinning-wheel and khadi, and, through them, to the boycott of foreign cloth. Deshbandhu's work thus lay in organizing the means. This is why, during the last year of his life, he was always exhorting people to take up village reconstruction. He harped on this in the Assembly and also as a Mayor, and in his speech at Faridpur he stated plainly that lawyers might go on with parliamentary work but ordinary people should devote themselves to village reconstruction. In Darjeeling he finally came to the conclusion that village reconstruction meant the spinning-wheel and khadi. Deshbandhu saw clearly that, in the solar system of the means of swaraj, the spinning-wheel held the place of the sun, and he even sent a message to his followers that they should take up the work of village reconstruction through it.

This was Deshbandhu's last will and testament in politics. It is our duty to water the seed which he sowed and help it to grow into a tree. Hence, promoting the spinning-wheel movement is the only right way of perpetuating his memory.

Let us now consider how much we should raise. Contrary to my usual practice, I have not specified a particular sum which we should collect, for there is no upward limit to the figure. Moreover, wherever I lay down a particular figure, it becomes a very heavy weight on my mind and I insist on its being reached at any cost. This time, too, I have fixed a figure in my mind and I insist on its being reached at any cost; but I do not want to involve in it the friends who have signed the appeal with me. Out of their regard for me and faith in the people, they would subscribe to the figure and invite a responsibility on themselves, but they would not be able to give all or most of their time for reaching the figure.

However, the reader should understand that we wish to start a business which would have a turn-over of sixty crores. No sum can be



too much for this purpose. But I have unshakable faith that, as people observe the success of the khadi movement, their confidence in it will increase and we shall get more and more money.

As pointed out in the leaflet, the contributions we get will depend on three things: people's love for Deshbandhu, their faith in khadi and the spinning-wheel and their confidence in the trustees. The whole country has demonstrated its love for Deshbandhu. My experience is that people's faith in khadi and the spinning-wheel is steadily growing. The trustees are known to the country. With a man of transparent honesty like Jamnalalji as treasurer and an equally conscientious and upright secretary in Jawaharlal, there can be no reason for distrust.

I wish that no one will wait to see what others do. Readers of *Navajivan* may send to it whatever amounts they wish to contribute. Their contributions will be acknowledged in the paper. If they are sent directly to Jamnalalji, *Navajivan* will be saved the trouble of maintaining the accounts and passing them on to him.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 26-7-1925

## 128. MISCELLANEOUS

### VISIBLE v. INVISIBLE

A friend writes to say :<sup>1</sup>

This trend of thought is entirely correct; however, it should not have arisen as a result of my article. All of us desire *moksha*, whether consciously or unconsciously. In my article, however, I considered only the value of the service rendered by workers. In addition, I also discussed, in passing, the kind of service that the people welcome today. The world hardly knows true sannyasis. These keep working in an invisible manner. To them, praise is as good as censure; in other words, it could be said that they fight shy of praise. In my article I discussed no such persons at all. Moreover, the service of those whose motive is to gain praise has little value. Monuments to honour them as well as the so-called sannyasis have been raised and will continue to be raised. In the article, the reference was only to such selfless service as was rendered by Deshbandhu and, in this connection, I indicated

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here. The correspondent had offered some comments on Gandhiji's obituary notice on Das; *vide* "Long Live Deshbandhu!". 28-6-1925.

that in the present age those who come forward to safeguard the people's freedom are worshipped. Such persons could hardly afford to remain unseen. In other words, one who works in the political field cannot possibly remain hidden. For him, there is no other alternative but to come into contact with thousands of people, hence the world cannot fail to take note of this service. We should be aware of one thing alone viz., even those workers who were frauds have had monuments erected in their honour; we should, therefore, guard ourselves against the temptation of doing anything in order to win glory. We should rather fight shy of it. However, when we find that people have been showering affection on an illustrious worker like Deshbandhu, we realize that they readily appreciate service rendered for the welfare of others. Moreover, though their assessment is sometimes wrong, it is more often right. Our dharma today is to serve the country in a non-violent and truthful manner. All of us should contribute our share of service, while maintaining an indifference towards the resulting praise or blame.

#### THE VOLUNTEER'S DHARMA

A volunteer writes as follows:<sup>1</sup>

I have omitted from this letter portions dealing with certain facts. The caution is quite relevant. The purpose of the correspondent is to state that we should not be greedy and that we should do nothing which might go against the responsibility which has been entrusted to us. We should have nothing to do with the private affairs of our host. Where is the room for a personal connection when the relationship is a public one? Wherever a volunteer happens to stay, he does so not because of any personal friendship but only because of his work, and therefore regards the place as a guest-house. Moreover, one who desires to be pure always avoids meeting a woman when she is alone. This is the dharma not only of the volunteer but also of a friend, a guest, a dependent and of every man. No one should sleep near a married couple's room. This is gentlemanly conduct. Unfortunately, we do not have such facilities in our houses and we do not have the habit of practising such discretion; however, there can be no difference of opinion regarding the propriety and necessity of having a married couple's room away from those of others. The volunteer

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here

should during his stay exercise great care wherever such facilities do not exist and, if he finds this difficult he should look for accommodation elsewhere.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 26-7-1925

### 129. MESSAGE TO “FORWARD”

*July 27, 1925*

Lokamanya lived and died for swaraj. He taught us to believe that swaraj was our birthright. I know that we cannot regain this birthright of ours without reinstating the charkha in our villages in its ancient dignity. This we cannot do unless we, the educated class, learn the beautiful life-giving art of spinning and wear khadi, whether it is coarse or fine, whether it is dear or cheap. No price is too great to pay for swaraj. If, then, we would honour the memory of Lokamanya, let us solemnly resolve to spin at least half an hour every day and habitually wear khadi and induce others to do likewise.

M. K. GANDHI

*Forward*, 1-8-1925

### 130. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

*Monday, Shravana Sud 6, July 27, 1925*

CHI. RAMDAS,

I have stopped writing with the right hand altogether. I shall give it rest and see. There is no reason at all to worry.

I had asked you if you were getting the *Ashram Samachar*. Even though there is no reply from you, I am sending you the issues lying with me.

You have now begun to figure in the press. I am sending the enclosed cutting for your amusement. May your present work bring you perfect inner peace and may you have a long and healthy life. In your spiritual growth lies my own spiritual growth; because some of my notions of spiritual growth rest on the growth of you four brothers. There can be a mistake in my calculations, but so far my predictions have proved correct. I do not believe at all that the children of virtuous parents must necessarily be sinful. I am

experiencing my four states in you four brothers. I have here given expression to a subtle thought and told you of a rule of the world. Do ask me if you have not understood that rule. There is no need for you to think too much about it. The knowledge of that rule has a limited use. That is precisely why all religions have given greater importance to action inspired by devotion.

You may take it that I shall be here till the 31st of August. Ten lakh rupees<sup>1</sup> cannot be collected without my presence here and if that does not happen, Bengal will lose its good name. I shall be going to Bihar in September. I shall be able to go to the Ashram. I shall definitely be in Bombay on October 1.

Jamnadas is still here. A young Chinese is also here. He seems very polite and industrious. He has come to me as Santiniketan could not accommodate him. He will go to the Ashram with Jamnadas.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Ramdas Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### *131. LETTER TO BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI*

CALCUTTA,

*Shravana Sud 6 [July 27, 1925 ]<sup>2</sup>*

BHAI BENARSIDASJI,

I write this with my left hand as the right hand fingers ache. I have your letter. I have written to Chhaganlal about the money and have asked him to send you all the balance if he has no difficulty. I take it that you will send the account directly to Mr. Petit. I also take it that whatever we are doing this time is in perfect conformity with our agreement with Mr. Petit.

<sup>1</sup> For the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund; for Gandhiji's appeal for it, *vide* "Appeal for Deshbandhu Memorial Fund", 22-6-1925 "All-India Memorial", on or before 22-7-1925 and "Appeal for All-India Deshbandhu Memorial", 22-7-1925.

<sup>2</sup> The postmark is dated "July 28, 1925".

Towards the end of your letter I notice some anger and despair.  
What is the reason?

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI  
FEROZABAD  
DIST. AGRA

From a photostat of the Hindi original : G.N. 2520

*132. LETTER TO D. HANUMANT RAO*

148, RUSSA ROAD,

BHAWANIPORE

[CALCUTTA,]

*July [28 ], 1925*

MY DEAR HANUMANT RAO,

My right hand requires rest. I am therefore dictating this. It was a delight to receive your letter. I shall not be satisfied unless I see you strong, healthy and active. I want you to become a walking advertisement of nature cure.

My impression, which is growing stronger daily, is that water cure is only an indifferent thing. The real cure has still to be found and that is air. There is still a step further, but that is far away from this. We do not realize the value of fresh air and different climates. I wish you could change from climate to climate till you find a suitable one where you can completely restore yourself. Do send Mr. Sharma. I am in Calcutta up to 31st August probably; certainly up to the middle of it. May have to be absent for two or three days. I shall try to give him whatever time I can spare. How is Krishnaiya ?

*Yours sincerely,*

D. HANUMANT RAO, ESQ.

DIGUMARTI HOUSE

BERHAMPORE

GANJAM DIST.

From a photostat of a typewritten copy : S.N. 10593

133. *LETTER TO W. H. PITT*

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
BHAWANIPORE,  
July 28, 1925

DEAR MR. PITT,

I have your confidential letter.<sup>1</sup> I appreciate the force of your reasoning and the goodwill lying behind it. The fundamental difference still remains both because of our temperamental differences and apart from these the point of view from which each of us looks at the same question. However, my business is to meet as far as it is possible those who may be interested in solving the same question, whether as friends, opponents or neutrals. I am now corresponding with Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, who, as you know, is my co-worker in this matter, and on whose judgment I place the greatest reliance. I am asking him even to go to Vaikom or Trivandrum if necessary. Meanwhile I shall continue to observe perfect reticence in public. No forward step will be taken without due notice to you and without the greatest deliberation. The assurance you have given me that the authorities are doing their best to remove the evil is a great temptation for me to fall in with your suggestion. But from this distance I do not want to trust to my unaided judgment.

*Your sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

My right [hand] is disabled.<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat of a handwritten copy : S.N. 11100

134. *LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI*

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
BHAWANIPORE,  
July 28, 1925

MY DEAR C. R.,

My hand requires rest for a few days. I am, therefore, dictating my correspondence. I hope you received a letter I sent to you from

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Letter from W. H. Pitt", 22-7-1925.

<sup>2</sup> The letter is in Mahadev Desai's hand.

Mr. Pitt. Here is another and a copy of my reply.<sup>1</sup> I am also sending you Kelappan's letters. Please advise. You may enter into direct correspondence with the Commissioner if you wish and write to Kelappan yourself.<sup>2</sup> As you will see from my letter to the Commissioner, I am inclined to fall in with his suggestion, but I am in a fog. It is necessary to understand the viewpoint of the volunteers. You will also consider Kelappan's proposal that he should be relieved. I feel that it would be necessary.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 11103

*135. LETTER TO K. KELAPPAN NAIR*

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
BHAWANIPORE,  
*July 28, 1925*

MY DEAR KELAPPAN,

I have your letter.<sup>3</sup> I have also a long letter<sup>4</sup> from Mr. Pitt. I send you a copy of that letter as also copies of my letters to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Rajagopalachari. Please correspond with the letter and give him your views. If, consistently with the upkeep of the Ashram, you can be relieved, you could certainly go and take charge of the Kerala Committee.

I hope you are now completely restored. Workers must not get ill.

*Yours sincerely,*

From a photostat : S.N. 11102

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> Rajagopalachari accordingly communicated with Pitt who, in a letter of September 2, acknowledged Rajagopalachari's letter of August 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Letter from K. Kelappan Nair", 18-6-1925.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Letter from W. H. Pitt", 22-7-1925.

136. LETTER TO FRED E. CAMPBELL

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,  
July 28, 1925

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND<sup>1</sup>,

I like your frank and sincere letter<sup>2</sup> for which I thank you.

You seem to have taken it for granted that I hate the British. What makes you think so? I have hundreds of friends among the British people. I cannot love the Mussalmans and for that matter the Hindus if I hate the British. My love is not an exclusive affair. If I hate the British today, I would have to hate the Mohammedans tomorrow and the Hindus the day after. But what I do detest is the system of government that the British have set up in my country. It has almost brought about the economic and moral ruin of the people of India. But just as I love my wife and my children, in spite of their faults which are many, I love also the British in spite of the bad system for which they have unfortunately made themselves responsible. That love which is blind is no love, that love which shuts its eyes to the faults of loved ones is partial and even dangerous. You must write again if this letter does not satisfy you.<sup>3</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 10547

<sup>1</sup> Campbell described himself as a young boy of 15 from Kansas, U.S.A.

<sup>2</sup> In his letter of May 4, Campbell had written : "A few days ago I heard a sermon in one of our Christian churches in which the minister gave a vivid account of your fasting in order to stop the hard feeling between the Mohammedans and Hindus. . . . I have to say is that the man said that you were the foremost example of Christ today, although you are not a Christian. After hearing this, I determined to read more about you. In this I read of your troubles with the British. What is your main reason for hatred towards them? Is it a commercial matter? If you could find time to answer this, I would be more than pleased. I am thanking you in advance."

<sup>3</sup> Some further correspondence appears to have ensued; *vide* "Letter to Fred E. Campbell", 23-4-1926.



137. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

*Shravana Shukla 8, July 28, 1925*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I am convinced that without Malaviyaji and Shraddhanandji Hindu-Muslim unity is impossible to achieve. I can only guide and when stray quarrels take place, do something about them if I can. My task is that of a scavenger: to work for and ensure cleanliness. When the time comes to work out a settlement it will be most necessary to consult Malaviyaji and others.

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Prem Prasadi, p. 32*

138. LETTER TO C. RAMALINGA REDDY

148 RUSSA ROAD,

CALCUTTA,

*July 28, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

Thank you for your letter. As my right hand refuses to work and insists upon rest I have taken to dictation.

You will see my views about my own special fitness in my article on Lord Birkenhead's speech<sup>1</sup>. If I felt that power within, I would seek the leadership which you would have me take up, but I have not that power today.

My congratulations to your nieces and yourself on their effect and your good fortune in securing the fruit of their effort. I really believe that they are bringing swaraj nearer by their adding to the wealth of the country, and by their setting an example in national labour to others. I do not know when I shall be able to visit Andhra Desh. When I do I shall certainly try to bring Sahib.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. C. R. REDDY, ESQ.

CHITTOOR (N. A.)

From a copy : C. W. 11334. Courtesy : Dr. N. Rama Murthy and C. A. Reddi

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A Deceptive Speech", 18-7-1925.

### 139. SPEECH AT MEETING OF MISSIONARIES

*July 28, 1925*

I had the pleasure of delivering an address before the missionaries in Calcutta at Y.M.C.A. on 28th ultimo. I have been supplied with shorthand notes of that address, and as it was of general interest I reproduce below an abridgment of it. I have omitted onsalient thought or expression, but I have omitted some descriptive passages.

M. K. G.

No many of you perhaps know that my association with Christians, not Christians so called but real Christians, dates from 1889, when as a lad I found myself in London; and that association has grown riper as years have rolled on. In South Africa, where I found myself in the midst of inhospitable surroundings, I was able to make hundreds of Christian friends. I came in touch with the late Mr. Spencer Watton, Director of South Africa General Mission, and, later, with the great divine, Rew. Mr. A. Murray and several others.

My acquaintance, therefore, this evening with so many missionaries is by no means a new thing. There was even a time in my life when a very sincere and intimate friend of mine, a great and good Quaker, had designs on me. (Laughter.) He thought that I was too good not to become a Christian. I was sorry to have disappointed him. One missionary friend of mine in South Africa still writes to me and asks me, 'How is it with you?' I have always told this friend that so far as I know, it is all well with me. If it was prayer that these friends expected me to make, I was able to tell them that every day the heart-felt prayer within the closed door of my closet went to the Almighty to show me light and give wisdom and courage to follow that light.

In answer to promises made to one of these Christian friends of mine, I thought it my duty to see one of the biggest of Indian Christians, as I was told he was,—the late Kali Charan Banerjee. I went over to him—I am telling you of the deep search that I have undergone in order that I might leave no stone unturned to find out the true path—I went to him with an absolutely open mind and in a receptive mood, and I met him also under circumstances which were most affecting. I found that there was much in common between Mr. Banerjee and myself. His simplicity, his humility, his courage, his

truthfulness, all these things I have all along admired. He met me when his wife was on her death-bed. You cannot imagine a more impressive scene, a more ennobling circumstance. I told Mr. Banerjee, 'I have come to you as a seeker,'—this was in 1901—'I have come to you in fulfilment of a sacred promise I have made to some of my dearest Christian friends that I will leave no stone unturned to find out the true light.' I told him that I had given my friends the assurance that no worldly gain would keep me away from the light, if I could but see it. Well, I am not going to engage you in giving a description of the little discussion that we had between us. It was very good, very noble. I came away, not sorry, not dejected, not disappointed, but I felt sad that even Mr. Banerjee could not convince me. This was my final deliberate striving to realize Christianity as it was presented to me. Today my position is that though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to identify myself with orthodox Christianity. I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being and I find a solace in the *Bhagavad Gita* and Upanishads that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. Not that I do not prize the ideal presented therein, not that some of the precious teachings in the Sermon on the Mount have not left a deep impression upon me, but I must confess to you that when doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon I turn to the *Bhagavad Gita*, and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

I have told you all these things in order to make it absolutely clear to you where I stand, so that I may have, if you will, closer touch with you. I must add that I did not stop at studying the Bible and the commentaries and other books on Christianity that my friends placed in my hands; but I said to myself, if I was to find my satisfaction through reasoning, I must study the scriptures of other religions also and make my choice. And I turned to the Koran. I tried to understand what I could of Judaism as distinguished from Christianity. I studied Zoroastrianism and I came to the conclusion that all religions were right, but every one of them imperfect, imperfect naturally and necessarily,—because they were interpreted with our poor intellects, sometimes with our poor hearts, and more often misinterpreted. In all religions, I found to my grief, that there

were various and even contradictory interpretations of some texts, and I said to myself, 'Not these things for me. If I want the satisfaction of my soul, I must feel my way. I must wait silently upon God and ask Him to guide me.' There is a beautiful verse in Sanskrit which says 'God helps only when man feels utterly helpless and utterly humble'. Some of you have come from the Tamil land. When I was studying Tamil, I found in one of the books of Dr. Pope a Tamil proverb which means 'God helps the helpless'. I have given you this life-story of my own experience for you to ponder over.

You, the missionaries come to India thinking that you come to a land of heathens, of idolators, of men who do not know God. One of the greatest of Christian divines, Bishop Heber, wrote the two lines which have always left a sting with me: "Where every prospect pleases, and man alone is vile." I wish he had not written them. My own experience in my travels throughout India has been to the contrary. I have gone from one end of the country to the other, without any prejudice, in a relentless search after truth, and I am not able to say that here in this fair land, watered by the great Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Jumna, man is vile. He is not vile. He is as much a seeker after truth as you and I are, possibly more so. This reminds me of a French book translated for me by a French friend. It is an account of an imaginary expedition in search of knowledge. One party landed in India and found Truth and God personified, in a little pariah's hut. I tell you there are many such huts belonging to the untouchables where you will certainly find God. They do not reason but they persist in their belief that God is. They depend upon God for His assistance and find it too. There are many stories told throughout the length and breadth of India about these noble untouchables. Vile as some of them may be, there are noblest specimens of humanity in their midst. But does my experience exhaust itself merely with the untouchables? No. I am here to tell you that there are non-Brahmins, there are Brahmins who are as fine specimens of humanity as you will find in any place on the earth. There are Brahmins today in India who are embodiments of self-sacrifice, godliness, and humility. There are Brahmins who are devoting themselves body and soul to the service of untouchables, with no expectation of reward from the untouchables, but with execration from orthodoxy. They do not mind it, because in serving pariahs they are serving God. I can quote chapter and verse from my experience. I place these facts before you in all humility for the

simple reason that you may know this land better, the land to which you have come to serve. You are here to find out the distress of the people of India and remove it. But I hope you are here also in a receptive mood and, if there is anything that India has to give, you will not stop your ears, you will not close your eyes and steel your hearts, but open up your ears, eyes and, most of all, your hearts to receive all that may be good in this land. I give you my assurance that there is a great deal of good in India. Do not flatter yourselves with the belief that a mere recital of that celebrated verse in St. John makes a man a Christian. If I have read the Bible correctly, I know many men who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ or have even rejected the official interpretation of Christianity will, probably, if Jesus came in our midst today in the flesh, be owned by him more than many of us. I therefore ask you to approach the problem before you with open-heartedness, and humility.

I was engaged in a friendly conversation with some missionaries this morning. I do not want to relate that conversation. But I do want to say that they are fine specimens of humanity. They did not want to misunderstand me, but I had to pass nearly one hour and a half in my attempt to explain to them that, in writing what I had written, I had not written anything in a spirit of ill will or hatred towards Englishmen. I was hard put to it to carry that conviction. In fact, I do not know whether I carried that conviction to them at all. If salt loseth its savour, wherewith will it be salted? If I could not drive home the truth that was in me to the three friends who certainly came with open minds, how should I fare with others? It has often occurred to me that a seeker after truth has to be silent. I know the wonderful efficacy of silence. I visited a Trappist monastery in South Africa. A beautiful place it was. Most of the inmates of that place were under a vow of silence. I enquired of the Father the motive of it and he said that the motive was apparent. 'We are frail human beings. We do not know very often what we say. If we want to listen to the still small voice that is always speaking within us, it will not be heard if we continually speak.' I understood that precious lesson. I know the secret of silence. I do not know just now as I speak to you whether it would not have been wise if I had said nothing to those friends beyond saying, 'We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away.' As I speak to you, I feel humiliated. Why did I argue with these friends? But I say these things to you, first of all, to make this confession and, secondly, to tell you also that, if you will refuse to see

the other side, if you will refuse to understand what India is thinking, then you will deny yourselves the real privilege of service.

I have told my missionary friends, 'Noble as you are, you have isolated yourselves from the people whom you want to serve.' I cannot help recalling to you the conversation I related in Darjeeling at the Missionary Language School. Lord Salisbury was waited upon by a deputation of missionaries in connection with China and this deputation wanted protection. I cannot recall the exact words, but give you the purport of the answer Lord Salisbury gave. He said, "Gentlemen, if you want to go to China, to preach the message of Christianity, then do not ask for assistance of temporal power. Go with your lives in your hands and if the people of China want to kill you, imagine that you have been killed in the service of God". Lord Salisbury was right. Christian missionaries come to India under the shadow, or, if you like, under the protection of a temporal power, and it creates an impassable bar.

If you give me statistics that so many orphans have been reclaimed and brought to the Christian faith, I would accept them, but I do not feel convinced thereby that it is your mission. In my opinion, your mission is infinitely superior to that. You want to find men in India and if you want to do that, you will have to go to the lowly cottages not to give them something, might be to take something from them. A true friend as I claim to be of the missionaries of India and of the Europeans, I speak to you what I feel from the bottom of my heart. I miss receptiveness, humility, willingness on your part to identify yourselves with the masses of India. I have talked straight from my heart. May it find a response from hearts.

At the end of the address questions were invited. The most important questions and their answers are given below :

Q. How do you think should the missionaries identify themselves with the masses?

A. The question is somewhat embarrassing. But I would venture to say, 'Copy Charlie Andrews.'

Another in the audience asked :

What definite work would you suggest that a missionary should do for and among the masses?

A. Since I have been challenged I must unhesitatingly answer, 'The Spinning-wheel.' You naturally laugh, but if you knew the

masses as I do, you will look upon this very simple instrument of torture (here Mr. Gandhi produced the *takli* he carries with him) with seriousness. You cannot present the hungry and famished masses with God. Their God is their food. General Booth knew what he was doing when at his numerous depots the first thing he did to the hungry men and women who flocked there was to give them a plate of soup. Before he would give them their next meal, he called upon them to make splinters for his match factory, and then he introduced them to God. The famished millions are famishing not because there is not enough food produced in India, but because they have no work to do. The only work for the millions is the spinning-wheel. I know the Industrial Mission House in Calcutta. It is good in its way, but it does not touch even the fringe of the question. The problem is how to take work to the cottages of these men, cottages which are scattered over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 broad. They will not take the spinning-wheel unless they learn the art themselves and unless they spin to set an example to these men who have lost faith in themselves and faith in everything and everybody. And the spinning-wheel is useless unless you and I wear khaddar. Hence it is that I have not hesitated to say to Lord Reading or to Lord Willingdon that I will not be satisfied unless they and their orderlies are dressed from top to toe in khaddar.

A third inquirer asked :

Q Do you definitely feel the presence of the living Christ within you?

A. If it is the historical Jesus, surnamed Christ, that the inquirer refers to, I must say I do not. If it is an adjective signifying one of the names of God, then I must say I do feel the presence of God—call him Christ, call him Krishna, call him Rama. We have one thousand names to denote God, and if I did not feel the presence of God within me, I see so much of misery and disappointment every day that I would be a raving maniac and my destination would be the Hooghli.

*Young India*, 6-8-1925

#### *140. APPEAL FOR ALL-BENGAL DESHBANDHU FUND*

The All-Bengal Deshbandhu Memorial Committee has at last fixed the final date for closing the subscriptions at 31st August. I would like the public to note that no such date was fixed before. Finality must be final and cannot admit of reopening. I, however, suggested that we should make a Herculean effort to collect the full

ten lakhs on or before the 1st of July. In this we failed, but I cannot say for want of effort. We failed for want of organization. It is a fine tribute to the memory of Deshbandhu that we shall, before this week is out, have collected six lakhs. It will have been fully five weeks for the collection of six lakhs, and that gives an average of a little less than a lakh and a quarter a week, or nearly seventeen thousand per day.

Now, in spite of a little better though by no means a satisfactory organization, we shall not be able to keep up the average as a majority of large subscriptions have been collected. It is only on the basis of past experience that the Memorial Committee has fixed the 31st August as the very last date for receiving collections. It is a long enough time for collecting what must be regarded as a paltry sum for Bengal, and for a purpose so sacred as that of perpetuating the memory of Deshbandhu. The public will remember that only three months were fixed for collecting one crore for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. On the assumption that six lakhs will have been collected before the end of this month, there will be thirtytwo days left for collecting four lakhs. That leaves an average exactly of Rs. 12,500 per day. And if we are to secure the sum by the end of next month, we must never fall below the average. And those who are collecting and are concerned with the reputation of Bengal and with the success of the Memorial will, I hope, make it a point of honour to secure the daily average. I remind the principals of schools and colleges all over Bengal of their duty. I know that the school-going boys and girls are as eager as any to pay their mite. They simply await the call. I know, too, that many zamindars who owe not a little to Deshbandhu, have not yet sent in their subscriptions. May I respectfully ask them to send them in unsolicited?

Nor have all the ladies paid their quota. I have been told that they merge in their husbands. I respectfully dissent from that view, I want them to give, each one, their ornaments and pocket money as I did at the time of collecting the Tilak Swaraj Fund. I ask them now to part with what is their own without asking their partners to replace them. Then there is no loss felt; only the pleasure of giving remains. It is in that spirit that hundreds of sisters have already paid. May I ask the remaining ones to copy that spirit if the memory of Deshbandhu is a treasure for them and if a decently equipped hospital for women and equally decent institution for training nurses appeal to them as worthy objects?

*Forward, 29-7-1925*



## 141 LETTER TO SHAUKAT ALI

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,  
July 29, 1925

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

A magazine editor has sent me an article he has written on the Prophet and which has given rise to an exciting meeting in Ahmedabad. He sends me also a copy of the *Khilafat* dated 29th May.

The article is not discourteous or abusive. I do not think that it warrants all the excitement that it has given rise to. At the same time it is an ignorant writing. The writer does not appear to me to have read any good biography. Certainly, he has not read the Koran. He has given an estimate of the life of the Prophet which we find in the ordinary European reviews. The writer has asked for my opinion and I have told him as much as I have told you. I would not have worried you about this thing, had it not been for the number of *Khilafat* that he has sent me.

In my opinion, the *Khilafat* writer has unnecessarily excited passion. I have read other portions of that number also out of curiosity, and I must confess that I do not like the language or the general tone of this particular number at all. "Fools, asses, downright lying" and such choice epithets embellish its paragraphs. I think you ought to control the language of the paper. I have not read a single well-thought-out, decent paragraph. I am sure that the writer does not even know that he has used unbecoming language.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

## 142. SPEECH AT MEETING OF ANGLO-INDIANS <sup>1</sup>

July 29, 1925

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I suppose it is better for me at the outset of our conversation to say—because we are such a small, beautiful compact gathering—that I would like this to be turned into a conversation rather than a set address by me.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji spoke to a gathering of Anglo-Indians at Wellesley Square in the evening.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph has been extracted from a report in *Forward*, 30-7-1925.

At the outset I would like to clear the ground by taking up the last sentiment of the chairman.<sup>1</sup> I appreciate the viewpoint that he has placed before me and there was a time when I could also say these things about loyalty. But as you know, for the past six years I have not been speaking of loyalty, but of disloyalty. It is not that I harbour disloyalty towards anything whatsoever, but I do so against all untruth, all that is unjust, all that is evil. This I want to make clear as I do not want to sail under false colours. I remain loyal to an institution so long as that institution conduces to my growth, to the growth of the nation. Immediately I find that the institution instead of conducing to its growth impedes it, I hold it to be my bounden duty to be disloyal to it. I cannot for one moment say that I am loyal to the present Government, that is, to the present system of Government. I assert that I am, every moment of my life, seeking to destroy this system of Government which is sapping the manhood of India, which is sapping its vitality and its resources, which is degrading alike those who are in charge of the system and those who are governed by that system.

But I think that whilst we may agree to differ on this very fundamental question, we must seek to find out whether there are not many points of contact between you and me—between you and the vast mass of the people who inhabit this beautiful land—if I may say so—of ours. What the ultimate destiny of India will be we do not know, or we know only this much that it is in our making, it will be what everyone of us whose lot is cast in India wants it to be. But beyond this we do not know, having no control over the minds of millions of human beings who compose Hindustan. But everyone should become an optimist and then there is nothing but the brightest future for this land. That is, today, everyone should be able to say to himself, “I live for this land. I shall die for this land.” I want you, therefore, to approach the question in a spirit of service and, when there is that spirit of service, we may erase that disturbing factor. ‘Loyalty’ or ‘disloyalty’ does not matter much when a person really wants to serve.

I have come here this evening in a spirit of utter humility and in a spirit of absolute friendship and goodwill towards you. During my incessant wanderings, I have come in contact not merely with Hindus, not merely with Mussalmans, but I have come deliberately in contact with all sorts and conditions of people. I hope I have made myself

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Moreno had said that loyalty was the creed of Anglo-Indians.

accessible to anybody who has wanted to see me, but I have even gone out of my way to search out the minorities. As the Mussalmans are the big minority, I, as representing the majority of India, think it is my duty to befriend them even though they may reject my advice. You do not occupy even that numerical position and, therefore, I have not, wherever I found opportunities to approach you, hesitated to meet you. But I am here to confess to you that the Anglo-Indians have not freely reciprocated that feeling.

My largest contact with the Anglo-Indians has been on the railway trains, because they have somehow or other fought shy of the public meetings, perhaps because of the notion that these meetings were meetings of disloyalists. And as you have made loyalty your creed, naturally these meetings have repelled you. On the trains, however, I have sought you out.

As an instance of how the Anglo-Indians have isolated themselves from the Indians, Mr. Gandhi gave a vivid narrative of his meeting with some Anglo-Indian youngsters who travelled with him in the same train from Ajmer. He had an occasion to listen to their profuse vocabulary of slang until they recognized him, shed their naturalness and put on manners. And the behaviour of even those boys afforded ample proof of their isolation. One of them liked Indian sweets. But he dared not purchase them when others saw him. "I eat the sweets only when no one sees me," he said. He was not an Indian, he thought, and did not want to be observed by Indians. This, Mr. Gandhi said, was due to their schooling.

Though you have got Indian blood of which you need be proud—you need not be ashamed of that—I know when you receive a reminder of it you are pained.

Mr. Gandhi next told them the story of a young Anglo-Indian who opened his heart to him, who though getting Rs. 400 was scarcely able to make the two ends meet, who had to live beyond his means, because "I must look a European every inch of me."

I was stabbed to listen to his story. This is doing violence to humanity, I said to myself. He was a Christian, there was nothing wrong in his demeanour and in spite of the surface polish there was the canker eating into his vitals that he was leading an untrue life.

Well, I have given you two telling instances. You have to make a choice. What shall you do? Will you attempt the impossible or will you be what you should be : every inch of you Indian? Let me tell you one thing more. If you go to South Africa or Australia or any Dominion, you know that the same thing which is in store for me is in

store for you. You will be classed among the coloured men and you will have no status. Those of you who may possess a white skin may deceive the Immigration Officer, but your relatives and sons may betray you. That is the position. The colour bar is too terrible there. You also will be counted among moral lepers. Mr. Malan now says he would not drive us out, he would starve us out of South Africa, and would practise hypocrisy double-distilled. The “bar sinister”, as Lord Morley put it, applies to us even in England. Now it is your privilege to fight this. If you cast in your lot with the masses of India from which you have sprung, there is nothing but hope for you, me and even for Government to whom you think you are bound to be loyal.

You can become a bridge so that all Indians and all Englishmen may cross to and fro without either feeling injured or hurt or feeling any degree of inconvenience. But if you want to aspire after the heights of Simla, well, those heights are unattainable and therefore poverty must be your lot, and also the lot of India. An important community like the Anglo-Indians, brave, resourceful, you are going to perdition simply because you would not see the plain truth, but persist in an impossible attempt. In this process, you are cutting yourselves away from the masses. Thus you have been ostracized by Indians and Europeans both.

He gave another anecdote of a very cultured Anglo-Indian in Kathiawar trying to live the European way of life, being ostracized everywhere. He said :

The picture of that tragedy still rises before me.

I do want to tell you at this critical moment of our national life, “Anglo-Indians, make your choice with determination and courage, whether you want to go away from the nation and whether you want to live up to the style of Europeans.” Mind you, I am not asking you to cut yourselves adrift from Englishmen. They are far more precious to me today than they were before, because today I am leading the natural life. There was a time when I was also aping the Europeans. Little things guided my life then. But at a precious moment of my life, I threw them into the Indian Ocean, and turned my back on them. ‘No more this life for me,’ I said, ‘no more shall I consent to become the “blotting-sheet of civilization,” ’to use Sidgwick’s picturesque phrase. Hence I have become more lovable, more approachable. I had never before in my life so many friends in Europe as I have today. That is because I have shed all unnaturalness. I may be blunt, but bluntness is better than put-up courtesy. I would, therefore, ask you to

shed this aping habit, to think for the masses, merge yourselves into the masses so that they can be lifted and we can show to the world a beautiful specimen of Indian humanity in which all races can blend and mingle, each retaining its special admirable characteristics, each keeping every bit of what is best in it. That is your privilege, if you will exercise it.

I have talked to you about your duty. You will naturally like to know my duty. Well, if I became the Viceroy of India, which I think is never coming to pass, I would simply give you and the other minorities the choice and ask you to take what you want. I would call all the leaders of the parties and tell them my proposal. Then I would call such of you as are numerically weakest to come first and to ask what you want. In services I would insist on a decent examination test, i.e., I would only ask a candidate, 'How much of a man or woman you are? Have you got the ability to rise to the occasion?' Provided he or she passes these tests, I would select first the one who belongs to the least numerical section. I would thus give preference to all minorities along just lines, consistent with the welfare of India. When I use this phrase, I assure you I am not doing any verbal jugglery. It will be none of my object to see that only Hindus can come in. Welfare of India as a whole, not of Hindus and Mussalmans or of a particular community. I would not flatter you or pamper you, but give you your due.

Mr. Gandhi next suggested that the Anglo-Indians' interests, as those of all minorities, would under his scheme, be protected by a voluntary pact— a pact not supported by legislation which always presupposes a third party, but absolutely voluntary like the pact between himself and the Swarajists, like the pact he offered to the Mussalmans at Delhi. So long as they had no faith in the justice of the majorities, they must have this protection by a voluntary pact. The parties to the pact were in honour bound to act according to the pact. If they reduced it to a scrap of paper, they would do so at their risk. To the Anglo-Indians he would say that, if the pact was not respected, if sacred promises were not carried out, they could have revenge on those who broke the pact. Concluding, Mr. Gandhi said :

I have dissected my heart. It has come unpolished in a spirit of friendship. May you also receive it in such a spirit.

Mr. Gandhi then invited questions. Dr. Moreno was the first questioner : "What would be your attitude if, as it appears, in the scheme of Indianization Anglo-Indians would be adversely affected?"

ANSWER : I would not oust a single Anglo-Indian if it was in my hands.

QUESTION : You have made over the Congress to Swarajists and yet you talk of an all-party programme. How can the Anglo-Indians engage in obstructionist tactics with Swarajists?

ANSWER : I have not made over the Congress to the Swarajists. I have absolved them from the Pact entered into between them and me. I could not, even if I would, hand over the Congress to anyone. It only means that every member can exercise his judgment in respect of the alteration or otherwise of the franchise. The Congress, which was made at Belgaum a non-political organization, will now be converted into a predominantly political institution, with the result that political resolutions could be brought forward now, and the bar would be removed from the path of those who could not enter the Congress as a non-political body. It would not be a Swarajist body, it would be a predominantly political body. The Swarajists are, it is true, predominant today, but that is because others have kept back, and if they outnumber others, it will be because the others have no organization. As regards obstruction, it may be wrong, it may be right. But you surely do not expect to react on the Swarajists by standing out of the Congress. Join the Congress in large numbers and make them change their policy if you wish.

In reply to a question how Mr. Gandhi could secure their interests when under proportional representation they could get none at all, Mr. Gandhi made his proposal of the voluntary pact clearer.

Before I would draw up the swaraj scheme, I would ask you what you want. A document setting out the terms would be publicly acknowledged. Assuming a fair measure of public opinion and honesty, Anglo-Indians and other minorities could not be possibly treated unfairly.

Questioned as to why Mr. Gandhi had not signed Mrs. Besant's memorandum on the Commonwealth of India Bill, he said that as he had said before, if he got a cablegram from Lord Birkenhead that the Bill would be passed if he subscribed to it, he would cable his signature. But he had declined to associate his name with the Bill simply because he did not want to be insulted. When he knew that the throwing of the Bill on the scrap-heap was an absolute certainty, as he felt it could not otherwise be, he could not possibly sign it. He had had enough insults before, but he had never courted them. He had taken insults in good grace when they had been flung in his face. But, in this particular case, he thought it would be courting an insult, which he was not prepared to do. As it is, he had got an indication of it that very day. Referring to that indication he said :

I made a most innocent practical suggestion to the Government of India. Deshbandhu Das had played the game, and you know how much at heart he had the case of the political prisoners. I said to the Government, 'Will you perform one single graceful act which will strike the imagination of the nation? Will you release the prisoners?' If that was done, it would have served a double purpose. That would have taken the sting, if there was any, out of these political prisoners, because they would have felt that they had been released out of respect to the memory of Deshbandhu and they could not commit a breach of trust reposed in them. And, then by this act the Government would have gained a supreme moral victory, so that they could have cleared the atmosphere for negotiations. But no. Lord Birkenhead says he is prepared to consider anything that Indians might have to suggest in order to allay animosities, but the suggestion made is not practical. I tell you I have not the ingenuity to make a more practical suggestion than what I have made. But it has gone to the usual waste-paper basket. So if these little things could not be had, what is the use of going on with the big Commonwealth of India Bill? Mrs. Besant has a robust optimism and, though on the wrong side of life like me, she thinks she must work on.

Another friend asked as to what Mr. Gandhi would suggest in the transition stage, if, for instance, they dropped the prefix 'Anglo' and joined the Congress. They would lose some of the trifling privileges they enjoy, and would get nothing to compensate for them.

That was the fairest of questions. For some purposes, you say, you are classed with Europeans. I have asked you to shed those privileges. You have mentioned the eligibility to the Indian Auxiliary Force. I would suggest that you will proudly say, 'We will have none of these special privileges. They demoralize and pauperize us.' I want you to think in the terms of the masses and not in the terms of the hierarchy and priesthood of Anglo-India. The upper section amongst you wants to be absorbed by Europeans—an impossible ambition—and the lower would be absorbed in the Indians in spite of itself. This involuntary merging can do no good. How then, you will ask, is it possible for you to be absorbed voluntarily? Well, I would not want you to be lulled into a false sense of security, but I would ask you to unhesitatingly shed the unnatural life you lead. If after becoming Indians, you are betrayed by the Indians themselves, you will turn rebels against the Indians, but refuse to aspire to be Europeans again. I ask you not to be cowed down by the thought of a small minority. It

is sometimes a privilege. I have so often said that I would love to be in the minority of one, because this artificial majority, which is the result of the masses' reverence for me, is a clog in my progress. But for the clog, I would hurl defiance today. I can neither be quickened into vanity by blind adoration, nor shall I sacrifice a tittle of my principle for mass adoration. The Englishmen are a microscopic minority. They do not fear that they would be engulfed. Of course, at the back of their security is the force of the bayonet. But it will some day ruin them if they are not warned betimes. You may rely either on your soul-force or sword-force. But in no case would you put up with the present degradation.

Asked whether he was an optimist, and if so, why he should despair of the future because Lord Birkenhead might not be always in office, he said :

I am an irrepressible optimist, because I believe in myself. That sounds very arrogant; doesn't it? But I say it from the depths of my humility. I believe in the supreme power of God. I believe in Truth and, therefore, I have no doubt in the future of this country or the future of humanity. Whatever Lord Birkenhead may say, I trust in God who knows how to confound the wisdom of men. He is a consummate *jadugar*<sup>1</sup> and I have placed myself in His hands. But He is a hard taskmaster. He would accept nothing short of the best you are capable of. To me the change of Government does not mean anything. I am an

optimist because I expect many things from myself. I have not got them I know, as I am not yet a perfect being. If I was one, I should not even need to reason with you. When I am a perfect being, I have simply to say the word, and the nation will listen. I want to attain that perfection by service.

*Young India*, 13-8-1925

### 143. NOTES

#### G. O. M. CENTENARY

If the reminder was needed, Mr. Bharucha has reminded the public that 4th September next is the centenary of Dadabhai Naoroji. Whilst he was alive, we called him, as he was, the Grand Old Man of India. He was the father of Indian nationalism. He was the first to introduce the word 'swaraj' in Congress parlance and was as ardent an

<sup>1</sup> Magician



advocate of it as Lokamanya himself. His service to the country was long, steady, selfless. He taught us to understand the poverty of the masses. His articles on that subject are still the Indian patriot's text book. His statistics stand almost unchallenged to this day. He had a record for unblemished character. How shall we celebrate the centenary of Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the noblest sons of India? Meetings we must have wherever the Congress flag flies. I would like to make these meetings business meetings that would take us a few steps definitely forward towards our goal. Though a full representative of educated India, Dadabhai thought for and of the masses. His spirit lived in their midst, the swaraj of his dreams included the economic amelioration of the masses. What can better bring the classes nearer to the masses than the spinning-wheel and khaddar? I would suggest raising of subscriptions at these meetings for the Deshbandhu Charkha and Khaddar Memorial. The meetings may also pass resolutions about hand-spinning and use of khaddar. Wherever there is a surplus stock of khaddar, volunteers may dedicate the day to hawking khaddar. From now those who have leisure may utilize the whole of the day for spinning good yarn and presenting it at these meetings for the nation.

These are my suggestions. They may not commend themselves to everybody. Let those who do not appreciate my advice adopt any other form that may commend itself to them, but I hope that all parties without distinction will celebrate the centenary in a manner worthy of the occasion.

#### CHINA'S PLIGHT

I hope that the readers of *Young India* have read the very long cablegram received by me from the Commissioner, Foreign Affairs, National Government, Canton. The cablegram has evidently been sent to several parts of the world.

I do not know what we in India can do to help China in her distress. We ourselves are in need of help. If we had any voice in the management of our own affairs, we should not tolerate the humiliating and degrading spectacle of Indian soldiers shooting innocent Chinese students and others like rabbits, i.e., if the story recited in the cablegram is to be believed. We can, therefore, only pray for their deliverance from all their troubles. But the situation in China reminds us that our slavery is not merely injurious to ourselves, but it is also injurious to our neighbours. It demonstrates also most forcibly that

India is being kept under subjection, not merely for the exploitation of India herself, but that it enables Great Britain to exploit the great and ancient Chinese nation.

If any responsible Chinese should read these lines, I would commend to their attention the method that we have adopted in India, that is non-violence. Let the Chinese understand that they are numerically the greatest nation on earth. They have glorious traditions, they are not emasculated as we are. If they would only follow the policy of non-violence and truth, victory is not only certain but it is very near. Surely a nation containing nearly four hundred million souls need not be crushed under the weight of European and Japanese ambition. China can free herself from foreign exploitation by purely internal peaceful effort. If she succeeds in her boycott of foreign goods, she removes the temptation in the way of foreign powers to retain their hold on her.

#### ALL-INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION

When the Congress has become a predominantly political body and if it is still in some form to represent the masses, there must be a spinners' association all over India which will regulate and develop the spinning part of the franchise, which will take charge of all yarn that spinning members may give and will concentrate itself solely upon hand-spinning and khaddar.

This association, if it comes into being, must be purely a business concern, it must be a permanent body not in any shape or form fluctuating with the fluctuations in the Congress politics. It must, therefore, have a fairly permanent executive. It must organize a khaddar service. It will, therefore, represent and develop village organization by taking the message of the spinning-wheel to the most distant villages and, for the first time distributing wealth among the villagers instead of draining it away from them. It will be a peaceful penetration into the villages and an outflowing, after a time, of real national life from them. It ought to be the mightiest co-operative effort the world has yet seen. Given a fair amount of talent, only a fair amount of sacrifice, average honesty and support from the monied and middle classes, its success is assured. Let us see what the future has in store for India.

#### A MISUNDERSTANDING

With reference to the two questions by a distinguished Mussalman put to me through a common friend, and dealt with in

*Young India* of July 16, the friend tells me that I misunderstood the second question.

If he had asked that question, I would not have left you for a minute to reply. It would be downright impertinence for any Mussalman to ask you that question, but poor. . . did not ask the second question in that form. What he said was this, "Mahatmaji talks of love and unity between the two communities, but this won't do at this moment. He should devise some tangible scheme in order to bring about the desired unity, something on the lines of Mr. C. R. Das's pact in Bengal."

I am sorry that I misunderstood the question, though my impression is that I was so startled by the question as I understood it that I had the friend to repeat it. However, even the question as it now stands need not have been put, if the enquiring friend had followed the proceedings of the Conference at Delhi and the tangible scheme I put forth there. I swear by that scheme even now and feel that we shall have to fall back upon it when we have regained sanity. It is shortly this : There should be an electorate under a franchise which would admit of all capable of understanding their responsibilities being placed on the voters' roll and which would be true reflex of the proportion each community bears to the other in point of numbers and that communal representation should be dealt with outside the law. The proportion to be given to Mussalmans has never worried me. The only thing I would like to guard against is a statutory distinction. I would not have the Government adjust the proportion and provide for its working. However divided we may be amongst ourselves, if we have the true national consciousness, we must be able to approach the Government with one voice. For the Government there should be neither Mussalman nor Hindu, Christian, Sikh nor Parsi nor Brahmin nor non-Brahmin. For them we must all be nationalists. This solution may not be acceptable, but it cannot be said that I talk of love and unity but devise no tangible scheme. I do not agitate now for its acceptance, because I have admitted that I have lost influence over the vocal sections of both the communities.

#### CONGRESS CORRUPTION

I receive letters every week complaining that corruption and indiscipline have crept into the Congress ranks, that people have got into the Congress who seek to exploit it for their own private end. Here is the latest typical letter duly signed :

. . . President, Congress Committee . . . enlisted about 1,300 members for

the Congress, but the subscriptions are not forthcoming from him, nor has he submitted any accounts.

With characteristic lack of scruples the Secretary and . . . are not convening the long overdue annual meeting lest they might be turned out of office. In contravention of rules . . . has been making payment without sanction. . . . is a notorious character who collected money which he never accounted for to the authorities.

There are also several other charges mentioned in the foregoing indictment. The complaint too had been received that the Congress Committees in several parts of India have been using monies received by them for purposes other than those for which they were earmarked. I hope that responsible Congressmen will look into their respective organizations and, wherever any corruption or misappropriation is discovered, they will not hesitate to denounce such corruption and remove it.

#### DESHBANDHU AND HAND-SPINNING

Shrijut Priya Rai writing about a charkha which he has invented and which he is trying to perfect says :

I am impelled to acquaint you with one more fact, that is, as to what Deshbandhu thought of and wanted to do with my charkha. I had occasion to show him the blankets, carpets, coatings and sundries, —product of the yarn from my charkha, and had the privilege of a free expression of my thoughts and ideas. I can never forget the warmth and earnestness with which Deshbandhu talked and listened about charkha and spinning. It was he who unfolded to my vision the immense possibilities of charkha even with our educated young men. He seemed very much pleased with the little improvement I have been able to set up in my charkha and, as was his wont, requested me to formulate a scheme, whereby, to start with, he could introduce my charkha in the primary schools, financed by the Calcutta Corporation and, later, in bigger areas. I was not ready with a cut-and-dry scheme before the hands of death snatched him away from amongst us. I do not know whether or not it is possible to give effect to the scheme, but I can tell you this that my humble services are at the command of those who might take up the work.

I know this charkha. It can be worked sitting in a chair with the feet, leaving both the hands free, but it is not yet possible for me to recommend it to the public, because its yield per hour is considerably below that of the ordinary charkha.

Priya Babu's charkha would yield no more than 300 yards of yarn per hour against 850 yards,—the highest speed attained by the

Khadi Pratishthan pattern. If the inventor can think of improvements which would give a greater yield than the Khadi Pratishthan charkha there should be no difficulty in popularizing his invention.

#### ‘TOO COSTLY’

A correspondent from Jamshedpur says that khaddar is too costly for the common or middle-class people; it does not last long; it gets dirty too soon, and to keep it clean means an additional expenditure; and adds, ‘Will you please explain in detail how it will be possible for men like us to wear khaddar in these circumstances?’

Although questions like these have been already answered in these pages, it is not superfluous to revert to them again and again. Yard for yard, at the present moment, khaddar is undoubtedly dearer than mill-cloth. But my invariable experience is that those who have taken to khaddar have, consciously or unconsciously, simplified their dress. They do not require so much as when they used mill-cloth. It is not the experience of all that khaddar does not last as long as mill-cloth. In the beginning stages the hand-spun yarn was ill-twisted. Therefore, khaddar woven from such yarn was undoubtedly not durable. But the quality has since improved. I suggest too that if khaddar is washed at home, it will last twice as long as when it is sent to the washermen. I admit that, if khaddar is sent out for washing, the cost of washing khaddar would be greater than that of washing ordinary calico. The only remedy is home-washing which need not frighten people. Soaking khaddar overnight in hot water with soap enables one to wash it perfectly clean in no time.

When the correspondent says that it gets dirty all too soon, I presume that he implies that being white it shows dirt. If the intention be to conceal dirt the remedy is to colour it precisely in the same manner that mill-cloth is coloured. And at the present moment, plenty of coloured khaddar is available in the market. But let me make the confession that khaddar cannot make headway if the middle-class people compare it in price and everything else with mill-made cloth. The incentive to use khaddar must be national for the middle-class people, and they are expected to put themselves to inconvenience in order to popularize it.

If the State had belonged to the people, it would have protected khaddar by legislation. But seeing that the State is foreign and neutral, if not even hostile to khaddar, it is for the people who believe in its national value go give it due protection by putting up with the

inconvenience and extra expenditure that its use may involve before it becomes universal in India. Only five years ago, I sold very coarse and ill-spun-and ill-woven khaddar at 17 as. per yard. Such bad khaddar is now nowhere to be seen. Its evolution has been phenomenal, so much so that much superior khaddar is today sold at nine annas per yard in the same part of India. Every attempt is being made to bring down the price of khaddar and, if the All-India Deshbandhu Charkha Memorial becomes a success and the scheme that is now being conceived comes into operation, I am expecting a still further decline in prices.

I would like the readers to remember what I said at Chittagong that, if khaddar is dear, freedom is dearer still. And he who feels for the masses will not grudge them the extra price that during the transition stage has to be paid for khaddar.

#### AN INSULT AND CHARKHA

A correspondent writes :

Fortunately or unfortunately a rich person, holding a Government position, assaulted me the other day. I had to accept ten rupees by way of compensation for injury to my feelings. I feel I can best use the amount by sending it to you kindly to buy charkhas with it for those that deserve them.

I congratulate the donor on his wise decision. As the letter was received on the day on which the appeal for an All-India Deshbandhu Memorial was published, and as that memorial is to spread the gospel of the charkha, I am sending the amount to the Treasurer and, no doubt, deserving persons will receive spinning-wheels that can be bought with the amount.

*Young India*, 30-7-1925

#### 144. CONGRESS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

I gladly publish the following from Sjt. Satyananda Bose, a veteran Congressman whom I had the pleasure of knowing even while I was in South Africa, because of his help to my late lamented comrade Sorabji of Adajan (Surat) :

Some misapprehension has arisen in the minds of the public in regard to your proposal to hand over the Congress to the Swaraj Party.

It is said that the Congress will henceforth be the tail of the Swaraj Party organization and it will cease to occupy the dominant position in the public life of the country. The provision in your last year's pact with the Swaraj Party, viz., that

the latter will carry on the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures on behalf of the Congress, strengthens this suspicion.

No doubt you have dissolved the pact. But it is suspected that there will be another pact giving to the Swaraj Party the power of direction and control over the Congress in *express words*.

Personally I cannot believe that either you or Pandit Motilal Nehru contemplate this course.

It goes without saying that, as the Swaraj Party is in the majority in the Congress and outside it, they partly will control the Congress for the present. But this position is different from a pact which gives the party a predominant position irrespective of every other fact and consideration.

The Congress ought to be like the British Parliament. In the latter there are members belonging to different political parties and those who are in the majority for the time being guide and control its affairs. This condition is the result of the elections and is *not* due to any agreement arrived at from outside. In the Indian National Congress, too, this constitutional state of things should prevail.

I request you to make your position clear. There is a growing desire amongst the non-Swarajists to join the Congress. I hope nothing will be done to put any obstacle in the way.

The Congress should remain as it has been in the past—the predominant national body, whatever party may control its affairs for the time being.

PS.

Written pacts are artificial, unconstitutional and unnecessary and they only serve to create difference and dissension. Pacts no doubt may be reversed. But why should there be a pact at all?

I do not think that there is anything in my letter to Pandit Motilalji to warrant the misapprehension referred to by Satyananda Babu. All that my letter is intended to convey is that the embargo, for which I made myself responsible, on pure political activities in the Congress at Belgaum should be removed.

Personally, I retain the same opinion that I did last year, that if educated Indians concentrated on the triple constructive programme and made it their predominant occupation, we should be nearer swaraj. But I confess that I have failed to carry that conviction home. I must, therefore, no longer stand in the way of the Congress being developed and guided by educated Indians rather than by one like myself, who has thrown in his lot entirely with the masses, and who has fundamental differences with the mind of educated India as a body. I

still want to act upon them, but not by leading the Congress; on the contrary, by working my way to their hearts silently so far as possible, even as I did between 1915 and 1919. I recognize the great services rendered to the country by educated India in the face of tremendous odds. It has got its own method of work; it has its own place in the national life. I cannot be blind to the fact that, no matter what may be said to the contrary, the disciplined resistance of the Swaraj Party has made its impression upon the rulers. The best way in which I can help that activity is by removing myself out of the way and by concentrating myself solely upon constructive work with the help of the Congress and in its name and that, too, only so far as educated Indians will permit me to do so.

I recognize that it is educated India which is to set the pace in the Congress, not I and those who have ceased to think politically for the time being. In my opinion, both have a place in the national evolution. And each group remaining in its own sphere can complement and help the activity of the other. I pin my faith to the spinning-wheel and khaddar. It is a programme which can absorb the energies of the most advanced youths of the country. It is an effort which demands the exclusive attention, not of one man, but of hundreds, indeed thousands, of men and women. I do not want to engage in disputations about the necessity or the utility of the spinning-wheel and khaddar. Time has come for working out the propositions I have advanced in behalf of khaddar, and in working them out I want the goodwill and co-operation of all who will extend them to the movement, and this is possible only by removing the spinning-wheel from the arena of Congress politics. The spinning-wheel and khaddar will, therefore, retain that place in the Congress which may be freely given to them by the politically-minded countrymen. If my advice is, therefore, accepted by the All-India Congress Committee, the ban upon political propaganda through the Congress will be entirely removed, and the Swaraj Party will, therefore, then function not through its separate organization, but through the Congress itself, not by virtue of any new pact but by reason of the dissolution of the pact existing between the Party and myself, and consequent amendment of the Congress constitution and of the Congress resolution that gave effect to the pact. The pact threw the door open to the other political parties by suspending non-co-operation. Its dissolution will make the opening wider still inasmuch as the politically-minded people of the country will no longer labour



under the handicap of the Congress being confined merely to the constructive programme. They had some hesitation in joining the Swaraj Party, and in their opinion, the Congress did not afford sufficient scope for their energies and talents. But when the ban is removed, they can, if they will, whole-heartedly join the Congress and move any political resolutions that they may desire from the Congress platform, and cross swords with the Swarajists and so act upon them and the country.

The compulsory yarn franchise will no longer hamper them. The only impediment in their way will be the compulsory adoption of khaddar as national wear. But it may be that the All-India Congress Committee will reject even khaddar as part of the franchise. I shall not stand in the way even of such rejection, painful though it will certainly be to me; for, in my opinion, then educated India will cut off the only visible and tangible tie that today binds it to the masses. I shall hope, therefore, that khaddar will find a permanent place in the Congress franchise. Do we not want to encourage cottage industries and handicrafts? Do we not want millions of women who have no work to do, and who will gladly earn a few pice per day, to do so by spinning? Hand-spinning, I understand, is to be retained as a permanent part of the franchise as an alternative. To that I should think there can be no objection. If, therefore, the proposals that I have made are accepted by the All-India Congress Committee, it will become possible for every educated Indian to join the Congress and evolve a united national political programme that will meet the emergency that has arisen both by Deshbandhu's death and Lord Birkenhead's speech.

*Young India*, 30-7-1925

#### *145. THE CONGRESS UNEMPLOYED*

Whilst I was discussing with friends the object of the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial, certain friends asked, "Why should not the maintenance of dependents of those who are in prison or deported and alleviation of unemployment of Congressmen who are starving by reason of their non-co-operation be one of the objects, if not the object?" The same question has come before me during my stay in Bengal in a variety of ways. In my opinion, it is not possible to raise the fund suggested from all over India and from all parties for such a purpose. So far as the maintenance of the dependents of political prisoners and detenues is concerned, it is a matter that requires most

delicate handling and must be left to each province to settle in the manner that may be considered most suitable in that province. I cannot reconcile myself to a permanent fund for that object. My own practical experience in South Africa, and to a limited extent here, has shown me that very often undeserving people get relief and the deserving are left out. A permanent fund for distant contingencies of this nature offers temptation to those who do not mind living on charity. In order to obviate chances of dishonest practices, I had to establish a settlement in South Africa where all those who needed and deserved relief could be accommodated, fed, and looked after. At a single stroke it was possible by this arrangement to save thousands of rupees, to provide for every honest case of distress, to do absolute justice to everyone, to put people in distress in ideal surroundings, to find useful employment for them and to provide education for the children of such families. I suggested a similar course in Chittagong after the great strike in 1921. There is danger of charity being misplaced unless drastic measures as I have suggested be adopted to deal with cases of political imprisonment or detention. The real fight, if it is to come at all on a large scale, is still to come. We shall have to pay a price adequate to the freedom we want and, unless we think out and devise some plan of meeting such contingencies in a reasonable manner, in the struggle for freedom, it is possible for us to be starved into an ignominious surrender. Apart, therefore, from the question of Memorial and on the merits of the case, I am against any permanent fund for the relief of what may be called political distress.

The question of the Congress unemployed is more urgent and of a permanent character. Although we have resolutions on the subject, hitherto we have been unable to establish an All-India Congress Service or even a Provincial Congress Service, not for want of will but for want of ability. Personally, I have endeavoured to tackle it more than once, but I own I have been baffled. It has not been possible to fix a maximum to be paid nor has it been possible to devise grades of service. Wherever, therefore, it has been sought to establish a system, it has been found necessary to leave well alone and try every case on its merits. It is perhaps not possible as yet to establish a regular service, but I have no doubt that the scale and the system are gradually growing.

There are two branches of constructive activity which absorb the largest number of Congress workers,—khaddar and, to a lesser extent, education. But here again every province will have to be responsible

for its own scheme and as it too depends, as a rule, upon local contributions, it is a fairly sound proposition that that Service only deserves to live which obtains local support, because the test of appreciation of service is the support given by those who are served. The very existence of the Congress depends upon the fact that it supplies a local want. It is not like a Government super-imposed and, therefore, independent of the support of those whom it seeks to rule. Both the khaddar and the educational services presuppose continued activity and continued preparation. I have laid it down as a rule for my own guidance that, if neither of these activities has local support, it is due to want of tact or ability on the part of those who are engaged in the respective services. I do not know a single case of starvation of deserving men. I know cases of straitened circumstances of Congress workers eking out an honest but precarious life. But I fear that that will be progressively our lot, and, if in some cases, some of us have not yet reconciled ourselves to the simplicity and severity that have entered into the national life, and if some owing to a long course of habit are even constitutionally unfitted to adopt themselves to the severe simplicity which is expected of them, in any case I hope it is now clear why the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial may not take the form of giving relief to the distressed or finding employment for Congress workers. The present object of the Memorial is calculated indirectly to do both.

*Young India*, 30-7-1925

#### 146. AGRICULTURE v. KHADDAR

An M.A.,B.L. writes thus :<sup>1</sup>

The question of unemployment raised in this letter I have dealt with elsewhere. But as others besides the correspondent have brought the question of agriculture in connection with khaddar, it might be as well to deal with the appeal of my lawyer correspondent.

Let me first of all point out to him that he is mistaken in thinking that he has merely to get a loan of two thousand rupees to make his proposed agricultural experiment a 'swinging success'. Indeed, agriculture requires just as much application and study as law.

<sup>1</sup> In this letter, not reproduced here, the correspondent appealed to Gandhiji to raise 100 lacs to finance agriculture and small industries as a solution of the unemployment problem.

The correspondent also seems to labour under the delusion that the message of khaddar is being presented to India in order to clothe the naked. On the contrary, khaddar is intended to serve the same purpose that paddy does. The spinning-wheel will provide additional occupation to the millions, which would mean an additional income wherewith to supplement the insufficient food that they are able to get today.

Agriculture is not a dying occupation in India. It requires reform and improvement. But agricultural reforms are possible under a national government. Individual agricultural effort can leave little impression upon the masses whose sole occupation is agriculture which gives them less than what they need for proper bodily sustenance. If this correspondent is really tired of his profession and wishes to give it up, he must not build castles in the air. He must become an expert spinner and he will find himself engaged, not in spinning for his maintenance, but in the organizations that are being conducted in Bengal for propagating spinning and khaddar.

*Young India*, 30-7-1925

#### *147. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*

*July 30, 1925*

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad informs me that the newspaper reports of my speech,<sup>1</sup> before the European Association, the other day, has given rise to a great deal of controversy among the Mussalman friends and even some resentment, because some Mussalman friends read into my speech the view that I could not find an able and honourable Mussalman who could occupy the Mayoral chair, and that the Maulana Sahib also had given me a similar opinion. I have now read the report of my speech from which these deductions have been made. Though it is not a verbatim report, even as it stands, I do not consider that it warrants the deductions that have been drawn from it.

What I said was that, instead of leaving it to those friends who had come to me to judge as to the ability and honesty of any Mohammedan name that might be suggested, if I had known such a one myself, I should have unconditionally recommended his name for adoption.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at European Association Meeting", 24-7-1925.

The Maulana certainly never conveyed to me directly or indirectly, that his recommendation of Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta's name was based upon the fact that there was no honest and able Mussalman in the Corporation or outside on whom the distinction could be conferred, but simply suggested a political motive for his recommendation, namely giving as much adventitious aid as possible to the Swaraj Party in the absence of its illustrious Chief. Whatever the interpretation that my speech, as reported, may be capable of, the public will accept my assurance that nothing was more remote from my mind, or that of Maulana Sahib than to think that there was no honest and able Mussalman who could be recommended for the honour. In fact, for me, it would be ludicrous presumption, when I did not sufficiently know any Mussalman in Calcutta except the Maulana, to say that there was no honest and able Mussalman who could occupy the chair. Indeed, if the Maulana Sahib's suggestion had not come to me or, having come, had not appealed to me, I would have continued to prosecute Mr. Suhrawardy's claim as I had come to know something of his ability, and I was entitled to presume his honesty from his occupation of the chair of the Deputy Mayor.

M. K. GANDHI

*Forward, 31-7-1925*

*148. LETTER TO "THE STATESMAN"*

148, RUSSA ROAD,

*July 31, 1925*

You will perhaps extend me the courtesy of finding room for a reply to your article headed "Civil Resistance" in today's *Statesman*. You see an inconsistency between my desire to prepare an atmosphere for civil resistance and my statement to the European Association that I was dying for co-operation. My speech before the European Association was delivered on July 24. I write for *Young India* on Saturday for the issue of Thursday following. The reference to civil resistance which you have quoted appears in *Young India* of July 23. I give you the dates in order to show that the idea or preparation for civil resistance was not conceived after the statement to the European Association.

I see no inconsistency between the desire for civil resistance and

for co-operation. You will remember that my statement to the European Association was a recalling of an old story. When, in the heyday of non-co-operation, an Englishman twitted me with the remark that, although I professed non-co-operation I was dying to co-operate, I said to him emphatically that I was doing so. And I say that that is my position also today. Civil resistance to wrong is not a new doctrine or practice with me. It is a life-long belief and a life-long practice. To prepare the country for civil resistance is to prepare it for non-violence. To prepare the country for non-violence is to organize it for constructive work which, to me, is synonymous with the spinning-wheel. You evidently seem to think that I have repented of my non-co-operation or civil resistance. I have never done so. I remain a confirmed non-co-operator. If I could carry educated India with me, I would declare non-co-operation in its entirety today. Being a practical man, I recognize the facts that stare me in the face. I have failed to convince some of my most esteemed colleagues that the particular form of non-co-operation which we embarked upon in 1920 can do good to the country at the present moment. It, therefore, remains under suspension. But I cannot hide from you the fact that, if I could reconvert my colleagues, I would certainly ask the Congress to renew the battle.

Personally, I have no desire to co-operate voluntarily with the Government in my weakness; that would be the co-operation of a slave. I admit my weakness, and, therefore, I remain satisfied with the mere desire for co-operation and I seek to fulfil that desire by developing strength. If I believed in violence, I would make no secret of it and would take the consequences. But I would let the country know publicly, and know in unequivocal terms, that there is no freedom for her and no room for honourable co-operation with the Government, unless she is prepared to match the British bayonet with the Indian. As it is, I do not believe in the creed of the bayonet. I further believe that, fortunately or unfortunately, it will never succeed in India. A substitute for it is, however, necessary and that is civil resistance. In your opinion it is as dangerous as violence, and if such is also the opinion of the Government, it has to suppress me, for after my discharge from prison, I have not allowed a moment to pass when I have not endeavoured to fit myself or the country for civil resistance. Let me inform you in all humility that, if I could but secure the absolute co-operation of my revolutionary friends by the entire cessation of their activity, and if I could produce an atmosphere

of general non-violence, I would declare mass civil resistance today and thus prepare the ground for honourable co-operation. I admit that I failed to do so in 1921, and when I found that Chauri Chaura betrayed me, I had no hesitation within twenty-four hours of the declaration of civil resistance to suspend it, and to take the consequences of a general depression in the country that followed.

And if I insist *ad nauseam* on Hindu-Muslim unity, and the spinning-wheel and khaddar, it is in order to ensure a state of non-violence necessary for civil resistance. I have, I confess, despaired of achieving Hindu-Muslim unity in the very near future. Untouchability is surely but slowly going, the spinning-wheel is surely but slowly making its way. Meanwhile, the ruthless exploitation of the country is proceeding apace. I am, therefore, thinking out plans of some form of effective individual civil resistance which, if it brings no relief to this poor country, will at least bring some solace to those whose creed is non-violence, to know that they have left no stone unturned to help the deliverance of the country from a bondage which is enervating a whole nation.

I confess, again that I have no ready-made plan, for if I had, I would not keep it from you or the country. But I am giving you the whole of the working of my mind. I have no desire to obtain or retain the goodwill of Englishmen under false pretences. Even as the Government abates no precaution or preparation for ensuring its existence and stability, when it may be offering terms to Indian politicians, even so do I want my country to abate no effort to arm itself with a weapon on which she may rely when the Government fails to respond to its wishes.

You may know (for the communication is published) that Deshbandhu did not sign Dr. Besant's manifesto on her Bill, one of the grounds for which was that there was no sanction stipulated for in the event of rejection. That sanction was to be civil resistance. Will you have the country's manhood absolutely paralysed and rendered utterly ineffective for any resistance, violent or non-violent, before the British Government can possibly think of offering any terms or considering proposals that might be made by the Swaraj Party or any other? If so, I assure you, no self-respecting Indian will voluntarily be party to a condition so degrading.

*I am, etc.,*

M. K. GANDHI

*The Statesman*, 1-8-1925

## *149. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CALCUTTA<sup>1</sup>*

*July 31, 1925*

Mahatma Gandhi, who presided, said that two things were dear to the heart of the deceased patriot, one of which was that he stood, without any mental reservation, out and out for Hindu-Muslim unity. He was also an ardent advocate of swadeshi. The times when Rasul lived were comparatively ancient, and he wished to interpret his message in the spirit of modern times. In the programme that was sketched out for the nation in 1920, both Hindu-Muslim unity and swadeshi were duly emphasized. But they gave a new meaning to both these two things. They then decided that it was not enough that a few educated Indians should stand shoulder to shoulder, work together, perhaps mix socially also. They then felt the necessity of taking that message to the masses. They had not half done the task. In fact, they had not yet made a beginning. They all wanted Hindu-Muslim unity, but they would not get it by simply talking about it. Then and then only would Hindu-Muslim unity be established when Hindus would learn to serve the Mohammedans without expecting the slightest reward and Mohammedans would learn to serve Hindus in a similarly disinterested spirit. The new meaning of swadeshi was, not that they should put together the several parts of an article, say a watch or harmonium, imported from abroad and label it as swadeshi, but their swadeshi now consisted in every part being made in India. They now recognized that the central fact round which swadeshi should revolve was “khaddar”. That was the modern dictionary meaning of swadeshi and not until they had done this one thing would they be able to realize the dream that Abdur Rasul dreamt.

Proceeding, Mahatma Gandhi said that he had that afternoon seen hundreds of hungry people being fed in front of the Marble Palace in Chor Bagan. The sight was one which was neither ennobling nor honourable to those who had organized the meal for the hungry people of Calcutta from day to day. They did not know what they were doing. They were ignorant of the irreparable harm they were doing to India by this misplaced benevolence. Not one of these men and women who were being fed were incapacitated for work. They had just as strong arms and legs as anyone of them had. Did they think there was any merit in feeding people who could work for their living? He differed from those who considered this as a merit. Let them not be flattered with the testimony that was sometimes ignorantly given by European writers that there were no such things as work-houses in India. These European writers believed that the Indians had a system of feeding the poor and the hungry which was self-organized, and which did away with the necessity of having work-houses. The

<sup>1</sup> This was held on the eighth anniversary of Abdur Rasul's death, and was held at Albert Hall.



statement was only partially true, and the system had done no good to India. They were today feeding the idlers. Some of them were thieves and, if this process continued for any length of time, he saw no bright future for this unhappy country. Let them, therefore, beware of this system. He did not introduce this story to criticize the philanthropist. He wished he had their 'ear, and then he would ask them not to misplace their philanthropy in this way; rather he would ask them to give some work to these men and women. Had they ever paused to enquire why these people were idlers, why millions of people of India were idling away their time? Indians were not a nation of idlers. Had they been so, they would have died long ago. The fact was that there was not enough work for them and therefore this glorious land of theirs, because of their ignorance, because of their want of real patriotism, was throwing out people who could not be sustained on the land. Therefore the remedy lay in finding an occupation for them. And what better occupation could be provided for these millions of men than the spinning-wheel or the charkha. Let the educated community, therefore, spin for at least half an hour if they wanted to remove this degrading poverty of the masses.

Forward, 1-8-1925

### *150. INTERVIEW TO "THE ENGLISHMAN"*

[Before August 1, 1925]

Interviewed by a representative of *The Englishman*, Mr. Gandhi said that he did not know that what was going on between Lord Lytton and Deshbandhu<sup>2</sup> could be described as negotiations. But some kind of communications were certainly going on between Lord Lytton and Deshbandhu through an intermediary. He did not know the actual and verifiable contents of these communications, but he knew perhaps the general trend which it was neither profitable nor advisable to disclose.

Mr. Gandhi added that no letter was sent to him by Pandit Motilal Nehru for approval and signature.

*The Englishman*, 1-8-1925

<sup>2</sup> C. R. Das

### 151. LETTER TO THE REV. ALLWOOD

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,  
August 1, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

It was a pleasure to meet you and have that little discussion, and an equal pleasure to have received your letter.<sup>1</sup> What I said at the meeting<sup>2</sup> was based upon recent experiences.

I know that individual instances of a broader and truer outlook upon religions are on the increase. The tolerance with which I was listened to at that meeting is a proof of it. But the literature that was sent me by unknown friends in the jail and the letters that I received almost every month from Christian friends, both in India and outside, demonstrate the truth of my remarks. As to Bishop Heber's Hymn<sup>3</sup>, you will realize, perhaps, that it is one thing for a man to think of himself as vile and unclean, but it is another for the world to pronounce him as such. Augustine considered himself as chief among sinners. The world calls him a saint. Tulsidas had no adjective harsh enough to describe himself as a sinner. The world regards him also as a saint. Lastly, I wonder if you know that the Christian Literature Society continues to sell the utterly unbalanced views and opinions of Mr. Murdoch and others. And if you only knew the literature in the vernaculars that is distributed through tens of thousands of leaflets and booklets, you will, perhaps, appreciate the force of my remarks. These things hurt me only because I know that they believe the teachings of Jesus, in whose name they are said and written; and it hurts me also because Indian Christians are fed upon such ignorance which they, in their simplicity, imbibe as God's truth, and hence learn to hate those who were once their friends, companions and relatives. You perhaps do not know that I mix as freely with Christian Indians in the lower strata of society as I mix with a similar class of Hindus and Mussalmans. I say these things

<sup>1</sup> This is not available.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Speech at Meeting of Anglo-Indians", 29-7-1925.

<sup>3</sup> Which contains the lines: "What though the spicy breezes/Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,/Though every prospect pleases, /And only man is vile."

[not] by way of argument, but to tell you that I spoke in that meeting out of fullness of knowledge and love. I went there in a spirit of service and I have written this also in the same spirit. That is the best appreciation I can tender of your well-meant letter. Please remember me to the friends who accompanied you.

Just after finishing dictating the foregoing letter, I read a letter from another Christian friend, this time an Indian. It is a long letter, but I cannot help giving you two extracts from it.

Here they are:

(1) I was greatly disappointed to hear you at the Calcutta Missionary Conference yesterday. I was under the impression all along that you were a true follower of Jesus Christ, but the utterance which you made last night broke my heart altogether. I do not know how I can call you 'Seeker for the Truth,' when you say Jesus Christ is only a great teacher and nothing else. What a great pity, a man of your calibre and culture says—Jesus Christ is a teacher. I must say, in that case, that either you have not cared to study the noble life of Jesus Christ intrinsically and prayerfully, or you studied the life with a deep prejudice in mind.

(2) It has been said by the leading men of different religions, other than Christians, supposed to be seekers for Truth, that Chaitanya, Buddha, Mahomed, Krishna and Christ are all the same. This is a most idle talk; where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise. This class of people have no business to call themselves—"Seeker for Truth"—they should be called the "enemies for Truth"—Truth is Truth and there is not the slightest compromising element in it. I cannot believe even for a moment that a true Hindu is a Christian, or a true Buddhist a Hindu and so on. How could you say that at the meeting yesterday? I am at a loss to discern. A man of your calibre and learning and experience would be the last man to utter such blunders.

*Yours sincerely,*

[PS.]

After the letter was typed, I got a copy of the Hymn. Here it is. You will observe that the good Bishop was thinking only of non-Christians. The Hymn still finds a place in ordinary hymn books. I have often heard it sung in churches in South Africa.

M. K. G.

[To  
THE REV. ALLWOOD  
BARRACKPORE]

From a photostat: S.N. 10648

152. LETTER TO A FRIEND<sup>1</sup>

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,  
August 1, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. A man who owns land which is haunted by wild beasts will be able to excuse himself for shooting them. It would be classed as inevitable *himsa*. It will be justified on the ground of necessity, but there is no doubt that, if one has a full perception of ahimsa, it would be well for him to let his land be overrun by wild beasts or be himself killed by them. Ahimsa is not a mechanical matter, it is personal to everyone. Moreover, possession of property against the whole world is inconsistent with ahimsa. A man who will follow the principle of non-violence to its uttermost limit has nothing in this world he can call his own. He must merge himself into the whole, which includes snakes, scorpions, tigers, wolves, etc. There are instances on record of innocent men whose innocence even wild beasts have recognized. We must all strive to reach that stage.

The same remark applies to your second question. It is *himsa* to kill the germs and the insects, but even as we commit *himsa* by taking vegetable food (for vegetables have life) but regard it as inevitable, so must we treat the germ life. You will recognize that the doctrine of necessity can be stretched so as to justify even man-eating. A man who believes in ahimsa carefully refrains from every act that leads to injury. [My] argument only applies to those who believe in ahimsa. The necessity that I have in mind is a universal necessity, hence it is not permissible to take ahimsa beyond a limit. That is why the Shastras of custom only permit *himsa* in certain cases. It is not only lawful but obligatory upon everyone to make the least use possible of the permission and relaxation. It is unlawful to go beyond the limitation.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10595

<sup>1</sup> The identity of the addressee is not ascertainable.

<sup>2</sup> The copy carries corrections in Gandhiji's hand.

### 153. SPEECH AT TILAK ANNIVERSARY MEETING<sup>1</sup>

CALCUTTA,  
August 1, 1925

Mahatma Gandhi, speaking in Hindustani, said that the great *mantra* that Bal Gangadhar gave to India was that “Swaraj was their birthright.” By swaraj he (Lokamanya) meant swaraj for the toiling crores of India. To Mahatmaji’s mind the call was clear: If they wished to achieve swaraj for the masses of India, they must have to work for it through charkha and khaddar and thus identify them with the poor, starving millions of Hindustan. If they really wanted to get inspiration from the memory of Lokamanya and if they really desired swaraj for the poor, then they should hear the old man speaking to them in season and out of season and take to the spinning-wheel. Let them promise from the very day that they would discard foreign cloth and take to swadeshi homespun and hand-woven cloth.

The other day, Mahatmaji proceeded, they declared a boycott of British goods in reply to Lord Birkenhead’s statement. He had his doubt as to the possibility of its achievement. But although he was on principle against boycott, he would be glad if the people discarded British cloth. They had failed to act up to their leaders’ advice for the last four years, they had not as yet universally taken to charkha and khaddar. They might, however, from now rectify their mistake the take a solemn vow from today onward to discard the use of foreign goods and use swadeshi.<sup>2</sup>

*Foreward*, 4-8-1925

### 154. NEW RITUALS

In the meetings and functions that were held after the death of Deshbandhu, besides the commonly practised rites, people introduced such new rituals as they found appropriate. *Kirtans* were held at many places in Bengal, the poor were fed at some places while, at other places, people took baths, etc., and performed religious ceremonies. The villagers of Chadia, in Kathiawar, observed the day<sup>3</sup> in the following manner:

1. They prayed to God for peace to the departed soul and for the birth in India of others like Deshbandhu.

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held at the Albert Hall. J.M. Sen Gupta presided.

<sup>2</sup> At the conclusion, Gandhiji addressed an overflow meeting at College Square. No report is available.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably, July 1, 1925, the day on which the *shraddha* ceremony of C.R. Das was performed

2. They gave balls of sweetmeat to dogs and cows.
3. They refrained from using the bullock to plough or to draw water from the well.
4. They decided to store enough good quality cotton in the coming year for their own domestic use.

At some other places, the day was spent in fasting and spinning. Such innovations are to be welcomed. To make such days the occasion for promoting those beneficial activities which one can think of and which were dear to the departed persons, is a good way of showing our love for them.

Not using the bullock for ploughing or drawing water indicates kindness to animals. Except during the monsoon, we are almost always callously engaged in drawing water and so on. Actually, this does more harm than good. People have lost nothing but have rather gained something where it is customary to give a weekly day of rest to servants and animals; hence it is a good beginning to stop drawing water with the leather bucket and thereby giving rest to servants and animals on such occasions of mourning for great men.

#### MISPLACED KINDNESS

Giving sweetmeat balls to dogs and cows, however, is misplaced kindness. There is no reason to believe that just because we like these sweets, cows and dogs also like them and are benefited by eating them. Animals have not had their taste for food spoiled. If even among human beings the taste for food varies, what can we say of animals? An Englishman, if given a sweetmeat ball, would throw it away. Many of us would not like English sweets. If anyone served a meal of *rotis* in Madras, our countrymen there would be unable to eat it. It is useless to serve a meal of rice in the Punjab. What then is the meaning of serving such sweets to cows and dogs? The fact that dogs eat these up is no argument in support of feeding them with these sweets. It is kindness to give grass to undernourished cattle. In villages, however there should be no such cattle. There is no kindness in giving such food to dogs; I see only ignorance in it. We are exchanging wakefulness for sleep. We increase their progeny by tempting dogs in an improper way and, then, since no one owns them, they remain undernourished. All dogs should be kept as pets. The existence of stray dogs is a sign of our sin and our ignorance. Ahmedabad claims to practise the religion of compassion by driving out its dogs without any owners from one place to another. A little reflection on the

religion of compassion would make it clear to us that practising kindness only in name doubles the amount of cruelty and violence. Violence is involved, first, in catching these dogs and driving them away from familiar surroundings and second, in releasing them in other poor villages. For the nuisance of stray dogs, civilized human beings should seek out a solution on a consideration of both ethics and expediency. Such tasks can be accomplished only if the *mahajans*<sup>1</sup> make a profound study of the religion of compassion. And, if they do not do so, the time is at last drawing near when irreligious persons in authority will hurriedly destroy dogs. The immediate solution seems to be to start a home for stray dogs under the supervision of someone who is an expert in the matter.

Starting from a common topic, I have gone into details. However, on reading the resolution to give sweetmeat balls to dogs I saw before my mind's eye the invasions of stray dogs on the Sabarmati Ashram and that has led me to put forward some views for the benefit of the *mahajans*.

In our country, however, just as there are lean and famished animals, similarly there are such human beings too. We have been piling up sin by regarding it a virtue to let them live on thus.

Last week I had been to Suri. As I am regarded as a servant of the poor, the *mahajans* of that place fed the poor in my honour. Their meal was fixed for the same time as that of the arrival of my train. I was taken in a car which passed between rows of poor people sitting down for their meal on either side of the road. I felt ashamed and, had I not been afraid of being discourteous, I would have got down then and there and run away. What kind of an arrogant servant of the poor was this who rode in comfort in a car between rows of people eating? I said a few words about this in the meeting at Suri. I saw a similar sight in an ancient wealthy family in Calcutta. I had been taken there in order to collect funds for the memorial to Deshbandhu. The palace of this family is known as the 'Marble Palace' and it is indeed made exclusively of marble. The building is a majestic one and well worth seeing. In front of this palace, the poor are always fed. They are given cooked cereals. The owners had asked me to come at the very time when these people are fed with the innocent purpose of demonstrating their generosity to me and with the good intention of pleasing me. I had agreed to go without giving any thought to the matter. However, I was even more pained and

<sup>1</sup> Representative bodies managing the affairs of communities

irritated on seeing the sight there than I had been at Suri. I was not taken in a car between rows of diners but, wherever I went, a whole crowd always followed me. This crowd rushed towards me from in between the people who were having their meal. The poor diners necessarily came into contact with the feet of these people. For a moment they even stopped eating. If in their souls they had blessed me, I would congratulate them on their restraint and generosity. What a contrast between that dusty courtyard and the tall, snow-white palace! I felt as if the palace laughed at those poor people and as if their benefactors who carelessly walked through them joined in this laughter.

Could there be any merit in feeding people in this manner? To me, it appeared to be a mere sin committed through thoughtlessness and ignorance, even though the sentiment behind it may be of the purest nature. Such *sadavartas*<sup>1</sup> are to be found at various places in the country. These add to our poverty, idleness, hypocrisy, theft, etc. This is because, if food is available without effort, those who are habitually lazy remain idle and become poorer. According to the saying that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do, these poor people learn to steal. Over and above this, they practise other vices which are harmful to them. I see only evil resulting from these *sadavartas*. The wealthy should give some thought to the free meals they serve in charity. It is not necessary to show that merit does not lie in all charity. *Sadavarta* is indeed to be commended for the lame, the crippled and those who are disabled by disease. Even when feeding these persons, however, some courtesy should be shown. Even the disabled should not be fed with thousands of people watching them. There should be a proper place, private and quiet, for feeding them. In fact, there should be special ashramas for them. There are a few such places scattered over India. Wealthy persons who wish to feed the disabled should either send their donations to such good ashramas or establish them at places where they do not exist and are needed.

Some sort of occupation must be found for the disabled poor. The spinning-wheel is the only means of benefiting hundreds of thousands of persons.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 2-8-1925

<sup>1</sup> Institutions where free meals are supplied



### 155. WHAT ABOUT GUJARAT?

Perhaps some people are wondering how Gujarat should interpret the letter<sup>1</sup> I have written to Pandit Motilalji. What is meant by the Swarajists capturing the Congress? Should Gujarat too change its opinion? Or, what should the Gujarat Provincial Committee do?

In the first place, the fact is that I have merely stated my views. I have not made any pact with anyone or on behalf of anyone. I hope that all members will attend the A.I.C.C. Session.<sup>2</sup> They will independently express their views and the resolution passed by them will be regarded as the one to be accepted.

Taking it for granted, however, that all the members will accept my views, that would only mean that, on the strength of the Congress resolution, the ban that existed on introducing political matters into the Congress will henceforth be lifted. If my advice is accepted, the Swarajists who have had to keep their mouths shut because of the Congress resolution will no longer have to do so. What is it that can be done by me alone and that I should do myself, because of the death of Deshbandhu and in reply to Lord Birkenhead's speech? It was my own idea that political matters should be kept out of the Congress for the time being. The pact too was between myself and the Swarajists. I alone can free them from this bond immediately. The Congress Committee is free to act as it chooses. If a sizable number of the members of that committee are opposed to my advice, I shall have to keep it to myself.

Accepting my advice would only mean that, in those provinces where there are many Swarajists, they could introduce and discuss any resolution relating to political matters through the provincial committees. Wherever, as in Gujarat, the committee has a large number of No-changers as members, the proposed change would have no great effect. Even in such places, I would like to give as much weight as possible to the Swarajists. Sitting in Bengal I could not say how this could be done. We see how that party has impressed the British authorities and, it is our dharma to make good use of this impression. There are many selfless men and women in that party. Their hearts are full of patriotism. Such persons deserve to be honoured, irrespective of the party to which they belong. Everyone

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Motilal Nehru", 19-7-1925.

<sup>2</sup> This session was held at Patna during September 22-24, 1925.

has the right to hold his own independent opinions. That independence is worth maintaining.

The doors of the Congress cannot be forcibly closed against anyone. So long as we cannot create faith in khadi and the power of the spinning-wheel amongst the educated class, the latter can never attain a place of importance. It is, I think, a barren gesture to give the spinning-wheel an important place for fear of embarrassing me or in order to keep me in the Congress. It would have significance only if the educated class has faith in it or if this class wishes to give prominence to those who believe in it. Even at a meeting of the members of the Swaraj Party, no one ever thought of displacing the spinning-wheel. Even if they had wished to do so, I was ready to agree to it, but they were not prepared to listen to any talk even about doing so. They were wholly satisfied if those who did not spin were allowed to contribute money instead. They are not even prepared to do away with the necessity of putting on khadi clothes. If this is the extent to which the Swarajists think independently, I would regard it as promoting effectively the cause of kahdi.

The very terms Swarajists and No-changers should be given up. The number of persons going into Legislative Assemblies will always be small. Everyone cannot go there. I do not see any reason for opposing this. If the very people who enter them can create the atmosphere for civil disobedience, they will come out of their own accord or give all possible help while continuing to remain in the Legislative Assemblies. Or, they will have to be opposed if and when they offer resistance to civil disobedience. That the Swarajists would do so I cannot imagine.

Those who understand the meaning of civil disobedience will sing the praises of the spinning-wheel all the twenty-four hours; hence my suggestion is that the latter should be given the same standing that the Swarajists occupy today or, in other words, an association for the spinning-wheel should be founded under the auspices of the Congress, whose only task would be to spread the use of the spinning-wheel and khadi. That association should also collect the yarn stipulated as a condition for the right to vote and should keep that yarn with itself. It should frame its own independent constitution. If work is carried on in this way, the two movements would continue to function without coming into clash with each other, but assisting each other.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 2-8-1925

## 156. MY NOTES

### DADABHAI CENTENARY

The centenary of Dadabhai Naoroji's birth falls on the ensuing 4th September. Shri Bharucha has given us a timely reminder of this. We knew Dadabhai as the Grand Old Man of India. He dedicated his life to the country. He made the service of the country our dharma. He was the friend of the poor of our land. It was he who first presented the picture of the poverty of India. To this day, no one has been able to contradict the statistics he furnished. He made no distinction between Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians and others. He regarded them all as the children of Mother India and hence all received equal service from him. His two grand-daughters have, we find, inherited in full measure this trait.

How shall we celebrate the centenary of this great servant of India? We shall, of course, hold meetings and that too not only in cities, but also in all villages to which the voice of the Congress can be carried. And what shall we do there? Praise Dadabhai? If this is all that we wish to do, why should we not sit comfortably, send for bards and minstrels and call upon them to employ their imagination and their torrential flow of words? If, however, we wish to emulate his virtues, we should think of them and take stock of our capacity to acquire them.

Dadabhai saw the poverty of India. He taught us that swaraj is the remedy for it. However, he left to us the task of seeking out the key to swaraj. The principal reason for exalting Dadabhai was his devotion to the country and he spent himself in it.

We know that the spinning-wheel is the chief means of winning swaraj. India's poverty is due to its peasants remaining idle for four to six months in a year. And, if this enforced idleness becomes a voluntary one, or in other words, we become habitually lazy, not only will this country not gain its freedom, but it will perish altogether. The spinning-wheel is the only way of getting rid of this idleness. Hence, all activities which encourage its use amount to an imitation of Dadabhai's virtues.

The spinning-wheel means khadi, it means the boycott of foreign cloth, it means sixty crores of rupees finding their way into the huts of the poor.

The spinning-wheel is the sole answer to the appeal for All-India

Deshbandhu Memorial. Hence, collecting funds for this purpose on that day, is an excellent way of celebrating Dadabhai's centenary. People should, therefore, get together on that day and totally eschew foreign cloth, wear khadi made of hand-spun yarn alone, reaffirm their determination to spin every day for at least half an hour and collect funds for the spread of khadi. Those who grow cotton should keep with them at least the quantity that they require for their own use.

However, what of those who do not like to utter the word spinning-wheel? What solution can I offer for this? What suggestion can I offer to those who do not like the word swaraj for celebrating the centenary? Such persons should discover a path for themselves. My suggestion is for the people at large. It cannot be anything but this. It is a different matter altogether if someone searches for other virtues in Dadabhai and tries to imitate them. He has a right to celebrate this centenary in a different way. Or, if members of the Swaraj Party wish to do something special in cities, they should certainly do so. I can only refer to that which can be practised alike by villagers and city-dwellers, old men as well as children, women as well as men, Hindus as well as Muslims.

We should start making preparations today if we wish to celebrate the Dadabhai centenary in accordance with my suggestion. We should start using the spinning-wheel today in view of that programme. We should start today producing khadi for that occasion and hold meetings at various places in which khadi alone may be seen and which would bring credit to us and the country.

#### ALL-INDIA DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL

Signatures are still being taken on the circular appealing for funds for this memorial. Naturally, I am happy to have received the signature of the great Poet<sup>1</sup>. Let the reader too feel happy at this. I had specially sent him a message asking him to sign only if he had such faith in the spinning-wheel as was described in the circular. When it became clear to me that an all-India memorial could only be associated with the spinning-wheel and khadi, I expressed this idea to the Poet before doing so to anyone else. That was about three weeks before I wrote this article. He had readily agreed, even then, to sign such an appeal. Those who do not have faith in the spinning-wheel

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore

and khadi, or who believe that these should have no place in the memorial, are not at all urged to sign this appeal. Not only was there an insistence to get signatures from those who have faith, but the decision had also been taken that the memorial should not be associated with the spinning-wheel and khadi if those who were particular followers of Deshbandhu did not approve of the idea. Such a memorial was not to be insisted upon if all those whom we would ordinarily expect to sign this appeal did not unhesitatingly do so. I know that there is a difference of opinion as regards the usefulness of the spinning-wheel and khadi. To give it the place of prime importance in the memorial of a great leader like Deshbandhu would not perhaps be readily acceptable to many people. I, however, had to carry out my duty as the friend and colleague of Deshbandhu and, if I had to think separately in terms of an all-Bengal Memorial, I would certainly not have approved of a hospital. I have never recognized the need for a large number of hospitals. However, I have not even let the thought enter my mind as to what I would do if I had the freedom to decide. I had before me the trust-deed made out by Deshbandhu. It clearly showed me the path I had to take and I regarded it as my duty to make it the heart of the memorial if it met with the approval of his followers and I have now stayed on in Bengal for the sole purpose of collecting Rs. 10 lakhs for it. The trust-deed was made out a year ago. Nevertheless, I know that Deshbandhu continued to hold until his death the views expressed in it. This is because he had asked me to help collect money to pay off the mortgage on the building. It could be said that except me, perhaps, no one but his wife knows his views on the spinning-wheel and khadi towards the end of his life. I had acquainted myself with the views of Shrimati Basanti Devi before issuing this circular. Similarly I had acquainted myself with the views of Deshbandhu's close friend and partner, Pandit Motilalji, and, later, those of his particular followers in Bengal. Only after having done so did I decide to draft the circular. I must admit this much that the work of this memorial is very close to my heart. Even though this is true, the reader must believe me when I say that I am unconcerned about its success. But this could not be said about the all-Bengal memorial. I am making ceaseless efforts to make a success of it. There are reasons for such a discrimination. My faith in the power of the spinning-wheel is inexhaustible despite the difference of opinion in this matter. Such a memorial cannot be established with limited resources. I would like to have an

inexhaustible sum of money only if there is any power in the spinning-wheel and if India has genuine faith in it. Hence, Pandit Malaviyaji's signature has given me the same measure of satisfaction as the signature of the great Poet. I have suggested to Shri Jawaharlal Nehru to make an appeal for other signatures.

It has to be seen now what contribution Gujarat will make to this memorial. My expectations are that its contribution will be worthy of Gujarat and will add to the glory of the memorial.

I hope that the readers of *Navajivan* and lovers of khadi will contribute their mite without waiting for anyone to approach them in this matter. This will be acknowledged in *Navajivan*. This appeal is not only to readers of *Navajivan* in Gujarat or in India, but also to those who live abroad.

#### THE CASTE SITUATION

In Calcutta, I was taken to a gathering of our Marwari brothers. Matters relating to reforms in the caste alone were taken up and discussed. What kind of speech could I make at such a place? Instead of talking of reforms, I mainly put before them the principle of boycott. I was aware that the ostracism had taken on a terrible form amongst these people with the result that there was bitterness amongst them. I give here the substance of my speech,<sup>1</sup> as it is applicable to all Hindus.

The weapon of boycott is well used only by those individuals who are pure. Otherwise, it would take the form of pure violence and perhaps lead to the destruction of the one who uses it and even of the one against whom it is used.

Today, we are not worthy of practising boycott. Could there be any merit in treating as an outcaste a father who arranges for the remarriage of his daughter widowed at the age of ten and extending the same treatment to the daughter as well as the person who marries her? Do we boycott persons who are immoral, and openly licentious and who partake of meat and wine? What of those who are guilty of licentious thoughts? In other words, so long as we are not purified, who is fit to boycott whom? None of us is fit to do so.

Boycott results in the creation of new castes. What we call factions today will become castes tomorrow. Hence, in this age when

<sup>1</sup>Vide "Speech at Marwari Agrawal Conference, Calcutta", before 24-7-1925.

castes are getting merged together, boycott is totally harmful.

*Varnashrama*<sup>1</sup> is a dharma; the existence of many castes is not. Protecting the former is desirable; destruction of the latter is equally desirable. Hence reformers deserve encouragement. Reform in this matter cannot be checked however much we try. This is because Hinduism is full of undesirable elements and there is an all-round awakening today.

The wise thing to do is to give reform the status of dharma. However, boycott is harmful even when the reform appears to be unacceptable.

The Marwari community is intelligent and brave. It has done good as well as harm to India. As a friend, it is my dharma to mention the latter also. May God spare it from this latter and bless it.

I would end this discussion of boycott by asking those against whom it is practised to exercise restraint and, through courtesy, put a stop to the spread of bitterness and also to persist for their part in what they think is right.

#### DISCRIMINATION IN CHARITY

While praising the generosity of our Marwari brothers, I have suggested the need for discrimination in practising this virtue. Carnegie became a multi-millionaire. He was fond of establishing libraries indiscriminately; hence Scottish professors warned him to be careful and suggested that it would be proper on his part to announce donations after consulting experts. Such advice is needed by all philanthropists and should be noted by them. There is no reason to believe that charity *per se* is meritorious. Our Marwari brothers are true protectors of the cow. Much of their wealth they use in that work. However, this is not always done with discrimination. If anyone can protect the cow, the Marwaris can, for they have courage. It is mainly a question of funds and business acumen. They possess both these requirements. If these are used with discretion, they can truly bring about cow-protection on a large scale.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 2-8-1925

<sup>1</sup> The division of society into four castes and of the individual's life into four *ashramas* or stages

### 157. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE IN THE CONGRESS

We have, very often, said in the *Navajivan* that civil disobedience may be practised not only towards those whom we regard as our enemies or those who regard us as enemies, but also towards those whom we regard as our friends or our elders. It is now time to apply this to the Congress. The constitutional changes which it is necessary to bring about are stated elsewhere in this issue. Ordinarily, however, the Congress Committee is not authorized to make these changes. They can be made only by amending the constitution. The Congress alone is authorized to amend it. This power is not vested in the Congress Committee. The latter would have to make use of its extraordinary powers in order to do so. The use of such powers may also be called "civil disobedience" of the law. Not only has every person and every organization the right to practise this if occasion arises, but it may become even their duty to do so. If we recognize the necessity of the reforms suggested by me, this is now our duty. This matter should certainly be discussed at the Congress session. The rule which permits the purchase of yarn to be contributed must be annulled because, not only has spinning gained nothing by it but, on the contrary it has led to an increase in hypocrisy and falsehood. If the Congress Committee does not make this necessary change, it may be regarded as having failed in its duty, because the public will be wasting a few months. Perhaps, there would have been room for difference of opinion on this subject if Deshbandhu had not died and if Lord Birkenhead had not made his speech; but there is no such room left now. It may be that some members of the Congress Committee do not accept the immediate necessity of making the change; in that case, they have no right to practise civil disobedience and, hence, I have stated that the Congress Committee can make such changes only by near, if not complete, unanimity.

The necessity of making such changes is not a sufficient ground for offering civil disobedience. Those against whom it is offered must also be benefited by it. This condition is wholly fulfilled in this case as the above changes are necessary only for the benefit of the Congress. The second condition is that those who practise such disobedience must bear no ill will. This is implied in its very name, as 'civility' is opposed to ill will. Moreover, how can there be any ill will when we only wish the Congress well? My purpose in writing this article is not to make anyone declare against his wishes that the



constitution should indeed be changed. In this matter, too, all concerned should make use of their independent judgment. Those, too, who feel that changing the constitution in this manner by the Congress Committee would result in greater harm than good, they too should in duty oppose these changes being made by the Congress Committee, although they may accept the necessity for making them. Civil disobedience cannot—it should not—be practised because someone else asks us to do so. It should be practised only when it seems appropriate to us; then alone is it worth the name, then alone it is worth practising. This is because human beings do not have strength to do a thing about which they are themselves not convinced, and civil disobedience relies for its success solely on the strength of the individual.

The chief purpose of writing this article is to describe the circumstances in which civil disobedience may be practised. I regard myself as an expert on the subject, I regard it as my own independent discovery and, I look upon it as my dharma to show from time to time its applicability and its limitations. Not only am I totally unconcerned whether the changes are made or not but I regard them as harmful if everyone does not exercise his independent judgment. This criticism applies particularly to those who regard themselves as my followers. I do not approve of blind worship. I am very much opposed to it. Swaraj cannot be secured by it and, if secured, cannot be maintained. Hence I would like to get work out of my ‘followers’ so as to utilize also their intelligence. If we make the above changes intelligently and honestly practise them, I expect very good results to follow.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 2-8-1925

### 158. INTERVIEW WITH DR. H. W. B. MORENO

CALCUTTA,  
*August 4, 1925*

Mr. Gandhi had recently said<sup>1</sup> at a public meeting of the Anglo-Indians that “the Anglo-Indians should not ape the Europeans”, on the contrary, they should even keep to the Indian style of dress and should look at all things political from the

<sup>1</sup>Vide “Speech at Meeting of Anglo-Indians”, 29-7-1925.

Indian standpoint. Dr. Moreno questioned the value of such a statement. He said from their earliest childhood Anglo-Indians used the English style of dress and spoke the English language. Such were their traditions and they respected these traditions.

Mr. Gandhi in reply said that he had been misunderstood. What he wanted was that “the Anglo-Indians should not ape the Europeans”. The Anglo-Indians had their distinctive mode of dress and so had the Mussalmans. He did not, however, refer to any particular mode of dress. He was conscious of the fact that Anglo-Indians lived according to certain European standards, but he deprecated Anglo-Indians keeping up a false appearance as Europeans, beyond their means, which led in most instances to bankruptcy. He referred especially to the bulk of the community who were far from being well off. He did not refer to those in the higher grades who had little or nothing in common with the community. He wanted Anglo-Indians to regard everything from the Indian viewpoint. Even if he were wrong in his suggestions, he left it to the community to decide for themselves, as they had the most intimate knowledge of their own condition.

*Forward, 7-8-1925*

### *159. SPEECH AT MEETING OF CHRISTIANS<sup>1</sup>*

CALCUTTA,  
*August 4, 1925*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

You, Sir, have just said that probably this is for the first time I am privileged to address a meeting of Indian Christians only. If you refer to my present visit, you are perfectly correct. But if you refer or have referred to the whole of the time that I have been in India since my return from South Africa, then I have to inform you that I had such a privilege in 1915.<sup>2</sup> But my connection with Indian Christians dates back to 1893. That was the time when I went to South Africa and found myself in the midst of a large Christian Indian community. I was agreeably surprised to find so many young men and young women who, whilst they were devoted Christians, were equally devoted to the motherland, and it gave me greater pleasure when I discovered that most of the young men and young women had never seen India. The majority of them were born in Natal; some of them in Mauritius, because it was from Mauritius that the first batch of free Indian settlers

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held at the L.M. Institution. S.C. Mukerjee, M.L.C., presided.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Speech at reception by Indian Christians, Madras”, 26-4-1915.

found their way to South Africa. They were most of them children of indentured parents. Indentured Indians were those who had gone to work on the sugar estates of Natal under an indissoluble contract to work on those estates for at least five years and as they had gone under this contract, otherwise called indenture, they were called Indentured Indians. Their state was described during his lifetime by the late Sir William Hunter as a state very near to slavery. I have mentioned this in order to show to you under what difficulties and disabilities these countrymen and countrywomen of ours laboured in South Africa and how they were able to overcome those difficulties, and, in the face of them, cut out for themselves honourable careers. Today, some of these men have even received a liberal education in England. Some of them are store-keepers, some of them occupying humbler walks of life. These brave lads offered their services to the Government at the time of the Boer War and the Zulu Rebellion. Some of them were brought up in my own home; two of them at least became barristers. So you understand what intimate relations I enjoyed with the Christian Indian community. I do not think there is in that land a single Indian Christian whom I do not know or who does not know me. It gives me, therefore, much pleasure to be able to come before you this evening to speak to you on "Brotherhood of Man".

It goes hard with people who have to suffer the disabilities that our countrymen whom I have just now described to you, have to labour under, to understand that there can be any such thing as "Brotherhood of Man". If you are readers of newspapers and if you take any interest in what goes on outside the four corners of India, you may know that, today, in that South Africa an attempt is being made by the Government of the country to drive away the Indians, or, as it has been well put by one of the newspapers here, English-owned, to starve them out of South Africa; and in this scheme of starvation are included some of these very men I have described to you. Whether ultimately this thing will come to pass, whether ultimately the Government of India will sanction or tolerate this thing, remains to be seen. But the connection in which I mention this thing to you is, as I have already told you, that it is difficult for such men to realize the meaning of brotherhood; and yet I have undertaken to speak to you on brotherhood at this time because it is in such times of stress and difficulty that one's spirit of brotherhood is really tested.

I receive compliments very often. They pass through my mind like water poured on to a duck's back. But you, Sir, have paid a compliment to me this evening which I feel inclined to accept. You think that if there is any person who has a right to speak on Brotherhood of Man, at least I should have that right, and I think so too. I have tried myself on many an occasion to find out whether it is possible for me to hate—I don't say love—my persecutor, and I must honestly but in all humility confess to you that I have not succeeded, I cannot recall a single occasion when I have felt constrained to hate a single human being. How I came to it I do not know. But I am simply giving to you a life-long practice and, therefore, it is really literally true that, if there is any person who has the right to speak on Brotherhood of Man, I at least have that right.

Brotherhood does not mean loving or sympathizing with those, extending the hand of fellowship to those who will in return love you. That is a bargain. Brotherhood is not a mercantile affair. And my philosophy, my religion teaches me that brotherhood is not confined merely to the human species; that is, if we really have imbibed the spirit of brotherhood, it extends to the lower animals. In one of the magazines issued in England by those great philanthropic societies 30 or 35 years ago, I remember having read some beautiful verses. I think the title of those verses was *My Brother Ox*. In them the writer beautifully described how on a man who loved his fellow men it was obligatory to love his fellow-animals also, taking the word animals to mean the sub-human species. The thought struck me most forcibly. At that time, I had learnt very little of Hinduism. All I knew about it was what I had imbibed from my surroundings, from my parents and others. But I realized the force of that writing. However I do not intend today to dwell upon this broadest brotherhood. I shall confine myself to "Brotherhood of Man". I have brought this thing in order to illustrate that our brotherhood is a mockery if we are not prepared to love even our enemies. In other words, one who has imbibed the spirit of brotherhood cannot possibly allow it to be said of him that he has any enemy at all. People may consider themselves to be our enemies, but we should reject any such claim. I have heard that claim made; that is the reason why I use the word 'claim'. The question then arises: how is it possible to love those who consider themselves to be our enemies? Almost every week, I receive letters either from Hindus or from Mussalmans, sometimes from Christians, combating this fundamental position that I have taken

up. If it is a Hindu who writes, then he asks me, "How is it possible for me to love a Mussalman who kills the cow", which is dear to me as my life? Or if it is a Christian who writes to me, he asks, "How is it possible to love Hindus who so ill-treat those whom they call untouchables, Hindus who have suppressed a fifth of their own numbers?" And if it is a Mussalman who writes, he asks, "How is it possible to extend the hand of brotherhood or fellowship to Hindus who are worshippers of stock and stone?" I say to all these three: "Your brotherhood is of no value to me if you cannot love the respective parties that you have described." But what does the attitude signify after all? Does it not signify cowardly fear or intolerance? If all of us are God's creation, why should we fear one another or hate those who do not hold the same belief that we do? A Hindu will ask me, is he to sit or look on, while a Mussalman is doing something which is most repugnant to him? My brotherhood replies, "Yes". And I add "You must sacrifice yourself, or in the language you have just listened to, you must bear the cross. If you want to defend one who is dear to you, you must die without killing." I have personal experience of such occurrences. If you have the courage to suffer lovingly, you melt the stoniest heart. You may raise your hand against one whom you regard as a ruffian, but how if he overpowers you? Will not the ruffian be more ferocious because of his victory over you? Does not history show that evil feeds on resistance? History also furnishes instances of men having tamed the fiercest men with their all-embracing love. But I admit that such non-resistance requires far greater courage than that of a soldier who returns two blows against one. I also admit that if a man has anger instead of love in him for the evil-doer, it is better for him to fight clean rather than, in a cowardly manner, to sit still for fear of dying. Cowardice and brotherhood are contradictory terms. I know that the world does not accept the fundamental position that I have endeavoured to place before you. I know that in Christian Europe, this doctrine of non-retaliation is pooh-poohed. At the present moment, I am privileged to receive precious letters from friends all over Europe and America, some of them asking me to still further expound the doctrine of non-resistance. Some others are laughing at me and telling me: "It is all right for you to talk these things in India, but you dare not do so in Europe." Yet others tell me: "Our Christianity is a whitewash, we do not understand the message of Jesus, it has got to be still delivered to us, so that we can understand it." All these three

positions are more or less right from the standpoint of the writers. But I venture to tell you that there is no peace for this world, and to take the name of brotherhood is a blasphemy, until we arrive at this fundamental position. Men there are who ask and so also women who ask: "Is it human to refrain from retaliation?" I say it is human. Up to now we have not realized our humanity, we have not realized our dignity; we are supposed to be, if Darwin is to be believed, the descendants of monkeys, and I am afraid that we have not yet shed our original state.

The late Dr. Anna Kingsford in one of her books wrote once: "As I walk about the streets of Paris, I seem to see before me diverse lions and snakes personified." She says these animals have only the human form but no more. Man, to realize his full stature, has to become absolutely fearless. This he will do not by being armed from head to foot, but by generating force from within. A Kshatriya is one who does not fly from danger, he is not one who strikes a blow for a blow. The *Mahabharata* says also that forgiveness is the quality of a brave man. There is a statue erected, I am told, in the memory of the late General Gordon. The sculptor does not put a sword in his hands, he puts only a stick. It is considered to be a beautiful work of art. If I was born a sculptor and I had the order, I would not have put even a stick in the hands of General Gordon, but I would have pictured him as one with folded arms, with his chest put forward in all humility telling the world: "Come, all of you, who want to throw your darts, here is General Gordon to receive them without flinching, without retaliation." That is my ideal of a soldier. Such soldiers have lived on the earth. Christianity undoubtedly has given birth to such soldiers, and so has Hinduism, so has Islam. In my opinion, it is not true to say that Islam is a religion of the sword. History does not bear that out. But I am just now speaking to you of individual instances, and what is true of the individual can be true of nations or of groups of individuals; not all at once, I admit, but in the process of evolution, when men after men live this truth in their lives before our very eyes, they cannot but affect us. Such is the history of Quakers. Such is the history of Dukhobors whom Tolstoy has described. I do not know how far the latter, after having gone to Canada, are carrying out their original resolution, but the fact stands that they have lived this life of non-resistance as a community. I therefore feel that we are trifling with that sacred name,

Brotherhood of Man, unless and until we are ruled by this fundamental fact in life.

What I am just now combating is the position that is taken up by some of the finest writers in Europe and by some of the finest writers even in India: that man, as a class, will never be able to arrive at a stage when he can do without retaliation. I have a fundamental quarrel with that position. On the contrary, I say that man, as man, will not realize his full destiny, and his full dignity, until he has been so far educated as to be able to refrain from retaliation. Whether we like it or whether we do not like it, we are being driven to it. It would be to our credit if, instead of being driven to the position, we will take ourselves to it, and I have come here this evening to ask you to exercise this privilege, the privilege of voluntarily taking up this idea in practice. Indeed, I ought not to have to be speaking to a Christian audience on this, because some of my friends tell me that I am really a Christian, when I talk about non-retaliation. Little do they know that I have got to strive with the Christians, as I have to with Hindus and my Muslim friends. I do not know many Christians who have adopted this thing as a rule of their life. Some of the very best Christians that I know do not admit that this is the teaching of Christ. I do believe that it is the teaching of Christ. They say it was meant merely for his twelve disciples, not meant for the world, and they quote some passages from the New Testament in support of their contention. The opponents of non-violence as a rule of life say that it can only breed a race of cowards, and if India takes up this message of non-retaliation, she is a doomed country. On the contrary, the fundamental position that I place before you is, that unless India takes up this position, she is a doomed nation and with her all the nations of the world. India is a continent, and when India takes up the doctrine of force, as Europe today seems to have taken it up, then India becomes one of the exploiters of the weaker races of the world. Just imagine what it must mean to the world.

I call myself a nationalist and I pride myself in it. My nationalism is as broad as the universe. It includes in its sweep even the lower animals. It includes in its sweep all the nations of the earth, and if I possibly could convince the whole of India of the truth of this message, then, India would be something to the whole world for which the world is longing. My nationalism includes the well-being of the whole world. I do not want my India to rise on the ashes of other

nations. I do not want India to exploit a single human being. I want India to become strong in order that she can infect the other nations also with her strength. Not so with the other nations of the world, not so with a single nation in Europe today. They do not give strength to the others. We are not receiving any strength. It is in the nature of things impossible for them to do so, and that is why I have taken the uncompromising position that I cannot possibly be a party to a constitution whose basis is brute force.

President Wilson mentioned his beautiful 14 points, and do you know what he wound up with? He said: "After all, if this endeavour of ours to arrive at peace fails, we have got our armaments to fall back upon." I want to reverse that position, and I say: "Our armaments have failed already. Let us now be in search of something new, and let us try the force of love and God which is Truth." When we have got that, we shall want nothing else. There is the story of the devotee, Prahlad. It may be a fable, but no fable for me. He was a lad of hardly 12 years. His father asked him not to take the name of God. Prahlad said: "I can't do without it, it is my life." Then his father asked him: "Show me your God." A red hot iron pillar was shown to Prahlad and he was asked to embrace it. Yes, there was God in that pillar. Prahlad embraced it in love and faith. He was unhurt. If we would realize brotherhood, we must have the love and the faith and the truth of Prahlad in us.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-8-1925*

## 160. NOTES

### KERALA NOT DEAD

The new Secretary, Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, says that there are now 122 A class and 52 B class Congress members in Kerala and says, Kerala is not dead to the Congress call. I am glad to be able to publish this information. I trust that the work thus begun will continue unabated.

### SAD END OF A PROMISING LIFE

Some time ago a serious-looking young Englishman named Harries announced himself with a note of introduction from Shuaib Qureshi. Without ceremony he at once told me that he had come to India for a short stay in pursuit of a philosophical research in



company with an Indian fellow-student. He engaged me in a swift conversation, and allowed me to see that he did not require much argument from me to make my meaning clear. Though he took me through his examination with lightning speed, I saw that I could not satisfy his appetite in the few minutes that I could then give him. I promised him another appointment if he wanted it. He gratefully accepted the offer. Next time he came with his friend and fellow-worker Basanta Kumar Mullick. I was much taken up with Harries's earnestness, intelligence and honesty of mind. During the time at my disposal he could not finish his enquiry. I gave him promise of another appointment to which I was looking forward when I got the sad news that young Harries was no more. Here is a summary of a pathetic account of his death and life sent to me by his fellow-worker Basanta Kumar Mullick:

Thomas Wilfred Harries, a young Englishman from Balliol (Oxford) came over, in the third week of June, to stay with me; but as luck would have it, he fell a victim to an attack of malaria before even July was half way through. He was only 24 when he died, and the attack lasted not even for full four days. The blow is still ringing in my head, as it ever will; and everybody who ever met him since he was out in India is mourning his death.

*There is no need, nor is it possible, to say what he was to me. Neither can I try and say at the moment what the loss means for his country or mine. Sooner or later it will be recognized and recorded. Let me only state as simply as I can some features of his career which stand out prominently. T. W. Harries was a Balliol man, and it will not be exaggerating the truth to say that he was one of the most brilliant students Balliol produced in recent years. Except only in the 1st public examination of Oxford known as Hon. Mods, he never missed his first. In 1923, he was one of the few who sat for the 1st examination in Modern Greats, and he took a brilliant first in it. Since then he had been lecturing on Economics, History and Philosophy to the W. E. A., in the Potteries in the place of Towney where he was already one of the most popular and respected of teachers.*

The object of his visit to India was as simple as his life was unostentatious and clean. He came out for a holiday and, what is more to the point, to finish the work which we had begun in Oxford some four or five years ago. There is a long history connected with this work, and this is not the place to relate it, but to show how Harries came to be associated with it, I have to mention that, after I had met him in a debate of the Lotus Club in the Oxford University of which he was the President, he, along with a few others who are

all dear to me, joined me in a philosophical investigation which I had been carrying on for some years before. The aim of this investigation was to expound a new system of thought which rose straight out of the scepticism of the age. We had lost our faith in tradition long ago. Contemporary life to us, except when it managed to avoid vital issues, was as defunct as the existing institutions were long past the stage where they could yield any new order of peace or a fresh ideal of life. What seemed to be evident was that not before a more compact and a less warlike though more efficient order of human society had arisen, could there be any real peace or rest.

I tender my condolences to the friends and family of Harries. Noble ideas once conceived never perish, and Harries will live through his ideas. The unknown and humble plodders like Harries ever continue the work bequeathed by their departed co-workers. All honour to them!

#### PARIAHS OF THE EMPIRE

Lest we forget our status and proper place in the imperial economy, we receive a constant reminder now from England and now from South Africa, or some such place, of what we are. The Secretary of State for India puts us in mind of 'the sharp edge of the British sword'. The Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's forces in India gives it as his deliberate opinion that what we are aiming at is 'unattainable'. Mr. Malan, the Union Minister in South Africa tells us that there shall be no equality between Europeans and Indians, and that, therefore, if he will not kill out the Indian settler, he will squeeze him out of South Africa and will reduce him to such a state that he cannot even think of equality. The ghetto is his proper place, and menial labour his proper sphere of action. We must be and remain a suppressed class of the world. To mention this evil is not to get rid of it. 'No pariahs need apply' is the permanent sign-board which is hung up in every Imperial Secretariat. What to do is the question. Pherozech Shah Mehta disapproved even of my going to South Africa. He said that nothing was to be done in South Africa until we had vindicated our position in India. Lokamanya said much the same thing. 'Seek ye first swaraj and everything will be added unto you' was his refrain. But swaraj is a result of the sum-total of India's energy. The order of the day is work from without and work from within. It is a long-drawn-out agony, but there is no new birth without the necessary pains of labour. We must pass through this inevitable life-giving, life-sustaining discipline, fiery though it is. Our

countrymen in South Africa must do the very best they can without flinching. If they have the old spirit of resistance and cohesion in them, and if they think that the moment has arrived, they must take up the cross of suffering. They must be sole judges of their fitness and of the psychological moment for taking the plunge. They must know that public opinion of India is with them. But they will also realize that it is an opinion which is powerless to help them. They must therefore rely upon their own strength and capacity for enduring hardships and in the innate justice of their cause.

#### A POLITICAL SUFFERER

Here is a description of a political sufferer. He says:

Will you help the poor and starving family of a political sufferer? You can easily gather lacs and lacs of rupees for our late revered leader Deshbandhu C. R. Das's memorial and you cannot help my poor family by giving me at least Rs. 5,000 for the maintenance of my family and for introducing in . . . village the charkhas. I am sure to get Rs. 2,000, if not Rs. 5,000, if you only speak but a single word to the revered<sup>1</sup> . . . You have written to me to take up weaving and earn Rs. 15 per month. I do not know weaving. Your formula is, no work, no food. Can you give me such work as will enable me to earn at least Rs.100 per month? Can you not try for me a handsome job in the Corporation of Calcutta by asking the Deputy Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer?

This represents the mentality of the average youth. Thousands of young men have to be satisfied with Rs. 30 per month. But here this political sufferer wants at least Rs. 100 per month, or Rs. 2,000 at least in a lump sum. There is no connection between the two proposals. But they are made in all good faith in the expectation of acceptance. It is impossible to satisfy ambition such as this. The Corporation of Calcutta cannot be used as a medium for finding work for the unemployed. As a matter of fact, all the public departments and private offices are almost over-supplied. The remedy, therefore, lies, first, in modifying one's ambition to suit the poor environment of the country and, secondly, in finding new scope for employment. Artificial wants must be curtailed; evil social customs must be got rid of. The custom of one man supporting the rest of the members of a family, although they may be able to do their share of work, must go by the board. It is then possible to be satisfied with Rs. 30 per month.

<sup>1</sup> According to the source, there followed a string of names here.

Many young men in Bengal have voluntarily rearranged their ideas, and are now living on Rs. 30 per month, whereas at one time they were earning even as much as four to five hundred per month. The only new source of employment which can give work to hundreds of young men and women is a well-organized khaddar service. I am hoping that the All-India Spinners' Association that I have in view will soon come into being. I am hoping also that the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial will receive an adequate response from the public. Let all honest men and women who are in search of employment qualify themselves by becoming expert carders and spinners, if not also weavers. They will not be called upon to earn their living by spinning and weaving, but they will be called upon to organize production and sale. But this organization will require on the part of the organizers an accurate knowledge of the art of carding and spinning, and all the processes which cotton has to undergo before it becomes weavable yarn.

#### INTIMIDATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

A correspondent from the South writes:<sup>1</sup>

If the report is true, and it appears to me to be quite authentic, and if it is also true that rowdyism of the type referred to by the correspondent is at all general, is a most regrettable thing. It consolidates the very power against which both the rowdies and we are endeavouring to fight. I have the names and full addresses of the parties and I have no doubt that those who know will have no difficulty in dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's. But my purpose is not to expose the evil-doers. I want to expose the wrong that they are doing, in the hope that it might not be repeated. Those who are in charge of affairs should courageously deal with the evil and nip it in the bud.

#### WREATH OR GARLAND?

I have observed in many parts of India but in Bengal especially the custom of garlanding guests with wreaths instead of a beautiful *bona-fide* swadeshi *mala*. I suppose it is considered more dignified to offer wreaths because they are much more expensive than the *malas*—

<sup>1</sup> The letter, not reproduced here, cited the instance of a co-worker having been manhandled for having complained to the Press, and observed that "intimidation is threatening to become the rule in settling political differences and disputed personal loyalties."

garlands. Wreaths are an importation from the West. So far as I am aware they are used for decorating coffins. The flowers are held together with a wire which often hurts. I am one of such individuals who have been hurt by the wires of wreaths which have been forced upon me by overzealous admirers. It is difficult to carry a wreath in one's hand for fear of getting hurt. A wreath being stiff instead of adorning the body, in my opinion, disfigures it. Whereas a *mala* strung together beautifully on a piece of string hangs loosely round the neck and causes no discomfort. Will Reception Committees please note ?

*Young India*, 6-8-1925

### 161 . DO I HATE ENGLISHMEN?

Some esteemed English friends have taken exception to the italicized sentence in the following extract from my article "The Science of Surrender" in *Young India*, dated the 9th July, 1925.<sup>1</sup>

I make bold to say that without mutual surrender there is no hope for this distraught country. Let us not be hyper-sensitive or devoid of imagination. To surrender is not to confer favour. Justice that love gives is a surrender, Justice that law gives is a punishment. What a lover gives transcends justice. And yet it is always less than he wishes to give, because he is anxious to give more and frets that he has nothing left. *It is libellous to say that Hindus act like Englishmen; Hindus cannot even if they would*, and this I say in spite of the brutality of the labourers of Kidderpore. Both Hindus and Mussalmans sail in the same boat. Both are fallen. And they are in the position of lovers, have to be, whether they will or no.

The friends think that, in writing that sentence, I have done a grave injustice to Englishmen, for they say that the implied censure applies to *all* Englishmen. I feel sorry that there could be any such interpretation possible regarding the passage. I had never intended it. I assure the friends that such was not my meaning. The context makes it clear that my remarks are not applicable to Englishmen as a whole. They could not, for instance, apply to C. F. Andrews who has utterly effaced himself for the sake of India.

The Mussalman charge was that the Hindus were trying to suppress and enslave them even as Englishmen had done with both

<sup>1</sup>Vide "The Science of Surrender", 9-7-1925.

Hindus and Mussalmans—meaning, necessarily, the majority of Hindus and Englishmen. In the extract quoted my endeavour was to show that Hindus had not the power even if they had the desire, to suppress Mussalmans. The friends do not object to my statement if it applies to Englishmen as a class in India,—not that they endorse my opinion even to that extent, but they could not be shocked as they had known me to hold that opinion for many years. But they were shocked because they thought that I had included in the condemnation all Englishmen, including the three friends who were honestly trying to serve India to the best of their ability. They thought that the passage was written in hatred and anger. As a matter of fact, there was neither hatred nor anger at the time I wrote the passage, and if the passage bears the meaning, which I still hold it does not, I can only plead my ignorance of the English language which is not my mother-tongue and whose intricacies, I own, I have not mastered. I hold myself to be incapable of hating any being on earth. By a long course of prayerful discipline, I have ceased for over forty years to hate anybody. I know that this is a big claim. Nevertheless, I make it in all humility. But I can and I do hate evil wherever it exists. I hate the system of Government that the British people have set up in India. I hate the domineering manner of Englishmen as a class in India. I hate the ruthless exploitation of India even as I hate from the bottom of my heart the hideous system of untouchability for which millions of Hindus have made themselves responsible. But I do not hate the domineering Englishmen as I refuse to hate the domineering Hindus. I seek to reform them in all the loving ways that are open to me. My non-co-operation has its root not in hatred, but in love. My personal religion peremptorily forbids me to hate anybody. I learnt this simple yet grand doctrine when I was twelve years old, though a school book, and the conviction has presisted up to now. It is daily growing on me. It is a burning passion with me. I beg therefore to assure every Englishman, who like these friends might have misunderstood me, that I shall never be guilty of hating Englishmen even though I might have to fight them fiercely, even as I did in 1921. It will be a non-violent fight, it will be clean, it will be truthful.

Mine is not an exclusive love. I cannot love Mussalmans or Hindus and hate Englishmen. For, if I merely love Hindus and Mussalmans because their ways are on the whole pleasing to me, I shall soon begin to hate them when their ways displease me, as they may well do any moment. A love that is based on the goodness of

those whom you love is a mercenary affair, whereas true love is self effacing and demands no consideration. It is like that of a model Hindu wife, Sita, for instance, who loved her Rama even whilst he bid her pass through a raging fire. It was well with Sita, for she knew what she was doing. She sacrificed herself out of her strength, not out of her weakness. Love is the strongest force the world possesses and yet it is the humblest imaginable.

*Young India*, 6-8-1925

### 162. SNARES OF SATAN

The following extract from a letter of a passionate lover of khaddar will be read with interest :

I believe in khaddar. I see the mission of khaddar clear as crystal. It simplifies and hence purifies life. It binds us to the poor by the tie of service. It is the only insurance against poverty which is killing the body and the soul of the nation, for at least as far as the illiterate millions are concerned there is no question of the soul without the body. Realized Yoga and its votaries might talk of it, but for the millions soul is mockery without body. Last and not least, charkha is the only insurance against violent social outbreaks as are now flooding Europe with blood and passions. Charkha brings the masses and the classes together and as long as India accepts it Bolshevism and kindred violent eruptions would be impossible. These things convince me of the vital need of the charkha. But there is only one difficulty. Can it work? Can it succeed? Can we now plant again the charkha in its old place of sanctity in every home ? Is it not too late? Before you went to prison I never would have questioned thus. There was room for hope. But now it is not all hope. And there is Bertrand Russell who says that industrialism is like a force of nature and India, too, will be submerged whether we want it or no. Only such people say we should find our own solution for industrialism. There is truth in what they say. Industrialism is flooding all the world and, after the flood, they are finding their own solutions. Take Europe. I do not believe that Europe will perish. I have too much faith in human nature, and human nature will find the remedy sooner or later. Can India, even if she wants to, isolate herself and get out of the clutches of industrialism ?

The argument to which this lover of khaddar has been involuntarily and irresistibly drawn is Satan's old device. He always goes with us half way, and then suddenly insinuates that it is no good going further and points to the seeming impossibility of further

progress. He applauds virtue, but immediately says that it is not given to man to attain it.

Now, the difficulty that has occurred to the friend is a difficulty that faces a reformer at every step. Have not untruth and hypocrisy permeated society? Yet those who believe in the ultimate triumph of truth, persist in it in the absolute hope of success. A reformer never permits time to run against him, for he defies that ancient enemy. Of course, industrialism is like a force of Nature, but it is given to man to control Nature and to conquer her forces. His dignity demands from him resolution in the face of overwhelming odds. Our daily life is such a conquest. An agriculturist knows it only too well.

What is industrialism but a control of the majority by a small minority? There is nothing attractive about it, nor is there anything inevitable in it. If the majority simply wills to say 'no' to the blandishments of the minority, the latter is powerless for mischief.

It is good to have faith in human nature. I live because I have that faith. But that faith does not blind me to the fact of history that, whilst in the ultimate all is well, individuals and groups called nations have before now perished. Rome, Greece, Babylon, Egypt and many others are a standing testimony in proof of the fact that nations have perished before now because of their misdeeds. What may be hoped for is that Europe, on account of her fine and scientific intellect, will realize the obvious and retrace her steps, and from the demoralizing industrialism she will find a way out. It will not necessarily be a return to the old absolute simplicity. But it will have to be a reorganization in which village life will predominate, and in which brute and material force will be subordinated to the spiritual force.

Lastly, we must not be entrapped by false analogies. European writers are handicapped for want of experience and accurate information. They cannot guide us beyond a certain measure if they have to generalize from European examples which cannot be on all fours with Indian conditions, because in Europe they have nothing like the conditions of India, not even excluding Russia. What may be, therefore, true of Europe is not necessarily true of India. We know, too, that each nation has its own characteristics and individuality. India has her own; and if we are to find out a true solution for her many ills, we shall have to take all the idiosyncrasies of her constitution into account, and then prescribe a remedy. I claim that to industrialize India in the same sense as Europe is to attempt the impossible. India



has stood many a storm. Each has left its own indelible mark it is true, but she has hitherto dauntlessly maintained her individuality. India is one of the few nations of the earth which have witnessed the fall of many civilizations, herself remaining scatheless. India is one of the few nations on the earth which have retained some of their ancient institutions although they have been overlaid with superstition and error. But she has hitherto shown an inherent capacity for purging herself of error and superstition. My faith in her ability to solve the economic problem that faces her millions has never been so bright as it is today, especially after my study of the conditions in Bengal.

*Young India*, 6-8-1925

### *163 TEACHERS' CONDITION*

A deputation from the All-Bengal Teachers' Association waited upon me some time ago and asked me to advise them how they could better their condition and be of service to the country. They admitted that, at the present moment, they were not doing much good to the country. This is how they described their condition:

The teachers are now engaged in performing a thankless task under a heavy personal sacrifice. They are imparting an education which is unprofitable and uninteresting through no fault of their own. They are to mechanically follow a curriculum of studies which provides for no religious, moral and vocational training. The education given today in Bengal through nearly 900 schools and by 20,000 teachers is domineered over by an examination system which only encourages cramming. The teachers are looked down upon as they are miserably underpaid. There is a large number of cases of mutual distrust and lack of sympathy between the teachers and the school authorities as well as the guardians. Education does not provide for physical training and is imparted through the foreign medium, resulting in a huge waste of national energy.

To all this the teachers might have added that the pupils are devitalized and have lost all initiative. I gave them an answer which satisfied them for the time being, but they took from me a promise that I would deal with the problem in these pages.

In my opinion, the root of the evil lies in the foreign domination, and the root of foreign domination lies in ourselves. I am aware that we shall never deal with these problems unless and until we deal with the root evil. If we had our own government, the teachers would be able to vindicate their position. Having our own government

means a government never strong enough to override by force of arms the wishes of the majority, in other words, a government responsible to public opinion. Today the teachers have public opinion behind them in many things, but it is helpless against a power that is armed for dealing with any possible physical combination on the part of the people of India. No government in the world is so irresponsible and so unresponsive to the opinion of the millions of men and women of India as the Government of India. It was the realization of this fact that made Gokhale postpone everything else to the effort for winning self-government. Lokamanya was so impatient that he made his formula, "Swaraj is my birthright", ring from one end of India to the other. He suppressed his taste for scholarship and philosophy in favour of swaraj. Deshbandhu laid down his life in the same pursuit. All those who are like the teachers have, therefore, no remedy for their disease save that of gaining swaraj as quickly as possible. How is that to be attained. I have pointed out the remedy and the country is supposed to have adopted it. The only change is that to the effort within must be added the effort without, viz., entry into the legislatures. The teachers cannot enter these institutions, they cannot take part in active politics, but they can all spin or, if they like, do some other labour. They must not expect their pupils to labour, if the teachers will not labour themselves and I have suggested spinning because all can be engaged in it, not for private profit, but for discipline and national profit. Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life. Do the teachers realize that the pupils are an exaggerated edition of what they themselves are? If they will have the initiative, the pupils will soon begin to have it. The examination system, as it is, becomes doubly oppressive by reason of the mechanical method of instruction. Only the other day, inspecting a school, I asked a boy to tell me what and where Pataliputra—about which he had read to me from his book—was. He could not tell. This was neither the fault of the Government nor the pupils, assuredly the teachers'. Teachers can, if they will, make their tuition interesting and effective in spite of the deadening weight of the examination system. In spite of the medium of instruction being the English language in the higher classes, it is open to the teachers to take care of the mother tongue of the boys under them. There is no rule preventing them talking to the boys in

their mother tongues. The fact is that most teachers do not know the vernacular names for technical expressions and find it difficult to make themselves intelligible in the vernacular when the subject of their discourse is technical. We have got into the very slovenly habit, in order, as we fancy to give point to our conversations, of using English adjectives, adverbs and even phrases of the English language. If the teachers wish it, many of the defects of the present system could be cured by them.

I have given only a few out of many possible illustrations of what can be done under the present system. It was my recognition of the evil of the system that made me conceive non-co-operation, but a revival of it just now seems to be almost an impossibility. I am, therefore, recommending what is, in some respects, more difficult of accomplishment. It is easier for the average man to run away from evil than remain in it and still remain unaffected by it. Many men can shun grog-shops and remain teetotallers, but not many can remain in these pestilential places and avoid the contagion.

However, the teachers have asked for advice and I can but place it before them so that each may then respond to the best of his ability. The unfortunate position is that educated Indians take to teaching not for the love of it, but because they have nothing better and nothing else for giving them a livelihood. Many of them even enter the teaching profession with a view to preparing for what they regard as a better thing. The wonder is that in spite of this self-imposed initial handicap so many teachers are not worse than they are. By well-ordered agitation, no doubt, they may better their pecuniary prospects, but I see no chance even under a swaraj government of the scale of salary being raised much higher than it is today. I believe in the ancient idea of teachers teaching for the love of it and receiving the barest maintenance. The Roman Catholics have retained that idea and they are responsible for some of the best educational institutions in the world. The *rishis* of old did even better. They made their pupils members of their families, but in those days that class of teaching which they imparted was not intended for the masses. They simply brought up a race of real teachers of mankind in India. The masses got their training in their homes and in their hereditary occupations. It was a good enough ideal for those times. Circumstances have now changed. There is a general insistent demand for literary training. The masses claim the same attention as the

classes. How far it is possible and beneficial to mankind generally cannot be discussed here. There is nothing inherently wrong in the desire for learning. If it is directed in a healthy channel it can only do good. Without, therefore, stopping to devise means for avoiding the inevitable, we must make the best use possible of it. Thousands of teachers cannot be had for the asking, nor will they live by begging. They must have a salary guaranteed, and as we shall require quite an army of teachers their remuneration cannot be in proportion to the intrinsic worth of their calling but it will have to be in proportion to the capacity of the nation for payment. We may expect a steady rise as we realize the relative merits of the different callings. The rise must be painfully slow. There must, therefore, arise a class of men and women in India who will from patriotic motives choose teaching as a profession, irrespective of the material gain that it may bring them. Then the nation will not underrate the calling of the teacher. On the contrary, it will give the first place in its affection to these self-sacrificing men and women. And so we come to this that, as our swaraj is possible largely by our own efforts, so is the teachers' rise possible mainly by their own effort. They must bravely and patiently cut their way through to success.

*Young India*, 6-8-1925

#### 164. ALL -INDIA DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL

The readers will share with me the pleasure to know that Pandit Malviyaji has signed the appeal<sup>1</sup> for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial published last week. Several others who are likely to endorse the appeal have been approached. At the time of writing this note, their replies have not been received. It has been a delicate matter to decide who should be approached, because of the object of the Memorial on which there is room for difference of opinion. I, therefore, hereby give a general invitation for signing to those who revere the memory of Deshbandhu and who believe in the potency of spinning-wheel and khaddar, to the extent defined in the appeal which I recopy below.

Supplement to *Young India*, 6-8-1925

<sup>1</sup>Vide "Appeal for All-India Deshbandhu Memorial", 22-7-1925.

## 165. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

AZIMGANJ,  
Thursday [August 6, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your two letters. I write this letter from Azimganj. Manilal<sup>2</sup> has brought me here for making collections for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Tomorrow, i.e., on Friday, I reach Calcutta; and from there I shall proceed to Jamshedpur the same day. I shall stay in Jamshedpur on Saturday and Sunday and return to Calcutta on Monday morning. For the time being I am leaving Mahadev in Calcutta for making collections, On account of his illness Kristodas is staying at the Abhaya Ashram, Comilla. Jamnadas<sup>3</sup> has gone to Santiniketan and will reach Calcutta on Monday. Take care of your health. What to say about Kashi<sup>4</sup>? Ask Prabhudas<sup>5</sup> to write to me about his mental and physical condition.

I get letters from Lakshmi. If she wants to come to me let me know.

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 6194. Courtesy : Chhaganlal Gandhi

## 166. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*Shravana Vad 2* [August 6, 1925]<sup>6</sup>

CHI. MANI,

I had your letter as well as Dahyabhai's. I had asked Mahadev to send a reply immediately to Dahyabhai's letter. I hope it has reached him. Dahyabhai had not answered the question put to him. If Dahyabhai wishes to study surgery there are enough facilities here as well as in Calcutta. These Colleges have nothing to do with the Government.

Since Manilal has sent you twelve bangles I believe you do not need any more for the present. But remember that if these bangles

<sup>1</sup> The date of receipt as given by the addressee is *Shravana Vad 6*, 1981, that is, August 10. The Thursday preceding it was August 6.

<sup>2</sup> Manilal Vallabhji Kothari, a political worker of Gujarat

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's brother

<sup>4</sup> Addressee's wife

<sup>5</sup> Addressee's son

<sup>6</sup> From the source

break frequently, they would prove costly. Even silver ones would be cheaper or those prepared from cotton yarn. These can be so knitted that they are thick, strong and always washable. But we will think more on this when we meet. Meanwhile you have a good stock with you.

Nothing is definite about my going there. Perhaps I may go over to Ahmedabad in October for a day or two.

Since you have bought a bicycle, you should use it for exercise.

We are in Murshidabad district today. Manilal too is here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN

C/O VALLABHBHAI ZAVERBHAI PATEL, BARRISTER

KHAMASA CHOWKI

AHMEDABAD

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*, pp. 27-8

### 167. *SPEECH AT KRISHNATH COLLEGE, BEHRAMPUR*<sup>1</sup>

*August 6, 1925*

MAHARAJA SAHIB, FRIENDS AND FELLOW STUDENTS,

I address you as fellow students because I regard myself as a student, 56 years though I am. The more I live on this earth, the more I realize how much I have yet to learn and possibly how much I have yet to unlearn. It gives me great pleasure to meet you this afternoon. It is a double pleasure. I always seek an opportunity of meeting the student world all over India. It was, therefore, a pleasure to find this function amongst the various functions arranged by the Reception Committee, but the knowledge that this College is associated with one of the magnificent charities of the Maharaja Bahadur was an additional pleasure when I understood what this College was. I have known his great charities since 1915, when I had the honour of coming in contract with the Maharaja Bahadur, but I never realized till

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji visited the Krishnath College on August 6, where he was presented with an address and a purse of Rs. 1,067 for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Gandhiji's reply was recorded in shorthand and reproduced as an appendix in the College Commemoration Volume.

I came here what was the quantity of these charities. I understand from reliable sources that they amount to more than one crore of rupees. I had flattered myself with the belief that my Parsi friends beat everyone on the face of the earth in their charities, and I suppose, now, that statement will stand unchallenged so far as the whole community is concerned; but so far as individuals are concerned, I do not recollect a single Parsi name that has exceeded the charities of Cossimbazar. As I told you, therefore, it is a double pleasure for me to meet you this afternoon.

I thank you for the purse that you have presented towards the Deshbandhu Memorial. You know better than I do how much the student world is indebted to Deshbandhu not merely because he was one of their patrons, not merely because the students found his purse open for them, but also because his advice was always at the disposal of students, and he has left to the student world a legacy of self-sacrifice and devotion to the motherland which is not to be surpassed by anybody, if it can be at all equalled. It is, therefore, nothing out of the way that you have given this good purse for this memorial and I hope that students all over Bengal will follow your noble example.

You have asked me to answer certain questions which you have put to me. I have understood these questions. I have not given myself much time to speak to you this afternoon, but before I come to these questions, I want to talk to you of things that are much more permanent for students and, therefore, of much greater importance than even the important questions that you have put to me. Throughout my travels in the world and my association with students and my experience as an amateur teacher of youth and of girls, I have come to the conclusion that the literary knowledge that a schoolmaster or a professor gives is by no means composed of what he has to give. You are not to be judged by the excellence of your pronunciation or by the excellence of your grammar, not even by the excellence of your eloquence; for that matter you might have never come to colleges, and yet it is possible for you to give a good account of yourselves to the world, it is possible for you to live a decent life as citizens of India—as citizens of the world. What you come to schools and colleges for is essentially to build your character. The highest ideal that can possibly be conceived for the student life has been placed before us by our Hindu ancestors, the great *rishis* of old. They likened the life of a student to that of a sannyasi, and they have laid

down laws for the guidance of students just as rigorous as those they have laid down for the fourth ashrama, the fourth stage—the stage of a sannyasi. What a sannyasi is expected to do after a full experience of the world, out of the fullness of his knowledge, a student is voluntarily expected to do because of tradition, because of regard for his spiritual and for his worldly preceptors. You know the distinction between worldly knowledge and divine knowledge. They used worldly ambition and worldly knowledge also for the uplift of the soul, and even whilst they discoursed on matters of the world, they gave us a secret knowledge of the soul. Anyone who has studied the glorious Upanishads will be able, without the slightest hesitation, to corroborate what I am just now telling you. Ask yourselves then, “Are you leading the life of a sannyasi, are you—all of you—*brahmacharis* ?”

Throughout my travels in Bengal I have heard a lot about the students of Bengal. I have heard something to your credit. I have also heard something to your discredit. I have been told that the life of the average student in Bengal, if not throughout India, is not particularly pure. He spends his time not in reading the purest literature, but he even devotes his spare hours to reading magazines which should never find a place in a decent library or in a gentleman’s drawing-room. I do not know how far this is true. But what I have told, I have received from men of knowledge, from men of culture, from men who have passed from those colleges. Some of them have declared to me that such is the life of the students of Bengal. They have told me that there is a general but sure deterioration in character. I hope this is not a proper and truthful generalization and that the average student is not so bad as he is made out to be. I recall to myself a story told by a Hindu widow, some weeks ago, with tears in her eyes. She has several daughters, some of whom are not yet married. She asked me what she was to do with her daughters. They are all educated. She is not sparing herself in order to give her daughters a decent education. I asked her what the ages of these daughters were. In my opinion they are not yet fit to be married. The mother said, “How can I help marrying my girls? Can you show me a place where I can hide them, where I can consider that my girls will be in safety?” She said, “You do not know the young men of Bengal, you do not know how dangerous it is for young girls to walk about unprotected; they are not free from the lustful eyes of students who walk about the streets of Calcutta.” Can this be true? I hope it is not. But that widowed mother is not an illiterate woman. Let me tell you she is a great Congress worker; she



spoke from knowledge, she spoke from the bitterness of her own experience and she said, "You may ask anybody you like, and you will find that, in general, my remarks will be corroborated by the parents in Bengal."

I have read only lately a paragraph in newspapers that a girl—I forget her name—committed suicide. I am not talking to you about Snehalata of a sacred memory, but I am talking to you of a girl who has recently committed suicide. She is supposed to have committed suicide because her father could not find a suitable match for his daughter. Why? Because, as the newspapers relate, a frightful sum was asked by young men who were approached by the parents. Is marriage a matter of money, is it a bargain or is it a sacred institution? Is it a matter of love or is it a matter of commerce? What have we learnt in our colleges and schools? If this is true, as it seems to me to be true, the responsibility for the death of the girl lies upon the heads of the students of Bengal. If it is true it is for everyone of you to correct that evil. Let us not talk of swaraj, let us not talk of liberty of India, so long as the liberty of a single girl in Bengal is imperilled, so long as a girl finds it necessary to commit suicide because her parents have not got money enough to buy a suitable match. Let this blot be removed from the face of Bengal and let the students of Bengal be worthy of the charity of Cossimbazar. Let the students prove to the world, let them prove to the parents of Bengal that the honour of every girl in Bengal is as sacred in their hands as it is sacred or should be in the hands of her parents; and unless we learn this primary lesson I feel that we have lived in vain, that the students have lived in vain in Bengal, and all this money that is being spent upon them in giving them a liberal education, in housing them in magnificent buildings, is a waste of effort and waste of money. May God give you strength and the wisdom to understand the substance of what I am telling you. Do not criticize it, do not talk high of it, but say to yourselves how far the information given to me is likely to be correct. But if it is an overstatement, it is still damning enough for the student world. If it is true of several hundreds of students, I ask you to regard it as a dangerous thing. It is an eyesore, it is a canker that is eating into the very vitals of society, and that kind of evil will spread throughout the length and breadth of Bengal, if it is not nipped in the bud. Therefore, without criticizing my remarks to you and trying to measure the truth of it in golden scales, take the substance of it and make the best use, what every one of you can, of what I have said.

The *rishis* of old tell us that the education of a student begins not with literature. Do you know what the student in the Vedic times was called upon to do when he went to the teachers? Not to pass any examination in letters. He had to go before the *rishis* with *samid khand*—with a bundle of wood—in his hand. What did that signify? It signified purity of heart, sincerity of heart. It signified determination on the part of the student to labour for his preceptor, so that he could get from his preceptor what he deserved. He was not to ask any questions; he was to take what the preceptor gave him. If you are satisfied with learning by heart brilliant passages from Shakespeare and Milton, I do not grudge you that. But it must be added to something that is more substantial. You must build upon a stable foundation—you must build, therefore, upon a foundation of absolute truth—you must build upon a foundation of a absolute love and non-violence. It is obligatory upon every student to observe these fundamental maxims of life. You know what the *Mahabharata* taught us about the value of truth. He said, “Put truth in one scale and put your *yajnas* in another scale. Still truth will weigh heavier.” There is nothing on this earth, the seer of *Mahabharata* tells us, that can possibly excel truth. And he was right. No matter how much in your little bit of experience you may find untruth work, no matter how you find in history also, fraud has given princes and potentates power and kingdoms, remember that these are only momentary changes. What are a few thousands of years in the life of a nation, in the life of the whole world? As students, you are not to bother your heads about these things; make up your minds to follow truth and non-violence. If you only remember these sign-posts, you will never go wrong and then you may add all the literature and all the science and everything. But if you have not this foundation, then however beautiful the house may appear to be for the time being, remember it is only a house of cards, and a mere whiff of wind will bring it down.

Now I come to the questions. You ask me what the spinning-wheel can do. Well, I think I have demonstrated to you what the spinning-wheel can do. The spinning-wheel will do for India what it did when the *rishis* lived. That was the golden age. I do not for one moment endorse what some historians tell us, that the golden age is merely a figment of the imagination or the diseased minds of poets. It is not so. We had our golden age. We are certainly coming to another cycle which will lead to another golden age. We have lived through that golden age when, in this land, there were not these semi-starved

millions as they are today. The creed of the spinning-wheel is that there should be a bond established between yourselves and the villagers; that is the meaning of village reconstruction—that is your another question. And the village reconstruction must dance round your charkha as the centre. You may not go to the villages, unless you take a little bit of bread to the semi-starved villagers. They will starve. During six months, if Sir P. C. Ray is to be depended upon, for six solid months cultivators of India, i.e., eighty percent of the population of India—have no work. They are idle. Do you suppose that the peasantry of any part of the world can possibly enjoy four months' holiday and make both ends meet. Not even a millionaire in this age will be able to enjoy four months' holiday. They soon find there is a deficit to meet or there is some hopeless mismanagement of their estate. If you want to take a little bit of life into these little cottages of India, you will only do so by the revolution of the charkha and, therefore, I say, whoever draws one yard of yarn per day, has added to the wealth of India; he has done something to alleviate the distress, and as the *Gita* says :

As the great men do so do the men in the street.

You are the future great men of India, you are the salt of the earth. If you, the future hope of India, do not know how to deal with this problem—the very serious problem of poverty of the masses—how are you going to solve it ? What is your education worth? Are you content to rest upon the ashes of seven hundred thousand villages? Will you allow the seven hundred thousand villages to be blotted out off the face of the earth, and if in India there may be a few, say a hundred, cities containing a population, of not three hundred millions but probably twenty millions, can you be satisfied with that and that all these villagers should die out? Will you perform the process that Mr. Malan of South Africa suggested? He says he won't drive the Indians out by the stroke of pen, but he will starve them out. In order that you may receive liberal education, villagers will starve! Is it economics of India? Study the figures and find out where all these millions upon millions of rupees go. Dadabhai Naoroji gave some figures, but it was child's play before the discoveries which are being made now from day to day, because of the double drain from India. The bulk of the revenue which supports this great military expenditure comes from the villages—that is one drain. But there is another drain—the drain of labour; not that the labourers are taken

away but the people are becoming incapacitated for work, so that later on they will say, "We have lost all vigour for work." All that we can do is to adjust the revenue a little bit. Hence it is I say to the students, you must spin for half an hour and wear khaddar.

You ask me a question about mill cloth *versus* foreign cloth. You have not studied the recent economics. I place mill cloth and foreign cloth in the same category. I will not have you wear mill cloth that comes from Ahmedabad, Bombay or even Banga Lakshmi. That is meant for those who do not think of India, who do not think of her future. Therefore, for you the real economics is to wear khaddar. When you wear khaddar, you are supporting the labour of a poor weaver. If you are to wear khaddar, you will be supporting many widows, you will be supporting many of your cultivators who may spin during their idle hours. You will be supporting many weavers who are not getting today sufficient for their labour. Study any history—economic history—and it will tell you that the majority of weavers have died out. Thank God, the weavers as a class have not died! Do you know that in the Punjab the majority of weavers have either become butchers or worse, because they have become soldiers who shot the innocent Chinese in Shanghai and who shot innocent men in Turkey and in all parts of the world? What is this the weavers of the Punjab have been reduced to? There is nothing wrong in becoming soldiers, in becoming butchers. I say it is wrong giving up their honourable calling as weavers. It is a sin for which you and I are responsible. Hence I tell you the real economics for you are that you should wear khaddar. You should spin and spin. Spin in order to make khaddar cheap. That is discipline for you. It will enable you to create your purity. Sit at the spinning-wheel calmly for half an hour and watch the transformation of your heart. I can quote to you instances of many men and women, of brilliant administrators, one of whom was a member in the Bombay Executive Council. He is as old as I am. He learnt spinning only a few months ago. He said: "After I began spinning at the wheel, I have somewhat got rid of my insomnia. I returned from office tired, sometimes at mid-night and, then, I was dozing, thinking of many problems which I did not want to think of. Now I sit at the spinning-wheel and spin away. Immediately comes the all-refreshing sleep—the sleep of innocence." Find out for yourselves what it can do. Find out what it cannot do.

You want excitement? Excitement for a *brahmachari* is

forbidden. In the student life you must steel your hearts against all excitement. Life itself is excitement enough for you. You will find all that excitement when you become a householder. But today you do not want excitement. You want calmness of mind. Read the last 20 verses of the second chapter of the *Gita* and read side by side Wordsworth's description of soldier. Find the common factor between the two. Study that and you won't need ask any questions at all.

I hope I have answered all your questions. If you want to know anything more, write to me and I shall reply to you at the earliest opportunity consistent with my other engagements.

I cannot convince you, God alone can convince you. I can only strive, I can pray for you.

May God help you to be what you ought to be.

*Krishnath College Centenary Commemoration Volume*, pp. 91 & 100-5

## 168. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

August 7, 1925

I have just returned from Sir Surendra Nath's home<sup>1</sup> and, when I tell you that I was expecting next Friday to be able to pay my second and promised visit and to enjoy a pleasant and instructive conversation with him, you can imagine with what sadness I must have gone there to pay the visit of condolence. The grief of the womenfolk whom I was privileged to see was unbearable. But Sir Surendra Nath has left a much larger family to mourn over his death than the blood relations whom I saw. Let that thought be a comfort to the bereaved family.

He was at one time the supreme idol of Bengal, if not of the nation. As a young man, during the congress session of 1901<sup>2</sup>, which I attended from far-off South Africa, I could see what influence he exerted in Congress deliberations and how nothing could go on without this seasoned soldier. He was one of the makers of Modern India, and if not the originator, certainly one of the originators of the National Congress. I am certain that, when all the strife is over and when we have come to our own, the services of Sir Surendra Nath will be remembered by his countrymen as much as those of any of the

<sup>1</sup> Accompanied by C. F. Andrews and Jamnalal Bajaj, Gandhiji had visited Barrackpore in the morning on his visit of condolence.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Calcutta Congress", 27-12-1901.

patriots who today rule the heart of India. In his own time Sir Surendra Nath was unsurpassed, and I know that, in spite of later differences, some of them fundamental, a grateful country will always cherish the memory of the late patriot who served India not for a few years, but for over a generation. He began when many of us were not even born, and never left the reins.

*Forward*, 8-8-1925

*169. SPEECH AT INDIAN ASSOCIATION, JAMSHEDPUR<sup>1</sup>*

[August 8, 1925]

I have great pleasure in being able to visit these great steel works. I have been thinking of coming to this place ever since 1917, the year in which I was trying to serve the Champaran agriculturists. It was then that Sir Edward Gait told me that I ought not to leave Bihar without having seen these works. But man proposes and God disposes and with me God had disposed otherwise. I made many attempts to see this place.<sup>2</sup>

As you know I am a labourer myself, I pride myself on calling myself a scavenger, weaver, spinner, farmer and what not, and I do not feel ashamed that some of these things I know but indifferently. It is a pleasure to me to identify myself with the labouring classes, because without labour we can do nothing. There is a great Latin saying of which the meaning is 'to labour is to pray', and one of the finest writers of Europe has said that a man is not entitled to eat unless he labours, and by labour he does not mean labour with the intellect, but labour with the hands. The same thought runs throughout Hindu religion. 'He who eats without labour eats sin, is verily a thief.' This is the literal meaning of a verse in *Bhagavad Gita*. I therefore pride myself on the fact that I can identify myself with labour throughout the world.

It is my ambition to see one of the greatest—if not the greatest—Indian enterprises in India, and study the conditions of work there. But none of my activities is one-sided, and as my religion begins and ends with truth and non-violence, my identification with

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was given an at-home in the evening and addressed a gathering of Indians and Europeans.

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is taken from the report of the speech in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 14-8-1925.

labour does not conflict with my friendship with capital. And believe me, throughout my public service of 35 years, though I have been obliged to range myself seemingly against capital, capitalists have in the end regarded me as their true friend. And in all humility I may say that I have come here also as a friend of the capitalists—a friend of the Tatas. And here it would be ungrateful on my part if I do not give you a little anecdote about how my connection with the Tatas began. In South Africa, when I was struggling along with the the Indians there in the attempt to retain our self-respect and to vindicate our status, it was the late Sir Ratan Tata who first came forward with assistance. He wrote me a great letter and sent a princely donation,—a cheque for Rs. 25,000 and a promise in the letter to send more, if necessary. Ever since I have a vivid recollection of my relations with the Tatas and you can well imagine how pleasurable it has been for me to be with you, and you will believe me when I say that, when I part company with you tomorrow, I shall do so with a heavy heart, because I shall have to go away without having seen so many things, for it would be presumption on my part to say at the end of two days that I had really studied things here, I know well enough the magnitude of the task before one who wants to study this great enterprise.

I wish to this great Indian firm all the prosperity that it deserves and to this great enterprise every success. And may I hope that the relations between this great house and labourers who work here under their care will be of the friendliest character? At Ahmedabad I have had much to do with the capitalists and workmen, and I have always said that my ideal is that capital and labour should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony, capital not only looking to the material welfare of the labourers but their moral welfare also,—capitalists being trustees for the welfare of the labouring classes under them.

I am told that though so many Europeans and Indians live here, their relations are of a happy character. I hope the information is literally true. It is the privilege of both of you to be associated in this great enterprise and it is possible for you to give India an object-lesson in amity and goodwill. You will, I hope, have best relations with one another not only under the roofs of the huge workshops you work in, but you will also carry your amity outside your workshops and both of you will realize that you have come to live and work here

as brothers and sisters, never regarding another as inferior, or oneself as inferior. And if you succeed in doing that you will have a miniature swaraj.

I have said that I am a non-co-operator, I call myself a civil resister—and both words have come to possess a bad odour in the English language like so many other English words—but I non-co-operate in order that I may be able to co-operate. I cannot satisfy myself with false co-operation—anything inferior to 24 carats gold. My non-co-operation does not prevent me from being friendly even to Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer. It harms no one, it is non-co-operation with evil, with an evil system and not with the evil-doer. My religion teaches me to love even an evil-doer, and my non-co-operation is but part of that religion. I am saying these things not to soothe the ears of any one—I have in my life never been guilty of saying things I did not mean—my nature is to go straight to the heart, and if often I fail in doing so for the time being, I know that truth will ultimately make itself heard and felt, as it has often done in my experience. The wish, therefore, that the relations between you should be of the friendliest character is a desire from the bottom of my heart. And it is my deep prayer that you may help in delivering India from evil and bondage and help her to give the message of peace to the outside world. For this meeting of Indians and Europeans in India must have or can be made to have a special meaning, and what can be better than that we two may live together so as to spread peace and goodwill on earth? May God grant that, in serving the Tatas, you will also serve India and will always realize that you are here for a much higher mission than merely working for an industrial enterprise.

*Young India*, 20-8-1925

### 170. PROBLEMS OF NON-VIOLENCE

People keep asking me which acts may be termed violent and which non-violent and, what is one's duty at a particular time. While some of these queries reveal the ignorance of the inquirers, others serve to bring out the difficult dilemmas involved. A Punjabi gentleman has put a question the answer to which is worth giving here. It is as follows :

What should be done when tigers, wolves and other wild beasts come and carry away other animals or human beings? Or, what should



be done about germs in water?

In my humble opinion the simple answer is that where there is danger from tigers, wolves and so on, then killing them becomes inevitable. The germs that water contains must also be inevitably destroyed. Violence which is inevitable does not therefore cease to be so and become non-violence. It has to be recognized as violence. I have no doubt that it would be best if we could contrive to survive without destroying tigers, wolves, etc. However, who could do so? Only he who is not afraid of these animals and can regard them as friends, he alone could do so. Anyone who refrains from violence because he is afraid, is nevertheless guilty of violence. The mouse is not non-violent towards the cat. At heart, he always has a feeling of violence towards the cat. He cannot kill the latter because he is weak. He alone has the power to practise the dharma of ahimsa who although fully capable of inflicting violence does not inflict it. He alone practises the ahimsa dharma who voluntarily and with love refrains from inflicting violence on anyone. Non-violence implies love, compassion, forgiveness. The Shastras describe these as the virtues of the brave. This courage is not physical but mental. There have been instances of physically frail men having indulged in grave acts of violence with the help of others. There have also been cases where those as physically strong as Yudhishtira<sup>1</sup> have granted pardon to such persons as king Virata<sup>2</sup>. Hence, so long as one has not developed inner strength, one can never practise the dharma of ahimsa. The non-violence practised by the banias today does not deserve the name; one finds in it cruelty sometime and ignorance all the time.

It was because I know this weakness of ours that during the War I went all out to recruit soldiers in Kheda.<sup>3</sup> And, it was for this very reason that I said at that time that perhaps the most brutal act of the British Government was to have disarmed and thus emasculated the Indian people. I hold the same view even today. If anyone afraid at heart cannot, while remaining unarmed, rid himself of that fear, he should certainly arm himself with a stick or an even more deadly weapon.

Ahimsa is a great vow; it is more difficult than walking on the

<sup>1</sup> The eldest of the five Pandava princes in the *Mahabharata*

<sup>2</sup> At whose court the Pandavas had lived in disguise

<sup>3</sup> In 1918; *vide* "Appeal for Enlistment", 22-6-1918 & "Appeal for Enlistment", 22-7-1918.

edge of a sword. Complete adherence to it is almost impossible for one who has a physical form. Severe penance is required for its practice. Penance should be taken to mean renunciation and knowledge. Anyone who desires to possess land cannot practise ahimsa. A peasant necessarily has to protect his land. He must guard it against tigers and wolves. A peasant who is not prepared to punish these animals or thieves, etc., should always be prepared to abandon his field.

In order to be able to practise the dharma of ahimsa, man must abide by the limits laid down by the Shastras and custom. The Shastras do not enjoin violence. But they permit certain acts of violence by regarding them as unavoidable at particular times. For instance, it is believed that the *Manusmriti*<sup>1</sup> permits the slaughter of certain animals. Such slaughter has not been ordained. Thereafter, with progress in thinking, it was decided that this would not be permitted in the Kaliyuga<sup>2</sup>. Hence it is customary today to regard certain forms of violence as pardonable, while some of the forms of violence allowed by *Manusmriti* are forbidden. It is obviously wrong to argue that we can go beyond the concessions allowed by the Shastras. There is dharma in self-control and, *adharma*<sup>3</sup> in indulgence. Anyone who does not make use of the latitude given by the Shastras deserves to be congratulated. Ahimsa knows no limits because there are none to self-control. The latter has been welcomed by all the scriptures of the world, while opinions differ widely regarding indulgence. A right angle is the same everywhere, while there is no end to the number of other angles. Non-violence and truth together form, as it were, the right angle of all religions. Conduct which does not fit into that angle should undoubtedly be given up. Imperfect conduct may, perhaps, be permitted. Anyone who practises the dharma of ahimsa should increase his inner strength by being always on the alert and progressively restricting the latitude that he has allowed for himself. There is certainly nothing religious about indulgence. Renouncing through knowledge the worldly life—this is the attainment of *moksha*<sup>4</sup>. Such absolute renunciation is not to be

<sup>1</sup> The Code of Manu which is the foundation of Hindu Law

<sup>2</sup> Age of strife

<sup>3</sup> Opposite of dharma

<sup>4</sup> Deliverance from phenomenal existence

found even on the peaks of the Himalayas. The true cave is the one in the heart. Man can hide himself within it and thus protected can remain untouched by the world even though living and moving freely in it, taking part in those activities which cannot be avoided.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 9-8-1925

### 171. LOKAMANYA'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY

This death anniversary has come and gone. It was celebrated here—in Calcutta—too. I had to attend the celebrations. Meetings were held at two places and I attended both. What should I have said there?

What does a son do on the death anniversary of his father? If he is a worthy son, he does not make a speech on his father's virtues but rather does something that the latter would have liked him to do. In the present-day meetings too we shall not invite the sons and relatives of the departed leaders to make speeches. Both they and we should be ashamed if we did. The death anniversaries of two leaders came in close succession, viz., that of Moulvi Abdul Rasul and later that of Lokamanya. I saw the former gentleman's son-in-law at the first meeting. No one asked him to make a speech; that task was left to others. This would suggest that just as fingers are kept at a distance from the nail, we too are separated by a distance from relatives. As a matter of fact, this should not be the case. If a son is not permitted to sing his father's praises like a minstrel, we too should not do so.

I had, therefore, decided against singing praises. I felt embarrassed on the day of the anniversary. Only the previous day I had spoken of the spinning-wheel in the same hall. Would I have to repeat all that again? I received the reply: "Where will you run to for fear of criticism, derision or defeat? You have assumed the task of adhering to truth. Of what consequence is it if that which appears to be true to you does not appear to be so to the rest of the world? It is your dharma to tell the truth and practise it." Hence, I repeated the very same things.

Tilak Maharaj gave the people the first half of a *shloka*<sup>1</sup> "Swaraj is my birthright". He passed away, leaving it to us to supply the other

<sup>1</sup> Used here for "Sacred Verse"

half of it, which we did as follows: “The spinning-wheel and khadi are the means of obtaining it.” Swaraj is not for the educated class alone. It is not for Hindus or Muslims alone, nor is it only for the wealthy class. Lokamanya’s swaraj is for Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, all. It is for the educated as well the uneducated, for men as well as women, for villagers as well as city-dwellers. Moreover, this swaraj is such that all should take a more or less equal part in the effort to secure it. That which can be secured through the efforts of a single section of people or a single community is not swaraj but rather rule by that particular community or section. What then is the activity which everyone can take up and which leads to the growth of everyone’s strength? Spinning is such an activity. We cannot have cloth without spinning and without spinning we cannot save sixty crores of rupees which are spent in buying cloth from abroad. Moreover, our purpose will not be served if we just save this sum. It should be distributed among crores of Indians.

The spinning-wheel is the only answer to this problem. We can boycott foreign cloth by means of an activity which can be taken up by all and which yields good results. Moreover, by doing so we can become strong enough to preserve swaraj as well as to secure it. Hence, those who have come to pay homage to Lokamanya should altogether renounce foreign cloth, wear khadi alone and spin every day for at least half an hour.

*Ramanam* was dear to Prahlad while he was sleeping, sitting, playing or eating. He cried out that very name even when he was tied to a red hot iron pillar. What could the poor boy do? I am placed in a similar situation with regard to khadi and the spinning-wheel. Even if someone were to tie me up and flog me, I would still cry out that the spinning-wheel and khadi are the means of securing swaraj. There may be—should be—many satellites revolving round it; but, just as the solar system without the sun is nothing, just as an army without a general is like a corpse, just as all activities are futile without Rama, even so without the spinning-wheel all other activities for swaraj are futile.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 9-8-1925

## 172. TO CHAIRMEN OF MEETINGS

The function of a judge is not to speak much. It is to listen to good, bad or indifferent speeches. Hence some of these gentlemen scrawl on the papers lying in front of them, others draw good pictures on them, while some others keep fidgeting with pieces of string. The chairman of a meeting is in the same pitiable condition.

On the occasion of Moulvi Abdul Rasul's death anniversary, I was given the honour of presiding over the meeting. I had not known the said gentleman personally but, on inquiry, was informed that although he was a learned barrister, he was humble, a whole-hearted supporter of swaraj and one who maintained his independence and self-respect. He regarded Hindu-Muslim unity as a dharma and was a devotee of swadeshi.

How could I make myself worthy of presiding over a meeting on the death anniversary of such a gentleman? My *takli* which shares whatever fate has in store for me, which is my goddess of peace, which is the source of relief to the poor and miserable in India— is always with me. For fear of having it some day separated from me, through oversight, it is now included in the same case as my spectacles or, more precisely, the latter share the same case with the *takli*. I cannot leave it behind any more than I can my spectacles. I took it out and started spinning. I was no longer worried whether the speeches were interesting or otherwise and I started giving an object-lesson in swadeshi which was dear to Maulana Rasul. At the same time as the speeches, my stock of slivers was coming to an end too. The audience benefited in two ways, by listening to the words of the speakers and by looking at the message spelt out by my hands.

What else would I have to say even at the conclusion of the meeting? My true speech took the form of action. Hence, by way of explanation, I spoke on the spinning-wheel. Swadeshi was dear to Maulana Rasul but he had not fully understood its true implications. We had come to bestow the name of "swadeshi" on those musical instruments or clocks whose parts had all been imported but which had been assembled here. We know now that practical and widespread swadeshi means hand-woven khadi made of hand-spun yarn. This was the interpretation of the message given by my hands.

All chairmen cannot have this twofold benefit. However, I would suggest to those who do not have contempt for the *takli* that if they can keep spinning while sitting on their gadi or chair, they could

spend their time peacefully and also have the honour of adding something to India's wealth.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 9-8-1925

### 173. MY NOTES

#### BASANTI DEVI'S SPINNING-WHEEL

I take every opportunity of paying a visit to Shrimati Basanti Devi. I have not yet succeeded in persuading her to go out daily for a walk. Her courage knows no bounds. However, she cannot shake off her mental agony. She can take interest in nothing. Often, late at night, she visits the cremation ground. But that is not to forget her sorrow; it is rather to add to it. There is only one thing in which she can keep herself occupied. She plies the spinning-wheel for two hours at a stretch and likes the work. The famous European poet Goethe makes the heroine of his best play—*Faust*—hold a spinning-wheel and sing the sweetest of songs. Sir Prabhashanker Pattani described in his public speech the effect the spinning-wheel had on him. It is worth while remembering it on this occasion. He suffers from insomnia. Hence, even at midnight he plies the spinning-wheel. In this way, he overcomes various mental anxieties suffered during the day and then he can sleep peacefully. The spinning-wheel, in this manner, has been able to bring relief to a politician, one who is separated from a dear one and a widow.

#### PROPAGANDA FOR KHADI IN MAHA GUJARAT

From some figures published by the Gujarat Khadi Mandal relating to propagation of khadi, I find that there are thirty khadi-promoting institutions in Maha Gujarat. The khadi produced in the last twelve months by 16 of these institutions out of yarn spun by its members themselves or of purchased hand-spun yarn, amounted to more than 2,64,000 square yards. The sale of khadi in that period amounted to Rs. 3,85,761-1-3. The net sale proceeds after deducting various charges, etc., are slightly smaller. The figures include khadi that has been brought from outside— for example, Andhra.

This quantity of khadi cannot be regarded as the total quantity produced by Gujarat. For instance, at some places in Kutch and Kathiawar, where the spinning-wheel had never ceased working, the weaving of khadi goes on all the time. Nevertheless, the above

quantity is far less than what we wish to achieve.

Besides these figures, the following is worth knowing: the number of spinning-wheels, the number of persons who weave hand-spun yarn, how many of these latter have taken to weaving again because of the swadeshi movement and how many of them are weavers who have recently learnt this art, how many of them are the so-called untouchables and what is their monthly income, etc. We should find out: the number of spinning-wheels that are in use as a means of livelihood and the number of those which are being used as a sacrificial offering, what is the value of the khadi which was brought over from other parts; how many volunteer workers there are in these organizations and of these how many are paid workers and how many honorary; the amount of the average salary paid to a person and what is the maximum and minimum salary paid to a single individual.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 9-8-1925

#### *174. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, JAMSHEDPUR<sup>1</sup>*

*August 9, 1925*

Replying to the address in Hindi, Mr. Gandhi announced that at the meeting at which he himself was present along with Mr. R. D. Tata, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Steel Co., Mr. Andrews, and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Tata agreed that the Labour Association with officers duly elected would be recognized by the Company, and that the Company would be prepared to collect subscriptions of the members of the Labour Association from their pay and further that, subject to the confirmation of the Board of Directors, as a token of goodwill and conciliation, Mr. G. Sethi who was dismissed by the Company and Mr. Thomas, who has since been working as an Honorary Secretary of the Labour Association, would be offered re-employment in the Company's works.

Mr. Gandhi hoped the Labour Association would devote its energies principally to the welfare of the labourers and the concessions made would end all the cause of friction between the Company and tens of thousands of workers.

Mr. Gandhi then exhorted his audience to shun two great evils which were

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was presented with an address in Hindi and a purse of Rs.5,000 at a mass meeting attended by some 20,000 people.

only too prevalent among the labouring classes all over India. These evils were eating into their vitals. He said:

You cannot get swaraj until you can leave off drink and until you can look upon all women as your mothers and sisters.

*The Searchlight*, 14-8-1925

### 175. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Shravana Vad 7 [August 10, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Your handwriting is very clear, I want it just like this every time. Both of you will be happy to know that my weight is nearly eight stone, i.e., 112 lb. I had come down to 106 or 108 in Juhu. I was weighed in the Jamshedpur Hospital.

The Dadabhai Centenary falls on 4th September. I will definitely go to Bombay then.<sup>2</sup> So I shall have only a few days at the Ashram. I must reach Bihar on the 12th.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 591 also S. N. 9346.  
Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit.

### 176. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

*Shravana Vad 7 [August 10, 1925]*<sup>3</sup>

CHI. ANASUYABEHN,

I got your letter along with the *rakhadi*. *Rakhadi* signifies protection which I always get from you. May God bless you.

I am not able to cope with my Gujarati correspondence with my left hand. Every Monday I want to write to you and Ramdas after I have done with writing for *Navajivan* but the *Navajivan* work takes me late into the night. I am writing this at 8.30 p.m. There is plenty to do. For the English work, however, there are for the present many helpers.

<sup>1</sup> Reference to the Dadabhai Centenary suggests that the letter was written in 1925; in that year *Shravana Vad 7* fell on August 10.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji presided over the Dadabhai Centenary meeting held in Bombay on September 4, 1925.

<sup>3</sup> From the contents of the letter. *Shravana Vad 7* in 1925 fell on August 10.



I missed you a lot in Jamshedpur. It is a city of workers, isn't it? Mr. Ratan Tata did not give us any trouble. He immediately accepted our demands. You will read more about this in the newspapers.<sup>1</sup>

I was weighed in the hospital there. You will be glad to know that I weighed eight stone. That means I eat as much as I used to at the Ashram. I can even regain my original weight. For me, however, even my present weight is more than enough.

Now I shall have to reach Bombay by September 4. I have to preside over Dadabhai's<sup>2</sup> anniversary which falls on the 4th. After that I shall visit the Ashram for two to four days. I have to reach Bihar by September 12.

Shankerlal was in indifferent health while here. I hope he is all right now. Tell him to take proper care of himself.

I understand about Bhai's signature. I will not insist even on your signature. I can understand your point of view.

I shan't write more.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32835

### *177. REMARKS IN VISITORS' BOOK*

*August 12, 1925*

I was taken to the *Basumati* offices. I was pleased with the appointments. I congratulate the proprietor on the choice and cheapness of some of his publications.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 5992

### *178. SPEECH AT Y.M.C.A., CALCUTTA<sup>3</sup>*

*[August 12, 1925]*

In the course of his lecture Mahatmaji asked the young Indian Christians to

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Vol. XXVIII, pp. 55-6.

<sup>2</sup> Dadabhai Naoroji

<sup>3</sup> The meeting was held at 9.30 p.m. at the Chowringhee Branch of the Y.M.C.A. and was attended largely by Europeans.

follow the noble and glorious examples of the late Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Kalicharan Banerjee and Susil Kumar Rudra, to imbibe their ardent love of mother tongue and national manners and modes of living. Also in their duty to the religion they had given up and secondly, the duty to the religion they had embraced. He appealed to them not to allow themselves to be isolated, but to try to understand the wishes and aspirations of the millions, understand the difficult social problems of the masses and of the mankind and to solve them. Let them prepare for villages, study the wants, the primary wants of the villagers and satisfy those wants.<sup>1</sup>

*Forward*, 13-8-1925

### 179. THE LION OF BENGAL

The death of Sir Surendranath Bannerjea removes from Indian political life one who has left upon it the deep impress of his own personality. What though with new ideals and new hopes withing recent times he receded into the background? Our present is the result of our past. Ideals and aspirations of the present day would have been impossible without the invaluable work done by pioneers like Sir Surendra. Time was when the student world idolized him, when his advice was considered indispensable in all national deliberations, and his eloquence held audiences spell-bound. It is impossible to recall the stirring events of the partition days in Bengal and not to think with gratitude and pride of Sir Surendranath's matchless services in connection with it. It was then that Sir Surendranath justly earned from his grateful countrymen the title of "Surrender-not". During the blackest period of the time of partition, Sir Surendranath never wavered, never lost hope. He threw himself into the agitation with all his might. His enthusiasm infected the whole of Bengal. His determination to unsettle the 'settled fact' was unshaken. He gave us the necessary training in courage and resolution. He taught us not to fear authority. His work in the Education department was no less valuable than in the political. Through the Ripon College thousands of young men came under his direct influence and received their liberal education. His regular habits gave him health, vigour, and, what may be called for India, a long life. He retained his mental faculties

<sup>1</sup> Questions were asked at the conclusion of the speech. To a question what was the duty of young Indians towards young Europeans, Gandhiji's reply was "Fraternization". To this he added a rider in a lighter vein, in answer to a supplementary, "By arranging boxing matches".

unimpaired up to the last moment. It required a courage of no small order to resume in his seventy-seventh year the editorship of his paper the *Bengalee*. Indeed, he was so confident of his mental vigour and physical capacity, that he said to me, when I had the privilege of meeting him at Barrackpore two months ago, that he expected to live till 91 years, after which he would not wish to live as he would not retain his mental vigour long thereafter. But Fates had decided otherwise. They snatched him away from us without notice. For nobody had expected so sudden a death. Up to the early hours of the morning of Thursday the 6th instant, he betrayed no sign of dissolution. But though he is no longer with us in the body, his services to the country will never be forgotten. He will ever be remembered as one of the makers of modern India.

*Young India*, 13-8-1925

## 180. NOTES

### KHADDAR WORKERS' CENSUS

The Secretary, A.I.K.B., had circularized all the provinces to send a list of their khaddar workers with particulars about their qualifications, work and remuneration. Figures have been received only from centres in seven provinces, viz., Bihar, U.P., Utkal, Assam, Maharashtra, Bengal, Kerala and Karnatak, those provinces where khaddar work on any considerable scale is being done having not yet sent their figures. Even the facts and figures so far received from the other provinces are incomplete. Thus, for instance, Bihar reports 32 paid and 2 honorary workers, but the names of some of the most prominent workers there are to be missed. Many centres have been mentioned but not Malkhachak. From Bengal only the Abhoy Ashram has sent the list from which, too, the names of Dr. Suresh Bennerjee, Sjt. Haripad Chatterjea and Annadababu are unaccountably left out. The Karnatak list does not contain the name of Sjt. Gangadharrao Deshpande who has, since Belgaum,<sup>1</sup> devoted the whole of his time to khaddar work. Only the Maharashtra list seems to be fairly full and accurate. Gujarat, Andhra, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, whose lists should have been particularly interesting and instructive have been entirely reticent.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the Congress session of 1924 held here.

And yet the incomplete and meagre details received have an interest of their own. The total number of paid workers are 148, receiving an aggregate allowance of Rs. 3,469, i.e., an average allowance of Rs. 23 per head. The number of honorary workers is 58; though the educational qualifications in some cases have not been shown, the lists show no less than 16 graduates and three lawyers and a number of undergraduates. The maximum allowance received does not exceed Rs. 65 per mensem, and the minimum is as low as Rs. 2. Almost all the workers are full-time workers, and three of the honorary full-time workers are ladies. 128 khaddar centres are mentioned.

#### NO LABOUR, NO MEAL

Some time ago, I was taken to a magnificent mansion called the 'Marble Palace' in Calcutta. It is richly furnished with some very expensive and some very beautiful paintings. The owners feed, in the compound in front of the palace, all the beggars who choose to go there, and I am told that the number every day is several thousands. This is no doubt a princely charity. It does great credit to the benevolent spirit of the donors, but the incongruity of this ragged humanity feeding whilst the majestic palace is, as it were, mocking at their wretched condition does not seem to strike the donors at all. Another such painful sight was witnessed by me on my visit to Suri, where the reception committee had arranged for feeding the beggars of the district. At the Marble Palace, the crowd that besieged me passed through the line of baggars eating off their dusty leaves spread on the gound. Some almost trampled over them. It was by no means a pleasant spectacle. In Suri it was a little more decently managed, for the crowd was not to pass through the line of baggars, but the motor car that drove me to my destination was slowly taken through the line of the beggars as they were eating. I felt humiliated, more so to think that this was all done in my honour, because, as it was put to me by one of the friends there, I was 'friend of the poor'. My friendship for them must be a sorry affair if I could be satisfied with a large part of humanity being reduced to beggary. Little did my friends know that my friendship for the paupers of India has made me hard-hearted enough to contemplate their utter starvation with equanimity in preference to their utter reduction to beggary. My ashimsa would not tolerate the idea of giving a free meal to a healthy person who has not worked for it in some honest way, and if I had the

power I would stop every *Sadavarta* where free meals are given. It has degraded the nation and it has encouraged laziness, idleness, hypocrisy and even crime. Such misplaced charity adds nothing to the wealth of the country, whether material or spiritual, and gives a false sense of meritoriousness to the donor. How nice and wise it would be if the donor were to open institutions where they would give meals under healthy, clean surroundings to men and women who would work for them. I personally think that the spinning-wheel or any of the processes that cotton has to go through will be an ideal occupation. But if they will not have that, they may choose any other work, only the rule should be: no labour, no meal. Every city has its own difficult problem of beggars, a problem for which the monied men are responsible. I know that it is easier to fling free meals in the faces of idlers, but much more difficult to organize an institution where honest work has to be done before meals are served. From a pecuniary standpoint, in the initial stages at any rate, the cost of feeding people after taking work from them will be more than the cost of the present free kitchens. But I am convinced that it will be cheaper in the long run, if we do not want to increase in geometrical progression the race of loafers which is fast overrunning this land.

#### “VARNASHRAMA” AND UNTOUCHABILITY

A correspondent writes:

With reference to your comments on my letter on *Varnashrama* published in *Young India* of the 23rd April 1925, I fully appreciate the distinction between *Varnashrama* and untouchability and agree that there is no sanction whatsoever for the latter in Hinduism. But is it not clear that, if the principle of ‘division of work based on birth which you approve continues to be the basis of our social organization, the untouchables will be always with us? What is more reasonable than to suppose that in the case those members of society who hereditarily perform such social duties as scavenging, corpse-bearing and grave-digging will continue to be looked upon as too unclean to be touched by the rest of the community? In all other countries, scavengers, cobblers, barbers, washermen, grave-diggers, undertakers etc., are not considered untouchable either as individuals or as a class for the simple reason that in those countries these occupations are not hereditary and any member of any of the classes can at any time be a soldier, trader, teacher, lawyer, politician or priest. It seems to me, therefore, that the root of the evil of the untouchability so peculiar to our country lies in our peculiar social system exclusively based on the principle of heredity. And it also seems to me that so

long as we adhere to that principle we cannot hope to get rid of untouchability. It is just conceivable that, under the influence of mighty reformers like Ramanuja or under the stress of a strong political passion, its virulence may abate from time to time but the evil cannot be wholly eliminated. I am afraid that every attempt to end untouchability without ending the caste idea will prove as futile as attempting to cut off a tree at its top.

The letter is very plausible and, unless the reformer takes care, the danger which the correspondent fears may become a stern reality. There is, however, a clear confusion of thought in the argument. Does untouchability in the case of a cobbler or scavenger attach to birth or to occupation? If it attaches to birth, it is hideous and must be rooted out; if it attaches to occupation, it may be a sanitary rule of great importance. It is of universal application. A collier, whilst he is engaged in his work, is practically an untouchable. He himself refuses to shake the hand extended to him and says, "I am too dirty". But his work finished, he takes his bath, changes his dress, and very properly mixes with the highest in the land. Immediately, therefore, we remove the taint of birth, i.e., the idea of superiority and inferiority attaching to birth, we purify *Varnashrama*. The scavenger's children may remain scavengers without being or feeling degraded and they will be no more considered untouchables than Brahmins. The fault does not, therefore, lie in recognizing the law of heredity and transmission of qualities from generation to generation, but it lies with the faulty conception of inequality.

*Varnashrama*, in my opinion, was not conceived in any narrow spirit. On the contrary, it gave the labourer, the Sudra, the same status as the thinker, the Brahmin. It provided for the accentuation of merit and elimination of demerit, and it transferred human ambition from the general worldly sphere to the permanent and the spiritual. The aim of the Brahmin and the Sudra was common—*moksha*, or self-realization—not realization of fame, riches and power. Later on, this lofty conception of *varnashrama* became degraded and came to be identified with mere empty ceremonial and assumption of superiority by some and imposition of degradation upon others. This admission is not a demonstration of the weakness of *Varnashrama*, but of human nature which, if it has a tendency under certain circumstances to rise to the highest point, it has also a tendency under certain other circumstances to go down to the lowest. What the reformer seeks to do is to end the curse of untouchability and to restore *Varnashrama* to its

proper place. Whether *Varnashrama* thus transmuted will survive the reform or not remains to be seen. It will surely depend upon the new Brahmin class that is imperceptibly coming into being, namely, those who are dedicating themselves, body, soul and mind, to service of Hinduism and the country. If they have nothing of worldly ambition, it will be well with Hinduism, if they have, Hinduism, like any other ism, coming into the hands of ambitious men will perish. But I have an immutable faith in the capacity of Hinduism to purge itself of all impurities from time to time. I do not think that that capacity is now exhausted.

#### ADVICE FROM JAPAN

Some time during last months two Japanese friends came to me, engaged me in a pleasant conversation and left with me the following document:

The great spirits of India once came to Japan through China.

They made great influences upon the whole of the souls of Japanese.

The influences still have upon us Japanese and will have for ever, so Japanese pay great special respects to India.

Now I am here in India— so much respected country by our people—I feel quite happy.

Even in the present time, at our own age, there came out a greatest man who is wholly self-sacrificed and absolutely honest to the justice and truth.

It should be great happiness to me if I should be allowed to be present before him and should be permitted to be given some influences from him directly.

We know him only through books and newspapers. There may be some misunderstandings on us to know about him.

Let me have honour to be given some of his opinions upon our thoughts.

Men are borned naked. But to them two hands are given.

We think God have given paradise upon men, but he have not given it directly upon men, he have given it indirectly upon them by giving two hands,— the power to create any and everything—to make paradise itself in the present world, so I think it is the duty of men to make use their hands best. For instance, they must make clothes with many variety and beauty to fit to several climates and different occasions. And in some occasions they must be clothed more beautiful than wild beasts and fowls, more beautiful than the skin of tigers or peacocks. Because to be beautiful is one essential thing in

paradise with to be good and to be truth.

To make railroads, steamers, and many different machines is our duty and we must utilize them with utmost efficiency, so yarn system, make pardon to say, I think, is not the final end of our purposes to attain, only one of means to teach people to be thrift, frugality, sound minded and such as to give other many good influences upon them, and make utilize plenty of time in country lives where many hands are left idle.

I have purposely refrained from making any corrections, for its quaintness would then be gone. I wish I had read this document before seeing these friends, in which case I would have told them that it was my realization of the fact that God has given us two hands that made me think of asking millions of the inhabitants of this land not to allow them to remain idle for a single minute, but to make the best use possible of them so as to be able, by their use during leisure hours, to clothe the whole of India. I would also have asked my visitors to help us to realize our destiny by inducing Japan not to inflict her cloth upon us, but to engage only in such commerce with us as would be mutually beneficial. Finally, I would have told them that I had no quarrel with railroads, steamers and many different machines as such, but that I protested against the abuse that was at present being made of them, either for exploiting many nations of the earth or for destroying them.

*Young India*, 13-8-1925

### *181. CURRENCY AND COTTON MILLS*

Here is a boiled-down wail from Trichinopoly:

It is regrettable to find that in all your speeches you fail to say a single word about the Indian currency problem and how the Government of India is trying to destroy the indigenous industries by raising the exchange to suit the interests of London merchants. Perhaps you are of opinion that about 300 cotton mills started in India are not a national asset and that the people will be more benefited by the import of cheaper foreign goods from Lancashire. For the past 30 years, the adoption of 1 s. 4d. to the rupee worked well. Even at that time, the Bombay cotton mills were unable to compete with Lancashire owing to the crushing excise duty. There is no excise duty on jute mills of Calcutta which were declaring a dividend of 100 to 400 for the past eight years. At present, the cotton mills are passing through a severe trade depression owing to the huge accumulation of stock from Lancashire which



has been dumped into India when the Government of India raised the exchange from 1s. 4d. in 1923 to 1s. 6d. in 1924 to stimulate imports from Great Britain. There is no use of asking the people to burn foreign clothes, or to spin yarn and wear khaddar unless they are sold at a moderate price. The competition from Lancashire owing to the present high exchange will destroy the khaddar industry even more quickly than the mill industry.

In these circumstances, I earnestly appeal to Mahatmaji to turn his attention more to the industrial regeneration of India *by agitating against the present high exchange policy and against the excise duty* which is unjustly levied upon the cotton mills merely to help Lancashire.

I publish the foregoing not for any merit it contains, but for dispelling the ignorance of methods of warfare the letter woefully betrays. Of course, I have not dealt with currency in the pages of *Young India*, as I have not dealt with many other evils of the present system of Government, e.g., the huge army expenditure. If any writing of mine could possibly remove these gigantic evils, I would every week recount them and impress the services of friends for the same purpose so as to be able to say the same thing in a variety of ways. But those who think like my correspondent should understand that if the evils we know still persist, they do so not because they have not been publicly proclaimed or because the rulers do not know them. Abler men than myself have exposed the wickedness of the Government currency policy, but the exposure has proved of no avail. The policy is supported, not by force of reason, but by the 'sharp edge of the sword'. I am an economist of time and labour. I believe in putting before the readers only those things in which they themselves can, if they will, do something. I do not need to rouse the feeling of the readers in respect of the evils we are suffering from. They feel them daily. But they are helpless. My privilege, therefore, is to place before them a remedy, or remedies if I can think of more than one. At the risk, therefore, of being unpopular and tiresome by reason of repetition, I continue with all the capacity at my command to tell the reader how we can help to advance the salvation of this depressed country.

Exclusion of foreign cloth is the one thing which is most practicable and is the most effective remedy for our many ills. I must, therefore, continue to harp on that one (to me) pleasant theme.

The correspondent is wholly mistaken if he thinks that this country has to wait, for bringing about exclusion of foreign cloth, for

a phenomenal reduction in the price of khaddar or even of indigenous mill-cloth. The exclusion will be brought about only when the nation realizes its national dharma which she must perform, cost what it may. A good Hindu does not count the cost of performing his *Gayatri* or his multitudinous ceremonials. A good Mussalman does not count the cost of offering his prayers five times a day, neither bargains for an easier road to heaven. It is the business of the Manchester merchants to take their calico to the remotest village of India at the lowest price possible. It is the duty of the villager to reject it in preference to his ill-made khaddar which, from a purely economic point of view, may cost more than the Manchester calico. Why should we think that any agitation on our part will induce the Manchester merchants to become so philanthropic as to waive the facilities by way of currency and otherwise which they can command from the Government of their own making? Will an Indian merchant similarly placed do otherwise than what his Manchester brother is doing today? The only agitation, therefore, that is relevant and effective is the generation of some kind of force that will effectively prevent the dumping down of Manchester and other foreign cloth on the sacred soil of India. My correspondent must be an indifferent reader of *Young India*, or he should have known that I am not indifferent to the mill industry of my country. I proclaim on every relevant occasion that I want all the protection that I can secure for the industry, and that, if I had the power, I would impose a prohibitive tariff on all foreign cloth. But there my duty ends. The mill industry stands in no need of other support from me. It has capital, it has agents who take its manufactures to all parts of India. It is well able to take care of itself. Unfortunately, it is timid and not national. It thinks in terms of profits of its few shareholders. It takes no note of the masses who are the purchasers of its manufactures. Khaddar is no enemy to that industry. Khaddar is its infant brother standing in need of delicate nursing—all the protection that a loving nurse can extend to it. It, therefore, commands my exclusive attention and I endeavour to enlist it from others. When it has grown to maturity, and not before, will be the time to consider the rival claims of the big brother—the mill industry. Only a little clear thinking is required to perceive that rehabilitation of khaddar necessarily means protection for the indigenous mill industry for perhaps a generation to come. But if out of our ignorance we fail to concentrate upon khaddar, not only is

khaddar doomed, but with it is doomed the mill industry of India.

*Young India*, 13-8-1925

### 182. SOME STRIKING FACTS

The following report received from the Secretary of the All-India Khaddar Board will be read with the greatest interest:<sup>1</sup>

The report does not only show us how much work has been possible in a year's time amongst the villagers through the simple instrumentality of the spinning population. But what is more striking is a comparison between the figures regarding the earnings from hand-spinning and from agriculture. These figures dispel the idea once for all about the insignificance of the wages received from hand-spinning by professional spinners. The lowest income from the charkha is 14% of the other income, but in some individual families the percentage is as high as 66. The reader will not fail to note too how other reforms naturally come in side by side with spinning. The foregoing report refers to temperance work. In many places in Bengal I have noticed that those who are interested in introducing spinning amongst the villagers took up medical relief as a matter of course and, if they do not touch the other departments of life in the villages, it is not because of want of will, but because the workers are too few, and the villagers too conservative to respond merely for the asking. What is true of the villages<sup>2</sup> examined in Tamil Nadu is equally true of many villages in Bengal. My enquiries have led to the discovery that thousands of cultivators make no more than Rs. 7 to 8 per month during the year. An addition of Rs. 2/- out of spinning done only by the family members is a very substantial relief for these poor cultivators.

*Young India*, 13-8-1925

### 183. LETTER TO ANTOINETTE MIRBEL

*August 13, 1925*

I have your most touching letter.<sup>3</sup> I do not want to strive against

<sup>1</sup> The report, which dealt in detail with the progress of spinning, khadi, etc., in certain villages in the Salem district of Madras, is not reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> These were: Uppupalayam, Sembampalayam, Chittalandur, Pulianpatti and Pudupalayam.

<sup>3</sup> She had written that she had read a book of extracts from Gandhiji's writings, and wanted to make Gandhiji her "Master and Guru".

you, and if you wish to come, by all means do. Only remember that you will find me of the same flesh of which you and all other fellow-mortals are made. The imperishable soul within can meet and talk from a distance of thousands of miles. However, I do not wish to deny the usefulness, at times, of physical nearness, and if you gain anything by being near me physically, it will be because of your marvellous faith and not because of any superhuman powers that I possess. I am merely a seeker after truth—undoubtedly striving to attain human perfection which all of us can attain by continuous effort. If you decide to come, and if I know the steamer you are to take, someone will meet you at the Bombay docks and take you to the train leaving for Sabarmati. As my right hand is disabled, I am dictating this letter and signing with my left hand.<sup>1</sup>

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai.

*184. LETTER TO J. KUSARY*

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,  
*August 15, 1925*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I like your business-like letter. Here is my reply. There should be no hurry. You will find enough work with the spinning-wheel. You need not think of attracting all classes at once. I should not start Hindu Sabhas, at least for the time being. Conducting a school and giving medical relief may well form part of a spinning organization, so far as they help spinning. If workers engage in paying industries, they cannot give exclusive attention to spinning. But if to spinning you add weaving, you make your institution financially self-supporting in the end. During the interval, you must expect the nation to find livelihood for the workers who give their whole time to the development of spinning. You must not think of having property that will yield a permanent income.

I do not know what you mean by the example of Christian

<sup>1</sup> In her reply of September 6, Antoinette Mirbel wrote to Gandhiji how his letter had made her "shed tears of joy over it." On September 29, she informed Gandhiji that she was leaving Marseilles on October 9 and would reach Bombay on October 23.

missionaries. You are yourselves working in villages. To make people self-reliant, fearless, self-supporting, resourceful and healthy is to make them keep swaraj always in view. There is nothing in the name swaraj apart from the qualities I have mentioned. Philanthropic societies exclude the idea of political freedom. You do not exclude it, neither do you parade it to raise false notions.

You may seek help from district boards and the like for your work so long as you are not called upon to sacrifice your freedom. Villagers' non-co-operation consists in modelling their lives, so far as practicable, independently of Government. They need not go to law-courts if they will not quarrel, and if they will submit to arbitration. They need not send their children to Government schools.

If the workers have the spirit of real non-violent non-co-operation, they will infect the villagers with it, not by speech but by their conduct.

I would not be a party to voluntarily sending any boy to a Government school. National schools, imperfect though they may be, must be encouraged, but here again no boy need be prevented by any mechanical contrivance from going to a Government school. It is nouse his refraining unless he feels the indignity himself.

If by half-educated Indians you mean those who cannot speak English correctly, I know many such who have got the highest ideals. There are thousands of graduates who have no higher ideal than to make as much money as they can, and disappear from public life altogether.

I wonder if I have answered all your questions.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. JITENDRANATH KUSARY  
SATYASHRAM  
BAHROK P. O.  
DACCA

From a photostat : G.N. 7188

### *185. LETTER TO SAMBAMURTI*

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
*August 15, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

My unexpectedly long stay in Bengal has upset all my arrangements. Up to the end of October I am booked in Bihar. There

will then remain the following provinces which I was expected to visit before the end of the year. They are Andhra, Tamilnad, Kerala, Karnatak, C.P. Marathi, C.P. Hindi and Maharashtra.

It is impossible to visit all these provinces in less than two months. Unless, therefore, it is absolutely necessary, I would ask you to disengage me from the projected visit to your province. If, however, you consider that it is absolutely necessary for me to visit your province, please let me know how long you will want me.

If more provinces require my presence than it is possible for me to visit during the time available, I propose to draw lots. I would urge you, therefore, to waive the visit if it is at all possible.

I am in Calcutta up to the 31st instant. I would like you to let me have your reply by letter or telegram before that date.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. SAMBAMURTI  
PRESIDENT, P.C.C.  
RAJAHMUNDY

From a microfilm : S.N. 10651

### *186. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CALCUTTA<sup>1</sup>*

*August 15, 1925*

With profound feelings of sorrow, this meeting of the citizens of Calcutta, representative of all parties and all communities, desires to place on record its deep and abiding sense of the loss sustained by the country by the demise of Sir Surendranath Banerjea, Kt., the high priest of Indian nationalism. His undaunted and unremitting labours for the last 50 years in the service of the motherland, fired with the warmth of apostolic fervour, constitute an unparalleled record of noble endeavour and high achievement which will ever remain enshrined in the grateful recollections of his countrymen and be a source of unfailing inspiration to the nation he served. This meeting tenders its respectful homage to his adored memory, and conveys its deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family in their great loss.

Mahatmaji said that he regarded it as a privilege to be able to attend the

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held at the Town Hall to pay homage to the late Sir Surendranath Banerjea.

meeting—a privilege to be able to move the resolution. He knew that they did not want him to make a long speech in praise of the old patriot. The resolution itself summed up what Sir Surendranath was to them and what he meant to the nation. Of late, from many a platform, he had been obliged to warn them against being satisfied with mere lip praise. At one meeting he had said: “Let us not be bards.” He had the honour of making the acquaintance of and paying his respect to the late Sir Surendranath in 1896, when he came from South Africa to pay a temporary visit. Long before that he had heard about his matchless oratory. When the speaker approached the great leader in 1896, as a young man, he then dimly realized what he was. He had the pleasure of renewing that acquaintance in 1901. He was able, if he might say so in all humility and reverence, to study him at close quarters. He watched him at the Subjects Committee; he watched him haranguing huge crowds that used to hang upon him during those days. The speaker saw then how indispensable his presence was considered at every meeting, whether it was a mass meeting or whether it was a private conference. He was needed for every national deliberation and he was needed in order to fire the enthusiasm of his countrymen. Whilst he was in South Africa, reading the proceedings of one of the National Congress sessions, he read that as soon as Sir Surendranath rose and made an appeal to the audience for money, ornaments were flung by ladies into his lap or on his table. Monied men threw notes on the table. Many promises were forthcoming. Whenever money was wanted, Sir Surendranath was also wanted and so throughout his observations, he understood what Sir Surendranath meant to Bengal and what he meant to India.

Let us, the present generation, not forget the services of those heroes of the nation—services they rendered before many of us were born. It makes not the slightest difference that we may not see eye to eye with such illustrious men. If they had not laid the foundation, we would not have been able to build; if they had not laid the foundation, we would not have been able to do what we are doing today. They set in those days an example when others were not forthcoming—an example in courage, an example in sacrifice, an example in diplomacy—not the diplomacy of the mean sort which is so much in vogue today. I am talking of that diplomacy which every nation requires, which every individual requires. Let us think of his services of those days, let us treasure the memory of the great deeds wrought by men like Sir Surendranath whom the nation in its admiration called ‘Surrender-not’. And is it not true? Was not the title deserved by him during those dark but brilliant days of Partition? Was he not able, through the assistance of Bengal behind him and the whole of India, to unsettle the ‘settled fact’? Was he not able to do many things of which we, the present generation, have every reason to be proud? Let

us not, therefore, in our better wisdom, which we so impute to ourselves, forget the great services of the great heroes. Let us shed, therefore, tears over the ashes of Sir Surendranath. But let us do a little better. Let us follow some of the things which it is given to every one of us today. We may not have his eloquence, probably not one of us has his great memory, but every one of us can imitate his love of the land, every one of us can imitate his unfailing regularity. Until the other day, when I had the honour of waiting upon him at Barrackpore, he told me that the secret of his health and the secret of his vitality was his unfailing regularity. I remember in 1901, when an important meeting was going on, the meeting could not be finished. Sir Surendranath apologized and said, "Gentlemen, I must catch my last train for Barrackpore." Sir Surendranath could not wait for the meeting. The meeting had to be postponed for Sir Surendranath. What did he do ? He kept his time not from selfish motives, but he did so for the sake of the nation he loved so much. Let us, therefore, remember these constructive virtues. What has he not done for the education of Bengal! Was he not at one time the idol of young men of Bengal? Let us imitate him in the love of the motherland; every one of us, man, woman or child, all of us can imitate.

There are many more things, but one thing I must not omit because it is a treasured memory. When I was with him at Barrackpore, he said to me, "I am going to live till 91 years. I am now preparing the second edition of my reminiscences. I am going to give many a battle to the Government, many a battle to the Swarajists. I shall be engaged in all these things. But do you know what is the nearest to my heart?" "I don't know," said I. "I belong," replied Sir Surendranath, "to the school of Vidyasagar. You will find it written in the first page of my book. If I had to rewrite the whole of my life, what do you think I would do? I would serve the neglected widow. I would repair the fortunes of many a broken home. I cannot bear the sight of innocent children having widowhood enforced upon them." Let the young men of Bengal remember their little innocent sisters. I hear such cases from every side of Bengal. Bengal is no exception, things are going the same all over India. A case was brought to my notice only last night. I do not want to detain you on that case. I simply mention this thing to enable the young men of Bengal to understand what it is that we have to do.

The political freedom of this country involves our contract with



every department of life. You may not get political freedom but cannot wait for social amelioration. If you will have little girls marrying and becoming mothers, we shall have to live as a race of pigmies. No wonder, then, if we are not able to think clearly for ourselves, no wonder, then, if in the words of Lord Willingdon, we will not say "yes" when we should say "yes" and "no" when we mean "no". I know many Englishmen have asked me: "When will you learn to say "yes" when you mean "yes" and "no" when you mean "no", irrespective of consequences."

Let us therefore, touch the national life in every department and we will have sufficiently revered the memory of this great patriot.

*Forward*, 16-8-1925

### *187. LABOURERS' SAD PLIGHT*

A gentleman has written the following letter<sup>1</sup>, mentioning his own name and address:

There seems to be no exaggeration in this letter. Those who have some experience of the labouring class are aware of this. In spite of any improvement that may take place in their condition, I do not see the possibility of much change in it. What is involved here is the education of this class. The labourers that the writer refers to are not those employed in mills. Theirs is a different tale. These facts relate to labourers employed in masonry work, etc. That class will continue to exist so long as the world lasts. The only safeguard for them is in education. There is no reason why they should offer bribes, there is no reason why they should remain suppressed. Their ignorance and weakness are the reasons why they offer bribes, remain suppressed, witness or perform licentious acts. Neither the spinning-wheel nor weaving offers any remedy for this. These can help a little, but they cannot impart knowledge to these labourers. The correspondent himself shows weakness. If he is able to feed his mother and educate his brother only on condition that he is a witness to such immorality, he should starve himself and feed his mother and put a stop to his brother's education. His brother's as well as his own education could be said to begin from the very day that he does so. The mother, if she

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here. The correspondent, himself a labourer, had complained about bribery among overseers who supervised the work and about their licentious behaviour towards women labourers.

is not a cripple, should also work. She should either spin or weave. In order to fulfil his vow of spinning, the correspondent should carry a *takli* wherever he goes and then he would never have to suffer hunger even if he has no spinning-wheel. And, with more such brave labourers the atmosphere around them will get purified.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 16-8-1925

### 188. MY SENTINELS

Lucky is the man who has self-appointed sentinels. I think I am such a fortunate person. Numberless are my critics. Some speak out of malice, others out of ignorance, some apparently because that is their custom. I learn all I can from these persons; this, however, is not much. I deliberately refrain from reading comments which I know are merely malicious, lest I should be angry with the critics and anger lead to delusion.

Those who keep guard over me, however, belong to a different category; they are trying to make a perfect man of me. They will forgive faults in others, but they get agitated when they find any fault in me. Such sentinels I welcome as, with their help, I hope to attain perfection. It is the dharma of everyone to become perfect. I have been able to see my dharma. The attainment of perfection should not, I think, be impossible if the circumstances are favourable. My sentinels have been contriving to create for me such circumstances. One such sentinel writes to say:<sup>1</sup>

I welcome this letter. The correspondent mentions only three funds. In my life, however, I must have collected not three nor thirteen, nor even thirty, but perhaps three hundred funds, large as well as small. There is one rule that I always abide by. I do not lend a hand in collecting funds where I do not regard the secretaries or treasures as dependable. And, to this day I have had no experience where those in charge of maintaining accounts have misappropriated funds. This does not imply that not a single pie has been missing from any of the funds. Despite great vigilance on the part of the secretary and the treasurer, sums have been misappropriated. I have found that the secretary or the officers primarily concerned are not to blame for

<sup>1</sup> Note translated here

this. I shall cease to collect funds when I start doubting my judgment of persons. This is not to say that my judgment is correct, but I believe that as a rule I would obtain pass marks in any test for ability to judge.

Let us now take up those funds one after the other. Accounts of the funds of the Satyagraha Sabha<sup>1</sup> and the Swaraj Sabha<sup>2</sup> have been kept. Shri Shankerlal Banker was their life and leading light. The accounts are open to inspection. The sums in these funds were small and the account-books have been preserved.

The Jallianwala Bagh Fund<sup>3</sup> was a large one. It did amount to about five lakhs, though not to ten. Pandit Malaviyaji, the jewel of India, was its very soul. Its accounts up to the last pie have been published many times. They have been brought out as a booklet and have also been published in newspapers. A part of the fund has been used for the purchase of a piece of land, in which there is today a beautiful well-maintained garden. And if the project has gone no further, perhaps I am mainly responsible for it. The hopes we entertained when it was conceived are there no longer. It is only when communal disputes are settled that some form of a fitting memorial can be built there. The reader will be sorry to learn that today even that garden has become a bone of contention. I dare not spend the money in building a useless memorial. If a proper building is not constructed during the life-time of the present trustees, it will be done in future. Mean-while, I am satisfied at any rate that the money is in good hands.

The largest fund was the Tilak Swaraj Fund. It too has been severely criticized. Its accounts were maintained fully and are still there. They have been published in the form of a book. The accounts have been examined by auditors. I am firmly convinced that that fund has been least mismanaged. It may be said that it was not used very intelligently. This, however, was inevitable. In this first attempt to use a large sum of money through an organization the lack of competence was less than is usually found. The reason for this was the constant vigilance on the part of the secretary and the treasurer. There has not been as much written off here as in a business firm; on an average such a firm makes allowance for a loss of ten per cent by way of bad

<sup>1</sup> Founded by Gandhiji in Bombay in 1919

<sup>2</sup> All-India Home Rule League which was re-named by Gandhiji as Swaraj Sabha after he accepted its presidency in April 1920

debts. I have found certain big businessmen in South Africa writing off 25 per cent as bad debts. The Congress might have suffered a loss of hardly one per cent. I may be mistaken in this. This may actually amount to two per cent but certainly not to ten per cent. The reader must note that this fund has not yet been exhausted. It has enabled us to have transactions in khadi amounting to lakhs of rupees and to buy a building in Bombay. Thousands of spinning-wheels have started working because of it, national schools have been established all over the country, and are run even today, out of this fund. Not even a pie from it has been used outside the country.

The other fund, worth knowing about although it involves a small amount, is the Padhiar<sup>1</sup> Fund. There may be a difference of opinion on the use it has been put to. I had, however, looked into the details of the fund. I know, at any rate, that not a single rupee was misused and that the fund has been entrusted to honest persons.

Last year, I was given large sums by my readers for relieving distress in Malabar.<sup>2</sup> Detailed accounts of the amount that was spent from it were published in the South Indian newspapers. There is still some balance left over with me in the bank. I cannot give the figures now as I am out of station. I am looking for proper ways to use that sum for some good purpose. I do not know of a single pie of it having been misused.

Let us now come to the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund in Bengal. Some of the best people in Bengal are among its trustees. Seven persons are in charge of operating it. From this fund, two lakhs of rupees were paid by way of debts. The public got a large building worth three lakhs in return. Arrangements are being made for the immediate opening of a hospital in that building. That work is being looked after by the well-known doctor of the place—Dr. Bidhan Roy. I am, therefore, certain that these funds will be used as we would like them to be.

Finally, let us take the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. For the time being, by becoming its chairman I have taken the responsibility for it on myself. I am mainly responsible for nominating its trustees. I wish that my capacity, such as it is, may be gauged by the way in which this fund is administered. Its secretary

<sup>1</sup> Sunderji Padhiar, a Gujarati author much admired by Gandhiji

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 2-4.

and treasurer are noted workers. Its aim is to propagate the spinning - wheel and khadi. I wish to dedicate the latter part of my life to this work. But I do not know what the will of God may be.

The work of cow-protection has of course to be done. That task is beyond my capacity to handle. I am on the look-out for a good Marwari treasurer. I have received letters from many aspirants to the secretaryship. I have to select someone from among these persons. Let me, however, talk only of the funds now. I have no desire, whatsoever, to collect any more funds in addition to these. Whether the total amounts to 10 lakhs or not, contributions from Bengal will be discontinued at the end of this month. I made a small beginning in Jamshedpur for the All-India memorial. The sum of Rs. 5,000 collected by the menfolk there will go to the Bengal fund. The sum the women gave me will be used for the all-India fund. This amounted to over a thousand. Another sum of Rs. 500 donated by a Gujarati gentleman and a sum of Rs. 500 donated by a Sikh gentleman will also be credited to the latter fund. The only reason for doing so is that Jamshedpur is in Bihar. The ten lakhs to be contributed by Bengal should be collected from Bengal and from Bengalis living in other provinces. If other Indians of their own accord send money for this purpose, it will not be refused. This, however, can not be insisted upon. And, where the matter is left to my discretion, it is my dharma to credit these sums to the all-India fund.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 16-8-1925

## 189. MY NOTES

### VISIT TO JAMSHEDPUR

Jamshedpur was originally called Sakchi. It is in the province of Bihar. Born of the vision of Jamshedji Tata it has become one of the largest iron producers in the world. This place was formerly an unpopulated forest; now 1,06,000 people live there. Among them there are people of all communities and faiths—Bengalis, Biharis, Sikhs, Kabulis, Parsis and Christians. There are several factories there. This township owes a debt of gratitude to the courage of Jamshedji Tata. Hence the then Governor or Viceroy named it Jamshedpur. It is also called Tatanagar by the labourers.

I had planned to see this factory many years ago. One thing

after another, however, prevented me from doing so. On this occasion, too I would have been unable to go had Andrews not urged me to go there for the sake of the labourers. Andrews and persons like him make me helpless and drag me along according to their wishes. Hence, I went to Jamshedpur and stayed there for two days.<sup>1</sup>

However, what can one see of such a large factory in two days ? I could not see a single thing well. I myself am a labourer and went there to serve the labourers. Nevertheless I have been unable to get any idea of the living conditions of the labourers. What could I find out until I had seen their homes, their courtyards, and so on.

Nevertheless, what follows will convey my impression: The climate is good; there is very good water supply. The houses presented a good appearance from outside. To all appearances, people seemed to be happy. The roads looked well built. Mr. Andrews is the president of the labour union. Three outstanding matters were resolved after a little discussion, viz., that the company should recognize the labour union, that the latter could freely elect its own leaders, that Mr. Shethi could continue to be the secretary of the union and that Mr. Ratan Tata should arrange to re-employ him in the company. If the labourers would apply in writing, the company would, within a period that it found suitable, pay their dues directly to the union by deducting them from wages. The union must primarily assume the responsibility to improve the conditions of the labourers themselves. The company has gained in credit by accepting these demands. The labourers now have to play their part.

This time I was able to take Mahadev along with me; hence, readers may expect a detailed description in his article.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 16-8-1925

### *190. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

*Shravana Krishna 13 [August 17, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter about subsisting on fruit. I have myself lived on dried and fresh fruits for some years and it did me no harm. I had

<sup>1</sup> In the second week of August 1925

<sup>2</sup> The year is inferred from the reference to the addressee's wife.

at that time also given up salt. I cannot advise you to try this experiment. However, if you give up salt and ghee for a while it will certainly help you in cooling down your passions. It is essential to give up spices as well as pan and the like. One cannot subdue one's sex and allied passions merely with a restricted diet; an aspirant can least afford to do away with any of the accompanying observances. Absolute cessation of desire comes only after revelation of the Supreme. This is on the authority of the *Gita* and is quite true. You must read my book *Arogya Digdarshan*, if you haven't read it already. A Hindi translation was published years ago.

I hope you are now perfectly all right. I wish your wife peace.

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original : C.W. 6112. Courtesy: G.D.Birla

### *191. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH*

*Monday, August 17, 1925*

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter. I approve of the first plan but we have to think more about it. I hope to reach the Ashram on the 5th. I must return on the 9th. But during those four days it would be good if some of us got together. I am afraid that the happy ones would benefit from our leniency whereas the unhappy ones might be left out. The wheel will, we reckon, put an end to the misery of the unhappy people. Poverty is increasing, we believe, in Kathiawar. If that is not true, we will have to think over it again. We should keep two things in mind. We should make khadi so cheap that the poor too can wear it and those who are hard up for even one pice should be given the spinning-wheel and work. The third point is that even if we stop giving bonus after a certain period the work should not stop. We can only discuss all this only when we meet.

Fix whatever day you wish to, after talking to Vallabhnbhai. If you wish to convene the Parishad Committee, you may do so.

The Franchise Committee has not yet met. The All-India Congress Committee will meet and do as they please. Jawahar is considering some of the suggestions. I hope to circulate the draft in a few days.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 5725

## 192. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Monday [August 17, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

Owing to too much travelling at present, I forget to write nor have I the time. I know that you are calm, so I do not worry if I cannot write. Whether I write or not I expect your letter, in which you must give your diary.

Your health should now have improved a lot.

We start for Orissa tomorrow.

*Blessings from*

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 513. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

## 193. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

Monday [August 17, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

I have your letter. Do not mind having made it a long one. It seems to me that you are harming your health by being somewhat hasty. I may not have as much faith in Hakimji as you have but that does not mean you should give up his treatment. Despair is a witch. Drive her out. Do not mind if your efforts bear no fruit. Exert yourself only within the limits of your strength.

As regards your mental condition too, instead of lamenting over it, you should go on trying to overcome it.

You need not at all worry about Kaka. He is strong enough to look after himself. He will not be disheartened by differences of opinion. How can we bring all people to look at a thing from the same point of view? The opposition of students will subside when they face him. And, finally, why grieve what is inevitable?

If I can, I will look into the Phoenix matter. About the Tolstoy Farm, I wrote as and when I remembered [the incidents]. It is possible

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji left on his Orissa tour on August 18.

<sup>2</sup> Somebody, possibly Prabhudas himself, has noted '*Bhadarva Sud* 1, Thursday, Samvat 1981', presumably as the date of the receipt of this letter. Samvat 1981 corresponded to the year 1925, and in that year *Bhadarva Sud* 1, Thursday was on August 20. The Monday, preceding that Thursday, was on August 17.



that I may have been ignorant of some things.<sup>1</sup>

It is desirable that, even when ill, one should wake up at four and pray.

Would not Jaikrishnabhai<sup>2</sup> agree to join the Ashram and teach?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : S.N. 33020

### *194. SPEECH AT ROTARY CLUB<sup>3</sup>*

CALCUTTA,

*August 18, 1925*

After thanking the Rotarians for the delicate courtesy that they had extended to him in making their luncheon a Bengali widow's luncheon—a mere potato-and-cabbage luncheon—and for inviting him to speak to them on a subject which was perhaps as uninteresting as the menu spread before them, Mr. Gandhi said:

“Charkha” is not an inviting word though I see that your magazine is called *Charkha*. I did not know that this was an Indian word you had copied. That means charkha—a wheel. I have also come to represent the potency of the wheel, the spinning-wheel or the spindle I hold in my hand (showing a little instrument), and I have so often humorously said to my mill-owning friends that I propose to compete with them with this little spindle. But beyond that humour it has a seriousness all its own.

First of all, as to its economic value. You know that the surface of India is 1,900 miles long from north to south and 1,500 miles broad from east to west and it includes 700,000 villages over this vast surface. The majority of the villages are not served by any railway system at all. There was a time in India when the spinning-wheel was a supplementary occupation of this vast agricultural population. The present agricultural population of India as the Government statistics

<sup>1</sup> The reference seems to be to Gandhiji's treatment of the Phoenix Settlement and the Tolstoy Farm in the chapters relating to them in the *History, of Satyagraha in South Africa* in Gujarati which was serially published in *Navajivan* from April 13, 1924 onwards.

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Bhansali

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji was the chief guest and speaker at the Rotarians' meeting held in the Grand Hotel.

tell us is nothing less than 85 per cent. The Government statistics also tell us that this 85 per cent of the population of India has at least four months in the year absolutely idle. Some of them who are in the know tell me that in Bengal there are agriculturists who have nothing to do for six months in the year. You can imagine what will happen to a man who takes four months' or six months' holiday without pay. Not even the Viceroy of India can afford that vacation. Businessmen, I think, even though they may be millionaires never give themselves all that holiday and do no business. Much less can this vast agricultural population which the historian of India, the late Sir William Hunter, told us 30 years ago was living a hand-to-mouth existence. He said that one-tenth of the population of India was living on one meal only per day and that meal consisted of dry bread and a pinch of dirty salt. They did not know what milk or ghee was. Nor did they get any vegetables.

As you know, famine is chronic in India, It is a money famine. I suggest to you, as business people, that for such people a supplementary occupation is an absolute necessity, and if it is an absolute necessity it must fulfil certain conditions to apply to this vast mass of mankind. It must, therefore, be a universal occupation. It must be an occupation whose products can be easily taken over by the whole of the population. Therefore it will be idle to suggest that they should make articles of luxury. It must be one that they could easily learn. If it requires a good deal of skill or if the instrument of production requires a great manufacturing skill or if it was expensive, it would not answer.

Showing a small spindle in his hand Mr. Gandhi said that that little simple device could produce 50 yards of yarn per hour. A spinning-wheel on an average could give 400 yards per hour. The highest output of a spinning-wheel was 850 yards per hour. No mill spindle had yet produced 850 yards of 10 counts per hour. That could only be done by the human hand. What the mill could do was that thousands of spindles could be worked by a few women with a great power behind it. It was good, it had its place. He did not want to displace the machinery from its proper place. He ventured to suggest that for these few millions of peasantry of India there was no other cottage occupation of that universal character as the spinning-wheel. Any body going to the villages would find some remnants of spinning-wheel. Women throughout the length and breadth of India were taking it up without the slightest difficulty because they were born to it. They knew what it was. But one other condition had to be fulfilled. Who would use the product of that wheel? Naturally the

people of India, as they did 200 or even 100 years ago, when every Indian was clothed in garments spun by Indian women and woven by Indian weavers. The weaving industry had not died out entirely but the spinning industry had all died out and there was a reason for it. The spinning industry could not support a large body of people by itself. It could only be a supplementary industry and therefore there was not that resistance to its destruction which the weaving industry offered, for the simple reason that the weavers lived purely upon weaving as their sole occupation whereas the peasantry had their agriculture as the backbone. India imported Rs. 60 crore worth of foreign yarn and adding a similar quantity to it produced by local mills, they could easily imagine what it meant to a poor country like India whose average income, according to Lord Curzon, was in his time Rs. 30 to 33 per year. The late Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji calculated the average annual income to be Rs. 26. The late Mr. R.C. Dutt challenged Lord Curzon's figure, and Mr. Gandhi thought that it was successfully proved that Mr. Dadabhai's figure was more reliable and more correct. Even taking Lord Curzon's figure what did it signify? Less than Rs. 3 a month. If the spinning-wheel could add even Rs. 5 or Rs. 6 per year to their income, was it not a fortune to them? It was, said Mr. Gandhi. That was the economic aspect of the spinning-wheel. That would solve largely the problem of the economic distress. It would solve the problem of famine. It would solve the problem of poverty. People need not live on charity which must be shameful to the giver as well as to the taker who had his limbs unimpaired.

As for the spiritual aspect of the charkha, Mr. Gandhi said that it flowed naturally from the former. If they must industrialize India in the English and American fashion by covering it with factories, they could do with a small population but could not deal with a vast population in a summary fashion. He asked :

Do you want the people to congregate in boxes where men and women are huddled together in a manner which I could not picture to you. I save them from such an immorality by giving them this occupation. There is another spiritual aspect about it. A man is often known by his occupation. There is a great deal of truth in the proverb 'When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?' That was the time when men were really contented and there was real brotherhood.<sup>1</sup>

If the mills made superfluous additions to the treasures of the already rich, the spinning-wheel was certainly spiritually superior to it inasmuch as it filled the pockets not of those who were already rich but of the starving and the needy millions.

<sup>1</sup> The paragraph that follows is taken from Mahadev Desai's report in *Young India*, 27-8-1925.

I read with deep interest Drummond's book *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* long ago, and I am sure that if I had that writer's facile pen, I would demonstrate even better that there is a spiritual law in the natural world.

He had read books by sane men seriously advocating electrocution to end the race of the starving and the diseased and the infirm. It may be an eminently economical remedy, but it was not a human or a spiritual remedy. In the spinning-wheel he was offering to his countrymen a spiritual remedy, a remedy with which they had been familiar for ages, and a remedy which if seriously tried would save them from the hideous consequences that town and factory life involved. And need he say anything as to the spiritual reaction on the mind, of the simple instrument? Well so many who had tried it bore witness to the fact that it brought peace to the distracted and troubled mind, and the genius of Goethe had woven that effect into song for ages, when he represented Margaret spinning away at the wheel and through its inspiration spinning out of her lips a song as perfect as the yarn from the wheel. He was not an enemy of inventions, said he, clinching the argument, but as matter misplaced was dirt, all inventions misplaced were abominations, to be shunned if they did not add to human dignity and peace.

Questions were invited. . . Mr. A. T. Weston said that he gathered from Mr. Gandhi's observations that weaving was also necessary besides spinning. Why should not then mill-made yarn be used for weaving on a large scale? Mr. Gandhi replied that everyone of the millions of India could spin during their spare time but they could not weave in a similar manner. That was why he had placed the spinning-wheel in the forefront.<sup>1</sup>

Gandhiji had studiously avoided the political aspect of the spinning-wheel throughout his discourse, but Dr. Sarbadhikari, a Rotarian, who spoke last compelled him to do so. 'If the spinning-wheel', he asked in effect, 'had played such a large part in Hindu ritual and was a living thing in the Bengali home, how had it fallen into disuse? Is it not the cost of the product of the wheel which had driven it out?' That, said Gandhiji, involved the spiritual aspect too. If he had the authority of Queen Elizabeth he would deal with the question just as she had done. She made it criminal for her people to use Holland lace, and imported workmen from abroad to teach the people how to make lace, and interdicted the use of lace until then. He was not an out-and-out free trader and he would if he could effectively stop all import of foreign cloth by heavy import duties. He said warming up:

And you have asked how the industry had died. Well it is a painful answer, but I must give it. *It was made to die.*

<sup>1</sup> What follows is from Mahadev Desai's report in *Young India*, 27-8-1925.

He could have narrated the whole blood-curdling tale which tarnished the record of East India Company, but he refrained.

It would make the blood of every honest man and women boil to turn over the pages written not by Indians but by the servants of the Company. When I tell you that people had to cut off their thumbs in order to escape the terrorism let loose, you would understand the position.

The charkha was not living in every home, as Dr. Sarbadhikari had said, it had been killed, and it was now being revived. Every country had to organize its industries, and it did not matter if they had to pay more for their products in the beginning. 'Service before self' was the motto of the Club, and the speaker, reminding them of it, said:

You are trustees of the welfare of the people of India. You will have to put service before self and teach them to feel that they should not have Manchester Calico or mill-made cloth when they can make cloth in their own homes.

He instanced the competition between a foreign Steam Navigation Company and a British Company, where the former went the length of selling tickets almost free for deck passengers which once used to cost Rs. 91, and said:

Healthy industry cannot stand that competition. You will educate the world opinion against such immoral competition. I want fair competition, and no favour.

*The Englishman*, 19-8-1925

### *195 LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL*

*Wednesday, Shravana Vad 15 [August 19, 1925]*

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. It is not that I wish you to be without bangles. I advise you to wear silver bangles. Just wearing rosewood bangles would not look nice. But there is no harm in wearing conch-shell bangles. I see that they are not cheap. I have already sent a reply as regards Dahyabhai. On the whole I feel Tibbia College would be good. But now I hope to reach there on the 5th September, so we shall discuss it when we meet.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*, p. 28

### 196. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*Shravana Vad 15 [August 19, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. NARANDAS,

I had your letters, but I did not write as there was nothing much to reply to.

I do not have time and moreover writing with the left hand takes double the time. I shall reach the Ashram on the 5th and start from there on the 9th. Meet me then.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI NARANDAS KHUSHALCHAND GANDHI  
OPP. MIDDLE SCHOOL  
NAVAPARA

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 6198. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

### 197. LETTER TO BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI

*Shravana Krishna 15 [August 19, 1925]*<sup>2</sup>

BHAI BENARSIDASJI,

I had guessed from your language that you were angry. If you were not, I have nothing to say. Hope you are keeping well.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

PS.

I write this with my left hand as the right one aches.

PANDIT BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI  
FIROZABAD  
DIST. AGRA

From the Hindi original : G.N. 2557

### 198. WHY NOT SURRENDER COMPLETELY ?

The following is a typical letter. It is signed by several No-changes.

Your promise to please the whole Congress machinery at the disposal of the Swarajists in order to make it predominantly a political body must have shocked almost all the No-changers. Sir, what is the political programme in

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

the first place? Was not non-co-operation programme a political one which you suspended last year? Why should you not renew it, in different form if wanted, to meet the present situation, created by the speech of Lord Birkenhead? You made a pact with the Swarajists last year. Did they faithfully work it out as promised at Belgaum? What obstructed them? You know that most of the No-changers did not like the pact but accepted it against their wishes for you. Now again you have thrown them overboard by your promise to the Swarajists without their previous consultation. Once accepted by you, it will have to be accepted by the No-changers though against their wishes. They are being dragged as it were.

Is the Council programme the only political programme? Will Councils give strength to the country for civil disobedience or non-payment of taxes? Under your leadership, the Congress had become a working body and now you again want to turn it into a place for vocal protests for arm-chair politicians. Congress Committee are today at least spinning associations, khaddar depots or khaddar shops, but hereafter they will be nothing more than debating clubs.

You propose alternative franchise, money or self-spun yarn, but the Maharashtra party do not approve of it, nor do they approve of khaddar-wearing. They are going to raise an opposition against, and are sure, though not this year, next year, they will do away with that. They don't want your spinning association. Why not start it outside Congress and surrender completely to the Swarajists?

The writers forget that I do not claim to lead or have any party, if only for the reason that I seem to be constantly changing and shifting my ground. To me I seem to be constantly growing. I must respond to varying conditions, and yet remain changeless within. I have no desire to drag anybody. My appeal is continuously to the head and heart combined. At the forthcoming meeting I expect an open and unfettered discussion wherein my opinion should be counted as only one among the many that would be then expressed. I know that this would appear to many to be utterly nonsensical. But if I persist long enough in expressing my opinion freely, those who feel that they are being dragged will soon resist me. But, after all, what have I done save that I have truly gauged the mind of educated India? I do not wish violently to wrest the Congress from educated India. The latter must grow to the new thought, if such it is. It is not for those who have ceased to believe in the particular method of non-co-

operation adopted in 1920 to give it a retrial or to find out a third thing. It is for those like me, who still believe in that form of non-co-operation, to demonstrate its present utility, so that the sceptics might veer round. But I must confess that I can present nothing in the shape of a fire-works display to those who came to non-co-operation, not with an inward conviction, but for the alluring promise it made of immediate deliverance. That deliverance in the way it was expected not having come, who shall blame them if they fall back upon the original programme, with such changes as it is capable of admitting? After all, those who have led an active political life in the old fashion, cannot possibly be expected to sit idle, whilst “dreamers” like me expect to evolve an intensely active programme out of a “harmless toy” like the spinning-wheel. They brought the Congress into being, and I must wait for their conversion before the Congress can become a purely spinning association.

I do not know what the Maharashtra party will or will not do. It is undoubtedly open to it or anybody else to oppose spinning as an alternative franchise or the wearing of khaddar as part of the franchise. It is equally open to the others to insist on spinning and khaddar being retained. If we do not finally arrive at a practically unanimous agreement, no change is possible before the Congress session at Cawnpore. We may cavil, if we like, at people’s opinions. That would be a sign of intolerance. Each one should have faith in his own programme and must be prepared to work it even single-handed if necessary.

Experience teaches me that there is room for both the programmes in the country,—for spinning and Council-entry. I must, therefore, whilst I retain my own views about Council-entry in the abstract, support those Council-goers who are likely to serve my ideals better, who have greater powers of resistance and greater faith in the wheel and khaddar. These are the Swarajists in general.

A spinning association does become a necessity under the new scheme. But it must be under the Congress patronage so long as the Congress continues to extend it. I have too great a regard for the Congress to want to do without it. It is the one institution that has weathered many a breeze fair or foul. It is the fruit of years of patient labour given to it by educated India. I shall wilfully do nothing to decrease its usefulness.

Lastly, let no one think anything to be a foregone conclusion at



the forthcoming meeting of the A.I.C.C. It is the duty of every member to attend it and come to it with an open mind determined to exercise his or her independent judgment fearlessly and in the best interest of the country.

*Young India*, 20-8-1925

### 199. PUBLIC FUNDS

I have critics who see nothing but flaws in everything I say or do. I profit by their criticism sometimes. But I have also the good fortune to have friends who may be described as guardians of my virtue. They would have me to become a perfect man, and therefore, feel agitated when they think that I have erred, or am likely to err in anything I may say or do. One such well-wisher, whose caution has before now proved to be of the greatest value to me, writes to the following effect:

Within my experience, you have been responsible for collecting subscriptions for several funds, such as for Jallianwala, Satyagraha Sabha, Swadeshi, Swaraj, and now you have fixed yourself up in Bengal for Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Are you satisfied that the previous funds have been well managed, and now the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund will also be properly managed? You owe it to the public to render a full explanation.

The correspondent might have added the Tilak Swaraj Fund, and also the Flood Relief Fund in the South.

The question is pertinent. Even in course of my collection for the Deshbandhu Memorial, those who have paid me handsomely have given me the caution. My general rule is that I never identify myself with any fund where I do not know those who are to operate upon it, and where I am not satisfied about their honesty. The first three funds were raised not by me, or on the strength of any reputation I possess, but they were raised by Mr. Banker, whom even then I knew well and who had a perfect right to use my name. I know, too, that he could have raised all the money that was received on the strength of his own undoubted reputation and service rendered. Fullest accounts were kept of the receipts and disbursements, and were published also, if my recollection serves me right. But, in any event, these are very small accounts.

I have referred to the Tilak Swaraj Fund, although my correspondent has not. I have heard repeated complaints about it. It was the biggest public fund ever raised. I have the clearest conscience about it. The closest scrutiny of the disposal of that fund will show that generally there has been no laxity about its administration, and that there have been far less losses than are incurred by commercial

firms. The latter generally write off 10 p.c. as their book-debts. I have known big South African firms writing off so much as 25 p.c. as a normal thing. In the transactions on the Tilak Swaraj Fund, we have not lost anything near 10 p.c. I doubt if the total losses would amount to 2 p.c. The working treasurer insisted upon vouchers for everything. The accounts have been audited from time to time. They have been published. This is not to say that in some cases there has not been gross misappropriation by Congress workers who were entrusted with funds. This is inevitable where monies have to be disbursed through hundreds of channels. All that is possible is to ensure against the looseness or carelessness on the part of top men. The wonder to me is that, on the whole, it is possible to show as clean a record as we have.

Then take the Jallianwala Bagh Fund. Here, again, there is accurate account-keeping. The accounts have been published also from time to time. The place is well looked after. Pandit Malavyaji may be considered to be the soul of that fund. The place is kept beautifully clean, and from a dung-heap it has been turned into a garden. Complaints, however, have been made that no fitting memorial has yet been raised, and the money is allowed to lie idle. If it is a charge, I must confess that I am perhaps more answerable for it than the others. Even plans have been prepared, but I felt that conditions of the time when the fund was raised were altered immediately after. The Bagh itself has been in some way or other, a bone of contention between different parties. I do not know that we have seen the last of it. The Memorial was to be, as it should be, a memorial of solid communal unity—a triumph out of a tragedy. Hindu, Mussalman and Sikh blood that flowed on that fateful 13th in a mingled stream was to signify an unbreakable union. Where is that union today? It will be time to think of building a memorial when we stand united. For the present, so far as I am concerned, it is enough that the Bagh stands, as a little bit of a lung in crowded Amritsar, with its narrow, tortuous and dirty lanes.

Now, I come to the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. The treasurer of the fund is a host in himself. But I know that he will not be forever possessed of it. It will ultimately vest in the trustees. The five original trustees are nominees of the deceased patriot. Every one of them has a status in society, and a reputation to lose. Some of them are monied men. These five original trustees have added two more. They are, again, men connected not with one public trust but many. One of

them, Sir Nilratan Sircar, is the premier physician of Calcutta, and the other, Mr. S. R. Das, the first cousin of the deceased, is the Advocate-General of Bengal. If these seven trustees are not capable of rendering a good account of themselves, and doing justice to the trust reposed in them, I should despair of any trust succeeding in India. The mansion is there, and I know that Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, another medical trustee and a physician of the first rank is busy evolving plans for putting it to the use for which it is intended. It has been whispered to me that possibly Mr. S. R. Das, being the Advocate-General of Bengal, cannot be trustee. I do not know the law in the matter. I knew that he was Advocate-General of Bengal when he undertook the trust; but if it is an oversight, there will be a trustee appointed in his place who will be equal in reputation to him. If Mr. S. R. Das can remain a trustee, I was privileged to know enough of him to be able to assure the readers that he will neglect nothing to make the administration of the trust thorough success. Up to the moment of his departure for England, it occupied his care and attention. But I feel sure that every one of the original trustees will be as jealous of the memory of the deceased as any can be, and that they will make the proposed hospital and nurses' training institution worthy of his memory. So much for the All-Bengal Deshbandhu Memorial Fund.

About the All-India Memorial Fund, I am myself one of the trustees. The object of the Memorial is nearest to my heart. My fellow-trustees are as well known to the public as any public men. The Secretary is a seasoned soldier, and so is the treasurer, both respectively Secretary and Treasurer of the Congress also.

Let me, however, in conclusion, warn the public that the safety of the public fund lies more even in an intelligent vigilance of the public than in the strict integrity of those who are in charge of funds. Absolute honesty of the trustees is a necessity, but public inertia is a crime. Ignorant criticism must not be mistaken for intelligent vigilance. What I have found generally is ignorant criticism. What I would love to see is, that some public men, with a knowledge of account-keeping, make it a point, now and again, of overhauling the administration of public funds, and bringing the administrators to book.

*Young India*, 20-8-1925

## 200. FOR CHRISTIAN INDIANS

[The other day<sup>1</sup> I was privileged to address what was to be a meeting of Christian Indians predominantly, but what turned out to be a meeting of European Christians predominantly. My address, therefore, took naturally a different shape from what it was to be. Nevertheless, I give below a brief summary of portions of the address, as, in my opinion, it is of interest to know what one who has lived in their midst, amid various scenes and surroundings, has thought about and felt for them. M. K. G.]

When I was a youth, I remember a Hindu having become a convert to Christianity. The whole town understood that the initiation took the shape of this well-bred Hindu partaking of beef and brandy in the name of Jesus Christ and discarding his national costume. I learnt in later years, that such a convert, as so many of my missionary friends put it, came to a life of freedom out of a life of bondage, to a life of plenty out of one of penury. As I wander about throughout the length and breadth of India I see many Christian Indians almost ashamed of their birth, certainly of their ancestral religion, and of their ancestral dress. The aping of Europeans on the part of Anglo-Indians is bad enough, but the aping of them by Indian converts is a violence done to their country and, shall I say, even to their new religion. There is a verse in the New Testament to bid Christians avoid meat if it would offend their neighbours. Meat here, I presume, includes drink and dress. I can appreciate uncompromising avoidance of all that is evil in the old, but where there is not only no question of anything evil but where an ancient practice may be even desirable, it would be a crime to part with it when one knows for certain that the giving up would deeply hurt relatives and friends. Conversion must not mean denationalization. Conversion should mean a definite giving up of the evil of the old, adoption of all the good of the new and a scrupulous avoidance of everything evil in the new. Conversion, therefore, should mean a life of greater dedication to one's own country, greater surrender to God, greater self-purification. Years ago I met the late Kali Charan Banerjee. Had I not known before I went there that he was a Christian, I should certainly not have noticed from the appearance of his home that he was one. It was no different from an ordinary modern Hindu home,—simple and meagre in furniture.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Meeting of Christians", 4-8-1925.

The great man was dressed like an ordinary un-European and Hindu Bengali. I know that there is a marvellous change coming over Christian Indians. There is on the part of a large number of them a longing to revert to original simplicity, a longing to belong to the nation and to serve it, but the process is too slow. There need be no waiting. It requires not much effort, but I was told, and even as I write, I have a letter from a Christian Indian before me telling me that he and his friends find it difficult to make the change, because of the opposition of their superiors. Some of them tell me that they are even jealously watched, and any movement on their part to identify themselves with national movements is strongly condemned. The late Principal Rudra and I used often to discuss this evil tendency. I well remember how he used to deplore it. I am offering a tribute to the memory of a dead friend when I inform the reader that he used often to express his grief that it was too late in life for him to change some of the unnecessary European habits to which he was brought up. Is it not truly deplorable that many Christian Indians discard their own mother tongue, bring up their children only to speak in English? Do they not thereby completely cut themselves adrift from the nation in whose midst they have to live? But they may answer in self-defence that many Hindu and even Mussalmans have become denationalized. The *tu quoque* argument serves no useful purpose. I am writing not as a critic but as a friend who has enjoyed for the past thirty years the closest intimacy with hundreds of Christian Indians. I want my missionary friends and Christian Indians to reciprocate the spirit in which these lines are written. I write in the name and for the sake of heart-unity which I want to see established among the people of this land professing different faiths. In nature there is a fundamental unity running through all the diversity we see about us. Religions are no exception to the natural law. They are given to mankind so as to accelerate the process of realization of fundamental unity.

*Young India*, 20-8-1925

## 201. NOTES

### A DECLARATION ON SWARAJ

An esteemed correspondent has sent me a letter which is so well reasoned and otherwise able that, in spite of my inability to agree with all that is said in it, I should like to publish it. But the correspondent

has himself advanced very cogent reasons for non-publication of the major, and the most interesting, part of his letter. The burden of the letter is to prove to me that my insistence on Hindu-Muslim unity and the manner of achieving it, have really resulted, at least for the time being, in an ever-growing estrangement. He then advises me not to harp upon it any longer and then ends the letter thus:

Now that you know the unexpected results of these acts of commission and omission on your part, let me request you to declare in the most public and unmistakable way that the swaraj you are immediately aiming at for your country is a (modern) democratic raj or government, that the State shall not take note of men's religious beliefs, that there shall be 'no compulsion in religion', that no one shall be debarred from doing anything or going anywhere merely because of his or her birth (as an 'untouchable', 'unapproachable', or 'unseeable', or 'unhearable'), and that *equality of opportunity to all* shall be the motto of the State, including, as a necessary corollary, the policy of *special encouragement to the poor and the backward* of all creeds and communities in accordance with their needs and in proportion to their poverty and backwardness the manner and the degree of the encouragement to be judged on the merits of each individual case and *not* by the accident of birth or the fact of creed alone or at all, or, in short, that a 'free field' to every citizen in his or her life—and no favour nor handicap by reason of birth or creed—shall be the immutable rule for the State in every department to follow.

Secure the acceptance of these principles by the chief communal leaders and you shall have more than half won the battle of unity among the children of *Madar-i-Hind*. But as regards the declaration I have mentioned, you owe it to yourself and to your deluded Hindu and Muslim fellow-countrymen. It would be well if you got the Brothers Ali, too, to make such a declaration on behalf of the Khilafatists.

I have anticipated the advice of the correspondent about Hindu-Muslim unity. I agree that it will do no good for me to be speaking upon it, as I used to. I am satisfied with letting my action speak for itself. So far as the declaration about swaraj is concerned, I accept the advice in full and ask the reader to regard the declaration suggested by the correspondent as my own.

#### A TRAVELLING CHARKHA

The travelling wheel of the Khadi Pratishtan has solved the question of providing an efficient travelling spinning-wheel. I have been using one for the last three months with the greatest satisfaction.

It yields as much to me as the ordinary charkha. I therefore use the same thing, whether at home or travelling. I have been able to use it in a moving train also. It is lighter than the ordinary wheel, and the principle of construction is the same. Success has been attained by making the wheel collapsible. When it is put away, it is an elegant and handy little box, capable of being carried without any effort. Its dimensions when packed up are 16"x6"x6" and the weight is 7 lb. The wheel is made of steel wires. It takes no more than two to three minutes to put it up, and no more to pack it up. By suspending the spindle inside the uprights, rather than the outside, the motion becomes perfectly noiseless and easier. There is also less danger of the spindle being bent. Holders are made of pieces of gut collected out of the breakage of carding guts and, therefore, cost nothing. The guts are held in position by wedges being driven from outside into the receiving poles made in the uprights. The box can accommodate an oil can, simple tools, slivers, etc. The price of this wheel is Rs. 15. Satis Babu informs me that it is possible for him to supply a few only of these charkhas at a time. I bring it to the notice of the readers only for the sake of those who would not suspend their spinning while travelling. I meet so many who give their constant travelling as an excuse for not spinning. This travelling wheel removes any such ground for excuse.

*Young India*, 20-8-1925

## 202. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

[August 20, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Stay in peace at the Ashram. Let me know where you are staying. I have not seen Navibunder but I can draw a mental picture of it. Today I am in Cuttack. I have come to see the tannery. Mahadev and Satis Babu are with me. You must make a

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

complete recovery. I am certain if you stay at Hajira you will be completely all right.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Now we shall meet soon. I shall reach there on the 5th.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9217

### 203. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS PURUSHOTTAM*

*August 20, 1925*

BHAI MATHURADAS,

I was very pleased on reading your letter in which you own up your mistake. This weakness is common. Decisive speech is for him only who never speaks without thinking and who speaks only when it is absolutely necessary. One should use language as sparingly as a miser. Everything will be well since you are firm about it. Today I am in Cuttack and have some leisure, so I am disposing of all pending letters such as yours.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3725

### 204. *LETTER TO KALYANJI MEHTA*

*[August 20, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAI KALYANJI,

I have read your letter to Mahadev. If Parvati wants to see Pragji, she may do so. Does Pragji spin? I would like you to leave Surat and settle in Bardoli. Most certainly open a school. It will be of use if you can run it on your conditions. Here is the message for *Navayug*:

“What message can I send to the Gujaratis? Let Gujarat work at the spinning-wheel, wear khadi, discard foreign cloth and then ask: ‘What shall we do now?’ When the first railway line was laid, there was an obstacle. There was a deep trench. If that could be filled up the railway line could be laid. The engineer said: ‘Fill up the trench’. It

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark



could not be filled up in any way. The men who were trying to fill it up got tired and asked, 'What shall we do now?' 'Fill up the trench,' was the reply received again. They tried but could not fill it up. They asked: 'What now?' Once more they got the reply 'Fill up the trench'. So again basketfuls of rubbish were dumped into it. At last the trench was filled. Stevenson became immortal. I also want to be immortal. So I tell you only one thing: 'Spin and wear khadi'."

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : G.N. 2677

### *205. REMARK IN VISITORS' BOOK*

*August 20, 1925*

It has been a privilege to be able to visit this asylum<sup>1</sup>.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 11017

### *206. INTERVIEW TO "THE ENGLISHMAN"*

*August 21, 1925*

In connection with Dr. Abdulla Suhrawardy's resignation from the Swaraj

Party, Mr. Gandhi who returned to Calcutta from Cuttack on Friday morning was interviewed by a representative of *The Englishman*. Questioned as to whether he would enlighten the public as to Dr. Suhrawardy's resignation, Mr. Gandhi replied:

All I can say is that I am surprised at the resignation. Evidently, all of Dr. Suhrawardy's grievance is purely against me, but I am not a member of the Swaraj Party. He may express all the resentment that he wishes to against me regarding the opinion that I gave at the meeting to which I was invited. But that was my own personal opinion.

So far as I am concerned, I still hold that it was wrong on his part, as it would be wrong on the part of any member of the Swaraj party, to see His Excellency the Governor on the eve of an election which was to be contested on party lines, and in which one like Dr. Suhrawardy stood as the party candidate.

I do not think that anyone at that meeting questioned the right of any member to enjoy the most intimate social relations with His

<sup>1</sup> Leper Asylum, Cuttack

Excellency the Governor or any political opponent, but, if the worthy Doctor's visit was social, the time chosen for it was inopportune and unfortunate.

We are fighting a bureaucracy which is resourceful and, I venture to say, unscrupulous.

I know cases in which Government officials have resorted to temptation, threats and other kinds of pressure to induce men to act against what they knew to be the country's interest.

I cannot, therefore, help saying that it is a healthy rule to prohibit members of the Swaraj Party from meeting or seeing officials without the permission of the Party. Many things have been known to take place at so-called social functions, but as I have said, this is my personal opinion which the Swaraj Party may or may not endorse.

If it is not too late for Dr. Suhrawardy, I would strongly advise him to be content with venting his anger against me, and to remain in the Party to which he has professed loyalty, especially after the death of the Deshbandhu, whose memory he rightly reveres.

*The Englishman*, 22-8-1925

## 207. MY NOTES

### TO THE RESIDENTS OF KUTCH

As I have promised to go to Kutch, residents of Kutch have been asking me about the time of my visit and what are my expectations there. I have been eager to go there ever since I gave the promise. One of the reasons for my eagerness is that I have never been to Kutch, though I have all along wanted to go there. The second reason is that a promise is like a debt, which should be discharged at the earliest opportunity. However, I do not think that I shall now be able to go there before November or perhaps even January.<sup>1</sup> I had expressed this fear even when making the promise. I have to go to Bihar in September or October. After that the southern provinces remain and so too some others. I shall visit whichever of these I can. If that can be postponed, I could go to Kutch in November or December. If this is not possible, it will of course have to be in January.

Now as to my expectations.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji, however, managed to go to Kutch on October 22, 1925; his Kutch tour lasted thirteen days.

I have of course to collect funds for the All-India Deshbandhu Spinning-wheel Memorial. I entertain very high hopes regarding the contribution of Kutch.

I shall also expect not to find anyone there clad in anything but khadi.

I shall expect that there will be no contempt for untouchables there.

I shall expect to see clean schools for these people.

I shall expect Hindu-Muslim unity.

I shall expect to hear *Ramanam* being chanted in every Hindu home.

I shall expect to find that there is a feeling of love between the Ruler and his subjects and that the latter are happy.

I shall expect to find the women clad in pure khadi and having the same steadfastness as Sita

#### THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE "PANCH"<sup>1</sup>

Having seen my advice on taking legal steps in cases where the funds of khadi boards were misappropriated by the members of the Congress itself, a gentleman suggests that justice should be sought through the good offices of the *panch* and also that the idea of the *panch* should be propagated among the people. The idea underlying the *panch* is very dear to me, but those who have been guilty are not likely to accept the verdict of the *panch*. A thief, one finds, yields to punishment; so does a rogue. There is no element of non-violence in letting off either of these types because of our lack of strength. Society has not reached a stage where the practice of punishing persons can be given up. Today, such non-violence seems to be possible only for individuals. Even among individuals, only those who have altogether renounced material possessions can afford to give up all recourse to punishments. In the present case, both those who borrowed money and those who stood guarantee for them have failed to repay the sums borrowed from the Khadi Board. The Board has only one way open to it, and that is to recover the amount even by going to a court of law. A realistic interpretation of the *Gita* too leads to the same conclusion. Of what use was the *smashan panditya*<sup>2</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> Board of arbitration; literally a group of five

<sup>2</sup> Other-worldly philosophy; literally, cremation-ground learning

Arjuna who had used weapons throughout his life? The very fact that he made preparations for the battle showed that he had to fight it. It was his dharma to fight and defend the faith of his age. Similarly, as soon as the Khadi Board lent out public funds it became its dharma to recover the sums by taking the guarantors, etc., to a court of law if the latter proved unworthy. The idea of the *panch* can only function where both parties are prepared to respect its decision. That respect is as good as non-existent now. In this case all that we can do is to go to the law-courts, always being prepared to abide by decisions of the *panch* and making efforts to re-establish the institution. However, before the idea of the *panch* is generally accepted, many individuals will have to practise penance and purify themselves. Let us do this to the best of our ability.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 23-8-1925

## 208. ONE OF THE OWNERS

I meant it when I said that the subscribers of *Navajivan* should regard themselves as its owners. In order to prove this I shall publish here a letter from one such ‘owner’, after sorting out his questions, because he is an ‘owner’, and give a reply.

In spite of the *Navajivan* Trust having saved Rs. 50,000, in comparison with other newspapers and so far as its subscribers were concerned, is it not unfair that these subscribers were given no direct benefit out of this? Every daily, weekly or monthly gives away some literature annually as gifts, why should not *Navajivan* do likewise and give a substantial gift?

Every periodical has its own point of view. The *Navajivan* does not enter into competition with anyone. It is not published for anyone’s personal benefit. Its income is derived solely from its subscriptions. It does not wish to continue its existence by tempting people with gifts. It is prepared to cease publication if intrinsically it is not sufficiently rewarding to the readers. I do not wish to express verbally my disapproval of the policy pursued by ordinary newspapers but I would rather place before them an object lesson by acting in the very opposite direction within my humble capacity. Would the subscribers of *Navajivan* be satisfied by partaking in this

experiment? Let the *Navajivan* set an object-lesson even for those subscriber-owners who are not so satisfied.

*The History of the Satyagraha in South Africa* was published as a supplement to *Navajivan*<sup>1</sup> and later published in the form of a book. Rather than this, would it not have been better if in the very first instance the book had been published and presented to the subscribers or offered to them at a reduced price?

In the first place, *Navajivan* is published on cheap paper; besides, as the supplement also contains other matter, the portion containing the history could not be separated from the rest. Only readers of *Navajivan* would have the advantage of reading it, the pages would get crumpled if many people read it and it would not remain in a fit condition to be filed. If instead a book were brought out, many people could read it. Only a handful of persons read the *Navajivan*, but many would like to read a book and yet a book would not get crumpled. It could be read at any time. The more it is read, the more would people come to know of it. In spite of this why is there such parsimony and lack of foresight in an institution which is run under your control? How difficult it is for one with a meagre income like myself to incur this double expense! Has the ideal of supplying good literature at low prices been adhered to here?

*The History of the Satyagraha in South Africa* has not been completely written. Only a few chapters were written in prison.<sup>2</sup> I spare some time for this purpose and write a chapter each week for the readers of *Navajivan*. If I had intended to publish it in book form in the very first instance, I would not to this day have been able to present anything to the public. Moreover, its price would have been higher. The poorest readers of *Navajivan* read it in libraries. Some share a copy with others. A gentleman supplies some poor persons with copies at a reduced price or even free of charge. This correspondent should carefully preserve his own copy and have it bound himself. The ability to preserve the smallest things with care is included among the fine characteristics of virtuous poverty. *Navajivan* is thrifty to the extent that some people work for it, spending money out of their own pockets.

What, however, should be said to this owner? He buys *Navajivan*

<sup>1</sup> From April 1924 onwards; it was published in book form in 1924-25, in Gujarati.

<sup>2</sup> Yeravda Central Prison, Poona, where Gandhiji was imprisoned from March 1922 to February 1924

and is content with merely reading it. Some owners add to their wealth, others lose it. Some promote morality, others help its decline. Some make you laugh, others make you cry; some pull you towards swaraj, others push you towards foreign rule. It is clear that the ownership of *Navajivan* brings no wealth. It is clear on the other hand that its ownership makes the subscribers poorer. But is there anything suprising in this? Should I not be regarded as its principal owner? I have to buy stamps from other departments for posting articles for *Navajivan*. Sometimes, I have to send even telegrams. I can give at least this assurance to the subscribers that I have to spend more than what they do. And, I am not the only one who has to do so. My other colleagues are also in a similar predicament. And is it not sufficient that one applies the same rule to oneself that one applies to others? The subscribers have no more responsibility after paying the annual subscription. What, however, is the plight of the honorary manager-cum-proprietor? To buy *Navajivan* is to take the road of swaraj, to chant the praises of the spinning-wheel. To sell it is to deal in truth and non-violence. I have no desire, whatsoever, to offer other temptations in order to find subscribers.

You say that *Navajivan* is not a means of making money. Its readers must regard themselves as its proprietors. These, however, are only your ideas. Should they be not put into practice? Does saving Rs. 50,000 not amount to making money? If in spite of this, the subscribers do not get any benefit from it, what then is the meaning of proprietorship? Is this not doing injustice to those who subscribe to *Navajivan*, by cutting down other expenses?

I still maintain that *Navajivan* is not a means of making money. Fifty thousand rupees may be regarded as money earned if the organizers make use of that amount. There are five thousand subscribers of *Navajivan* today; previously there were 30,000. If *Navajivan* can attract the same number of subscribers again, I would not reduce its price but rather resume using the one pice saved per subscriber for public welfare and look upon its subscriber-owners as having gained something in this way.

Actually the 'Prakashan Mandir'<sup>1</sup> owes a debt of gratitude to *Navajivan*. Would you please accept it as a fact that the former is therefore indirectly grateful to the subscribers of *Navajivan*? Despite this, why should there be

<sup>1</sup> Navajivan Publishing House

such a preferential treatment that books published by the Mandir should be given to its customers at a reduced price, while subscribers of *Navajivan* should have to pay a higher price? Why should we also not get at reduced price the books that we require? What fault have those persons committed who have been subscribing to *Navajivan* continuously for the last six years?

I did not conceive the plan of having cheap publications. The manager<sup>1</sup> of the press conceived it, although it is being carried out with my approval. Such publishing activity would certainly appeal to me. When the press had less work to do for the weeklies, this scheme came into being with the idea that it would have at least some work in its spare time. In doing so, the press receives payment at the market rate and, in return, undertakes to shoulder the entire responsibility free of any charge, the subscribers of *Navajivan* do not have to do so. Consequently, it is but proper that only those who are the customers of the Mandir get the benefit of the reduced price. Those who have been subscribing to *Navajivan* for the last six years have gained a lot by way of the weekly reading material they get.

Shall I tell you of how I was deceived like the client of a lawyer of Lyallpur?<sup>2</sup> I was cheated only because of the appeal in *Navajivan* to encourage the Swadeshi Bhandar, Ltd., in Nadiad. It is a mistake to believe that your son is like you and so be deceived, but, how could one disbelieve the facts that are mentioned in your newspaper? I bought five shares of Rs. 10/- each. A poor person like me invested half his capital in it with a view to encourage swadeshi and at the same time earn some interest on it. What was the result of this? Let alone receiving an interest, although it is three years since the company was liquidated I have not yet recovered a single pie. In spite of having written as many as three times to Master Co. and the Bhandar I have received no reply as to how the liquidation has proceeded. I wrote a letter appealing to Gokuldas Talati in this connection, yet he too did not reply to it. Do you regard it as proper that the liquidators of the Bhandar thus refrain from giving a reply and even a person like Shri Talati does not look into the matter and send a reply? Have you nothing to say to them? How shall we be able to get on if we do not have even this much organizational responsibility and honest intention? Just as *Navajivan* had published an appeal for the Bhandar, could it not after looking into the affair explain who was to blame for the liquidation, whether there was any mismanagement and whether the organizers or others thought only of filling their own purses?

I do not know of the circumstances of the Nadiad Swadeshi Bhandar. If that Bhandar has gone into liquidation, if it has been guilty of dishonesty and if I had given a testimonial to it, I was

<sup>1</sup> Swami Anandanand

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* Vol. XXVII, pp. 259-62.

undoubtedly a party to the sin. It indicates my lack of knowledge. I have often admitted that I am liable to err. If the number of times that I have proved to be correct adds up to more than the number of my mistakes, what I say should to that extent carry weight. The better way is not to rely on testimonials given by others but to trust one's own experience. However, as this is not always possible, the world will be led to believe in testimonials and be deceived sometimes. I do not know if any fraud has been practised in the Nadiad Bhandar. I invite the organizers to give an explanation. I do not even know what kind of a certificate I gave it. I do not carry files along with me on my tours.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 23-8-1925

### 209. *TEMPLES FOR THE UNTOUCHABLES*

I have already expressed my views regarding temples for the untouchables. In my opinion the value of all temples is determined by the penance that underlies them. For instance, if a licentious or cruel man builds temples at various places in order to help or hide his sins, they do not acquire sancity because they have the name or form of temples. As against this, if a few devout persons put in their own labour, build a hut of mud and straw, install an image and constantly meditate there, this would be a place of pilgrimage as compared to the jewel-studded edifice called a temple raised by the loose liver. Following the same line of thought, I believe that temples for the untouchables would be worth while only if our untouchable brothers contributed the largest share in the form of labour, in building these. I gave such advice to our untouchable brothers and sisters in Lathi<sup>1</sup> and they have acted on it too. They contributed money and ornaments at that very meeting. I suggested the following conditions: The State should contribute a sum equal to that collected by our untouchable brothers. I should raise an amount equal to these two amounts put together. A trust should be formed for the temple, consisting of one trustee representing the untouchables, one representing the State and a third representing me. If this is done the temple would have a good organization, some sentiment would attach to it and our untouchable brothers would have the facility to practise

<sup>1</sup> A small town in Saurashtra; then capital of a princely State



their faith. The facility for a school, etc., in the temple was also kept in view. I hope that the untouchable brothers of Lathi have not given up efforts begun by them.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 23-8-1925

### *210. MORE QUESTIONS*

The correspondent who has posed the question appearing in today's leading article has also, in that very letter, asked some other separate questions which I quote below:

Was it not a mistake on the part of Pandit Malaviyaji not to accept the offer held out by the State of Alwar, allowing him to carry out alone an independent inquiry? Is it not unworthy of a leader of the status of Panditji to forgo the opportunity for investigation that was granted to him, by being cowed down because of the financial assistance offered by the State, relinquishing one's duty and hesitating to show his courage publicly?

What I wrote about Panditji was based on what I had read in the newspapers. The correspondent has hastily formed a wrong opinion. Panditji did not get permission to go and investigate in Alwar. The officials of the Alwar Ruler have acted much like General Dyer and the Ruler, by preventing a public inquiry, has acted in an autocratic manner and has taken the shine out of his crown. Panditji is not such a coward as to forgo the opportunity for investigating if it is given to him. No one should imagine even in his dreams that Panditji would sell his soul for the sake of money.

I find the following suggestion of yours to be improper, viz., that a husband and wife should tolerate each other's dharma even if they are opposed and in order to do so the husband should even get foreign clothes for her. If the wife disobeys the husband, under what law should the latter obey the former? In the case of a reformed couple who drink liquor, if the husband gives it up later and asks his wife to do likewise, should he obtain it for her if she refuses to give it up? You yourself have often compared burning of foreign cloth with giving up liquor, why then do you give such advice? Is this not the very opposite of knowledge? The husband may possibly get for her Indian mill-made clothes but certainly not foreign ones.

The dharma of the husband and the wife towards each other is full of perils. A Hindu husband seems to think that a wife is a chattel.

I have heard monster-like husbands referring to the wives as their property. What should we say to those who claim that the wife should immediately understand and put into practice any changes made by the husband in his way of life?

Does not the wife have an individuality too ?

Damayanti<sup>1</sup> had it, Mirabai<sup>2</sup> showed that she too had. The dharma of a married couple is not an easy one. The children of a suppressed woman would also be likewise suppressed. A devotee of khadi has to tolerate the foreign clothes of others; he should similarly tolerate those of his wife. Supposing my wife and I are meat-eaters; later I become purified and give up meat. Must my wife, therefore, give it up too? Or, should I persuade her and reason with her, asking her to give it up? Supposing I force her to give it up and later crave for meat, should my wife start eating meat again? How is widowhood any worse than having one's husband alive under such circumstances? Even Mandodari,<sup>3</sup> who was the wife of a demon enjoyed freedom. Draupadi used to scold the Pandavas. Even a husband like Bhima<sup>4</sup> became meek in front of Draupadi. What could we not say of Sita's husband? Rama was worshipped because of Sita. No force can be used in the matter of dharma. Dharma is like the edge of a sword. Shri Krishna's words "what action should one perform" should be construed as "what dharma should one pursue". Even the poets, that is learned men, have yielded to the fascination of searching for its import. I am a true devotee of khadi and yet believe that I have no right to force my wife to take to khadi. The mutual love of husband and wife is not something gross. Through it one gets a glimpse of the love of the soul for God. Such love can never be sensual. Only animals yield to their senses. We call it animal behaviour. Force has no place where there is pure love. Where there is pure love each respects the beliefs of the other and both go forward on the path of dharma.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 23-8-1925

<sup>1</sup> Wife of King Nala, in *Mahabharata*

<sup>2</sup> A sixteenth-century saint-poetess of Rajasthan

<sup>3</sup> Wife of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, in the *Ramayana*

<sup>4</sup> One of the five Pandavas in *Mahabharata*

## 211. LETTER TO NANABHAI ICHCHHARAM MASHRUWALA

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,

*Bhadra Sud 4 [August 23, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI NANABHAI,

I have your letter. I shall surely go there whenever I find time. Whether or no the country does something, we must keep on doing our work. That is the easiest way of educating people. The conduct of the Amravati lawyers only betrays our weakness.

I shall definitely go over when I find time. But I at present have no moment to spare; so I am helpless. Invitations continue to pour in from many quarters, but I can accept none.

Tell me of everything that happens there.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 1170a. Courtesy: Sushilaben Gandhi

## 212. LETTER TO SUDHIR RUDRA

148, RUSSA ROAD,  
CALCUTTA,  
*August 25, 1925*

MY DEAR SUDHIR,

As my left hand refuses to work, I am dictating this little note. Charlie Andrews tells me that you are moody and have given way to grief. It is unworthy of Sushil Rudra's son. If father is no more with us in body, is he not with us in the spirit and possibly more so? Let us all translate into our own lives all his noblest qualities and we need not grieve over the dissolution of the body.

With love,

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

From the typewritten original: C.W. 6094. Courtesy: Mrs. Rajmohini Rudra

<sup>1</sup> The year is deduced from the fact that in 1925 Gandiji was in Calcutta, staying at 148, Russa Road.

### 213. SPEECH AT Y.M.C.A., CALCUTTA<sup>1</sup>

August 25, 1925

At a meeting of the College Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association, Calcutta, Gandhiji was called upon to speak, last month, on a subject he had not thought of before. There was evidently some misunderstanding. He was under the impression that he had to speak on 'Village Organization' whereas he was asked to speak on 'Value and Possibility of Personality' a subject which puzzled him a little. But he came to a compromise and spoke on the subject of the evening incidentally touching on the subject of village organization too.

If personality meant character, as he had no doubt it did, then almost anyone could be got to address on the value of character. Bhartrihari, king, philosopher and poet rolled into one, thus summed up the power of character: 'What will not *satsang* do for a man?'

Character should be lived into one's own life. He who places purity of public life before anything else and say that a nation which disregarded purity of public life was doomed to perdition. Village organization seemed a simple word, but it meant the organization of the whole of India, inasmuch as India was predominantly rural. Sir Henry Maine had left a work on Village Communities which everyone might treasure. He had shown to India and to the world that the village life of India today was what it was five thousand years ago, which did not imply that the Indians were barbarous. On the contrary, the writer had made it clear that the Indian village life had so much vitality and character that it had persisted all these long years and weathered many a storm. He had described these villages as so many village republics completely self-contained, having all that one may want—schools, arbitration boards, sanitation boards, and no Poor Law, indeed, but ample provision for the relief of the poor.

He had also shown the treasures of art that the genius of the Indian villager had produced. The villager then learnt from his parents by word of mouth all the wisdom that he should learn. In daily contact with people, he was able to realize the value and possibility of personality. To him the village headman was a personality in himself. He was not the impostor of today; he was the servant of the people whom they could go to in times of difficulties, whom every child in the village knew and loved. He was incorruptible, he was a gentleman. But such a one was a rare bird today. The speaker asked with a sigh:

What has come over this land that all these beautiful things are not to be found anywhere, that instead of those self-contained villages

<sup>1</sup> Admission for the meeting, held in the Overtoun Hall, was by tickets and the gate money was donated to the All-Bengal Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Rev. Dr. W. S. Urquhart presided.

of a few hundred years ago we find villages dependent for their very necessities of life on Lancashire or Japan?

The whole village life was broken. People were dying by millions of malaria, hookworm and other diseases, all brought about by insanitation, deep poverty, sloth and idleness. What created this disruption and brought about this downfall? One might search the records of the East India Company and see for oneself how ruthlessly the village system was broken up by means mainly foul. Men who had served the East India Company had left imperishable records of how injustice, bribery and corruption reigned supreme in those days, and how relentlessly the handicrafts of India were ruined. A famine or a flood left the villagers absolutely destitute. But why should a village flooded be absolutely stranded and compelled to live on charity? The speaker had known the effects of flood in South Africa. There no relief was necessary. They had not to be fed by the State. They had cottage occupations. They worked. They had savings to fall back upon. Here there was no occupation save agriculture, no work and no savings, unemployment for four months and even six months in the year in the villages of Bengal. That was a problem, before village organizers and in the solution of that problem, the speaker said, the power of personality could be made to be felt. Summing up, the speaker said:

I say go with your character to the villages and express it through some loving act of service or kindness. It will be instinctively understood and responded to. Let any young man who has a character to save venture out to the villages and he will get a response. But he will have to be patient and truthful. There is no character where there is no patience and truth and gentleness and humility. He will not go out as a patron saint of the villages, he will have to go in humility with a broom-stick in his hand. There is a Trinity of Evil—insanitation, poverty and idleness—that you will have to be faced with and you will fight them with broom-sticks, quinine and castor oil and, if you will believe me, with the spinning-wheel. But all these will not help you without character. You must come down from your high pedestals, stoop to conquer, take the risk of catching malaria yourself. This work will give you all the satisfaction that your soul can desire. It will enrich the villagers' life and your life.

*Young India*, 17-9-1925

## 214. INTERVIEW TO INDIAN PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

CALCUTTA,  
August 26, 1925

Mr. Gandhi agreed whole-heartedly about “the unconscious factor”, but he thought that the suggestion put forward by Major Berkeley Hill would not have the desired effect. He thought that cow killing was not the most important factor. There were many more factors involved in the problem, all of which could [not] be tackled from the stand-point of “the unconscious”. The problem should be taken up by individual workers with reference to different provincial conditions and not in an amateurish manner. The feeling against cow-killing was strongest in Bihar and United Provinces. It is a problem from the past, requiring a life’s study of several workers. He wanted the members to take up this work on the lines suggested. He was not a specialist in the line and could not undertake such work himself. He kept an open mind and would give his attention to all suggestions of a practical nature.

He was at present in a state of “collapse” so far as the solution of Hindu-Muslim Unity was concerned. He left the thing to nature. He believed that one, two, three pitched battles would convince the masses of the futility of such fights which were being engineered by the local and quarrelsome sections of both the communities. He had no power over these men. He believed that Hindu-Muslim Unity was coming fast like swaraj and that India was passing through a crisis.

*The Hindu*, 29-8-1925

<sup>1</sup> The members of the Society met Gandhiji at 148, Russa Road, at 3.30 p.m. Earlier they had sent him the text of a lecture by Major Owen Berkely Hill, Superintendent of the Ranchi European Mental Hospital, who had observed that the efforts hitherto made in uniting the Hindus and Muslims had failed because “the uncosconscious factor” involved in the problem had been neglected. The cow in his opinion was a “totem” for the Hindus, and as such was the repository of unconscious ambivalent feelings. When a cow was killed a large amount of his repressed emotion was let loose and was responsible for the trouble. He suggested that if a suitable symbolic animal could be devised, and if Hindus and Muslims could meet on a common platform, and participate in the sacrifice of this symbol, the tension could be relieved. The members of the Society sought Gandhiji’s views on this thesis.

## 215. NOTES

### “SANATANA” HINDU

I have a correspondent who always brings me to book for the slightest negligence on my part. He is evidently a regular student of *Young India*, but no blind admirer. Here is a candid but friendly critic, and, if he sees something good in my writings, he detects also errors. One of his letters drawing attention to a possible inconsistency in my writings has long remained in my file. One portion of it deals with the definition of ‘*sanatana* Hindu’. Here is the letter:

You have often declared yourself a *sanatana* Hindu, defining one as a believer in the Vedas, *Smritis* etc., and laid emphasis on the institution of castes by birth as legitimately following from those ‘scriptures’. Of course you limit the number of castes to the supposed pristine four. (I say ‘supposed pristine’ advisedly—for, even as early as the times of the production of Manu [’s] and other *Smritis*, there had been already so many castes evolved out of and recognized over and above the ideal four, although, be it noted, inter-dining and intermarriage amongst them all had not yet come to be interdicted.) Now the fourth or, last in order of the ‘fundamental’ castes, is the Sudra, which is debarred by those very ‘scriptures’ a belief in which you regard as the *sine qua non* of a *sanatana* Hindu, as well as by their ‘twice-born’ professors, from studying or reciting the Divine Vedas including the *Gayatri*, a recitation of which you mention as obligatory upon a *sanatana* Hindu (without distinction of caste). So the question arises: How can anyone (e.g., a Sudra) be said to belong to a religion (viz., Hinduism as defined by you), if the mere reading, reciting or even the hearing of its scripture is tabooed to him, as though it were a sacrilege? How can you expect a man to be a swimmer without letting him step into water? Either one who is born a Sudra cannot be a *sanatana* Hindu in your sense, or else a *sanatana* Hindu must be something very different from what you define one to be. (I refer you to your old article on ‘*Hindusism*’ in 1921 and your address to the cow conference at Belgaum as printed in *Young India*, 29-1-’25). I for one, who am a Brahmin by birth, cannot glory in the name of ‘Hindu’ so long as an exemplar of *real sanatana* dharma like you permits the term to cover a bundle of contradictions like the one I have pointed out. Lastly, in view of your mention of *Gayatri*, may I humbly inquire whether you have in your ‘twice-born’ life never omitted to include the *Gayatri* in your daily prayers?”

I am not a literalist. Therefore, I try to understand the spirit of the various scriptures of the world. I apply the test of Truth and Ahimsa laid down by these very scriptures for interpretation. I reject what is inconsistent with that test, and I appropriate all that is consistent with it. The story of a Sudra having been punished by Ramachandra for daring to learn the Vedas I reject as an

interpolation. And in any event, I worship Rama, the perfect being of my conception, not a historical person, facts about whose life may vary with the progress of new historical discoveries and researches. Tulsidas had nothing to do with the Rama of history. Judged by historical test, his *Ramayana* would be fit for the scrap heap. As a spiritual experience, his book is almost unrivalled, at least for me. And then too, I do not swear by every word that is to be found in so many editions published as the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas. It is the spirit running through the book that holds me spell-bound. I cannot myself subscribe to the prohibition against Sudras learning the Vedas. Indeed, in my opinion, at the present moment, we are all predominantly Sudras so long as we are serfs. Knowledge cannot be the prerogative of any class or section. But I can conceive the impossibility of people assimilating higher or subtler truths, unless they have undergone preliminary training, even as those who have not made preliminary preparations are quite unfit to breathe the rarefied atmosphere in high altitudes, or those who have no preliminary training in simple mathematics are unfit to understand or assimilate higher geometry or algebra. Lastly, I believe in certain healthy conventions. There is a convention surrounding the recitation of the *Gayatri*. The convention is that it should be recited only at stated times and after ablutions performed in the prescribed manner. As I believe in those conventions, and as I am not able always to conform to them, for years past I have followed the later Saints, and therefore have satisfied myself with the *Dwadasha Mantra* of the Bhagavata or the still simpler formula of Tulsidas and a few selections from the *Gita* and other works, and a few *bhajans* in Prakrit. These are my daily spiritual food—my *Gayatri*. They give me all the peace and solace I need from day to day.

#### WHERE IS IT ?

The same correspondent writes:

‘Where is it ?’ Where is Lohani? Echo still answers: Where? (Please see *Young India*, 30-4-’25, p. 150.) On two or three previous occasions, I remember, you published complaints from some Mussalmans alleging unholy hands to have been laid on their mosques by Hindus, but subsequently, on enquiry, you were forced to admit that the complaints were groundless; yet you failed or forgot then to specify the disproved cases and withdraw the published charges formally enough. Now, I fear the complaint about ‘Lohani’ is the latest of such inventions. If you refer to *Young India* 12-3-’25, p. 91, you will



be reminded that the Lohani complaint was the only one which was picked out by you for publication out of a mass of other allegations that were made by your Muslim correspondent, but rejected by you as ‘unsupported’. And now, what about that chosen one? *Does Lohani exist?* If so, is the allegation well-founded? If not, will you please wash your hands of the *patak*<sup>1</sup> by publishing a vicarious retraction at least as prominently as you did the original complaint, and that as early as possible?

I have removed the two or three concluding sentences which betray a style somewhat more energetic than the writer usually adopts. I must inform the readers that, in spite of very diligent inquiry from the original complainant and all those to whom he referred me, I have failed to identify the place in the map of India. As I have ceased to regard myself as an expert or an authority on the Hindu-Muslim question, I need not dwell upon the other points raised by the correspondent. It is with reluctance that I have found room at all for the paragraph. I felt that I was in honour bound to inform the readers of the result of my enquiry about Lohani.

#### THE CATTLE PROBLEM

Mr. Andrews has sent me the following cutting for disposal:

‘What other country on earth pays such a staggering price for the veneration of an animal?’ asks the June issue of *The Round Table*, the quarterly review of the politics of the British Commonwealth. Figures are supplied by the article entitled ‘The Disabilities of Rural India’, showing that the annual economic loss ‘is greater than the total revenue of British India’,—an economic waste which is ‘almost unbelievable’. The article referred to points out that ‘the regard, even veneration, which some of the people have for all forms of animal life prevents them from restricting its multiplication, even when it comes into direct economic competition with men for the produce of the soil, or makes it impossible for him to develop it to its full capacity’, and the following are the figures representing India’s ‘staggering price’ for cow-veneration:

What surplus oxen cost India.	Rs. 1,15,20,00,000
What surplus cows cost India.	Rs. 61,20,00,000
Total	Rs. 1,76,40,00,000

This amount calculated at Rs.15 to the £ equals £117,600,000. The annual land revenue for British India, we are told, amounts to 36 crores of rupees, so that the annual economic loss due to surplus cattle is over four times the land revenue.

<sup>1</sup> Sin

There is no doubt that, like the growing poverty of India, the cattle problem is growing more and more serious. But the cattle problem of India is, for the vast majority of the population—the Hindus, the problem of cow-protection, taking the expression in its broad sense. There is, therefore, no doubt that we shall have to pay ‘a staggering price’ for ever. If we have no ‘cow-veneration’, we could make short work of all the surplus and dilapidated cattle, and save the seventeen hundred and sixty-four millions of rupees which the writer has dished out for us. Similarly, no doubt, we could free this land from poverty by killing out all the surplus population, all the diseased, all the weaklings, and a few thousands of us may then live on this vast surface of the earth, with a few pistols or some more quickly-working weapon of destruction for ridding ourselves of those men and animals, ferocious or otherwise, whom we may regard as a burden. But in India, like the poor and the diseased everywhere, we shall have to have our brethren the cattle also, and we must, therefore, solve the cattle problem, as the poverty problem, along our own, or as some might say, superstitious lines. I have endeavoured to show the way in my address to the Cow-Protection Conference. Within the limitations prescribed by religious sentiment, we must adopt the latest scientific methods. We must resort to scientific castration, we must find out an economical method of feeding our cattle, we must take the maximum of service consistently with the welfare of the cattle, we must increase the milk supply from the existing cows and buffaloes, and we must make the best economical use of the hides of all dead cattle. If we succeed in doing these things, we shall have gone a long way towards solving the cattle problem.

There will still have to be a price paid for religious sentiment, but a religious sentiment is not worth the name if it is not worth paying for. The money that is daily being paid in the name of cow-protection blindly and in utter ignorance of scientific facts can be well utilized for the purposes above mentioned. It will make no direct return, but it will, under better conditions, prevent the wicked waste that is going on, and certainly save thousands of cattle from the butcher’s knife to which they fall victim, not because of Mussalman or English cussedness, but because of Hindu stupidity. Today, because of our ignorance and slothfulness, millions of human beings and millions of cattle are dying of semi-starvation—a sad reflection upon religious India.

## STEADY PROGRESS

The reader will remember my note on the progress made in eleven days in spinning at Satyashram, in Baherok. I have now another letter showing further progress, which I reproduce below:

Perhaps you remember my last letter re the progress I made in spinning within 11 days. I am glad to inform you that we have been continuing the practice of spinning in competition almost every day. In the last four years, all our work would stop when the rains would set in, as the country at that time becomes a vast sheet of water. But since your last visit, we have been making steady progress in our work, in spite of the inelement weather of the rainy season.

The total amount of yarn produced in the locality, which was only 1 or 2 seers at the time of your visit, has reached up to half a maund per month. The progress made by the boys of the national school is much more encouraging. The speed of a boy of 16 has come up to 730 yards of 15 counts per hour. The quality of the yarn is also appreciably improved.

As regards the wheels, they are the same machines shown to you in the demonstration held in the Ashram compound. We have only changed the spindles. We hope to make further progress. May we have your sympathy and blessings?

If the authorities continue their faith in the spinning-wheel unabated, I have very little doubt that progress in spinning will also be continuous.

## CONGRESS YARN

A correspondent from Conjeeveram writes:

You have introduced a new factor into our politics, and that is khaddar. The common people have evinced very great interest in working it up. Up to the end of April, 1925 eighteen thousand yards of yarn have been sent as subscription. But the senders do not know what has become of the yarn. Neither the district nor the provincial Committees inform as to what is going on. Could we send subscriptions direct to you?

Another correspondent from Burra Bazar writes:

I regularly send the yarn I spin to my District Congress Committee. But the answer to the question what is being done to it is that it is being eaten up by the rats. I would like you to enquire into this and provide a remedy.

I have picked up samples out of the many complaints received by me. I have no authority to receive subscriptions. I can receive donations of yarn as I do from every part of India. But subscriptions

must go to authorized channels. It is, however, in order to remedy such defects that the proposal to form an All-India Spinners' Association has been made by me. Through it, if the Congress retains spinning as an optional part of the franchise and appoints the proposed body as its agency to receive spinning subscriptions, the defects mentioned can be obviated. Anyway, I have no doubt that some solution will be found by the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. Meanwhile, I commend the complaints to their respective Committees for attention.

*Young India, 27-8-1925*

## 216. AGE OF CONSENT

Mrs. Dorothy Jinarajadasa has issued a circular letter upon a Bill before the Legislative Assembly, whose object is to raise the Age of Consent at least to 14. She has favoured me with a copy of the circular letter which I reproduce below:

I am writing to ask you if you can use your influence to obtain support for the Children's Protection Act that is coming up in the Legislative Assembly during the next session. I think very strongly that, if India is to be a great nation honoured and respected among the nations of the world, the blot of child motherhood must be removed from her.

Last time the Bill came up, it received a very great deal of support in the country and in the Assembly, and I think that during the next session, there will not be much difficulty in passing it, if only we get a certain amount of expression of public opinion from the people. To my certain knowledge, there are quite a large number of meetings being held all over the country, especially my women, supporting this Bill, and I am sure that it is in line with the wishes of the majority of women that the age for the consummation of marriage for little girls should be raised to at least 14.

I am sure that it would be a considerable help to the passage of the Bill if you could express your opinion strongly in support of it and also urge on men and women the importance of both supporting the Bill and living up to its principles in daily practice.

I must confess that I am ignorant of the Bill but I am strongly in favour of raising the Age of Consent not merely to 14, but even to 16. Whilst, therefore, I can say nothing about the text of the Bill, I should heartily endorse any movement whose object is to save innocent girls of tender age from man's lust. A so-called marriage rite

ought no longer to confer legality upon an immoral and inhuman act which consummation even at the age of 14, in my humble opinion, undoubtedly is. Sanskrit texts of doubtful authority cannot be invoked<sup>1</sup> to sanctify a practice which is in itself immoral. I have witnessed the ruin of the health of many a child-mother, and when, to the horrors of an early marriage is added enforced early widowhood, human tragedy becomes complete. Any sensible legislation in the direction of raising the Age of Consent will certainly have my approval. But I am painfully conscious of the fact that even the existing legislation has proved abortive for want of public opinion to support it. The task before the reformer in this, as in many other directions, is most difficult. Constant and continuous agitation is necessary if any real impression is to be made on the Hindu public. I wish every success to those who are engaged in the noble task of rescuing Indian girls from premature old age and early death, and Hinduism from being responsible for bringing into being rickety weaklings.

*Young India*, 27-8-1925

### 217. SWARAJ OR DEATH

The following<sup>2</sup> is printed not for its intrinsic worth but for the earnestness of the writer whom I know, and for the reason that many people hold similar views:

There is some truth in the correspondent's reasoning. But he is wholly wrong in imputing all evil to the Government. After all, is there not a great deal of truth in the saying that a people get the Government they deserve? If we had not been a people easily duped and as easily subdued, we would not have succumbed to the blandishments or the force of the East India Company and given up hand-spinning or khaddar. If the Hindus and Mussalmans had been living like brothers, the British satraps could not have divided us. And it is libellous to blame the Government for the existence of untouchability. Probably, if the Government had no fear of a revolt of orthodoxy, they would have made short work of untouchability long ago. I do not know a single case in which the Government have obstructed that reform. The correspondent is wrong in imputing

<sup>1</sup> The Source has "involved."

<sup>2</sup> For the text of this letter, *vide* Appendix I.

blame to the British Government for the Vaikom business. It is solely due to the timidity of the indigenous Government. I am no lover of the existing system of Government. But I shall fail to destroy it if, in my rage, I lose the faculty for discrimination. 'Give the devil his due' is a sound proverb worth bearing in mind.

But I fully suspect that, when khaddar becomes powerful enough to oust foreign cloth, the Government will probably endeavour to kill it. I refuse to believe that it is or need be a rebel's dress. What is true is that there is a subtle propaganda against khaddar in Government circles. I am told that the wearing of khaddar places the wearer under observation. He cannot get the facilities he would otherwise get in Government circles. But there is nothing to prevent the general body of people from adopting khaddar. Surely swaraj will not drop from the clouds. It will be the fruit of patience, perseverance, ceaseless toil, courage and an intelligent appreciation of the environment. Even the 'divine agency' of which the correspondent writes will be available to prayerful toil, not laziness of mind or body. Prayer without labour is like faith without works—a Dead Sea apple. Whilst, therefore, we may not have complete exclusion of foreign cloth, we might at least make a 'decent show' of khaddar before swaraj is won. What is, there, for instance, to prevent Congressmen from wearing khaddar on all occasions or from spinning? Or are they to be expected to wear khaddar and spin after swaraj is established? Are we angels merely waiting for the establishment of national Government to flap our wings? We may not have an ideal communal unity before swaraj. But what is there to prevent a workable unity? Is it not rather a fact that we distrust one another too much really to desire swaraj?

The correspondent's mistake lies in his misconception of the function of Government. He evidently thinks that an ideal Government is that which orders everything for us so that we need not even think for ourselves. Whereas, in truth, a Government that is ideal governs the least. It is no self-government that leaves nothing for the people to do. That is pupillage—our present state. My correspondent is evidently unable as yet to rise superior to that. But, if we are to attain swaraj, a large number of us must outgrow enforced nonage and feel our adolescence. We must govern ourselves at least where there is no deadly opposition from armed authority. The triple programme is the test of our capacity for self-government. If we impute all our

weaknesses to the present Government, we shall never shed them.

The correspondent reminds me of a statement made by me at Belgaum that, probably, at the end of the year, if there is not much headway made, I would find a way whereby we could make our final choice and say 'Death or Swaraj'. He has evidently in mind some strange upheaval in which all distinction between violence and non-violence will be abolished. Such confusion will most assuredly lead to self-indulgence [which] is not self-rule. Self-indulgence is anarchy, and though anarchy is every time better than slavery or suppression of self, it is a state which I would not only have no hand in consciously bringing into being, but which I am by nature unfitted to bring about. Any method of 'Death or Swaraj' that I may suggest will always avoid confusion and anarchy. My swaraj will be, therefore, not a result of murder of others, but a voluntary act of continuous self-sacrifice. My swaraj will not be a bloody usurpation of rights but the acquisition of power. It will be a beautiful and natural fruit of duty well and truly performed. It will, therefore, provide amplest excitement of the Chaitanya type, not of the Nero type. I have no formula at the present moment, but with my correspondent I share the belief that it will be a divine guidance. I am awaiting the sign. It can come, often does come, when the horizon is the blackest. But I know that it will be preceded by the rise of a class of young men and women who will find full excitement in work, work and nothing but work for the nation.

*Young India*, 27-8-1925

## 218. KHADDAR WORKERS' CENSUS

The following figures will speak for themselves. I am glad almost all the important centres have expedited their reports.

M. K. G.

No. full											Total
time Gra-	Paid or	Maxi-	Mini	Ave-	Remu-	Centre	workers	duates	Hon.		
mum	mum	rage	neration								
<hr/>											
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.								
1.Tamil Nad											
Khadi Board	22	1	Paid	80	15	32-4-4	710				
2. All India											
Khadi Board	24	8	2H+22P	150	10	64-8-0	1,504				
3. Khadi Pratish-											
than Bengal	88	13	4H+84P	100	10	26	2,345				
4. Gujarat Khadi											
Mandal	32	5	Paid	100	15	43-12	1,402				
5. Punjab Khadi											
Board	15	1	Paid	150	20	50	750				
6. C.P. (Hindi)											
Khadi Board	6	—	Paid	40	10	18	107				

*Young India*, 27-8-1925

## 219. A COMMON SCRIPT

If we are to make good our claim as one nation, we must have several things in common. We have a common culture running through a variety of creeds and sub-creeds. We have common disabilities. I am endeavouring to show that a common material for our dress is not only desirable but necessary. We need also a common language not in supersession of the vernaculars, but in addition to them. It is generally agreed that that medium should be Hindustani—a resultant of Hindi and Urdu, neither highly Sanskritized, nor Persianized or Arabianized. The greatest obstacle in the way are the numerous script, we have for the vernaculars. If it is possible to adopt a common script we should remove a great hindrance in the way of realizing the dream which, at present, is of having a common language. A variety of scripts is an obstacle in more ways than one. It constitutes an effectual barrier against the acquisition of knowledge. The Aryan languages have so much in common that, if a great deal of



time had not to be wasted in mastering the different scripts, we should all know several languages without much difficulty; for instance, most people who have a little knowledge of Sanskrit would have no difficulty in understanding the matchless creation of Rabindranath Tagore, if it was all printed in Devanagari script. But the Bengali script is a notice to the non-Bengalis—"hands off". Conversely, if the Bengalis knew the Devanagari script, they would at once be able to enjoy the marvellous beauty and spirituality of Tulsidas and a host of other Hindustani writers. When I returned to India in 1915,<sup>1</sup> I had a communication from a society whose headquarters were, I believe, in Calcutta, and whose object was to advocate a common script for all India. I do not know the activities of that society, but its object is worthy, and a great deal of substantial work can be done by a few earnest workers in this direction. There are obvious limitations. A common script for all India is a distant ideal. A common script for all those who speak the Indo-Sanskrit languages, including the Southern stock, is a practical ideal, if we can but shed our provincialisms. There is little virtue, for instance, in a Gujarati clinging to the Gujarati script. A provincial patriotism is good where it feeds the larger stream of all-India patriotism, as the latter is good to the extent that it serves the still larger end of the universe. But a provincial patriotism that says "India is nothing, Gujarat is all", is wickedness. I have selected Gujarat because it is the half-way house, and because I am myself a Gujarati. In Gujarat, somewhat fortunately, those who settled the principles of primary education decided to make Devanagari script compulsory. Every Gujarati boy or girl who has passed through a school, therefore, knows both the Gujarati and the Devanagari scripts. If the committee had decided upon purely Devanagari script, it would have been better still. No doubt, the research scholars would still have learnt the Gujarati script for deciphering old manuscripts, but the Gujarati boy's energy would have been spared for more useful labour, if he had to learn only one instead of two scripts. The committee that settled the education scheme for Maharashtra, was more enlightened, and it simply required the Devanagari script. The result is that a Mahratta reads, so far as mere reading is concerned, Tulsidas with as much facility as he reads Tukaram, and Gujaratis and Hindustanis read Tukaram with equal facility. The committee in Bengal, on the other hand, ruled otherwise, with the result we all know and many of

<sup>1</sup> The source has "1905", obviously a misprint.

us deplore. The treasures of the richest Indian vernacular have been rendered most difficult of access as if by design. That Devanagari should be the common script, I suppose, does not need any demonstration—the deciding factor being that it is the script known to the largest part of India.

These reflections arise, because, I was called upon to solve, during my visit to Cuttack, a practical question. There is a tribe wedged between the Hindi speaking people in Bihar and Uriya speaking people of Orissa. What was to be done for the education of its children ? Were they to be taught through Uriya or through Hindi? Or were they to be taught through their own dialect and, if they were, was the script to be Devanagari or a new invention? The first thought of the Utkal friends was to absorb the tribe amongst the Uriyas. The Biharis would think of absorbing them in Bihar, and if the elders of the tribe were consulted, they would most probably and naturally say that their dialect was just as good as the Uriya or the Bihari, and that it should be reduced to writing. And for them it would be a toss whether the script to be adopted should be Devanagari or Uriya, if not even a newly invented script, as has happened in modern times in at least two instances I know. Endeavouring to think in terms of all India, I suggested to my friends that, whilst it was proper for them to strengthen the Uriya language among the Uriya speaking people, the children of this tribe should be taught Hindi and, naturally, the script should be Devanagari. A spirit that is so exclusive and narrow as to want every form of speech to be perpetuated and developed is anti-national and anti-universal. All undeveloped and unwritten dialects should, in my humble opinion, be sacrificed and merged in the great Hindustani stream. It would be a sacrifice only to be nobler, not a suicide. If we are to have a common language for cultured India, we must arrest the growth of any process of disintegration or multiplication of languages and scripts. We must promote a common language. The beginning must naturally be made with the script, and until the Hindu-Muslim question is solved, confined perhaps to Hindu India. If I could have my way, I would make the learning of Devanagari script and Urdu script, in addition to the established provincial script compulsory in all the provinces and I would print in Devanagari chief books in the different vernaculars with a literal translation in Hindustani. Unfortunately, not many Congressmen have taken the trouble of learning the Devanagari script and fewer still the Urdu script.

*Young India*, 27-8-1925

## 220. *HOOKWORM AND CHARKHA*

In the letter enclosing the cutting about cattle, dealt with elsewhere in this issue, Mr. Andrews writes:

I have just had with me here Dr. Tendrich of the Rockefeller International Health Board who has been plodding away in Madras. He tells me that on examination 92 to 85 p.c. of the peasantry have hookworm, and other infections from night-soil, like typhoid and dysentery, which are rife owing to evacuations getting everywhere mixed up with the water supply. He says that they were just in the same condition as the Negroes in the Southern States twenty years ago. The consequence also was the same, —no vitality, a wretched life of weakness. Now, in the very same States today there is prosperity and vitality, because hookworm, typhoid, etc, have been conquered by the night-soil being got under control. He said to me that, if a change were made in the people's habits in this direction by the very simple method of a village drainage, which would be filled in every six months, and then every six months afterwards dug out and used as a perfectly safe fertilizer, as they do mostly in China, Japan and the States, the economic gain is so great as to be quite incalculable. My point is that the charkha has opened the village problem, but it has not solved it. And if you say that it alone will solve it, by concentrating on it alone, that is too narrow. The cattle problem and the sanitation problem are equally vital.

In this paragraph Mr. Andrews has raised the question of sanitation. I am not blind to the necessity of sanitation. I became a sanitary reformer long before I discovered the charkha. I was myself carrying on at the farm in Phoenix, Natal, experiments in burying night-soil and converting it into rich manure. We had there no scavenger; we were our own scavengers, and as, Mr. Andrews himself knows, one could walk about the settlement in Phoenix bare-footed without the danger of treading upon any dirt. The same treatment of night-soil is being continued at the Satyagraha Ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati. But I do not carry on any propaganda about it for the simple reason that it cannot solve the problem of the daily-growing poverty immediately and directly. Moreover, in dealing with this question of insanitation, one has to fight against old prejudices and old habits. It is a matter of sustained education and one that cannot be dealt with without State aid. I regret to have to confess that ingrained bad habits handed down from generation to generation do not yield to persuasion. Legislation seems to me to be the only effective remedy.

But the same objection does not apply to the charkha. On the contrary, it is to be the precursor of every reform, and if I can only concentrate the attention of the nation upon the charkha, it will automatically solve all the other problems and pave the way for legislation where legislation is required. The charkha is calculated to make an immediate return, be it ever so small, to the individual. It presents the least difficulty in its working. There is no rooted prejudice against it. For the simple folk at least it requires no elaborate reasoning. It needs the smallest capital. It is the only constructive effort that is possible on a national scale. It is fraught with tremendous political consequences if it becomes successful, and seeing that it cannot succeed without co-operation it makes for a mighty co-operative effort. Hence the claim that concentration on charkha alone leads to swaraj, and if this is too strong a proposition, let it be put in another way— ‘Without the charkha and all it implies there is no swaraj, and therefore a wise economist will concentrate his attention upon the charkha alone, knowing that the rest will follow.’

Let me diagnose the disease a little deeper. It is not the drain that matters so much as poverty, and it is not even poverty that matters so much as idleness which was at first enforced, and has now become a habit that matters. The drain may be stopped and poverty is merely a symptom, but idleness is the great cause, the root of all evil, and if that root can be destroyed, most of the evils, can be remedied without further effort. A nation that is starving has little hope or initiative left in it. It becomes indifferent to filth and disease. It says of all reforms ‘to what good?’ That winter of despair can only be turned into the ‘sunshine of hope’ for the millions only through the life-giving wheel, the charkha.

*Young India*, 27-8-1925

## 221. STATEMENT REGARDING A.I.C.C. MEETING

[August 27, 1925]

Some friends have been to me telling me that the date 22nd September for the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee is an inconvenient one for the Bengalis in view of the forthcoming Puja holidays. The date has been fixed in consultation with Pandit Motilal Nehru who has chosen it after consultation with the members of the Assembly. The original date fixed has been anticipated for the

convenience of these members so that they might not have a double journey. Had the 1st of October been retained, it would not have been possible to fix the venue at Patna. Even as it is, a telegram has been received from Sind protesting against the venue being fixed at Patna. I appreciate the difficulty of the Sindhi friends. But Patna has been chosen after much consultation and for the convenience of the majority of the members. The real Puja holiday commences on the 24th and I have promised the Bengal friends that, even though there may have to be a late night sitting, I shall finish the deliberations of the All-India Congress Committee on the 22nd so as to free the members to leave for Calcutta the night of 22nd. If any routine matters requiring the attention of the All-India Congress Committee remain over, and on which Bengali friends might not have any fixed views, subject to their consent, the proceedings will be prolonged beyond the 22nd. But the main purpose for which the meeting is being convened will be finished on the 22nd. I hope to be in Patna on the 20th. 21st is my day of silence, and I shall be free to discuss with friends who might arrive on the 20th any question that they may wish to discuss in regard to the proposed change in the constitution. Needless to say that no change in constitution will be adopted unless there is an absolute unanimity. I hope all the members of the A.I.C.C. will attend the forthcoming meeting.

If all goes well, it is my desire also to inaugurate the All-India Spinners' Association and to discuss matters relating to the spinning-wheel and khaddar. I therefore, invite all khadi workers who may wish to help at the framing of the constitution of this organization to attend.

M. K. GANDHI

*Forward, 30-8-1925*

## 222. A TESTIMONIAL

*August 28, 1925*

F. N. GOOPTU & Co.,

It has been a great pleasure to me to be able to visit this pencil and penholder factory. I was delighted to be informed some of the machines were designed and made in this factory. I wish this national enterprise every success.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

## 223 SPEECH AT MECCANO CLUB, CALCUTTA<sup>1</sup>

August 28, 1925

You have very adroitly got rid of the obligation of bestowing some little praise upon the speaker of the evening. I wish I could do likewise and avoid anything to speak at all. I had hoped that a little bit of praise from you would give me some encouragement, but that was not to be my lot. But I am convinced from the manner in which you have been conducting these proceedings and in which you have garlanded this little girl<sup>2</sup> that you at least are not guilty of any race hatred.

But in India, at the present moment, the young generation is undoubtedly face to face with this very problem. Is it possible to love one's country and not to hate those who rule over one's country, whose domination we do not want, whose domination we dislike from the bottom of our hearts? The answer has been in the hearts of many young men that it is impossible to love one's country and not to hate those who rule over one's country. Some of them expressed their opinion in board daylight, a few of them translate that opinion into action. Many, however, harbour this opinion in secret and feed upon that opinion.

I have been a student of this question, not since my return to India in 1915, but ever since I entered into public life and public service. That was in 1894. But I have come deliberately to the conclusion that love of one's country, namely nationalism, is perfectly consistent with the love of those whose rule, whose domination whose methods we do not like. I was face to face with that problem in my dealings with the South African Government or, more accurately speaking, the then Natal Government; later on with the Transvaal Government and later still with the Union Government. Most of you are aware of the disabilities—the glaring disabilities—under which our countrymen labour in that sub-continent—South Africa. It is enough; those disabilities are really enough to make one hate one's fellow beings, if one did not preserve one's sanity. You find there injustice rampant for no cause save that you do not have the same colour of

<sup>1</sup> The meeting to which admission was by tickets, was held at the Overtoun Hall. The proceeds were sent to the All-Bengal Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Rev. T.E.T.Shore presided.

<sup>2</sup> Here Gandhiji pointed to a five-year -old girl.

skin. There shall be no equality between the white and the coloured races—so runs the constitution of the Union Government. It was at one time an article of the Transvaal Government constitution, but the constitution has today been adopted by the Union Government. When you come to India you find, though not the same thing, much the same thing and very often one finds it most difficult to reconcile the two things, love of one's country and love also of one whom you may consider to be the tiger. It is beside the point whether you are just and correct in your estimate or whether you are incorrect, but the impression left upon your mind is that you are labouring under the grossest form of tyranny, grossest form of injustice. How shall you then love the tiger?

Let me put it in another way—not necessarily that you should love the tiger, but love is an active force and the subject of this evening is—Is it necessary to hate the tiger? Is hatred essential for nationalism? You may not love, but must you also hate? The answer, as I have said before, in the minds of many people is undoubtedly that you must hate. Some, I know, consider it their duty to hate the tiger and they cite instances from modern constitutions, they cite the late disastrous War in Europe, they cite wars of which they have learnt in history; they cite also the law, and they say society hangs on the gallows those who are guilty of murder. Is not that a sign of hatred? There certainly is no love. Would not one love one's father, would not one love one's dearest ones, even if they might err? [Would one wish them] to be hanged on the gallows? One would pray for their reformation but not for their punishment, and yet, it is said, perhaps with a great deal of justification, that society will break into pieces if under the law of sanction punishment was withdrawn, abolished or suspended. With those illustrations before them, the young men rush to the conclusion that those who consider that hatred is not essential for nationalism are in the wrong. I do not blame them. They have to be pitied; they command my sympathy, but I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that they are labouring under the grossest delusion; and so long as they retain that attitude, so long as a large body of men and women retain that attitude the progress of this country, the progress of the world is retarded. It does not matter to me that all those illustrations that I have placed before you can be cited in order to justify their conduct.

The world is weary of it. We see the fatigue overcoming the Western nations. We see that this song of hate has not benefited

humanity. Let it be the privilege of India to turn a new leaf and set a lesson to the world. (Cries of 'hear, hear'.) Is it necessary that three hundred millions of people should hate one hundred thousand Englishmen? That is the concrete term to which I can reduce this evening's subject. In my humble opinion it is derogatory to the dignity of mankind, it is derogatory to the dignity of India to entertain for one single moment hatred towards Englishmen. That does not mean that you are to be blind to the excesses that English rulers have been found to commit in India. I have drawn this particular distinction between the evil and the evil-doer. Hate the evil but not the evil-doer. We ourselves, every one of us, are full of evil. And we want the world to be patient with us, to be forgiving, to be gentle with us. I would like the same thing to be meted out to the Englishmen. Heaven knows no one in India perhaps can claim better than myself to have spoken as fiercely and as fearlessly of the many misdeeds of English rulers and the corrupt nature of the system under which we are governed. My freedom from hatred—I would even go so far as to claim for myself individually—my love of those who consider themselves to be my enemies, does not make me blind to their faults. That is no love which is extended simply because of the possession of some virtues fancied or real in the beloved. If I am true to myself, if I am true to mankind, if I am true to humanity, I must understand all the faults that human flesh is heir to. I must understand the weaknesses of my opponents, the vices of my opponents and, yet, in spite of these vices, not hate but even love them. It is by itself a force. Brute force has been handed down to us from generation to generation. We have used it and we have found what it has done for Europe and what it has done for the world. The glamour of European civilization does not dazzle us. Scratch beneath the surface and you will find there very little to choose.

Do not for one moment consider that I condemn all that is Western. For the time being I am dealing with the predominant character of modern civilization, do not call it Western civilization, and the predominant character of modern civilization is the exploitation of the weaker races of the earth. The predominant character of modern civilization is to dethrone God and enthrone Materialism. I have not hesitated to use the word "Satan". I have not hesitated to call this system of government under which we are labouring "Satanic". And I withdraw not one word from it. But, however, I shall not deal with it this evening. If I begin to devise means of punishing the evil-doer,



my business is to love them and by patient and gentle handling to convert them. Non-co-operation or satyagraha, therefore, is not a hymn of hate. I know that many who call themselves satyagrahis or non-co-operators do not deserve to bear that name. They have done a violence to their own creed. They were not real representatives of this principle. Real non-co-operation is non-co-operation with evil and not with the evil-doer. Sometimes it is difficult, I know, to distinguish between evil and evil-doer. But how are you to non-co-operate with the evil and not with the evil-doer? I do not want to go into the whole of the intricate doctrine. I can simply comment on what is going on during these 5 or 6 years. If we understand the secret of this doctrine and the beautiful consistency between hating evil and not hating evil-doers, I have said that all that we need today is to extend the law that we apply in our domestic relations to the political field, and, therefore, to the relations between the rulers and the ruled and you will find the true solution. What does a father do to a son who is inclined to do evil and become corrupted? He does not punish him nor does he encourage him, but tries to correct him.

Your non-co-operation is intended not to encourage evil. That is the meaning. One of the greatest writers has said that if the world ceases to encourage evil, evil will die of inanition. If we simply find out for ourselves to what extent we are responsible for the evil that exists in society today, we will soon see that evil will soon be gone from society. But we tolerate it under a false sense of love. I am not talking of the blind love that dotes on an erring son and pats him on the back while he errs, nor am I speaking of the son who, under a false sense of loyalty to his father, tolerates evil in his father. I am not talking of that. I am talking of the love that discriminates, that is intelligent, that is not blind to a single fault. That is the love of reform, and the moment we have seized the secret, that very moment the evil goes out of sight.

I talk of the relations between the two races. Think of the many evils from which we are suffering today in Hindu society. Let alone Mussalmans, let alone Christians, Parsis and others. The majority of us are Hindus. How should we deal with the evil that is rampant in Hinduism? Shall we hate those who consider untouchability part and parcel of Hindu religion and quote scriptures in favour of untouchability or shall we remove untouchability by our persistent conduct? The secret, then, is suffering, but not to subject the evil-doers to suffering, but to take the suffering upon our own shoulders.

If we reform Hinduism of the many abuses that have crept into it, we shall only do so by taking the instance of Vaikom. It comes to me naturally because it is through praise that you see the finished example. I know every one of the brave young men. I think I know every one of them who are working in Vaikom under terrible difficulties. They have undergone suffering which I cannot possibly describe here in the few moments, but I dare give this testimony to you that these young men have not erred by a hair's breadth. I mean the young men of Vaikom. I don't say individuals have not erred, but they have kept their record absolutely clean. The result is that they have not yet got rid of the whole of abuses, but I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that in Travancore today untouchability has lost its foothold, it is fast dying simply because of the determination of a handful of youth who plunged themselves down into the midst of Vaikom and invited suffering on their own shoulders. That is really the secret. In my humble opinion hatred is not essential for nationalism. Race hatred will kill the real national spirit. Let us understand what nationalism is. We want freedom for our country. We do not want sufferings for other countries: we do not want the exploitation of other countries; we do not want the degradation of other countries. For my part I don't want the freedom of India if it means the disappearance of Englishmen, if it means the extinction of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from this free country of mine. I want freedom of my country so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the Province and the Provinces for the whole nation, and when we indulge in provincialism I as a Gujarati say, Gujarat first, Bengal and the rest of Provinces next. There is no nationalism in it. On the contrary if I live in Gujarat and prepare Gujarat, I should prepare Gujarat so that the vast resources of Gujarat might be placed at the disposal of Bengal, nay, of the whole of India, that Gujarat may die for the whole of India. My love, therefore, of nationalism, or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free—free that if need be the whole of the country may die— so that the human race may live. There is no

room here for race hatred. Let that be our nationalism.<sup>1</sup>

A question from Mr. Chapman, the Librarian of the Imperial Library, at the conclusion of the speech, drew a telling reply from Gandhiji. 'Was not the insistence on political freedom and political equality on the part of Indians conducive to race hatred, when Indians themselves were not capable of ruling themselves' was in effect Mr. Chapman's question.

If you have drawn the deduction from what I said that we should tolerate your rule so long as we are not capable of managing our affairs, you are mistaken. We can develop that capacity only by resistance to the system. And may I say that the questioner unconsciously betrayed his own race prejudice when he referred to Indians as incapable of ruling themselves. Underlying that prejudice is the idea of superiority and the conceit that the Englishmen are born to manage the affairs of the world. That is an idea to fight which my whole life has been dedicated. Unless the Englishmen are dislodged from that position there is no peace in India, nor any peace for the weaker races of the earth. It is the absolute right of India to misgovern herself. My heart rebels against any foreigner imposing on my country the peace which is here called 'Pax Britannica'.

*Forward, 29-8-1925*

## **224. SPEECH AT STUDENTS' MEETING, CALCUTTA<sup>2</sup>**

*August 29, 1925*

In thanking the students for the purse presented to him, Mahatma Gandhi said they should remember that, in revering the memory of Deshbandhu, they were revering their country and they pledged themselves to do something, be it ever so little—to the best of their ability—for their country. But, as he had said repeatedly, these subscriptions he regarded only as an earnest of what the subscribers were going to do for their country.

Speaking of organization, Mahatmaji said that, first of all, they should understand what was meant by organization. But what was the meaning of organization? Organization meant that the people should have a united purpose, a united will. Immediately they had got these two conditions fulfilled, they had brought

<sup>1</sup> What follows is extracted from Mahadev Desai's account in *Young India*, 10-9-1925.

<sup>2</sup> The Ashutosh college Students' Parliament, under whose auspices the meeting was held at Russa Theatre Hall, presented Gandhiji with a purse of Rs. 1,001 for the All-Bengal Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Prof. M.C. Bhattacharya presided.

into being a little organization. Although, they, the Indians, seemed to have a common aspiration, they had not yet discovered that, for common aspirations, common methods were also necessary. They had not yet received the faculty for application in connection with these common aspirations. These aspirations of theirs still more or less remained only as ideals and a few of them, who were endeavouring to translate those ideals into action, were too few to bring into being organizations that were necessary in order to permeate the masses of India. Another requirement for efficient organization was a leader, or more than a leader, soldiers. They might have a towering personality like Deshbandhu and people in their adoration and admiration might follow such a man for the time being irresistibly attracted to him. But that did not bring into being an organization. The test of an organization was that they should work as soldiers, not because they were irresistibly drawn to a personality but because they were irresistibly drawn to the principle. Therefore, the requirements of an organization were common will, common purpose, a leader, disciplined soldiers.

How could students then learn the spirit of organization? That was to say, in concrete terms, what was to be their own purpose, what was to be their common will in connection with India in terms of the nation? Naturally, the first answer was that students should import national consideration even in their studies. While students they should not only think for themselves, what they should do after they were discharged from colleges, but they should also learn how they would utilize the knowledge they were gaining. They should see that there was no contradiction or inconsistency between obligations to the family and obligations to the nation. Taking his audience back to 1908, Mahatmaji said that he had discovered one thing common and that was the spinning-wheel. He had discovered, and he challenged anybody to disprove the discovery, that this nation was dying of sloth and idleness. Poverty, hunger, drain from India—certainly all these things could be stopped in a moment if they would only shed their idleness and sloth. If they would go to the villages, they would see for themselves that the root cause of the deep, distressing poverty of India was slothfulness. Nay he would go so far as to say that idleness was the cause of their foreign domination. For it was his settled conviction that a nation which was not a nation of idlers, a nation which utilized all its time for its existence, defied the whole might of the universe. India should do likewise. Every villager should consider it his duty to work every spare moment at his disposal for the sake of the motherland.

Then, what was the work that every one of them could do, retaining his own individual work? The answer was simple, and that was the charkha. Therefore, students should go to the villages, and try to impress upon the villagers the potency of the charkha and that they would succeed in doing only when they had shed their slothfulness and idleness and gone there not as patrons, but as servants.

Speaking about swadeshism, Mahatmaji said that swadeshism is a conservative spirit—not conservative or radical—but conservative in its original root meaning, i.e. something that conserved. The spirit of swadeshi would enable and teach them to conserve all that was best. There was a process of rejection also, but not summary rejection nor blind adoration of all that was ancient, simply because it was ancient. They must use the God-gifted reason, discrimination. Swadeshism was a discriminating, conservative spirit which would retain all that was best in national life, in ancient tradition and at the same time absorb by assimilation—not by base imitation—all that was best in the modern world, all that was best in the West, so that from good they might grow to better and from better to still better. But there was some fundamental principle in their religion which could not be improved upon. What possible improvement could they make on the statement “God is Truth and Love”? But there were certain usages and customs which had been handed down to them. All these customs must vary according to the varying circumstances and here they must reject them if they conflicted with reason, with their moral sense of mankind.

But he knew what swadeshism had become cheap today. Anything imported from Germany, Japan became a swadeshi article. To him that was a parody of swadeshism.

My swadeshi is khaddar, because I have taken my stand on one thing, and restricted my swadeshism. Manufactured goods we must not use—goods from outside which we can usefully manufacture in our own country. That is not antagonistic to anything, but it is the law of charity beginning at home it is the law of charity which teaches us that, if we do not serve our family, our neighbour, we will not be able to serve our distant neighbour. Remember one yard of calico puts into the pockets of the labourers one pie. One yard of khaddar, khaddar bought from the villagers, puts into the hands of the famishing villagers at least four annas. Make your choice—one pie or four annas and decide for yourselves.

*Forward, 30-8-1925*

## 225. *SPEECH AT BENGAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE, CALCUTTA*

*August 29, 1925*

On rising to speak, Mahatmaji was accorded a great ovation and he began by saying that, when the son<sup>1</sup> of late Babu Kalicharan Banerjee requested him to address the meeting of the Indian Christian community, he could not but comply with his request, because the request was made by the son of one whom he revered most and whom he had the good fortune to meet on an occasion of seeking his advice at a critical time.

Mahatmaji continued to say that he had no new message to deliver to them. Whatever he had got to say to his Christian brethren of Indian nationality he had said on many previous occasions and they had read it in newspapers. His first intimate relations with the Indian Christians began while he was in South Africa. There he made acquaintance with a large number of Indian Christians who used to share his joys and trials equally with him. Ever since that time his intimacy with them had been on the increase.

Mahatmaji next referred to the deplorable condition of the Indian Christians for their mixing Christianity with European modes and methods. He said that, for the first time, he detected this perverse mentality of the Indian Christians in South Africa and from that time he had been all along striving hard to combat this evil idea. He had very often tried to prove that there was a clear distinction between the modes and manners of Europeans and Indian Christians. On the previous evening, he showed that race hatred was not nationalization<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, he had shown that Christianity did not mean denationalization. He was quite sure that for them Christianity did not mean Europeanization. It had no geographical limit. Jesus lived every inch of him in Asia and certainly Christianity had no relation whatsoever with Europeanization.

Mahatmaji further observed that there seemed to exist a wide gulf between the Indian Christians and Indian Hindus and Mohammedans. No doubt the gulf was getting narrower day by day. But it should be bridged over without any further delay. Everyone of a particular religion must love those who belonged to other religions. Referring to his experience in Travancore, Mahatmaji said that in that State there was a large number of highly educated and cultured Indian Christians. He was glad to find them try to do away with hatred and ill will of any sort for men of other religions. The sooner the number of such Christians increased, the better for India.

<sup>1</sup> J. K. Banerjee, who presided at the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Meccano Club, Calcutta", 28-8-1925.

Mahatmaji continued that they had gone away far from their original religion. Therefore, they must be prepared to come back to their old brethren with loving hearts. They had gone within the fold of another religion simply to rise above, at least as they thought it to be, superstition and errors of their ancient forefathers. So, they must rise above any malice or despite for their brethren. Next he referred to internationalism and said that his strong belief was that, without being nationalist, none could lay claim to internationalism. Unless a man could serve his family, his village and his country he could not serve the world. Internationalism had got no malice, no ill will or contempt, but it had only peace and goodwill in it, and unless a man began to love heartily his neighbours, he could not cultivate the spirit of love for the outside world. He continued that Christianity to them must be a better expression of nationalism, so they should be prepared to die for the nation before they could claim to give up their life for the cause of the world. In his opinion, Christianity must not be repugnant to nationalism. It must mean a greater dedication of their lives to the country's cause and for that they must enter into the hearts of the masses. He had heard many Christians say that they had nothing to do with the masses of India. He thought no religion could say so, since all of them were imperfect in some sense or other. Mahatmaji requested the Indian Christians to dispel such ideas from their minds.

Referring to the poverty of India, Mahatmaji next said that certainly Christianity did not mean multiplication of wants—wants which poor India could ill afford to supply. Many might say that their outlook was not limited within a narrow sphere. He would ask them to examine their hearts and see whether their utterances were at one with their belief, and he was sure they wouldn't be able to reconcile their utterances with their beliefs.

Last of all, Mahatmaji appealed to them to put on khaddar at least, if they could not spin. For every yard of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar they bought, they paid in a way at least four annas to their suffering brethren in the villages who were dying of starvation practically for want of work. Mahatmaji concluded his speech by saying that in pursuance of the high tenets of their religion which was absolutely based on the spirit of service to mankind they should buy khaddar and thus save their millions of starving brethren who lived in the remote villages.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 30-8-1925*

## 226. A GREAT DISEASE

India is a land of peasants. In a way the whole world belongs to peasants. In other countries, however, people do not live by farming alone. In some countries people earn their living by hunting. England

lives by its industries. It imports much of the grain that it needs. For India, however, farming is the only means of subsistence. If the rains fail, the people have to starve. The farmers have to look up to the clouds in the monsoon.

However, as only a few persons can cultivate the land all the year round, crores of people are without any occupation for four to six months. Hence we have become idle. This has not always been our plight. Crores of people were kept employed when we made cloth ourselves. All these crores suffer from idleness today. Their eyes have lost lustre. They are without hope; their faces are devoid of enthusiasm. We are in such a sad plight where idleness has become second nature to us. This idleness of the peasants is shared by the middle class too. There can be no swaraj for an idle nation. Idleness leads to destruction. While moving amidst hundreds of thousands of people, I find that they do not get weary of chatting or just sitting doing nothing. If I don't look out, many people would sit around me and believe that they were doing something meritorious.

This idleness is a great disease with us, whose symptom is poverty. I believe that while the drain of money from this country is the cause of our poverty, it is not the cause. It is our idleness that is responsible both for our poverty and the drain of our resources. And, what else can an idle person become but a slave? Idlers have never become, and never will become, self-reliant.

How to get rid of this idleness? By taking up some sort of activity. Which is the activity that can be taken up by crores of human beings? In my opinion the spinning-wheel is the only activity of this kind. Anyone who can find a better activity for the people is free not to work on the spinning-wheel. I have been claiming from the very beginning that the spinning-wheel is the best possible means of making an idle person active; however, if anyone points out a more fruitful means which could be generally adopted, I will readily bow to him. I have come across many persons who are hard working themselves. But does this make the whole country industrious? There are ten or twenty millionaires in India, there are twenty-five or fifty rulers; does that, however make everyone a millionaire or a ruler? We can be called a single nation when those who are well-to-do partake of the misery of the country. Even a person like Shri Krishna had to work for the mass of people even though it was unnecessary so far as he himself was concerned. Moreover, it is not sufficient to be engaged



in work that is directed to one's self-interest. Those who can be called public leaders or public servants will pursue for the good of others an activity which crores of persons pursue in mere self interest. If they do not do this, even those who work of the sake of self-interest will give it up under a false glamour or illusion. In this case, we have to fashion workers out of idlers. We have also to teach them an activity which will bring about the good of the individual and society. The spinning-wheel alone can offer such an activity. It is for this very reason that I call the spinning-wheel a *Kamadhenu*<sup>1</sup>. Once the people realize the value of time, they will be able to understand everything else.

Mr. Andrews has posed two questions. We incur a loss of crores of rupees every year as cattle are not properly looked after. Moreover, as people do not put their excreta to good use, manure worth crores of rupees is wasted, and this also leads to the spread of diseases among people. If I can stress the importance of the activity of spinning, why do I not attempt readily to save crores of rupees by stressing the importance of this problem of cattle and this problem of filth? I have taken up the responsibility of cow-protection by way of protecting cattle. The problem of filth is a very difficult one which also owes its existence partly to our idleness. If people realize the importance of working hard the problem of cattle and that of filth would immediately be solved. If people do not take up the activity of spinning which is both easy and immediately rewarding how will they understand the problem posed by cattle and filth, which can be solved after very great efforts? Hence, from whichever angle you look you will see the very same thing. Idleness is the great disease of India and the spinning-wheel is the sole remedy for it.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 30-8-1925

## 227. MY NOTES

### END OF THE BENGAL TOUR

By the end of August, my tour of Bengal will be over. I would have stayed about a month and a half longer than intended<sup>2</sup>. I had not known the Bengalis previously as I have come to know them this time. I have had the pleasure of knowing many types of Bengalis. However,

<sup>1</sup> Mythical cow yielding whatever is asked of her

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was in Bengal from May 1, 1925 to September 1, 1925.

right now I do not wish to describe my experiences. What I write now is meant for Gujaratis.

I shall be reaching Bombay in connection with the Dadabhai Centenary, on the 3rd. After celebrating this occasion on the 4th, I expect to reach the Ashram on the 5th. I shall have to leave the Ashram again on the 9th. I hope to complete some tasks during these four days. Among these, I hope to give an account of the work of the Kathiawar Political Conference<sup>1</sup>. The latter has given khadi a place of prime importance. Devchandbhai will give an account of the extent to which this task has been carried out. In my opinion, a fairly good proportion of what was expected has been accomplished. The workers have not been idle.

What now remains is the political work. To some extent, I had taken this burden upon my shoulders. I have not been oblivious of this task although I was not in Gujarat. This does not imply that any success has been achieved. I only wish to say here that I do not, in any way, regret the advice that I offered to Kathiawar.<sup>2</sup> My experience confirms its wisdom.

It is extremely difficult to solve the problem of mismanagement where it exists in the Indian States. But it is not impossible. That, however, depends on increasing the strength of the peasantry and educating the rulers. The strength of the former cannot be increased by any outward struggle but through their own training. Hence, constructive work is the basis for solving political problems. Opinions may differ on whether this means the spinning-wheel or some other activity. But the time is drawing near when there will be a general agreement that the true solution of political problems lies in the education of the people. This education does not imply mere literacy but an awakening of the people from their slumber. The people should become aware of their own condition. Such awareness is possible only through public work and not through talks. This does not also mean that every outward agitation is useless. As I have said in *Young India*, outward agitations too have their place. Journalists must certainly carry on such agitation. It is bound to produce effect in

<sup>1</sup> On September 6, Gandhiji presided over the meeting of its managing committee held at Sabarmati Ashram.

<sup>2</sup> As president of the Kathiawar Political Conference, when its third session was held at Bhavnagar on January 8, 1925

proportion to its truthfulness and scope. But outward agitation cannot be given the first place. It is of subsidiary importance and it depends for its success entirely on the success of that which is internal, viz. constructive work. A corpse cannot be revived by artificial respiration. This would help only a person who, although asphyxiated, is alive and has the strength to make an effort. This is also true of society. The agitation acts as a support but is not the crux of the matter. However much the world may resound with tales of the sufferings of the Negroes, the entire movement would be futile if the Negroes themselves remained unaffected. There are many such contemporary examples. If the Indians in South Africa remain passive, their position will grow weaker in spite of the efforts made here. The Kathiawar Political Conference must choose its own field of activity.

#### GUJARATIS LIVING OUTSIDE GUJARAT

Wherever I go I happen to meet Gujaratis living outside their province. I get their help at every place. After Shri Manilal Kothari came to Calcutta, his contribution to the Bengal Deshbandhu Fund exceeds all expectations. The Gujaratis of Kharagpur have also sent in their contributions. There are only a few Gujaratis in Cuttack; they have, however, contributed a good sum. I had a novel experience in Kharagpur which pained me. There were three gentlemen who were afraid of coming to me and handing in their contribution, for fear of losing the contracts that they had been getting from Englishmen. At present, there is no ground for such fear. Even Englishmen are friendly to me. Fear is something internal. Everyone frightens one who is afraid; no one dares to frighten one who is fearless. And it is not even true that the fearless cannot earn a living.

Yes, a guilty conscience makes a man miserable. Those who earn a living dishonestly are afraid of everyone. Why then were these gentlemen afraid? Those who resort to fraudulent practices in contracts see fear where there is none. However, I hope that these timid gentlemen had no such cause for fear. I do not wish to see any Indian, man or woman, being frightened. I had imagined that Gujaratis who live outside their province must have rid themselves of ordinary fears. While on tour, I have had direct experience of Gujaratis being fearless when others were afraid. The incident in Kharagpur was the one exception and I hope that these gentlemen will shed their fear. [From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 30-8-1925

## 228. OUR DIRTY WAYS

Elsewhere in this issue appears my article written at the request of Mr. Andrews, on the question of our dirty habits; nevertheless, it is necessary to take it up separately for discussion. I do remember having written on this subject even when I first took up the editorship of *Navajivan*. It is, however, a subject on which one can write repeatedly.

Our rules regarding cleanliness are fine: one should always take a bath. We do not, however, know the implications of all these acts; hence they have become merely a ritual. Alternatively, we give in to superstitions and believe that the touch of water—of whatever quality and in however small a quantity—purifies us and makes us fit for heaven. Science, however, tells us that a bath is beneficial only when it is taken with clean water and when the body is rubbed and cleaned. There is no sense in sprinkling a few drops of water or just in pouring water on oneself and putting on dirty clothes; this may even be harmful. Our lavatories are like hell on earth. To visit these is like committing a sin. We could improve these with a little effort, thought and discretion. There is no question of any expense involved in it. Knowledge is all that is required. Even the poorest of the poor can, if he wishes to follow the rules of cleanliness. It is true that he cannot afford to have an aversion for looking at and cleaning up his own excreta. The farmer has no such aversions. He fills up cart-loads of filth in a very dirty way.

The lanes of Ahmedabad are dirty not because of poverty but because of great ignorance and idleness. In Madras in the well-to-do localities I found wealthy persons of fifty using the lanes as latrines in the morning. I feel disgusted even when I think of that sight. In Hardwar, the pilgrims fill the banks of the holy Ganges with foul smell, morning and evening. It becomes impossible to sit or walk there. At some places these people clean themselves directly in the river and do not even carry water in vessel to clean themselves with. In the river near Trichinopoly one can see excreta with the naked eye! And, the same water is used for bathing and drinking! In Bengal hundreds of puddle-like tiny lakes are used for the purpose of bathing, washing and drinking—by cattle and human beings.

The complaint made by Mr. Andrews's friend, however, relates to something else. He says, "the farmers make dirty the soil by defecating and urinating at any place. When it rains there, the water is

polluted by all this filth and, since lakhs of people walk bare-foot, they fall a prey to hookworm, dysentery, etc. Many people suffer and many die an untimely death. Fine manure can be made out of this filth. The people of China save crores of rupees by doing so. Why should not Indians do so and, at the same time, keep healthy? At one time the conditions in South America were the same as those obtaining in India. They have been changed in twenty years with great effort and the people are free from many diseases”.

We, too, could save ourselves if we so desire. Next week, we shall discuss how to do so.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 30-8-1925

## 229. *LETTER TO PROTAP CHANDRA GUHA ROY*

[Before *September 1, 1925*]

I thought you had surrendered already. I was thinking of you early this morning and thought you had gone without my seeing you. I am glad you have come. Do keep well in the jail, go in for introspection. There is much work to be done if we are to get swaraj before long. We must achieve power, but that will not be without enlightened consecration. I know that consecration through the charkha is the best and the noblest because it is so selfless. You cannot spin the wheel and not think of the dumb millions. I know nothing better.

*Forward*, 1-9-1925

## 230. *NOTES*

THE LATE DR. BHANDARKAR

The death of Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar<sup>1</sup> removes from our midst a celebrated Sanskrit scholar and social reformer. Dr. Bhandarkar's services to Sanskrit learning will always be remembered. He made Sanskrit learning by English-speaking Indians easy, interesting and popular. The Sanskrit text-books written by him still

<sup>1</sup> 1837-1925; the Oriental Research Institute at Poona was named after him. Gandhiji first met him in 1896, when he presided over a meeting addressed by Gandhiji.

retain their popularity. His researches won the recognition and admiration of Oriental scholars throughout the world. Dr. Bhandarkar was as ardent a social reformer as he was a ripe Sanskrit scholar. A grateful country will ever cherish the memory of the deceased scholar. I tender my respectful condolences to his family.

THE FORTHCOMING A. I. C. C.

I hope that every member of the A.I.C.C, unless he is prevented by unforeseen circumstances, will make it a point to attend the forthcoming meeting of the Committee and take part in its deliberations and register his vote. The change sought to be made in the constitution can only be justified, if there is a unanimous and insistent demand for it. Unanimity and insistence can only be proved by every member attending even at considerable inconvenience and sacrifice if necessary. It will not do for members to assume anything as a foregone conclusion, and let those who attend do what they like. Absence from the meeting will be presumed to be a sign of want of sense of responsibility unless the absence is otherwise duly accounted for. Members should realize that I have not worried them throughout the year, and but for the emergency I would certainly not have worried them now. In my opinion, a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and the expense attendant upon it can only be warranted if a new policy has to be initiated or important resolutions of an educative character are required to be passed. The intention at first was to hold the meeting on the 1st of October in Bombay. But it was suggested that an earlier meeting will be more convenient for the members of the Committee, and that it could be more conveniently held at Patna. There is hardly a place which is equally suitable for all. When Bombay was thought of, the Bengalis were perturbed. Patna having been appointed, there is a protest from far-off Sind. I wish it was possible for me to please all the members and all the provinces in justifying the choice of Patna. I can only say that it was selected because many considered that it was the most suitable place, and more especially, because Pandit Motilalji desired it after consultation with his colleagues in the Assembly. And I had no hesitation in fixing Patna when I knew that Panditji's health would be better conserved by selecting Patna as the venue. He is by no means yet strong or completely restored. Asthmatic spasms are only under check and are kept so by the greatest vigilance and care. I, therefore, hope that no member will absent himself because Patna is too far away for him.

## ALL-INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION

It is my intention, too, at the same meeting, if all goes well, to inaugurate the All-India Spinners' Association. I would like, therefore, all khaddar workers who are interested in its inauguration, and who have valuable suggestions to make, to attend at Patna whether they are members of the A.I.C.C. or not. I would like them to advise Babu Rajendra Prasad of their intention to attend and of the addresses where they would be staying. If they require Babu Rajendra Prasad to arrange for their food and lodging, they should give him due notice. I have requested Rajendra Babu to advertise the charges it would be necessary for intending visitors to pay if they want him to make the arrangements for them.

### Why Not All Parties

The idea running through my mind is to lighten the burden of the forthcoming Congress, to adjust defferences that there may be amongst Congressmen, and to explore avenues, if any, of common action by all parties so that the Congress may be free to discuss and initiate new policies and new programmes if any. It may be asked why I am not inviting leaders of other parties also to meet at Patna. I had given most anxious consideration to the matter, and I have come to the conclusion that such an invitation at this stage will bear no fruit. It will be time enough to take the next step when all the Congressmen know their own minds and become of one mind. The differences between the Congressmen and others are well known and well defined. It will be for the Congressmen first to consider how far it is possible for them to go, and then to hold consultation with the leaders of the other parties. For the time being, I must content myself with giving the assurance to all concerned that I yield to no one in my disire to see all the parties united on a common platform. But I know that when the differences are fundamental, it is difficult, in spite of all the desire in the world, to construct a common platform. What is true of Chemistry is true of human beings. Incompatibles meet but to explode. What every Congressman aims at, and must aim at, is a real union or combination which would mean strength, not a patched-up makeshift which can only weaken the nation and, therefore, retard the national cause.

A friend writes from Purulia:

As you are expected to come to Purulia, all the people are buying khaddar just to wear it during your stay. Your visit has reminded some of these men of their promise to use khaddar, and some are buying it just to escape public criticism. Now, if a man uses foreign cloth as a rule, but only wears khaddar on certain occasions, he is a hypocrite. And if your visit increases the number of such men, what is the use? Hypocrites never help the self-government of any country. There was a time when I deemed it a pleasure to present khaddar garments on marriage ceremonies. But I found by experience that it was almost impossible to get pure khaddar locally. What is generally bought as such is made in Japan or in Indian mills, and what I have bought from Swaraj Ashram has warp made of mill yarn.

This letter raises two important points. One is whether there is any use in occasional use of khaddar. On the principle that something is better than nothing even an occasional use of khaddar is to be encouraged. We want to sell home-made, home-woven, and home-spun cloth. Any demand for such cloth is, therefore, welcome and those who make occasional use are likely to make even habitual use of khaddar. I would, therefore, encourage its use of every occasion. Nor can I endorse the remark that those who wear khaddar on particular occasions are necessarily hypocrites. If a man pretends to be what he is not, he is a hypocrite, not one who makes no such pretences. One who drinks secretly and makes his neighbour believe that he is a teetotaller is a hypocrite to be shunned. A man who makes no secret of his habit of drinking, but omits drinking in society, or out of regard for his friends, is not only not a hypocrite, but a sensible and considerate man, and there is every hope of his being weaned from his habit. If, therefore, the people of Purulia, who are reported to be buying khaddar in view of my forthcoming visit, are doing so in order to induce the belief in me that they have never worn any other cloth, they are undoubtedly hypocrites. But I do not believe that they are buying khaddar with any such unholy design. It is no secret to me that a vast number of people have not yet given up the habit of using mill-made cloth, foreign or indigenous. But they do not mind using khaddar occasionally, and, since it has now become the Congress dress, people who attend Congress functions even occasionally consider it proper to wear khaddar. Whilst, therefore, I should like all



those in Bihar who are buying khaddar to enable them to appear at Congress functions during my tour, to wear it habitually, I am unable to condemn its use for the occasion of my tour. It is some gain, be it ever so small, that the surplus khaddar stock in Bihar will be used up and so much money freed for manufacture of more khaddar.

The second point raised by the correspondent is serious. The only way to avoid fraudulent imitations is for purchasers to ensure the purity of their purchases. Congress organizations, or khaddar organizations can do a great deal to prevent, or, at any rate, to check the evil. The correspondent states khaddar stores should be run by the Congress in all principal centres. Some such thing has been attempted, but it is a matter of finance and organization. The All-India Spinners' Association is being conceived for the purpose of dealing with such evils. Meanwhile I would urge writers like my correspondent not to give up khaddar for want of facility. It is because the successful organizing of khaddar and the spinning-wheel means the evoking of all that is best in us that I often say that the adoption of the spinning-wheel will lead to swaraj.

#### HALF-KHADDAR

The correspondent also deals with the evil of half-khaddar being manufactured and sold by Congress organizations. The evil is serious enough. A Congress organization, which is pledged to sell khaddar, can have nothing to do with half-khaddar. So long as Congressmen do not see the simple truth that manufacture of half-khaddar prevents the evolution of hand-spun yarn, spinning will be done indifferently. To subject hand-spun yarn to the test of the loom by using it for the warp is the surest and the quickest way of improving the quality of hand-spun yarn. It is a superstition to believe that by and by one would be able to displace mill yarn from warp. The difficulty will have to be faced one day. It has already been faced by several Congress organizations. There is no difficulty about getting hand-spun yarn woven, if not in the district of its production, in some other district. I wish, therefore, that Congress organizations should cease to weave or deal in half-khaddar.

#### COW-PROTECTION

Those who imposed on me the responsibility of conducting the All-India Cow-Protection Association and those who were responsible for its inauguration may rest assured that its affairs have not escaped

my attention. Only, the more I study the subject, the more I realize the difficulty of the task. With the protection of the cow, in the sense in which I have used it, is bound up not merely the welfare of the cattle of all India and the good name of Hinduism, but, also to a very large extent, the economic welfare of the country. The conviction is also becoming more and more deep-rooted in me that the solution of the problem lies in the acceptance by Hindus in particular, and the Indians in general, of the methods adopted by the Association. In order to enable me to study, or to have studied, all the literature on cow-protection, I invite all local Associations and those interested in the cattle problem, including the Agriculture Department of the Government of India as also the provincial Governments, to favour me with such literature and statistics as they may possess on the cattle problem, the conducting of dairies, tanneries, etc. The meeting of the Committee of the Association takes place in Bombay on the 3rd inst., at which I hope to announce the choice of a Secretary and a permanent Treasurer. I hope, too, that those who undertook to enroll a certain number of members, will be able to announce the fulfilment of their undertaking. The literature I have asked for may be sent to the address of the All-India Cow-Protection Association, Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati.

#### SPINNING AT A GOVERNMENT INSTITUTE

There is at Serampore a weaving institute run by the Government of Bengal, through its Department of Industries, where hand-spinning is being systematically taught. I was curious to know its progress and the methods of instruction. I, therefore, applied for permission to visit the institute which was readily granted. Mr. Hoogwerf showed me round. There was hand-weaving, dyeing, and spinning not restricted to cotton only, but extended to jute, silk, etc.

I propose, however, to confine my attention to cotton-spinning only. I appreciated the anxiety of the staff about it, but I discovered at once that there was not that technical ability and guidance which one would expect in a teaching institution. I had gone there to find a spinning expert with faith in hand-spinning. I had expected to find also up-to-date spinning-wheels. I say this not by way of idle criticism, but in the hope of definite improvement taking place in the near future. Some of the spinning-wheels I saw there were indifferently made and open to the same objections which I have raised in these columns to many specimens I saw during my tour. Some of them

even created a jarring sound. The slivers were also not of the best. Under the circumstances I should not at all wonder if in a short time one finds a report to the effect that the experiment in hand-spinning was a failure. Any experiment, before it can be pronounced a failure, must be given the fairest chance. It must, therefore, be conducted by one who has faith in it, and the requisite ability. There is, I understand, a desire to introduce instruction in power-loom weaving also at the Institute. As it is, the Institute is living on starvation wages. It is intended to promote cottage industries. In my opinion, the introduction of the power-loom will be a waste of public money, and I say this not because of my disbelief in power-looms, but because it does not promote the object for which the Institute has been founded. Every rupee voted for its management must be devoted to the development of cottage industries, and, therefore, all the activities of the Institute should be devoted to the exploration of possibilities of hand-spinning, and the antecedent processes and instruction therein.

One thing I noticed in the Institute which can be copied by all national institutions where hand-spinning is taught and developed. Mr. Hoogwerf took me to his home which contains testing instruments for testing the strength and the count of yarn, its evenness, the staple of cotton and the durability of cloth when it is woven. If some of these simple instruments are kept in national institutions and judiciously used, they will help spinners to make rapid progress and to check their spinning.

I must not omit an institution which is run chiefly from the aid of the Government Institute and is situated near by. It is really a home for girls to which a missionary lady has devoted herself. There, too, hand-spinning is one of the things taught. But my criticism applies equally to this home. The superintendent, in spite of all her will to make it a success, cannot do so, until she herself learns the art, so as to enable her to know a good wheel from a bad [one] and to know when spinning is done properly.

*Young India*. 3-9-1925

### 231. WHAT OF THE WEST?

A European friend thus writes:

What can be done, what would you suggest that could be tried in favour of the starving millions of the West? By starving millions I mean the masses of the European and American proletariat who are being driven to the

abyss, who live a life not worth the name, full of the direst privations, who can nourish no dream of future relief by any form of swaraj, who are perhaps more hopeless than the millions of India because the faith in God, the consolation of religion, has left them to be replaced by nothing but hatred.

The iron hands which press down the Indian nation are at work there also. the devilish system is at work in each of these independent countries; politics do not count as there is a close solidarity of greed. Vice is devastating these masses who naturally try to escape the hell of their life at any cost, at the cost of making it a greater hell, and who have no longer the outlet of religious hopes, as Christianity by siding for centuries with the powerful and the greedy has lost all credit.

Of course, I expect Mahatmaji to answer that the only way to salvation for these masses, if there is any left, if the whole Western world is not already doomed, lies in the application of a disciplined non-violent resistance carried on, on a large scale. But there are no traditions of ahimsa in the European soil and mind. Even the spreading of the doctrine would encounter huge difficulties, what about its right understanding and application!

The problem underlying the question so sincerely put by the friend lies outside my orbit. I, therefore, attempt an answer merely in courteous recognition of friendship between the questioner and myself. I confess that no value attaches to my answer, save what we attach to every considered argument. I know neither the diagnosis of the European disease nor the remedy in the same sense that I claim to know both in the case of India.

I, however, feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country the people enjoy political self-government, No mere transference of political power in India will satisfy my ambition, even though I hold such transference to be a vital necessity of Indian national life. The peoples of Europe have no doubt political power but no swaraj. Asian and African races are exploited for their partial benefit, and they, on their part, are being exploited by the ruling class or caste under the sacred name of democracy. At the root, therefore, the disease appears to be the same as in India. The same remedy is, therefore, likely to be applicable. Shorn of all the camouflage, the exploitation of the masses of Europe is sustained by violence.

Violence on the part of the masses will never remove the disease. Anyway, up to now experience shows that success of violence has

been short-lived. It has led to greater violence. What has been tried hitherto has been a variety of violence and artificial checks dependent mainly upon the will of the violent. At the crucial moment these checks have naturally broken down. It seems to me, therefore, that sooner or later, the European masses will have to take to non-violence if they are to find their deliverance. That there is no hope of their taking to it in a body and at once does not baffle me. A few thousand years are but a speck in the vast time circle. Someone has to make a beginning with a faith that will not flinch. I doubt not that the masses, even of Europe, will respond, but what is more emergent in point of time is not so much a large experiment in non-violence as a precise grasp of the meaning of deliverance.

From what will the masses be delivered? It will not do to have vague generalization and to answer "from exploitation and degradation". Is not the answer this that they want to occupy the status that capital does today? If so, it can be attained only by violence. But if they want to shun the evils of capital, in other words, if they would revise the viewpoint of capital, they would strive to attain a juster distribution of the products of labour. This immediately takes us to contentment and simplicity, voluntarily adopted. Under the new outlook multiplicity of material wants will not be the aim of life, the aim will be rather their restriction consistently with comfort. We shall cease to think of getting what we can, but we shall decline to receive what all cannot get. It occurs to me that it ought not to be difficult to make a successful appeal to the masses of Europe in terms of economics, and a fairly successful working of such an experiment must lead to immense and unconscious spiritual results. I do not believe that the spiritual law works on a field of its own. On the contrary, it expresses itself only through the ordinary activities of life. It thus affects the economic, the social, and the political fields. If the masses of Europe can be persuaded to adopt the view I have suggested, it will be found that violence will be wholly unnecessary to attain the aim and they can easily come to their own by following out the obvious corollaries of non-violence. It may even be that what seems to me to be so natural and feasible for India, may take longer to permeate the inert Indian masses than the active European masses. But I must reiterate my confession that all my argument is based on suppositions and assumptions and must, therefore, be taken for what it is worth.

*Young India*, 3-9-1925

## 232. INDIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

The following cable has been received by me from Mr. Amed Bhayat, President of a mass meeting of Indians held in Durban:

The Asiatic Bill<sup>1</sup> in the Union Parliament is far reaching in its results. It is inequitous and disastrous to Indian interests and is deliberate violation of Gandhi-Smuts understanding to recognize vested interests. The Bill provides for allocating residential and trading areas only within which Indians may buy and lease property. In rural districts Indians will be confined to thirty miles from the coast line wherein areas may be defined. The result will be that the business of thousands of Indians must cease on the expiry of present leases. It amounts to compulsory segregation, deliberate deprivation of Indian property. Ultimate aim is apparently repatriation and confiscation of rights. The right of *bona-fide* Indians to enter the Union is seriously jeopardized. Many provisions of the Bill will enable the Government to declare Indians as prohibited immigrants and domicile rights will be practically forfeited. Mere absence over three years causes forfeiture. The wives and children of domiciled Indians cannot enter the Union after five years from August 1925. Thousands of ex-indentured Indians who are now for thirty years here and their descendants may be declared prohibited immigrants and cannot claim domicile. South African born Indians domiciled in one province of the Union must return to the province of their birth, and there also into segregated areas. Indians born here could also be declared prohibited immigrants if unsuitable to the requirements of the Union. Such prohibited Indians will lose all property and vested rights in the Union and be driven away. Protest mass meeting Natal Indians been called for 31st in Durban. We rely upon you for creating strong influential public opinion so that the Indian Government may be roused into determined action to protect us. Affront to Indian nation must be met with dignified protests from India. The insult is gratuitous and we resent same in a most strenuous and emphatic manner. We implore you to press Indian Government to give immediate public expression to its attitude as supineness may be misunderstood by all concerned.

Although it has been published in the Press, it can bear repetition here. I have also received a copy of the *Gazette* containing the full text of the Bill. It is a long Bill divided into three chapters, containing 27 sections and a schedule. It occupies 9 foolscap sides

<sup>1</sup> The Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill, introduced in the Union Parliament in July 1925. The Bill was intended to prevent the acquisition of land by Asiatics save in certain specified areas.

closely printed. I do not print the Bill, as without the aid of previous enactments with which it deals and which it modifies or repeals, it is not capable of being understood by the reader. Suffice it to observe here that the cablegram faithfully summarizes the restrictions sought to be imposed by the Bill. It reduces the position of the resident Indian population to such an extent that, without the Union Government having to pay any compensation whatsoever, there will be no Indian settlers in South Africa within a few years' time. If the provisions of the Bill are applied with enough stringency, there will be powers given to the administration to freeze out every Indian, no matter what the step may be, in the land of his adoption and even of his birth, for the Bill makes no distinction between Indians born in South Africa and domiciled. The safeguards provided by the Bill are all illusory and can be rendered perfectly nugatory. That the Bill has not yet become law is a matter of little comfort. The Bill is an indication of the determination of the Union Government to starve the Indians out of South Africa. Mr. Malan has made no secret of it. It is a matter of time when every Indian will have left South Africa. Let the reader remember, or know, that the Chinese labourers who were imported for developing the gold mines of Johannesburg, were summarily repatriated when the Government had made up its mind. The Chinese had no voice. So it will be with Indians unless the Government of India choose to do its duty. Mr. Bhayat has made a pathetic appeal to us here. So far as public opinion is concerned, it is unanimously for the Indian settlers. Unfortunately for them, it is at present ineffective. Such as it is, it will certainly be mobilized for the purpose of preventing the impending spoliation of our countrymen in South Africa in total disregard of the Agreement of 1914, which was designed to guarantee the then existing rights of the Indian residents in South Africa.

*Young India*, 3-9-1925

### 233. DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL

I am leaving Bengal not without much sorrow. I have almost become domiciled in Bengal. I shall miss my daily pilgrimage to Basanti Devi, and I shall miss the happy smiling faces of the numerous subscribers who have been coming daily from various parts. I know that if we have not reached ten lakhs, it is not because of want of devotion to the memory of Deshbandhu or of will on the part of the

Bengalis, but because of the universally defective organization for which we are responsible. Had it been possible to canvass every village in Bengal, we would have long ago made up the full total. But even as it is, the sum of Rs. 7,74,165-10-5  $\frac{1}{2}$  is not unworthy of Bengal. I have had a rough calculation made, and the result shows that the resident Marwaris have contributed over Rs. 140,000, the resident Gujaratis have contributed nearly Rs.60,000, and the balance is contributed by the Bengalis in Bengal, and outside Bengal, including small sums from other provinces. The burden now rests upon those who are in charge of the funds to fulfil the objects for which it has been raised.

There remains still the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Organized collection for it has not yet begun, Pandit Jawaharlal has circulated a list<sup>1</sup> of collections up to the 23rd August, which brings the total to Rs. 2,002-8-6 and which I give below as an interesting study.

*Young India*, 3-9-1925

### 234. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

Some friends have been telling me that the date 22nd September for the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee is an inconvenient one for the Bengalis in view of the forthcoming Puja holidays . The date has been fixed in consultation with Pandit Motilal Nehru who has chosen it after consultation with the members of the Assembly. The original date fixed has been anticipated for the convenience of these members so that they might not have a double journey. Had the 1st of October been retained, it would not have been possible to fix the venue at Patna. Even as it is, a telegram has been received from Sind protesting against the venue being fixed at Patna. I appreciate the difficulty of the Sindhi friends. But Patna has been chosen after much consultation and for the convenience of the majority of the members. The real Puja holiday commences on the 24th and I have promised the Bengali friends that, even though there may have to be a late night sitting, I shall finish the deliberations of the All-India Congress Committee on the 22nd so as to free the members to leave for Calcutta the night of 22nd. If any routine matters requiring the attention of the All-India Congress Committee remain over, and on which Bengali friends might not have any fixed

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here, the list showed contributions from almost all over the country.



views, subject to their consent, the proceedings will be prolonged beyond the 22nd. But the main purpose for which the meeting is being convened will be finished on the 22nd. I hope to be in Patna on the 20th. 21st is my day of silence, and I shall be free to discuss with friends who might arrive on the 20th any question that they may wish to discuss in regard to the proposed change in the constitution. Needless to say that no change in the constitution will be adopted unless there is an absolute unanimity. I hope all the members of the A.I.C.C. will attend the forthcoming meeting.

If all goes well, it is my desire also to inaugurate the All-India Spinners' Association and to discuss matters relating to the spinning-wheel and khaddar. I therefore invite all khadi workers who may wish to help at the framing of the constitution of this organization to attend.

*The Hindu*, 3-9-1925

### 235. LETTER TO V. L. PHADKE

*Bhadra Vad 1 [September 3, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAI MAMA,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter. You may certainly sit with Vallabhbhai and prepare a budget as you please. It will have to be passed. If you wish to stay on in the Sangh who can throw you out? I shall reach the Ashram on the 5th and stay there till the 9th. Give the Samiti all the information it wants about the Ashram<sup>3</sup>. You may write to say that the deed has been passed on to me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3811

<sup>1</sup> The dates, 5th and 9th, of Gandhiji's reaching the Ashram and of his leaving it, which are mentioned in the letter, coincide with September 5, 1925, when in fact he arrived at Satyagraha Ashram, and September 9, 1925, when he departed for Bihar.

<sup>2</sup> Vithal Laxman Phadke was popularly known as *Mama*, 'maternal uncle'.

<sup>3</sup> Antyaja Ashram at Godhra in Gujarat, managed by the addressee

## 236. INTERVIEW TO “THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE”

[September 3, 1925]

Mahatma Gandhi arrived in Bombay yesterday. On his arrival at the Victoria Terminus station in the morning he was received by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and several other friends. He is staying in Revashanker Jagjivans's house, Laburnum Road, Gamdevi, his usual Bombay residence. Knowing that he would soon be caught up in the maze of engagements that have been fixed for him even in advance of his arrival, a representative of *The Chronicle* sought an interview with him soon after his arrival at his residence. Gandhiji readily consented to give one, though visitors had already begun to call. He had a slightly tired look but otherwise was as cheery and fit as ever.

Our representative began by asking about Gandhiji's outstanding impressions of his Bengal tour and he replied that so far as khaddar was concerned, the thing that counted most, the province in general showed as much enthusiasm for khaddar and as much disposition to work out the programme as any other province. It might even do more. Asked what advice he had given or would give to the Bengal Swarajists with regard to the policy in the Legislative Council, he replied that he had only advised them to follow the lead of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Gandhiji had by now taken out his twirligig<sup>1</sup> and begun plying it.

“What remedy would you suggest against the prevailing stagnation in the country?” was the next question. He fixed a fond look on the twirligig, drew out a fine long thread, and said with a beaming smile:

Well, I have already prescribed my remedy. Spin, spin, spin, till stagnation vanishes. That is my remedy and it holds the field till another or an alternative remedy is suggested and a case made out for it.

Our representative pointed out that village panchayats were being suggested in several places, especially in Maharashtra and also co-operative societies for khaddar work as adjuncts for village organizations. Gandhiji said:

They are all right where they can properly be worked out in a spirit of absolute self-reliance. Where this spirit prevails, I would welcome almost any organization as better than none, but I fear that in many cases these institutions might turn out to be additional instruments to accustom people to lean on officials or their agents. What we want to unite and vitalize the whole nation is a common industry which all can carry on entirely by themselves. Universal spinning is the thing.

<sup>1</sup> The *takli* or spindle-like contrivance for spinning

“Do you see any signs , even if stray, of the Hindu-Muslim tension easing?” he was asked next. He said gravely:

No, it is growing worse, but only to grow better. I fear the growing tension may end in an explosion, though we shall try to make it as little violent as possible. But with the reaction following, the two communities must coalesce, and absorption in common constructive work can keep down the violence of the explosion and will further cement the union when it comes.

“What reply would you have the Congress give to Lord Birkenhead?” The prompt reply was:

More work and more briskly on the lines I have already suggested.

“May we not,” our representative asked, “take him at his word in a sporting mood and spring a swaraj scheme upon him?”

If the offer were made in a genuine sporting mood we could accept it so, but, in the absence of any actual signs of a change of heart on his part, I only fear that the offer to consider any scheme prepared by us may turn out to be a trap. I would not walk into it.

Asked if he would not convene a representative leaders’ conference to re-explore the avenues to the unity of all parties, he replied:

I have answered this question several days ago. I am also referring to the topic in today’s *Young India*. Informal attempts are being made but the time for a formal conference is not yet. At present almost each party wants unity, no doubt, but unity on its own terms. No conference can succeed under these circumstances. As soon as I see any general disposition to subordinate one’s individual or party views to the present needs of the country, I shall be the first to call such a conference.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 4-9-1925

### 237. MESSAGE ON CENTENARY OF DADABHAI NAOROJI

Dadabhai justly earned the affectionate title of the G.O.M. of India. Was it not he who first introduced us to the problem of the deep poverty of the masses? In discovering the growing poverty of the masses Dadabhai put his finger upon the root evil of the present system of Government. In my opinion, therefore, the best way we can celebrate the forthcoming Centenary is to do something tangible for dealing with the problem of poverty. It cannot be dealt with

satisfactorily save through the universal adoption of spinning-wheel and khaddar. Hence it is that I have unhesitatingly recommended the celebration of the Centenary by making collections for khaddar and charkha, by holding khaddar exhibitions, by hawking khaddar and in every becoming manner pushing forward the cause of khaddar and the spinning-wheel, in other words the cause of the millions.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 4-9-1925

### 238. INTERVIEW TO “FORWARD”<sup>1</sup>

BOMBAY,  
September 4, 1925

A glowing tribute to Bengal and the Swaraj Party was paid by Mahatma Gandhi in course of a special interview for *Forward* which I had this morning. Questioned whether the Swaraj Party had been weakened by Deshbandhu's death, Mahatmaji replied:

Any party, any institution must be weakened after Deshbandhu's death. But that in no sense means that the Party will break up. On the contrary up to now the Party has been exceptionally loyal to the memory of Deshbandhu and has to the best of its ability carried out his wishes.

Has the resignation of Dr. Suhrawardy had any adverse effect on the Party?

Personally, I do not see.

In your opinion, Mahatmaji, are the election of Mr. Patel<sup>2</sup> as President of the Assembly and Panditji's acceptance of a seat on the Skeen Committee<sup>3</sup> consistent with the Swaraj Party's principles?

I see no inconsistency in either of these things. Any party which is growing in strength or wants to grow in strength must adapt itself to the circumstances. I think the acceptance by Panditji of a seat on the Skeen Committee and the election of Mr. Patel were fine strokes.

*Forward*, 5-9-1925

<sup>1</sup> Some of the questions and answers occurring in this report are the same as those in “Interview to *The Bombay Chronicle*”, 3-9-1925, and are not being reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> Vithalbhai Patel

<sup>3</sup> The Committee, set up under the chairmanship of Sir Andrew Skeen, had been asked to consider whether it was desirable to start a military college in India. The demand for such a college had been made in a resolution passed by the Legislative Assembly in Delhi.

### 239. *SPEECH AT DADABHAI NAOROJI CENTENARY MEETING, BOMBAY*

*September 4, 1925*

Mahatma Gandhi said he was a real worshipper of Dadabhai Naoroji, the Dada of India. Any man or woman who did his or her duty and died in the performance of it, the name of such a person would never die. Dadabhai was with them in spirit, although he was not there in his physical body and his sweet voice could not be heard by them any more. The passage of time had merely made Dadabhai's name dearer to them and it was more deeply engraved on their hearts. It was in 1888 that he had occasion to sit at the feet of Dadabhai and, although he was not reading newspapers then—in the same way as he was not reading them now—he had heard the name of Dadabhai. A Deccani gentleman gave him a letter of introduction to Dadabhai, although he was not acquainted with him and, when he took it to him in England, although Dadabhai did not know the writer of the letter, he took him (Gandhiji) to his heart and said: If you are ever in any difficulty come to me. Dadabhai was living in England not to enjoy life, or play any games or to go to the theatre, but to serve India. He there had a large number of Indian students under his care, to whom he acted guardian, but had he done only that he would never have been remembered by Indians. Although Dadabhai had never been into the villages, yet his heart was so big that it found room for the poor villager. He not only had a heart big enough to include all the Indian communities, but even the poorest of the poor were remembered by him. He knew that the poor villagers were dumb and he wanted to make their voice heard by the rulers of this land. He knew that the villagers could not get even one square meal a day, not to speak of such luxuries as ghee and milk. And what Dadabhai had said 30 or 40 years ago was true even to this day. Dadabhai knew that, so long as a majority of Indians were skeletons and were mere bags of bones, they could not achieve anything. In England Dadabhai had a small office-room for doing his work and he lived there like an ascetic serving the cause of India. The speaker said he was a true worshipper of Dadabhai and it did not matter to him even if his idol had blemishes. The audience that night had come to that meeting to worship Dadabhai, but how many of them were actuated by a sincere desire to do so? Dadabhai had taught him two things: that he must give his idol his fullest love and worship without any reservation and that, if he wanted to serve India, he must serve the poor. Gandhiji said he could only serve the poor by becoming the very poorest of the poor, the meanest of the mean by becoming a Hindu, a Muslim and a Parsi, for to Dadabhai all Indians were alike. Although Dadabhai was staunch Zoroastrian, he never disliked the other

<sup>1</sup> The meeting, organized by 13 representatives of local associations, was held in the Cowasji Jehangir Hall and was presided over by Gandhiji. Sarojini Naidu and Shaukat Ali also spoke.

communities. He even respected Englishmen. Dadabhai never said that India alone should be great at the cost of the whole world. He was willing to sacrifice India for the good of the world, but for that purpose a free nation was required, and he knew that a slave nation could not do anything. Therefore, through his noble life he worshipped at the shrine of the goddess of freedom and liberty. It was said that if they offered their God even a simple flower, He was pleased and that merely showed how easy it was to please Him, provided they were sincere. The best way of celebrating the centenary of Dadabhai was to resolve to serve the country. Gandhiji asked the audience not to follow whatever Dadabhai did, but do only that which would please his soul. He who could serve India ceaselessly, sincerely, and whole-heartedly would always be honoured, and to do that was the only way they could celebrate the centenary of Dadabhai.

*The Bombay Chronicle, 7-9-1925*

#### 240. COW-PROTECTION

The more I study the problem of protecting cows, the more I realize its importance. This problem will become increasingly serious in India, since it involves the economic well-being of the country. I believe that from its very nature religion embraces economic, political and other problems. The religion which is opposed to true economics is no religion, nor that which is opposed to true politics. Economics devoid of religion should be shunned, and political power uninformed with the spirit of religion is Satanic. There is no such thing as dharma unrelated to economic and other activities. Individuals and society, both survive through dharma and perish without it. Accumulation of wealth, that is commerce, through truthful means fosters the growth of society, but commerce carried on without any regard for truth destroys it. Many instances can be cited to show that what is gained through falsehood, through dishonest and devious means is but shortlived and proves harmful in the end.

Hence, while discussing our duty to protect cows we must consider its economic aspect as well. If cow-protection is opposed to true economics, we have no choice but to give up the effort. Not only that, but we shall discover in that case that we cannot succeed in protecting cows even if we wish to do so.

It is because we have not even thought about the economic benefits of cow-protection that, in a country where countless people regard the protection of the cow and her offspring as a sacred duty,

the latter starve. We see them reduced to mere skin and bone, so much so that all their bones can be counted, and they are slaughtered only because of the indifference of Hindus. Cow-protection involves the very existence of Indian agriculture. Cow-slaughter would cease if every Hindu understood the economics of Cow-protection. The destruction of cows through the sheer stupidity of Hindus must be a hundred times greater than their slaughter in the name of religion. So long as Hindus themselves do not understand the right method of protecting cows, not all the crores of rupees which they can spend will save the latter.

In Gujarat, *Banias*, *Bhatias* and Marwaris take interest in the cause of cow-protection. They spend large sums on it. And even among them the Marwaris, especially, go to great lengths, Marwari business men run the largest number of *goshalas* in India. They cheerfully contribute lakhs of rupees towards these and it is for this reason that I have said that the problem of protecting cows cannot be solved without the help of Marwaris. I have often visited *goshalas*, but I cannot say that I saw any which was an ideal one.

These reflections were provoked by my visit to the *goshala* at Liluah in Calcutta. Two and a half lakh rupees are spent on it every year, but the return is practically nil. A *goshala* which gets two and a half lakh rupees every year should be able to save the lives of not less than 10,000 head of cattle in a year. Even the cattle tended by this institution do not come to so many. The organizers are not to be blamed for this, nor are they dishonest. The secretary who took me round to show the institution is serving it to the best of his ability. The system itself is to blame for this result. We do not know how to run such institutions, and so the people do not derive the fullest benefit from them.

Practical ability is not considered necessary in matters concerning religion. Such institutions are regarded as well run simply if those who manage them do not misappropriate funds. In a business firm in which additional capital of two and a half lakh rupees is invested every year, the best available paid workers are employed, whereas in this case persons engaged in their own business spare some of their time as a social duty. Those who do so deserve to be congratulated, but their work does not help the cause of cow-protection. This cause requires full-time services of able and efficient persons. Only men of spiritual knowledge who live a life of self-denial

and self-sacrifice will offer such services, or able, worldly men if properly paid. It would not matter if those who donate money for charitable purposes are not practical persons, but those who run charity institutions must be more capable and hard-working than even business men. All the moral rules which apply to business men also apply to charitable institutions. if *goshalas* were run as commercial concerns, men with scientific knowledge of such matters would be working in them, and they would daily conduct new experiments and save the lives of more and more cows, would carry out many experiments about rearing cattle in *goshalas* and about ensuring the purity and increasing the quantity of milk. It is quite obvious that the knowledge about rearing cattle which can be obtained through *goshalas* cannot be got elsewhere. Since, however, they are charity institutions, they are not being run properly and no one is concerned about them. It would be slighting the Vedas if schools which are meant to teach them taught us the least about them; the present-day *goshalas* are in the same condition.

I have doubts whether the *goshala* at Liliuah is properly located. That the buildings are not of the right kind can be judged even by a layman like me who knows nothing about the scientific method of running *goshalas*. There are no instruments there for examining the quality of the milk and other products. There is no one there who can say whether it is possible to increase the yield of milk. The institution seems to be the responsibility of no one. I would advice those who are in charge of it to consult experts in the management of *goshalas* and employ paid workers who know their job and leave it to them to run it. Institutions of this kind should train people in rearing cattle and bullocks, provide instruction in regared to improved techniques of castration, cattle feed and the methods of growing them, hygienic processes of obtaining milk and of removing skin and processing it. So long as there is indifference in those matters, we should feel that *goshalas* are not being put to the best use. We should feel ashamed even if a single cow or bullock dies an untimely death or is exported. I am convinced that this can be easily prevented through *goshalas*.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 6-9-1925



## 241. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

September 6, 1925

CHI. RAMDAS,

I have received your letter. I think I have already written to you about the Sangh. Having a Sangh means getting people together. It is your job to collect people, if God grants you satisfaction there and if you can concentrate on the work. You have the capacity to attract people. It is on people that the Sangh must depend. If the Sangh is created and people devote themselves to it, other people will be drawn to it. But the basis is still people. I have already written to you to this effect.

What you have written about irregularity, etc., is correct. I intend to discuss that part of it in *Navajivan*. Maybe it can be done next week. I have no doubt at all that there is nothing sinful in having a fashionable hair-style. In the case of such external actions, the sin lies in the intention, not in the act. A thing done with an innocent heart is never sinful. Of course, with regard to such behaviour it has been said that even if an act is pure, it should be abandoned if it incurs popular disapproval. For instance, the solar hat is absolutely harmless. It has many advantages in the summer. Nevertheless, I feel that if people do not approve of it, it should not be worn. I do not object to people wearing that headdress but I do wish that they should respect popular sentiment.

Chi. Harilal came to the station. Then I went back to Faridpur. I returned today, that is, on Monday. He may come here tomorrow.

I am in good health. Don't worry at all.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I am sending you the letter I have received from Fulchandbhai. Read it, then give it to Ramjibhai Jaisukhlal to read and then destroy it.

From the Gujarati original: Ramdas Gandhi Papers, Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 242. SPEECH AT LABOUR UNION SCHOOLS, AHMEDABAD<sup>1</sup>

September 6, 1925

I am pleased to hear the report of your work and I offer you my congratulations. I have observed the activities of your schools during my tours. I see what classes of children are taught here and what sort of education is imparted to them. Nowhere else have I seen the orderly management found in these schools. This does not mean that I have some sort of partiality for these schools. Since there is such a possibility, I have made allowance for it. And so I should like to stick to my opinion. This appreciation is not meant to flatter you. I have expressed it because it is well deserved. My duty is rather to point out your defects than to congratulate you. I can see clearly your efforts at strict observance of the rules of cleanliness, but I would urge you to look at the problem from my view-point. I was shocked to find dirt in the nails of the girl there. It is uncleanliness; it is a wrong thing. The roll-call is not complete until the nails, teeth, etc. of every child are inspected. We contract perhaps more diseases through the nails and teeth than otherwise. These two things are most serviceable and it is easy to maintain them in good condition. Do not yield any scope here for “as far as possible”. The cleanliness of the nose and eyes is of lesser importance. The children themselves will learn to take care of them. It is necessary to inspect their hair also.

I congratulate you on your work with the *takli*. No national school has, I think, made so much progress in this respect. I add my own experience of the *takli* to yours. It was a wrong experiment to have introduced in the school the spinning-wheel which does not possess the potency of the *takli*. Even if the spinning-wheel is completely destroyed, the *takli* has the potency to bring about a boycott of foreign cloth. The spinning-wheel is a nuisance though it does good. It is an ornament to a hut. The *takli* is an ornament only to a school. It is a top which is useful. I congratulate you also on having such a large number of children here.

It would be a misfortune if the mill-owners failed to encourage these schools. It will bring them credit if they develop them. It is their duty to do so. I am deeply grieved to learn that the grant of Rs. 1,200 which used to be received from the Tilak Swaraj Fund has stopped

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was arranged by the organizers, teachers and students of the schools *vide* also “Notes,” 10-9-1925, sub-title, “A Remarkable Record”.

coming in. The grant ought to be resumed. But Anasuyabehn ought to be relieved of her anxiety by making some other aid available. What can I say to the rich who would not take advantage of the services of honorary workers? I do wish that you too should listen to me just as Mr. G.G. has done. That is my prayer to you. You have to request the mill-owners to donate funds for your education.

The Arab brushes his teeth as he travels about in the ship and hence the Somali Arab is healthy and handsome. Can black-skinned people not look handsome?

God is a wonderful watch-maker. He alone can set right his watch that has gone out of order. Harijan children are my adopted children; therefore they should keep themselves very clean. One should have a pure tongue, a pure mind and a pure body.

[From Gujarati]

*Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. VIII

### **243. SPEECH AT MEETING OF LABOUR UNION, AHMEDABAD<sup>1</sup>**

[September 6, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

Gandhiji in his speech laid especial stress on the labourers' duty. He knew they had grievances about insufficient water supply, lack of dining sheds, proper cleaning of latrines, beatings and ill-treatment by jobbers and numerous breakages of ends in the throstle department and consequent less work and less wages. But he was sure that some of the things depended on themselves, on their cultivation of proper self-respect. He was glad to note that the Union had redeemed the debts of some of them and substituted cheap loans for loans on exorbitant rates of interest. But it was a sad commentary on their way of life that they should have to borrow so much. Their wages may be insufficient, but he had no doubt that if they were more thrifty, free from drink and other evil habits, they would not have to be indebted. He was very glad that the mill-hands recognized the difficult situation of the mill-owners at the present moment. He said:

I am glad, you recognize this. You cannot ask for more pay when they are going through serious difficulties. A time might come when loyal labourers may have to come forward with an offer to serve

<sup>1</sup> This was the annual general meeting of the Labour Union at which Gandhiji presided. No full version of the speech is available. But *Young India* and *The Bombay Chronicle* seem to have reported different parts of it.

<sup>2</sup> As given by *The Bombay Chronicle*

without any wages, in order that the mills may not have to be closed down. But I know that you are not prepared today for that. There is not that amount of trust between you and the mill-owners. You are labouring under numerous injustices, and unless the mill-owners have won you over by considerate and loving treatment, you are going to do nothing of the kind today. But that is a consummation towards which I want you to work.<sup>1</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi said that they were benefited by the establishment of the Union. Still their grievances were manifold. For that they themselves were responsible. It was easy to point out the defects of the mill agents. If they remedied their own defects, they could impress the mill agents as well as others. They could achieve a great deal by being courteous and truthful. He wished they might regain the wages that were cut and obtain higher wages, but they should know that there was trade depression and that the mills had to fight with Government. At such a time it was their duty not to expect higher wages. There was mutual distrust. The burden of dispelling this distrust lay on their shoulders. If they worked efficiently without the supervision of overseers they would not have to ask for the redress of grievances.

*Young India*, 10-9-1925, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 8-9-1925

## 244. NOTES

### A REMARKABLE RECORD

I have before me a brief and business-like report of the remarkable work that is silently but most efficiently being done by the Labour Union managed under the gentle care of Shrimati Anasuyabai. It deals with the educational work being done among the labourers.

In 1924 there were 8 day schools. Today there are 9. Of these two are for all children, six for untouchables and one for Mussalmans. There were 11 night schools in 1924. Today there are 15. Of these, 1 for all, 8 for untouchables, 5 for Mussalmans and 1 for *Vaghris*. In 1924 there were 1,119 scholars and the attendance was 979.4. There were 692 untouchables, 221 touchables and 206 Mussalmans. In the beginning of the year there were 1,166 scholars 798 being untouchables, 219 touchables and 169 Mussalmans and 60 *Vaghris*. The attendance was 907.92. At the present moment there are 1,285.

<sup>1</sup> This is taken from *Young India*. What follows is from *The Bombay Chronicle*.

The boys and girls learn all the subjects taught in the ordinary primary schools. In addition they have hand-spinning. The management at first tried the wheels. Among so many boys and girls, the wheels were found to be too expensive and inconvenient because of the space required. They have, therefore taken up the *takli* which every scholar can possess. It was a fine sight to see several hundred boys and girls spinning all at the same time. Their average speed is 30 to 40 yards per hour each . They have already spun 2 mds. and 8 seers of good yarn.

There is also a residential school with 16 untouchable boys. Of these 6 pay Rs.5 each towards boarding expenses. The rest are free. They learn to card, spin and weave. In 1924, they spun  $1\frac{1}{4}$  mds. of yarn and wove 125 yards of khaddar. In 1924, there were 66 teachers, today there are 77 teachers. The total expenses were Rs. 22,254-8-4. Of these Rs. 1,250 monthly were contributed by the Mill-owners' Association being part of interest on Tilak Swaraj Fund contributed by its members and earmarked for the purpose of the welfare of the labourers. A donation of Rs. 60 per month was received from Mr. Brijvalabhdas Jekisandas. The rest was found by the Union. The residential school expenses were paid by the Provincial Congress Committee.

The most striking fact is the very large number of untouchable children receiving education in these schools. I understand that their parents do not need coaxing. They gladly send their children. If anything, it is the other parents who require to be approached and induced to send theirs.

Needless to say, these schools are independent of all Government aid or control.

Special attention is paid to the cleanliness of these scholars. Indeed, the schools will compare favourably with any primary schools throughout India. I draw the attention of all school-masters to the necessity of cleanliness and tidiness among the scholars. It requires no special effort daily to hold a parade of all the scholars before commencing the classes and examine their teeth, nails, ears, eyes, etc. I have seen neglect of these simple things even in schools claiming to be model schools.

### IS IT OVER-CONFIDENCE?

An esteemed friend, jealous of my reputation for correct conduct, asks how it is that I feel confident of my being right in my latest attitude of whole-hearted support to the Swaraj Party. Have I not made Himalayan blunders? Do I not notice, the friend asks, that many of my No-changer friends are bewildered over what to them appears to be my inconsistency? Might I not be guilty of over-confidence?

I do not think so. For a man of truth must ever be confident, if he has also equal need to be diffident. His devotion to truth demands the fullest confidence. His consciousness of the fallibility of human nature must make him humble and therefore ever ready to retrace his steps immediately he discovers his error. It makes no difference to his confidence that he had previously made Himalayan blunders. His confession and penance make him, if anything, stronger for future action. Discovery of errors makes the votary of truth more cautious of believing things and forming things and forming conclusions, but once he has made up his mind, his conscience must remain unshaken. His errors may result in men's reliance upon his judgments being shaken, but he must not doubt the truth of his position once he has come to a conclusion. It should further be borne in mind that my errors have been errors of calculation and judging men, not in appreciating the true nature of truth and ahimsa or in their application. Indeed these errors and my prompt confessions have made me surer, if possible, of my insight into the implications of truth and ahimsa. For I am convinced that my action in suspending civil disobedience at Ahmedabad, Bombay and Bardoli has advanced the cause of India's freedom and world's peace. I am convinced that because of the suspensions we are nearer swaraj than we would have been without, and this I say in spite of despair being written in thick black letters on the horizon. Such being my deep conviction, I cannot help being confident of my present position as regards Swarajists and other matters. It is traceable to one source only, a lively understanding of the implications of truth and ahimsa.

### ALL-INDIA MEMORIAL

Sjt. Manilal Kothari has already commenced his operations. The Parsi friend whom he induced to subscribe Rs. 25,000 told me that it was impossible for him to resist Manilal Kothari. The *Bhatia* friend who subscribed Rs. 51,000 must have felt the same thing. But I assure them that whilst their donations are no doubt princely, they are not

too much for the purpose to which they are to be devoted. Our duty to the memory of Deshbandhu will not have been performed unless by khaddar work we achieve the exclusion of foreign cloth. And that is not possible without men and money. I hope, therefore, that the response will be quick and generous. Up till now Rs.1,087-3-3 have been received at the *Young India* Office and Rs. 2,096-12-6 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at Allahabad ( up to 29-8-1925) .

*Young India*, 10-9-1925

#### 245. A VILLAGE EXPERIMENT

The following will be read with interest by everyone concerned with village reconstruction:<sup>1</sup>

This is in many respects a remarkable experiment. Quiet work has gone on without fuss, without advertisement, and practically without capital and this has been possible because the people were willing to revise their taste in dress material and to make use of their idle hours. The population of the village is 640. The cloth budget is estimated at Rs. 3,640. Therefore, when all the villagers are clothed in khaddar, they will add to their annual income Rs. 3,640 by simply using their waste moments. There is no village reconstruction scheme which can possibly yield such brilliant, tangible and quick results. This khaddar work is also an object-lesson in co-operation. And by the time khaddar becomes a permanent part of the village life, selfless village workers can, if they will, promote sanitation, education and social reform. This is practical self-government. Imagine thousands of such villages bound together by a common tie through khaddar, and you have swaraj for the asking. For when India learns to deny itself the use of foreign cloth, she will have sterilized the many undesirable activities of the British people and paved the way for real swaraj. I hope that the good people of Kanur will not rest content till every man, woman and child living in it habitually wears khaddar. It is to be hoped, too, that the infection will not be confined to Pudur only, but that it will spread from village to village.

*Young India*, 10-9-1925

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. The writing dealt with the progress of spinning and use of khaddar in Kanur village of Coimbatore district, in South India.

## 246. ALL-BENGAL DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL

Friends have been inquiring whether they may still pay their subscription to the All-Bengal Memorial Fund. So far as the official collection is concerned, it was closed on the 31st ultimo. But if there are any who still wish to pay to *that* fund, they can do so through the Trustees. But whatever may now be received by me will be credited to the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial unless the subscriber directs to the contrary.

*Young India*, 10-9-1925

## 247. ABOUT UNTOUCHABLES

Sjt. T. N. Sarma of Andhra Desh came to me the other day at Calcutta and asked me certain questions regarding the difficulties found in the path of those who were serving the *Panchamas*.<sup>1</sup> He has now reduced my answers to writing and sent them to me to correct and publish if possible. As they are likely to help workers, I gladly find room for the questions and my answers.

1. What methods do you suggest for the propaganda for the removal of untouchability?

Not much lip propaganda is necessary now. Work is propaganda. You should work fearlessly, unmindful of social ostracism, for bettering the condition of the untouchables. Lectures may be arranged when leading men pay you a visit.

2. There are two shades of opinion in our Andhra province, and a resolution was proposed to the effect that money should not be spent for the non-*Panchamas* to do propaganda work. Some people think that the *Panchamas* should be educated first, and the demand for the removal should come from them, while others think that paid propaganda should be done among the higher classes to change their hearts, and to make them feel that untouchability is a sin, and pundits and workers should be appointed to do this work.

I would not spend even a single pie over the pundits. if you pay them they become hirelings. They must work for pay. Money should be spent on the *Panchamas* to make them realize their own position. Our methods should always be non-violent. Men of the so-called higher classes must change their attitude, and remove the ban for their

<sup>1</sup> Castes regarded as untouchables



own elevation and purification. If they do not do so and persist in suppressing them, time must come when the untouchables will rebel against us, and may have recourse even to violent methods. I am trying my utmost to prevent such a catastrophe, and so must we all do who believe untouchability to be a sin.

3. Do you think that schools started exclusively for the *Panchamas* will help in any way in removing untouchability?

They must in the long run do so, as all education must. But such schools should not be exclusively *Panchama* schools as boys from other castes also should be welcomed. They will not come at present. But the prejudice will break down in time if the schools are well managed. If you want mixed schools, you must start one in your locality. Suppose you own a house. Nobody can ask you to go away from your house. Bring an untouchable boy to your house and start a school with him. Induce other boys to come and attend that school.

4. In our province encouragement is given to the schools where the children of both the untouchables and the touchables read together.

Yes. You may encourage them. But you should not refuse help to schools or institutions where there are only untouchables.

5. In some Taluk Boards, there are orders that schools will be abolished if admission is refused to the untouchables. Do you advise us to help the *Panchamas* at such places in getting admission through our propagandists?

Certainly. You should help them. But there is no need for special propagandists. Your workers will do for that purpose.

6. Then what about the propaganda work? Do you think that silent work will do?

Yes. There is no good of propaganda when there is no solid work behind to elevate the *Panchamas*.

(In this connection, Gandhiji referred to the Vaikom struggle, and said that it had a very tremendous effect on the people of those parts.)

7. Shall we spend money freely for the propaganda at a time when such questions arise?

Not freely. Solid work is its own propaganda. At Vaikom most of the money is spent for constructive work.

8. Are you going to take up the question of untouchability more vigorously at any time in the near future?

I have already taken up that question as vigorously as possible. We are trying to start schools, dig wells, and build temples, etc., for them

wherever it is possible. The work does not stop for want of money. Perhaps you are thinking that nothing is done for them, because it is not advertised in the papers.

9. According to the Belgaum resolution, no school can be called 'national' where *Panchamas* are refused admission.

Certainly. They are not national schools.

10. Do you say that such schools should not be given help from Congress funds, even though they satisfy all the other conditions to be called national schools?

No help should be given.

*Young India*, 10-9-1925

## 248. LETTER TO JETHALAL MANSUR

*Bhadra Vad 8, '81 [ September 10, 1925]*

BHAI JETHALAL,

I have your letter. Try to collect soon donations for the temple.<sup>1</sup> How much do you expect from Ramjibhai?<sup>2</sup> The members of his family have donated ornaments also. The delay there will be responsible for the delay in the temple construcion. It is also necessary to know who will be the priest in charge of this temple.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: S.N. 11135 (1)

<sup>1</sup> For Harijans at Lathi, chief town of the then princely State of Lathi in Saurashtra.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, Ramjibhai of Lathi who, with his wife Gangabehn, responded to Gandhiji's appeal for reviving in Gujarat the craft of weaving from hand-spun yarn, and taught it to others in Sabarmati Ashram.

## 249. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,  
Friday [September 11, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

I read your letter carefully in the train. I understand your suffering and appreciate your arguments. But even so, it seems to me that you should certainly take an injection and even after doing so, try to control your impure thoughts. Be constantly alert for that purpose. There will be no difficulty in sending you to a place like Almora. But that will be considered later. For the present, watch the effect of the injection and avoid fatiguing exertion.

In fact, if you can make yourself completely free from impure thoughts, you will not need even the *chiretta*<sup>2</sup>. All of us should try to attain that state. Surely one of us will succeed in it. Rarely do we find anyone in the world who is pure even in his thoughts. Nothing is impossible for such a person. I wish you to make greater effort than others in that direction.

Write to me when you feel so inclined. Look after Lakshmi.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S. N. 33021

## 250. SPEECH AT PURULIA<sup>3</sup>

September 12, 1925

Mahatmaji first of all thanked the members of the District Board and the Municipality for the addresses that they had presented to him. In one of the addresses, he said, reference had very fittingly been made and regret had been expressed over

<sup>1</sup> The dateline in Gandhiji's hand has 'Friday, on the train' whereas the addressee has noted it as 'Rentiabaras, Samvat 1981'. *Rentiabaras*, i.e. *Bhadarya Vad* 12 in Vikram Era 1981 fell on September 14, 1925, which was a Monday, not a Friday. The letter, therefore, appears to have been written on the preceding Friday, i.e. on September 11, 1925 when Gandhiji was travelling from Bombay to Purulia. 'Rentiabaras' may have been the day on which the addressee received the letter.

<sup>2</sup> An Ayurvedic medicine

<sup>3</sup> In district Manbhum, Bihar

the passing away of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das.<sup>1</sup> Although it was now some months that he had passed away, still they had not been able to forget the pang of separation from him. He knew before he entered that town that Purulia was the place of rest for Deshbandhu. And the day he entered his house in that town, he was greatly grieved to find that it was after his death that he had an occasion to enter his house. He thanked the members for all that had been done to perpetuate the memory of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. References had been made in both the addresses to khaddar and the charkha. Charkha, said Mahatmaji, had become the very *mantra* of his life. He did not see any other method by which he could get rid of the poverty of India. The poverty of Bihar was well known. Barring Orissa and perhaps one or two more provinces, he thought Bihar was the poorest of all the provinces in the country. There was a time when Bihar used to export to other places some very fine hand-woven cloth made of hand-spun. Like Bengal, Bihar too was famous for production of fine cloth. But today there were people in Bihar who did not know how to satisfy their hunger. And for them there was no other course but to take to the charkha. Today there were thousands of Biharis in Assam earning food in that province and at Calcutta. It would not do for us to leave them there. Man was not born only to amass money. One who lost his soul did great harm to his soul. They could know better than him about the character of those people living in Assam and in Calcutta. But even if they left them out of consideration, there were lakhs of Biharis who did not know what was called two meals a day. They did not know how to earn their livelihood.

I have become a Bihari from the date I began my work in Champaran. If you do not know, I would like to tell you that there in Champaran women could hardly earn 5 pice a day. For males 6 pice or two annas was considered to be too much. Today, although the wages have gone up, still these peoples have to pay commission (*dastur*) out of their wages. Their condition today continues more or less the same as before. But if the charkha was placed in their hands, what would be the result? Let the economists judge for themselves. But it lies in the hands of the educated people to revive it.

It was a fact that the masses followed the higher and the influential. If they went to the villages, preached the charkha to them and plied the wheel themselves, it was only then they could evoke enthusiasm for the charkha among the villagers. If they wanted Bihar to get rid of her poverty, if they wanted to give employment to the unemployed during the time of the flood, famine and other scourges of nature, then they must ply the charkha themselves and preach it to the people. But that alone

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had earlier unveiled a portrait of C. R. Das, after the presentation of the addresses.

would not do.

They would have to give up their charm for the foreign and even the mill-made cloth of Bombay and Ahmedabad. So long as they did not do that, they would not be able to achieve anything substantial. Their very self-respect demanded that they (the Biharis) should use cloth made in Bihar only and not go in for the mill-products of Bombay and Ahmedabad.

If you are the real well-wishers of India, if you want to serve Bihar sincerely, you must be able to understand and appreciate well this first *mantra* of the charkha.

Mahatmaji proceeding congratulated them on the absence of any communal trouble in the district and hoped that it would continue to be so. He also congratulated the members on all that was being done by them for the propagation of the charkha and for uplifting of the untouchables. Concluding he appealed for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. He explained that the Fund would be for the scheme for village reconstruction which was so near and dear to Deshbandhu's heart. And the amount collected would be spent through the proposed new organization to be called "The All-India Spinners' Association". He knew that the middle-class people of Bihar were not every rich. But if they appreciated the methods of the charkha and if they approved of the method of utilizing the sum collected, they must contribute their mite to this fund. The major portion of the money collected in Bihar would be spent in this very province.

*The Searchlight*, 16-9-1925

### 251. "WHAT SHOULD WE DO?"

Although I stayed in Gujarat for only five days<sup>1</sup>, during that period I met co-workers and came to know much through them. I heard, too, about some serious matters. I do not have the time to discuss everything that I heard. Just now I shall write about only one subject. Some co-workers tell me that they do not get money from people in their districts. They are ready to send their children to [national] schools but do not contribute towards their expenses. It is with the greatest difficulty that people are made to spin. What should they do in such circumstances? Why should the Provincial Committee not provide funds?

This is an unworthy attitude. Wherever local help is not available

<sup>1</sup> After his four-month tour of Bengal, Gandhiji returned to Gujarat on September 5, and left for Bihar on September 9.

the general rule is not to take up any work. There can be only a few exceptions to this. Where the aim is to spread a completely new idea, help from outside may be taken for a certain period, but this cannot be a permanent practice. The service of *Antyajias* is a cause of this nature. It is a sacred duty. It is possible that local help may not be available for such work in the initial stages. In that case, workers may secure it from other sources. But no such help can be expected from a popularly elected body like the Provincial Committee. The worker should rely on his own influence with people. This rule, however, cannot be followed in the matter of the education of the people. If the residents of a village want facilities for education, they must provide the necessary funds. If they do not do so, we may conclude that no such institution is required there. Very often, the fault lies with the worker. He may lack strength of character, or ability or may not be hard-working. Such a worker should have patience. He should reform his character, acquire ability through experience and make an effort to be hard-working. This is what we mean by *tapascharya*<sup>1</sup> Through *tapas*<sup>2</sup> the world exists, through it Bhavani<sup>3</sup> won Shambhu, Savitri brought back Satyavan<sup>4</sup> to life, Lakshmana<sup>5</sup> defeated Indrajit<sup>6</sup> and Rama defeated Ravana. Instances in modern times are there right before us; I would, therefore, strongly advise co-workers to try to obtain local help and wherever this is not available, to limit the field of their work.

Let us consider the limits of the Provincial Committee. Where does it get its funds from? From the districts. What would happen if all the districts looked to it for help and contributed nothing to its funds? The rule is that every area should contribute to the funds of the Provincial Committee and then ask for help from it. I would advise the Provincial Committee to wind up its work if it, too, has to carry it on with funds obtained from outside Gujarat. For this very reason I have always advocated that Gujarat should depend primarily on Gujaratis' money. This is the secret of swaraj. Local autonomy implies local responsibility. We should not be too eager to run a single institution

<sup>1</sup> *Tapascharya* is the pursuit of *tapas*.

<sup>2</sup> *Tapas* is penance generating spiritual strength.

<sup>3</sup> Parvati, consort of Siva also known as Shambhu

<sup>4</sup> Husband of Savitri in the *Mahabharata*

<sup>5</sup> Brother of Rama in the *Ramayana*

<sup>6</sup> Son of Ravana, King of Lanka, in the *Ramayana*

out of a false sense of prestige. Dharma is the only thing we can pursue in opposition to public opinion, and to pursue dharma means to lay down one's life. This does not require any monetary help. Can running a library or a school possibly be one's dharma? Non-cooperation can be. We may bear hardships in employing it. It requires no monetary help whatsoever. If the residents of a village do not wish to get their children educated by me, there should be no question at all of my attracting the children to me against their wishes. If they are ready to send their children but not prepared to contribute funds, that means that they beg for charity. They will get it only if they need it. *Antyajias* are such a class of people, for we have neglected our duty towards them so far. It is, therefore, useless to expect help from the Provincial Committee in every matter. If the latter gives any help under pressure, it would be doing a wrong and may have even to stop business. I know at first hand that some Provincial Committees are reduced to such straits. Gujarat is not in such a plight because its workers weigh everything most carefully in carrying on their work and continually walk on the razor's edge. They are ever vigilant.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 13-9-1925

## 252. PURITY

Corruption has gradually entered our public life. A learned gentleman has remarked that our public life has become corrupted ever since the Congress got one crore rupees. There was intense malice in this criticism, but it also contained a drop of nectar. With money in the Congress treasury, temptation followed and laxity came over its working. Why should we work ourselves, [we thought] for what we can obtain with money? Vices do not trumpet their coming. They work as thieves and poisonous germs do. They enter stealthily, without our being aware of their coming. They creep in and lodge themselves as an innocent lamb would creep unnoticed into your home. We cannot get rid of them, however much we try. If we are not on our guard, they pull at us and draw us behind them. Unknown to us, corruption has entered us. It is necessary to be on our guard against it.

Many people have borrowed money from the [Provincial] Committee. This should have been returned. Some have obtained khadi from the khadi Association. All these sums have not been

returned. This is laxity and means an indirect breach of trust. If we had obtained similar facilities on business terms and failed to repay the sums in time, we would have had to suffer punishment by being sent to prison. We seem to believe, however, that we need not follow business standards in repaying money borrowed from public bodies like the [Provincial] Committee.

Really speaking, the position should be that the money due to the Committee should be regarded as a loan received on one's credit. In English such a debt is known as a debt of honour, or, in other words, money obtained on one's credit as a man of one's word and it is a law among business men, a law of the world, that such debt should be repaid at the earliest opportunity. One should be particularly anxious to repay it. There is another law, too, namely, that the King's tax should be paid before a private debt. This should be the law which one should follow in regard to the money borrowed from the Committee, otherwise the Committees cannot continue to function. Our laxity may suggest to us many excuses, but none will serve. We deserve no admiration if we refrain from crimes for which the world would punish us; there certainly is no virtue in such conduct. It is no test of our truthfulness. He alone is a man of truth who saves himself from a crime to which God would be the only witness. Innocence consists in voluntarily refraining from a crime for which the world would not punish us. There is no merit in forced charity or one done through fear. Thus, from whatever point of view we look at the matter, our duty is clear, and that is that all those who have received loans from the Committee or other public bodies should wake up, shake off their lethargy and repay the loans without any further delay.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 13-9-1925

## 253. *OUR DIRTY WAYS-II*

Last week we discussed our dirty ways<sup>1</sup>. The people should give up their habit of defecating at any and every place whether in cities or villages. We should follow the practice of using only fixed places for this purpose. At present we do quite the opposite of this and do not even hesitate to dirty our courtyards or our streets. There is, in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Our Dirty Ways", 30-8-1925



consequence, an excess of foul smell and it becomes difficult even to walk. In villages, one should go to the fields which have been fixed for such use or go to one's own fields, and after defecation one should invariably throw dry earth over the faeces. The best way of doing this is to dig a hole with a small shovel or a spade and, after defecation, fill up the hole with the mud so dug up. If, in addition, people follow the practice of marking such spots by fixed signs, everyone would know them. In order to ensure privacy in following this method, a few places should be selected for use.

If people understand this and co-operate in following such a method, the necessary arrangements can be made easily and without expense. Really speaking, such a method would add to the nation's wealth at no cost of labour and bring about improvement in public health. It is the experience of the whole world that the productivity of the field which is used for such purposes increases. If the people welcome this idea, they would actually offer to pay for their fields being put to such use. They do that in other countries. In our country, too, in certain parts we see peasants securing a monopoly of removing the night-soil, but they remove it in such a dirty manner that one feels disgusted at the sight of it. If my suggestion is followed, no one would need to remove night-soil, the air would not become polluted and villages would remain very clean.

This is with regard to villages. The same practice cannot be followed in cities. They must have lavatories. It is not necessary to say anything about cities which have Western-style water-closets and where the night-soil is collected through sewers at one place. All that needs to be considered is what people can do on their own. They should voluntarily observe the following rules.

1. Both excretary functions should be performed only at fixed places.
2. To pass urine anywhere in a street, at any place not meant for the purpose should be regarded an offence.
3. After passing urine at any selected place, one should cover up the spot well with dry earth.
4. Lavatories should be kept very clean. Even the part through which the water flows should be kept clean. Our lavatories bring our civilization into discredit, they violate the rules of hygiene.
5. All the night-soil should be removed to fields.

How can we ensure the observance of all these rules? The answer is, through education. Laws are useless so long as people do not understand them and do not recognize their necessity. A law can be passed to compel only a small number of persons. The penalty prescribed by a law which is either not understood or not obeyed by a large number of people serves no useful purpose.

Literacy is not essential for such education. Through magic lanterns and lectures, people should be told about the diseases which spread through filth and about the advantages of saving night-soil for use as manure. Different ways of doing this should be demonstrated.

The best method of education, however, is to show the way through one's own practice. Those who have been convinced of the necessity of putting these suggestions into practice should do so and set an example to others.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 13-9-1925

#### 254. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, PURULIA<sup>1</sup>

*September 13, 1925*

Mahatmaji, in reply to the address, said that he was highly pleased to see so many *satis* assembled there. He continued that his religion had taught him to utter the names of *satis* in the morning and thus revere them. Asking all of them to be *pratasmaraṇiya*<sup>2</sup> like Sita and Damayanti he said that it was only by virtue of their purity of body, soul and deeds that they had become so. In fact, he appealed to the womanhood of India to be as pure as Sita and, until and unless they were so, it was quite impossible to attain *swaraj* either by the manhood or by the womanhood. To him *swaraj* was *Ramraj* or *dharamaraj* and that could be obtained only when the women of India had become like Sita. Sita Devi knew no suffering. She entered fire without the least sense of suffering and they too could attain that stage if they had followed in her footsteps.

Mahatmaji next appealed to them to spin and wear khadi. He said that in the time of Sita no woman or, as a matter of fact, no man used to put on foreign cloth. Just as there was a hearth in every house, there was at least one spinning-wheel in it and the female members used to spin. To those who could afford to buy khaddar he

<sup>1</sup> At the meeting, held at 8 a.m., Gandhiji was presented an address of welcome on behalf of the women of Purulia.

<sup>2</sup> Worthy of being remembered in the early morning.

appealed to do so, but at the same time they should spin for their suffering brothers and sisters and contribute the yarn to the All-India Khadi Board.

In conclusion he appealed to them to contribute to the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund which would be spent for khaddar and village organization according to the last wishes of Deshbandhu.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-9-1925*

## 255. *SPEECH AT MEETING OF UNTOUCHABLES, PURULIA*<sup>1</sup>

*September 13, 1925*

I want to tell those brothers and sisters who have shown by raising their hands that Hindus regard them as untouchables, that I am also a *Dom*. Call me *Bhangi* or *Dom* and I am so. It is my firm conviction that one does not become bad or despised simply because one cleans night-soil. The mother always does so for her child, but society never condemns her as an untouchable. Untouchables are really those who do evil acts, and whose heart is not pure. I therefore want to tell my *Dom* brothers and sisters and others of the untouchable class that they should hate neither Hindus nor their religion. Hindus are trying their best to find out remedies and make amends for the ill-treatment meted out by them to the *Doms* and members of the other untouchable class. There are to be found all over the country Hindus at the present time, who have dedicated their whole time to the cause of ameliorating the condition of the untouchables.

But I have a request to make to the untouchables. I must ask you to eradicate those evils which have crept into your society. During my tour in Bengal, I came in contact with many untouchable brethren, from the United Provinces and Bihar. From them I came to know that they were addicted to the habits of drinking and gambling. It is true that nowadays other Hindus too, even Brahmins, are subject to these vices of drinking and gambling. But let us not imitate the evils in others. I therefore appeal to my *Dom* and other untouchable brothers and sisters that, for God's sake, they should shun the evils in them.

I have also come to know from none else but yourselves that you all are victims of corruption, immorality and untruth as well. You

<sup>1</sup> Before replying to the address in Hindi, Gandhiji had asked those in the audience who were untouchables to raise their hands to enable him to know how many of them were there.

must be able to eradicate these evils also out of yourselves.

You might be acquainted, if you have known Tulsidas's *Ramayana*, with the fact that Ramachandra, Sita and Lakshman had very affectionately embraced the untouchable Guha and I want to see the same repeated once again in India. Let even those who are known as *Chandals*<sup>1</sup> eradicate the evils in them and become the devotees of Shri Ramachandra. I would also request you to shun the use of foreign clothes and take to the use of hand-woven clothes made of hand-spun yarn. You should bear in mind that, in the days of Shri Ramachandra, neither rich nor poor used any foreign cloth and the khadi produced in the country was in the general use of all.

Further, I would like to tell my other brothers besides the untouchables, who are present here, that untouchability has got no place in the Hindu religion.

My personal belief is strong about it. The moment I am convinced that untouchability is an essential element of Hindu religion, I would immediately renounce my religion. We regard the Shastras and the Vedas as divine revelations. How can then a divine revelation advocate any hatred against members of a particular community? So long as the Hindus continue just to tolerate the untouchables among them and treat them with contempt, the nation would continue to be treated as untouchables by other nations, as is the case today.

And thus also I believe and trust we will not be able to attain swaraj unless we are able to purge the Hindu society of this evil of untouchability. *Ramayana* and Tulsidas have preached the religion of kindness. I would therefore appeal to Hindus of the higher castes present here that, if they call themselves *sanatanadharmi*<sup>2</sup>, if they love the cow, they should not hate the members of untouchable classes.

May God bless you all.

*The Searchlight*, 20-9-1925

## 256. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

*September 15, 1925*

MY DEAR MOTI BABU,

I have carried your letter with me so as to remind me that I must

<sup>1</sup> Lowest class of Harijans, removers and eaters of carrion

<sup>2</sup> Followers of the original or orthodox Hinduism

send you a line. Do please keep me informed of your doings and happenings there. I am in and about Bihar till the end of October. My address will be Patna during the Bihar tour. I reach Patna on 19th and shall be there till 24th.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 11019

### *257. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

*Bhadra Vad 13 [ September 15, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MAHADEV,

I have your two letters. I hope you received the wire I sent yesterday. I wish you not to come if it makes Durga unhappy. I shall manage somehow in regard to the Gujarati writing. Dalal has told me that for writing I should use the right hand, a little at any rate. So I shall use it for *Navajivan* at least. The English I shall dictate to Kristodas and Pyarelal. Mr. Sen has sent word that he is not coming.

I hope you have understood what I said about Ramdas in the telegram. Satis Babu is with me. His brother, Hemprabhadevi and Prafulla Ghosh also were with me in Purulia. Urmila Devi and Mona have not come. My programme is as follows:

17 Ranchi

18 Hazaribagh

19 Gaya, and Patna at night

19-24 Patna

I do not know further .

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11433

### *258. SPEECH AT NATIONAL SCHOOL, CHAKRADHARPUR*

*September 15, 1925*

Mahatmajji accompanied by Sjt. Rajendra Prasad and Satis Babu reached Chakradharpur this morning. Addressing the students of the National School

<sup>1</sup> The itinerary in the letter indicates that the letter was written in September. 1925.

Mahatmaji said that the student of the old days used to approach the teacher *samitpani*<sup>1</sup> or with wood in hand, indicating that he had come to be taught and give in exchange his services. The modern system of education has changed this order of things, the result being that the process of giving and receiving education has become a dry one. The students of national schools should give something in return for what they receive today. They are to come to the teacher *sutrapani*—with yarn—or ply the charkha in return for education received. The students should spin and thereby serve the nation in exchange for the education they receive.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 16-9-1925

## 259. TELEGRAM TO SECRETARY, RAMLILA COMMITTEE, ALLAHABAD

RANCHI,

[On or before *September 17, 1925*]<sup>2</sup>

REGRET HAVE NO INFLUENCE OVER EITHER SECTION.<sup>3</sup>

GANDHI

*The Leader*, 20-9-1925

## 260. NOTES

### THE INDIAN HERCULES AND BRAHMINS

I had a visit by appointment on the 8th instant during my brief stay at Sabarmati at 4 o'clock in the morning from the Indian Hercules, as Professor Rama Murti delights to describe himself. He engaged me in an entertaining conversation on the wickedness of modern Brahmins and drew from me questions that seemed to give him full satisfaction, and there seemed to be, for the moment, a kinship between our non-Brahmin souls and a vision was opened out before him of a non-Brahmin war to the knife against the Brahmins who, as he said, after all represented but a microscopic minority.

After our conversation, the athletic Professor seriously

<sup>1</sup> Offering of forest twigs and wood to the gurukul or ashram was an ancient practice.

<sup>2</sup> The telegram according to the source, was received on September 17.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is not clear, but from the context apparently concerned the observance of *Dussehra*, a Hindu festival

concerned himself about my bodily vigour and initiated me into the mysteries of 'healthy mind in healthy body'. He found in me a very willing convert. The exercises which he gave me were delightful but I am inclined to think that they were a trifle too much for one like me who has passed the meridian of life. He claimed for them a superiority over all the European methods, which certificate I heartily endorsed. The exercises were nothing but a few *Hatha Yoga* practices. I commend them to all young men. *Pranayam* has a great health-giving value if practised under skilled supervision. But let there be no self-deception about it. Those who practise these exercises should do so for the purpose of health and that only. They have, no doubt, restricted spiritual value. But I would strongly dissuade young men from going in for *Hatha Yoga* practices for spiritual regeneration. In the present age such regeneration comes more from heart-devotion than through physical practices. And for acquiring spiritual merit through *Hatha Yaga* one needs a preceptor who is himself a spiritual adept through these practices. I have searched for such and I have failed. That does not necessarily mean that there are no pure *Hatha Yogis* in India, but where a diligent searcher like me has not succeeded, let young men beware of accepting claimants without severe examination.

But I have gone astray, I must redeem the promise I have made to the Professor when he sent me a digest of our political talk for revision that I would give the substance myself in these columns instead of revising his own reproduction which I received at a time when I had not a moment to spare. He told me that, at Municipal and District-Board elections, my name was being unlawfully exploited by those who described themselves as Congressmen or Swarajists and told me also that on that account I was losing my influence among the masses. I informed him that I was not concerned with my influence and that I could not help if people made an unlawful use of my name. But, retorted the Professor, could I not at least guide the voters by saying what I wanted them to do. I told him that I had done so already on more occasions than one. For me mere Congress label was of no avail. I could only give my vote, if at all, to those who were Congressmen or Swarajists in reality and, therefore, I would give my vote to those who believed in the Congress creed, who habitually wore hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar, who believed in unity among all classes and, if Hindus, were active champions of the so-called untouchables and believed that untouchability was an evil to be

removed without delay, who were total prohibitionists as to intoxicating drinks and drugs, and who otherwise conformed to the Congress resolutions. If I found no such candidates, I would keep my vote with myself. Not to give the vote is as much an exercise of the privilege of the voter as the giving of it.

The Professor then asked me for my definition of a Brahmin. I told him that a Brahmin was one who sacrificed himself for his religion and his country and who accepted poverty as his happy lot in life for the sake of service. "Are there any such Brahmins?" quickly asked the Professor. "Not many," I answered, "but more, perhaps, than you expect."

#### HARSH v. PLEASANT TRUTH

With reference to my removal of certain passages from a correspondent's letter recently published, he thus complains:

In spite of the expurgation you have thought fit to effect in my letter, I may claim that in all my letters to you, especially where communal questions are involved, I have tried to observe not the 'prudent' maxim, सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम् (which means in brief 'speak not the unpleasant truth') although it be found in most of our received texts of Manu, but the saying of William Lloyd Garrison, the American slave-liberator, which has stood for many years at the head of the *Indian Social Reformer*<sup>1</sup> of Bombay as its motto: I *will be* as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice, etc.

I do not mind harsh truth but I do object to spiced truth. Spicy language is as foreign to truth as hot chillies to a healthy stomach. The passages removed by me were not necessary to elucidate the meaning of the correspondent or give point to it. They were offensive without being useful or necessary. There seems to be the fashion to think that, in order to be truthful, one must use harsh language; whereas truth suffers when it is harshly put. It is like wanting to support strength; truth being itself fully strong is insulted when an attempt is made to support it with harshness. I see no conflict between the Sanskrit text and Garrison's motto quoted by the correspondent. In my opinion, the Sanskrit text means that one should speak the truth in gentle language. One had better not speak it if one cannot do so in a gentle way, meaning thereby that there is not truth in a man who cannot control his tongue. In other words, truth without non-violence is not truth but untruth. Garrison's motto requires to be interpreted in

<sup>1</sup> Weekly edited by K. Natarajan



terms of his own life. He was one of the gentlest of men of his time. Mark his language. He will be as harsh as truth, but since truth to be truth is never harsh but always gentle and beneficial, the motto can only mean that Garrison would be as gentle as truth but no more. Both the texts have relation to the inner state of the speaker or writer, not to the effect that will be produced upon those to whom the speech or the writing is addressed. The *Indian Social Reformer* is rarely, if ever, harsh. It tries to be fair though it often jumps to conclusions in a hurry and is obliged later to revise its estimate of men and things. In these days of surrounding bitterness one cannot be too cautious. After all who knows the absolute truth? It is in ordinary affairs of life only a relative term. What is truth to me is not necessarily truth to the rest of my companions. We are all like the blind men who, on examining an elephant, gave different descriptions of the same animal according to the touch they were able to have of him. And they were all, according to their own lights, in the right. But we know also that they were all in the wrong. Every one of them fell far short of the truth. One cannot be too insistent therefore upon the necessity of guarding oneself against bitterness. Bitterness blurs the vision and to that extent disables one from seeing even the limited truth that the physically blind men in the fable were able to do.

#### A STRING OF QUESTIONS

One of the best of national workers sends me questions for answers. Here they are with answers:

You say we must help the Swaraj Party. What is the meaning of this help?

My meaning is that everyone should help this party to the best of his ability and as far as his conscience will permit. Thus one who is inclined towards the Council programme and has no conscientious objections to it will join the Party. One who has conscientious objections will refrain but, short of joining, give all the other help that he can. He may object to vote also. He will then refrain even from voting. In no case will he vilify the Party.

Should young workers in the villages take part in the election turmoil and canvass for votes for the Swarajists?

I have not conceived that as possible except for Pro-changers. Those village workers who are, for instance, doing khaddar work, and who are not politically inclined will certainly not disturb themselves and their work to the extent contemplated in the question.

The Swarajists will want to capture village boards, municipalities, local boards, etc. What are khadi workers to do?

I expect Swarajists also to be khadi workers. The difference between them and No-changers is that Swarajists add Council work to khadi work. They, therefore, whilst remaining lovers of khadi, give the first place to Council work. No-changers have nothing but khadi and other constructive work to fall back upon. Each may go his own way and each is expected to help the other to the best of his ability and conscience.

What is my position when there are Brahmin and Non-Brahmin candidates,—one set opposing the other?

In such a case, if I were you, I would refrain from interfering except to remove strife and bitterness.

You have said not only should No-changers refrain from opposition to the Swarajists but they should even help them. What is the extent of this help?

I have already answered this question. When there is friendliness, there are many ways of giving help without hindering one's own special work. But each one must determine for himself the extent of help that he is to render. Such help has to be a voluntary offering which cannot be dictated, much less can there be any coercion. There is no question here of party discipline. Mine is the opinion of an individual. The meaning of it can be more fully derived from my own conduct.

Have you decided to help the Swarajists as a matter of necessity, or because you consider that through Councils India will benefit?

There is room for a third reason. I do not consider that Councils will benefit India in the present condition. Nor is it a matter of necessity that I help the Swarajists in my own poor way. I dislike the Council programme but I see that the majority of educated Indians cannot do without the Council programme. The most forward amongst them will gladly retire if they had a fiercely active political propaganda. They cannot be satisfied with the mere constructive programme. It is too slow for them. I recognize the honesty of this attitude. And as one wanting to harness all the forces for the good of the country and realizing that, if one goes to the Councils, one may even there advance the constructive programme and offer dignified opposition to such measures as are detrimental to the welfare of the country, I choose for my help that party which best fulfils my conditions.

## KHADDAR WORKERS' CENSUS

The following further figures have been received:<sup>1</sup>

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Name of Total	Average
Province No. of Remuner-	Expense
or Centre Workers Paid or Hon. Graduates ation	Per Worker

*Young India*, 17-9-1925

### 261. TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

It is a privilege for me to enjoy the friendship of so many unknown American and European friends. It pleases me to note that the circle is ever widening, perhaps more especially in America. I had the pleasure of receiving a warm invitation about a year ago to visit that continent. The same invitation has now been repeated with redoubled strength and with the offer to pay all expenses. I was unable then as I am now, to respond to the kind invitation. To accept it is an easy enough task, but I must resist the temptation, for I feel that I can make no effective appeal to the people of that great continent unless I make my position good with the intellectuals of India.

I have not a shadow of doubt about the truth of my fundamental position. But I know that I am unable to carry with me the bulk of educated India. I can therefore gain no effective help for my country from the Americans and Europeans so long as I remain isolated from educated India. I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity. But I feel that I should be going out of my orbit if I left it for help from the West. I must be satisfied for the time being with such help as I can get from the West, speaking to it from my smaller Indian platform. If I go to America or to Europe, I must go in my strength, not in my weakness, which I feel today,—the weakness I mean, of my country. For the whole scheme for the liberation of India is based upon the development of internal strength. It is a plan of self-purification. The peoples of the West, therefore, can best help the Indian movement by setting apart specialists to study the inwardness of it. Let the specialists come to India with an open mind and in a spirit of humility as befits

<sup>1</sup> For the figures, given earlier, *vide* "Khaddar Workers' Census", 27-8-1925.

a searcher after Truth. Then, perhaps, they will see the reality instead of a glorified edition that, in spite of all my desire to be absolutely truthful, I am likely to present if I went to America. I believe in thought-power more than in the power of the word, whether written or spoken. And if the movement that I seek to represent has vitality in it and has divine blessing upon it, it will permeate the whole world without my physical presence in its different parts. Anyway, at the present moment I see no light before me. I must patiently plod in India until I see my way clear for going outside the Indian border.

After pressing the invitation, the American friend puts a number of questions for my consideration. I welcome them and gladly take the opportunity of answering them through these columns. He says:

Whether you decide, now or later, to come here or not to come, I trust you will find the following questions worth considering. They have developed insistently in my mind for a long time.

His first question is:

Has the time arrived—or is it coming—when your best way to help India will be by moving the whole world—and especially England and America—to a new consciousness?

I have partly answered the question already. In my opinion the time has not yet arrived—it may come any day—for me to go out of India to move the whole world to a new consciousness. The process, however, is even now indirectly and unconsciously going on though slowly.

Are not the present-day interests of all mankind, everywhere, so inextricably interwoven that no single country, like India, can be moved far out of its present relationships to the others?

I do believe with the writer that no single country can remain in isolation for any length of time. The present plan for securing swaraj is not to attain a position of isolation but one of full self-realization and self-expression for the benefit of all. The present position of bondage and helplessness hurts not only India, not only England, but the whole world.

Is not your message and method essentially a world gospel—which will find its power in responsive souls, here and there, in many countries, who will thereby, gradually, remake the world?

If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message and methods are indeed in their essentials for the whole world and it gives me keen satisfaction to know that it has already received a wonderful response in the hearts of a large and daily-growing number of men and women of the West.

If you demonstrate your message in the language only of the East and in terms only of Indian emergencies, is there not grave danger that inessentials will be confused with fundamentals—that some features which correspond only to extreme situations in India will be wrongly understood to be vital in the universal sense?

I am alive to the danger pointed out by the writer, but it seems to be inevitable. I am in the position of a scientist who is in the midst of a very incomplete experiment and who, therefore is unable to forecast large results and larger corollaries in a language capable of being understood. In the experimental stage, therefore, I must run the risk of the experiment being misunderstood as it has been, and probably still is, in many places.

Ought you not to come to America (which in spite of all her faults is perhaps, potentially, the most spiritual of all living peoples) and tell the world what your message means in terms of Western, as well as Eastern, civilization?

People in general will understand my message through its results. The shortest way, therefore, perhaps of making it effectively heard is to let it speak for itself, at any rate for the time being.

For example, should the Western followers of your inspiration preach and practise the spinning-wheel?

It is certainly not necessary for the Western people to preach and practise the spinning-wheel unless they will do so out of sympathy or for discipline or with a view to applying their matchless inventive faculty to making the spinning-wheel a better instrument while retaining its essential characteristic as a cottage industry. But the message of the spinning-wheel is much wider than its circumference. Its message is one of simplicity, service of mankind, living so as not to hurt others, creating an indissoluble bond between the rich and the poor, capital and labour, the prince and the peasant. That larger message is naturally for all.

Is your condemnation of railroads, doctors, hospitals and other features of modern civilization essential and unalterable? Should we not, first, try to develop a spirit great enough to spiritualize the machinery and the organized, scientific and productive powers of modern life?

My condemnation of railroads, etc., whilst true where it stands, has little or no bearing on the present movement which disregards none of the institutions mentioned by the writer. In the present movement, I am neither attacking railroads nor hospitals; but in an ideal State they seem to me to have little or no place. The present movement is just the attempt the writer desires. Yet it is not an attempt

to spiritualize the machinery—because that seems to me an impossible task—but to introduce, if it is at all possible, a human or the humane spirit among the men behind the machinery. Organization of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organization of machinery of the present age is of that type. The movement of the spinning-wheel is an organized attempt to displace machinery from that state of exclusiveness and exploitation and to place it in its proper state. Under my scheme, therefore, men in charge of machinery will think not of themselves or even of the nation to which they belong but of the whole human race. Thus Lancashire men will cease to use their machinery for exploiting India and other countries but, on the contrary, they will devise means of enabling India to convert in her own villages her cotton into cloth. Nor will Americans under my scheme seek to enrich themselves by exploiting the other races of the earth through their inventive skill.

Is it not possible, in conditions so favourable as America's, to clarify and advance the evolution of the best human consciousness into such purpose and power, courage and beneficence, as shall liberate the souls of India's millions—and of all men everywhere?

It is undoubtedly possible. Indeed, it is my hope that America will seek the evolution of the best human consciousness; but that time is perhaps not yet. Probably it will not be before India has found her own soul. Nothing will please me more than to find America and Europe making the difficult path of India as easy as it is possible for them to do. They can do so by withdrawing the temptations in India's way and by encouraging her in her attempt to revive her ancient industries in her own villages.

Why is it that people like myself, in every country, are grateful to you and eager to follow you? Is it not for two reasons chiefly: first; Because the next [*sic*] and basic need throughout the world is for a new spiritual consciousness—a realization, in the thought and feeling of average people, of the equal divinity of all human beings and the unity, brotherhood, of all; second, because you, more than any other widely known man, have this consciousness—together with the power to arouse it in others?

I can only hope that the writer's estimate is true.

It is a world need—is it not?—to which you have the best answer that God has vouchsafed to man? How can your mission be fulfilled in India alone? If my arm or leg

could be vitalized to an extent far beyond the balance of my body, would that make for my general health—or even for the permanent best good of the one favoured member?

I am fully aware that my mission cannot be fulfilled in India alone, but I hope I am humble enough to recognize my limitations and to see that I must keep for the time being, to my restricted Indian platform till I know the result of the experiment in India itself. As I have already replied, I would like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world. The individual, being pure, sacrifices himself for the family, the latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all.

May I even submit,—with deep reverence for your message— that possibly your own vision and inspiration would benefit by adjustment to the world instead of only, or chiefly, to India?

I recognize the considerable force of the foregoing statement. It is not at all impossible that a visit to the West may give me not a wider outlook—for I have endeavoured to show that it is the widest possible but it may enable me to discover new methods of realizing the outlook. If such is my need, God will open the way for me .

Is the political form of government, in India or anywhere, so important as the average individual's soul-force—his courageous expression of the best inspiration he can derive from the divine spirit within and all about him?

The average individual's soul-force is any day the most important thing. The political form is but a concrete expression of that soul-force. I do not conceive the average individual's soul-force as distinguished and existing apart from the political form of government. Hence I believe that after all a people has the government which it deserves. In other words self-government can only come through self-effort.

Is not the basic need, everywhere, for the clarification and development of this soul-force in individuals—beginning, possibly, with a few people and spreading like a divine contagion to the many?

It is, indeed.

You teach, rightly, that the faithful development of such soul-force in India will assure India's freedom. Will it not everywhere shape all political, economic and international institutions including the issues of Peace or War? Can those forms of human civilization be made radically superior in India to the rest of the world—now, when all mankind are neighbours?

I have already answered this question in the preceding paragraphs. I have claimed in these pages before now that India's freedom must revolutionize the world's outlook upon Peace and War. Her impotence affects the whole of mankind.

You know, better than I or anyone, how all these questions should be answered. I chiefly seek to express my eager faith in your gospel, my hungry desire for your leadership in solving the urgent problems of America and of all mankind. Therefore, will you graciously remember that, if (or when) the time may come that India's progress in the directions you have so inspiringly outlined appears to pause—waiting for the Western world to come up alongside—then we of the West stand urging you to give us a few months of your time and your personal presence. My own feeling is that if you will call us and instruct us, we (your uncounted followers scattered obscurely over the wide earth) will join our lives to yours in the discovery and realization of a new and noble, worldwide Commonwealth of the Spirit in which man's age-old dreams of brotherhood, democracy, peace and soul progress shall characterize the daily life of average people—in India, England, America and everywhere.

I wish I had confidence in my leadership on the world platform. I have no false modesty about me. If I felt the call within, I would not wait a single second but straightway respond to an invitation so cordial as this. But with my limitations of which I am painfully conscious, I feel somehow that my experiment must be restricted to a fragment. What may be true of the fragment is likely to be true of the whole. It is true indeed that India's progress in the direction I desire seems to have come to a pause but I think that it only seems so. The little seed that was sown in 1920 has not perished. It is, I think, taking deep root. Presently it will come out as a stately tree. But if I am labouring under a delusion, I fear that no artificial stimulus that my visit to America may temporarily bring can revive it. I am pining for the assistance of the whole world. I see it coming. The urgent invitation is one of the many signs. But I know that we shall have to deserve it before it comes upon us like a mighty flood, a flood that cleanses and invigorates.

*Young India*, 17-9-1925



## 262. AN INSTRUCTIVE TABLE

The following table prepared by the Provincial Congress Committee of Gujarat is a most instructive study:

*Figures of the working of the franchise in Gujarat for the half year ended 31st August:*

	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{A} \\ \text{B} \end{array} \right.$	2,215 365
Members originally registered		
Members who have paid full annual quota		266
Members who have paid 6 months' quota		314
Irregular subscribers		1,273
Complete defaulters		727
Total yarn received in yards		15,83,000

*Note:* The table shows that out of a total of 2, 580 members who originally gave in their names only 580 are entitled to vote at the next A.I.C.C. elections.

The irregular subscribers have paid 6,750 thousand yards of yarn in 5,500 yards on an average instead of 12,000 yards that they should have paid.

These figures give one an idea of the work lying in front of us. There is no lack of organization in Gujarat; no lack of khadi workers, but, strange as it may appear, less than one-fourth of the number registered have actually carried out their obligation. The figures need not disappoint any earnest worker who has faith in himself and his cause. But he must not underrate the difficulties in his path. We will not get swaraj without working for it. Congressmen have got into the slovenly habit of making promises and straightway forgetting them, especially when it is a matter of giving any work. In ordinary affairs of life we are made to fulfil the pledges we give. A breach of promise to pay in a commercial transaction carries with it a penalty. A voluntary promise made to a voluntary organization imposes in well-organized societies a stricter obligation of the giver of the promise than a promise made in a commercial transaction. Thus debts of honour have a prior claim for fulfilment than debts enforceable at law. But somehow or other, Congress debts have not yet acquired any such sanctity as ordinary debts of honour. Those who

have no faith in khadi will no doubt argue that the Gujarat figures are an eloquent testimony to the complete failure of the spinning franchise. I should venture to join issue with such objectors. The spinning franchise has enabled us to lay our finger on the weakest spot. Let it be known that even the four-anna franchise fared no better.

Those who registered their names once did not come the second time to pay of their own accord. And had there been a monthly subscription we would have found almost as many defaulters as we have found among spinners. But pecuniary obligation is a totally different proposition from the obligation to work from day to day. Swaraj is not a pecuniary transaction. It is not to be bought with money. It has to be bought with solid, sustained, vigorous work. And I venture to suggest that we would have noticed the same result, if, instead of spinning, the Congress had imposed the obligation to mend pencils for half an hour every day. The lesson, therefore, that I draw from a study of these figures is that we must preserve along the same lines that we commenced at Belgaum if we are to make the Congress a working, effective and powerful organization. In all probability compulsory spinning will be done away with, but if the Congress retains spinning as an alternative franchise, the effort to make it effective should in no way be relaxed. Out of a population of three hundred millions, we should not have difficulty in finding a few lacs of men and women who would willingly and with unfailing regularity labour for the nation. Spinning is the form chosen because of its great national value and its simplicity. I have not burdened the reader with the detailed working of the franchise in the different districts of Gujarat. The Provincial Congress Committee's report does contain a detailed study. The Committee's organization is so thorough and so honest that, if the strength of the people is properly brought out, their weakness is never suppressed. The detailed study shows that even the five hundred and forty members who are still paying their full quota are not distributed over all Gujarat. But they are drawn from the five spinning organizations, for want of which there would not be even five hundred and forty members remaining. Spinning organizations all over India are therefore a necessity, if voluntary spinning is to be universal.

*Young India*, 17-9-1925

### 263. IS THERE SATAN IN HINDUISM?

A correspondent writes:

A few months back under a heading not quite justified by its contents you published a letter of mine concerning certain religious systems and the belief in God.<sup>1</sup> Now I am tempted to put you a question concerning his adversary (according to Semitic beliefs), whose name you are so often using in your writings and speeches—not of course without effect, as witness the article “Snares of Satan” in your issue of 6-8-'25. If it was only rhetorical effect that was intended thereby because you were writing or speaking in the language of a people who have been taught to believe in Satan's existence through the Semitic creed of Christianity, then I would have nothing to say. But the article cited, among other things, does seem to point to a belief on your part in Satan's existence, —a belief, in my humble opinion, quite un-Hindu. Asked by Arjuna what was the cause of man's continual fall, Sri Krishna said: “*Kama esha, krodha esha*”, etc. (“It is lust, it is anger”—). According to Hindu belief, it would seem, the Tempter is no person outside of us, nor indeed is it *one*; for there are the six enemies' of man enumerated in the Shastras: *kama* or lust, *krodha* or anger, *lobha* or greed, *moha* or infatuation, *mada* or pride, and *matsara*, i.e., envy or jealousy. So it is clear, Hinduism has no place for Satan, the Fallen Angel, the Tempter, or as he has been called by a French writer (Anatole France), ‘God's man-of-affairs’! How is it then that you who are a Hindu speak and write as if you believed in the real existence of the Old One?

This correspondent<sup>2</sup> is well known to the readers of *Young India*. He is too wide awake not to know the sense in which I could use the world Satan. But I have observed in him a disposition to draw me out on many matters about which there is a likelihood of the slightest misunderstanding or about which a greater elucidation may be considered necessary. In my opinion the beauty of Hinduism lies in its all-embracing inclusiveness. What the divine author of the *Mahabharata* said of his great creation is equally true of Hinduism. What of substance is contained in any other religion is always to be found in Hinduism. And what is not contained in it is insubstantial or unnecessary. I do believe that there is room for Satan in Hinduism. The Biblical conception is neither new nor original. Satan is not a personality even in the Bible. Or he is as much a personality in the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Is there God?”, 10-3-1925.

<sup>2</sup> S. D. Nadkarni

Bible as Ravana or the whole brood of the *Asuras* is in Hinduism. I no more believe in a historical Ravana with ten heads and twenty arms than in a historical Satan. And even as Satan and his companions are fallen angels, so are Ravana and his companions fallen angels or call them gods, if you will. If it be a crime to clothe evil passions and ennobling thoughts in personalities, it is a crime for which perhaps Hinduism is the most responsible. For are not the six passions referred to by my correspondent, and nameless others, embodied in Hinduism? Who or what is Dhritarashtra and his hundred sons? To the end of time imagination, that is, poetry, will play a useful and necessary part in the human evolution. We shall continue to talk of passions as if they were persons. Do they not torment us as much as evil persons? Therefore, as in innumerable other things, in the matter under notice the letter killeth, the spirit giveth life.

*Young India*, 17-9-1925

#### 264. REMARKS IN VISITORS' BOOK<sup>1</sup>

*Bhadra Krishna*<sup>3</sup>, September 17, 1925

I wish this institution to progress in every way. It has made a good impression on me. I hope more knowledge will spread through the plying of the spinning-wheel.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[From Hindi]

*Autobiography of a Yogi*, p. 465

#### 265. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, RANCHI

*September 17, 1925*

In reply Mahatmaji told them that the conviction was daily growing upon him that there was nothing but charkha to feed India's starving millions. There were other occupations, no doubt, for leisure hours, but none was more suited for the millions than charkha-spinning. He had been touring throughout the country but nobody had yet been able to suggest to him another substitute for charkha. Bihar had got one lakh worth of khadi stock and if that was sold, the released money would help in producing

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji wrote this when he visited the Brahmacharyashram of Swami Yogananda of Ranchi.

<sup>2</sup> The meeting was held at 3 p.m on St. Paul's School ground. The gathering was estimated at about 12000 people. An address of welcome on behalf of the Ranchi public was read. A purse of Rs.1,001 was also presented to Gandhiji towards the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund.

double the quantity. It was not difficult for Ranchi alone to buy that khadi. People talked of millicloth as swadeshi, but could they substitute Delhi or Bombay biscuits for their home-made bread? Then why should not they use Bihar-made khadi instead of Bombay-made mill-made cloth? If they wanted to clothe their naked mothers and sisters, they must buy khadi. What did comparative dearness of khadi matter when every pice spent went to the poor women in the villages. This charkha had saved the Bombay untouchables. Referring to the problem of untouchability he said that Hinduism knew no untouchability and this untouchability had made Indians untouchables in the whole world and those who wanted to see the condition of untouchable Indians should go to South Africa and realize what untouchability meant. The late Sjt. Gokhale knew it and Mrs. Naidu had come to know of it. Tulsidas had taught them the religion of kindness (*daya* dharma ) but today they were going against it. They must eradicate that problem of untouchability, otherwise swaraj was impossible to attain.

*The Searchlight, 20-9-1925*

## 266.SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, HAZARIBAGH

*September 18, 1925*

Mahatmaji replying to the addresses<sup>1</sup> said that he was thankful to them for the addresses they had presented to him, but he was grieved to learn of the two things pointed out in one of the addresses. They stated that recently goodwill [had] prevailed amongst the Hindus and the Mussalmans of the place, but now some misunderstanding had crept in. He was grieved to learn that that was so, but he hoped that leading men of both the communities would join hands and settle the matter. Secondly, they had told him that something similar was passing between the Biharis and the Bengalis too. He could not understand what it was due to. But he knew this much that, if they wanted to free India, if they wanted to gain swaraj for India, they must forget that they were Biharis, Bengalis, Gujaratis or Marwaris, but should bear in mind that they were Indians above all. As provincial men, they should work with the idea that they were preparing their province for the service of the country as a whole. He could not understand how such unpleasantness could enter the societies as this; also, he would say the same thing which he said about the Hindu-Muslim differences. In concluding the speech, Mahatmaji spoke of khaddar and the charkha.

*The Searchlight, 20-9-1925*

<sup>1</sup> Addresses on behalf of the citizens of Hazaribagh, the District Board and the Municipality were presented to Gandhiji in a beautiful, locally made wooden casket together with a purse of Rs. 1,300.

## 267. SPEECH AT STUDENTS' MEETING, HAZARIBAGH<sup>1</sup>

[ September 18, 1925 ]<sup>2</sup>

I have nothing set for you. I had no notion when I came here that I would be called upon to address this gathering. I would, however, venture to put before you some stray thoughts on social service. At one of the meetings that I attended at Calcutta, I said that the first necessity for social service was character that, unless a man who aspires after social service has a character, to keep and to lose, he is unfit for that service. Although apparently my life has been a life of political turmoils, all those who at all know me will tell you that it has been predominantly devoted to social service. I am a lover of it and I have very often claimed to be an expert in that line of work—if 30 years' unbroken experience of service can make one an expert.

In my life, I have had the great privilege of a long association not with dozens or even hundreds but of tens of hundreds of men and women, both Indian and European, devoted to social service. In my humble opinion, even political service of the true type is hardly possible without social service, and it was at an early stage of my career as a social servant, whilst I was in South Africa, more so after I returned to India—that I realized the absolute necessity of character for social service. For hard as it was in South Africa to render social service the difficulties there were nothing compared to the difficulties that confront one in India. Here one has to battle against a tremendous amount of superstition, prejudice and conservatism. Conservatism is a good thing in its own way. It keeps a man clean and on the right path, but when conservatism comes to be allied to ignorance, prejudice and superstition, it becomes most undesirable. Unfortunately, in India, a social worker finds himself confronted by this trinity of evils at the very outset of his career. The field for social service here is abundant and a man or woman who wants to render social service has hardly to think what he or she shall do. There are hundreds of things that await a social servant, they obtrude themselves on his attention if he will only exercise his faculty of observation, so that one may most truthfully say that here more than anywhere else, the harvest is really rich and plentiful but the labourers are few and, it is really amazing that, even after all these long years of education in

<sup>1</sup> The meeting was held at St. Columba's College.

<sup>2</sup> Date given in *Buddhi Prakash*

the colleges of India, we find so few students taking to social service in after-life.

It is true that in social service there is no excitement, no fire-works display. It is all hard, plodding work. It is also true that it has no pecuniary attraction about it; one has got to be satisfied with a bare pittance and sometimes not even that. At present, throughout the length and breadth of the land, there are young men, some of them brilliant graduates, men of sterling character, who are engaged in social service. But some of them have to live upon what may be called starvation wages. But they do not regret it. They have voluntarily abandoned lucrative careers and chosen their thorny but beautiful path of duty and service which is its own reward and satisfaction. The satisfaction which a man feels when he sees his work of alleviating the distress of humanity prospered before him from day to day gives to him a pleasure that is all its own. It gives him a peace of the soul which he cannot get elsewhere. Let us, therefore, explore the various branches of social service and examine their possibilities. We will find as soon as we do that, that there is one fundamental fact which is common to all India and that is its ever-deepening pauperism. It is acknowledged by all. Even those Englishmen who belong to the Civil Service have stated in their evidence that the poverty of India is most distressing and is growing. They have also said that one-tenth of the population of India is living in a state of semi-starvation, getting nothing but stale chupatty and dirty salt. They do not know what milk is. They have never tasted ghee, some of them may have tasted whey. They do not get even oil. You who are studying in colleges and visit the villages only rarely, have you ever thought that within a stone's throw of you in the village there are living men and women whose poverty is most distressing, who hardly get enough to eat. Probably you would not believe me if I told you all the misery that they endure and, even if you believed me, you would not be able to form a mental picture of it. If I were to take you with me throughout my travels, all over the length and breadth of the country, outside the railway's beat, perhaps you would be able to understand what that state of semi-starvation is whose results in degradation and filth and helplessness. I have often met these men in the villages and tried to tell them something about God and I confess to you that I have come back from these talks absolutely humiliated. I said to myself: I have no right to talk to these men about God before I can give them bread to eat. These people do not know what God is. Their God is their stomach.

Look at their faces. There is no lustre in their eyes. You talk to them about work. They smile-nay deride, not smile. They cannot understand why they should work at all. They have lost all hope, they have almost come to regard starvation as their natural condition. Such is their state of utter helplessness. Here among these men then—and they are not few but millions and millions of them—there is almost unlimited field for social service for all of you. In this very district of Chota Nagpur, I learnt that there was a tribe called the Ho, but I did not know all their customs and habits. These men, in this province which should be flowing with milk and honey, which is so nice in its climate and scenery, so rich in mineral resources, I found, are forced to go to Assam to work on tea plantations. I do not mind their working on tea plantations if such be their need but such is not their need. Among these backward tribes there is work enough for all young men. Here you have got a vast field for research and investigation. Wonderful discoveries you will come across in course of your research work—hidden cords underlying the human breast whose presence you little suspected. And when you succeed in touching some of these cords and find that they are responsive to human touch, it will give you all the satisfaction that a man can legitimately desire. I have often told young men that for social service of a universal character they must have one thing. You will laugh when I tell you what that one thing is and say that this old man, whether he talks of politics or social service or alleviating economic distress, cannot help harping upon the charkha. Yes, it is true, I cannot help doing so. This time at Calcutta I was privileged to meet a larger number of people, some of them engaged in missionary work, others in commercial undertakings, and after all these talks, my conviction has grown deeper that social service on a large scale is impossible without a thorough knowledge of the science of the charkha. The disease from which we as a nation are suffering is idleness—enforced at one time, now grown in habit—and a nation living in idleness does not deserve to live. The middle class people will slave away for their maintenance for eight hours, but a man who slaves away like that for 8 hours is not necessarily industrious. They have no sense of time. I know this to my cost. I have lived in the midst of thousands of labourers in south Africa and, ever with my rickety constitution, I was able to overtake them in their work because they lost so many idle moments. A friend, who is a Collector, once wrote to me; “I detest your politics,”—meaning non-co-operation about which he had read



little, known less—but he loves the charkha. “As an Englishman I do not understand Indian economics,” he wrote, “but I like this hobby of yours because by delivering your message of the charkha, you have rendered a great social service.” With me it is not a mere hobby—though I should prize it even as a hobby—but a life-giving thing which has revolutionized the lives of thousands of men and women, and if I could carry you educated people with me, if I could make the Englishman agree with me, millions of people should go with a smile on their faces where there is a look of blank despair now. And why? Simply because they have no work and so starve. They feel the pinch of hunger, but they cannot go to the costly works that the Government has opened for them. The work there mostly consists of breaking stones for the roads or carrying metal. And what are the conditions under which this work has to be done. The majority of them are women and they have to work under the supervision of overseers, who have no character to lose or to keep, and who are lustful. The rest you can understand. I would not describe it to you. These women who ought to be as dear to you as your mothers or sisters, if you have any regard for them, have been weaned from this class of labour. The charkha gives them all that they need. An old lady of 60 years walks two miles to obtain slivers from my son and says, “Tell your father he has given me something which is a blessing to me because it has given me a dignity which I did not have before.” Today there are millions of such men and women in Champaran to whom the charkha would give independence. The wages of women there are anything between 5 and 6 pice per day, those of boys between 3 and 4 pice and those of men between 8 to 10 pice. The average annual income of an Indian today, I am told, is Rs. 50. I do not know that. But I know that Dadabhai Naoroji calculated it at Rs. 26. The late Lord Curzon, who challenged the accuracy of this figure, set it down at Rs. 33. Even if we accept the late Lord Curzon’s figure, including as it does, the crores of the millionaires like the Tatas, as correct, just consider what it would mean to put two to three rupees per month in the pockets of these people. And through what agency? Not the insolent overseers who rob these sisters of their shame and take one rupee as their *dasturi* of the three rupees that they give to them, but by working under the observation of clean lads who will regard their honour as sacred as of their ownsisters and give them money with a smile. It makes all the difference in the world whether you receive 8 or 10 annas from

insolent hands or four pice from hands sanctified with work.

That is the dignity of the charkha. There are many other departments of social service. But I have neither the time nor the energy to talk about them to you. If some of you will be fired with the zeal to render this kind of selfless and unassuming social service, you will receive no applause, no Mahatmaship, no pecuniary reward—these, it will not be your privilege to receive. But you will receive instead the blessings of the poor people, a gift greater than riches and treasure—a gift that descends upon you when God says: “Well done, my faithful servant. I am well pleased with thy work.” You will, by serving His dumb millions, be able to establish the closest bond of relationship with your Maker. What greater mission can you have? Nothing can be greater. May such be your lot!

*The Searchlight, 27-9-1925*

## 268. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

BANKIPORE,  
*September 19, 1925*

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI  
93 BAZAR GATE  
BOMBAY

AM GLAD HE IS GONE. COMFORT WIDOW MY BEHALF.  
BAPU

From the original: Pyarelal Papers. Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.  
Courtesy: Beladevi Nayyar and Dr. Sushila Nayyar

## 269. MY NOTES

### MISUSE OF MY NAME

It seems a certain business man in Ahmedabad who is trading in tea, puts out many advertisements. And in these my name has been used in such a manner as to give an impression that I have been encouraging his business or, that I approve of the habit of taking tea. I have received four or five letters of complaints on this matter. I do not wish to advertise his tea any further by giving the name and other particulars of the dealer. It is sufficient to state that I have given no certificate to any tea merchant in India for his tea. For many years, I

have not taken tea. I do not believe that it is essential for the human body. Tea, if boiled, is harmful. I believe that much harm has been done by people giving up milk because of tea. I do not approve of tea also because the labourers in tea-gardens are subjected to much hardship. Those who get addicted to tea feel nervous when they cannot have it. It is better to give up a thing of this kind which becomes an addiction. For those especially who wish to court imprisonment, it is best to give up tea, as it is not served in prison. It is, therefore, improper to associate my name in any manner with advertisements of tea, and it pains me to see this done. Hence, I would ask those who have been using my name to remove it from their advertisements.

Even otherwise, the story of the misuse of my name is a long one. Men have been killed and falsehood propagated in my name; my name has been misused at the time of elections; cigarettes, to which I am totally opposed, are sold in my name, as also medicines! When the evil is so widespread, what can one do against it?

A British writer has said that cheats prosper where there is a large number of foolish or ignorant people. Is there anyone who has not known the truth of this from his own experience? I have been crying from the house-tops that no one should be deceived by the use of my name. The merits or otherwise of every object must be judged independently. In cases where my certificate is regarded by anyone as essential and there is ground for the slightest suspicion, it is absolutely necessary to refer to me for an explanation.

#### CENSUS OF "GOSHALAS"

The work of the All-India Cow-protection Association is progressing at a snail's pace, but, let the reader know that it is progressing.

At the last meeting, a resolution was passed to the effect that a census of *gashalas* and *pinjrapoles*, containing certain particulars, should be prepared. Particulars of certain *goshalas* are available but it is necessary that they should be complete. The following details are required for this census.

1. Name.
2. Address.
3. Date of establishment.
4. Number of cattle, under different heads, such as cows,

buffaloes, disabled cattle, cattle which do not yield milk, oxen, etc.

5. Description of the land and the building, their area, size, etc.

6. Income and expenditure.

7. Names, and other particulars of the members of the committee. If any bulletins are being issued, a copy should be sent.

8. Does the institution require workers to educate people about its aims?

9. How far removed is the slaughter-house?

10. Is there a cattle market?

Those in charge of *goshalas* and *pinjrapoles* are requested to send a statement giving these particulars to Shri Nagindas Amulakhrai (at Homji Street, Hanuman Building, Fort, Bombay- 1).

Chaudh Maharaj has undertaken to get through his workers all the details from places which are within their reach. I assume that those in charge of the institutions they visit, will give all possible help.

#### REPORT ON GUJARAT

The report of the Gujarat Provincial Committee, with figures, is published elsewhere in today's issue. These figures teach a great deal and explain many things. I do not feel disappointed by them, but I find that even in Gujarat the spinning franchise has succeeded less than it was hoped. I do not believe that it has failed, for, if the remaining 580 members do their duty, we can get much out of them. Three things, however, become plain from these figures:

1. We attach little value to our provinces.
2. We are not sufficiently hard-working .
3. Something can be achieved only if there are workers.

The spinning franchise was not forced upon us by the Government; the Congress had introduced it after much deliberation. No one was forced, either, to offer their names; people did so voluntarily. Nevertheless, out of 2,580 persons only 580 have stayed on. What does this imply? Does this not mean simply that people do not wish to work? That, further, they attach no value to their words. If anyone says that this is true only with regard to spinning, he is not right. Even when members had to pay their subscriptions in cash, all those who signed did not pay regularly. If we give up the spinning-

wheel now and decide on some other form of work, it will meet the same fate. Suppose for a moment that everyone is asked to make as many pens from reeds as they can in half an hour's time, and give them to the Congress as subscription fee, only a few of those who promise to do so will keep their promise. In this laxity lies the cause of the delay in winning swaraj.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-9-1925

## 270. WHAT HAS GUJARAT ACHIEVED?

A non-co-operator expresses his dissatisfaction in the following words:<sup>1</sup>

Knowing as I do the conditions prevailing in the rest of the country, I can see that this dissatisfaction springs from a one-sided view of the matter. It is but natural that the correspondent cannot see this. As he would expect complete success, he would naturally feel dissatisfied with anything less. In my opinion, Gujarat has done more than the other provinces, but the difference is so insignificant that no Gujarati should seek consolation in this fact. No one who wishes to make progress should pride himself on having less to blame himself for than others and be complacent; he should on the contrary, continually examine himself for any shortcomings he may have, feel ashamed of those which he may discover and try to remedy them. If, instead of criticizing others, everyone attended to his own duty this world would be a very much better place to live in.

I, therefore, welcome this letter. We could do much even if we only kept our pledges with regard to khadi. A small but solid achievement yields permanent results. More ambitious work done haphazardly proves short-lived in its results, very often fruitless and sometimes even dangerous. A mason who builds a slanting wall and does not use a T-square may in a short time put up a building which has a beautiful appearance but it will collapse with the very first rains. If there are any people living in it, they too will perish. That mason, however, who patiently and intelligently builds a solid and straight

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had complained that Gujarat, which was a stronghold of No-changers, had not done all that had been hoped for from it by way of constructive work.

wall with no defects in it, may perhaps take longer to complete it. Nevertheless, the wall he builds will endure so long that, though he may have taken more time, his work will on the whole prove of greater worth than that of the idle, dishonest and ignorant mason. This is true of every kind of work.

But, having known our shortcomings, it is improper to go on lamenting them. We should examine them only in order that we may overcome them. We know what our shortcomings are and there is only one way of remedying them.

We who know what they are should not lose hope, but should try to get rid of them. Whether or not others take notice, we should silently continue to do our work. Even if in any village there is only one person who is a genuine lover of khadi and spins, he will not lose heart. He will methodically sit down for work and without wavering in his faith, continue to spin. This *yajna*<sup>1</sup>, this patience and this *tapascharya* cannot but have their effect on the surrounding atmosphere. All great things have been achieved in this manner. What would have happened if Rama had lost heart at the sight of the army of demons, or if Arjuna<sup>2</sup> had taken to his heels at the very sight of the large army of the Kauravas<sup>3</sup> confronting his own smaller one? What would have been the result if Galileo had lost faith in himself because of fear of public opinion and of bigoted priests? We can look for and collect such instances from all parts of the world. The beginning is always made by one man or woman with determination. If such a person is patient, he or, she either converts the entire world to his or her views, or being humble and honest, sees his or her error, admits it and corrects it.

It is the Lord's assurance that one who strives for the welfare of his soul never suffers an evil fate for his effort. Everyone who makes a sincere effort is a person striving for his welfare. Even the error of such a one does the world no harm. On the other hand, even the kindness done by a person whose intentions are evil or whose mind is disordered proves dangerous.

Knowing this, all Gujaratis who understand their duty should keep up perfect faith and, without thinking about anything else,

<sup>1</sup> Sacrifice

<sup>2</sup> Most valiant of the Pandava princes, in the *Mahabharata*

<sup>3</sup> The hundred sons of King Dhritarashtra, in the *Mahabharata*

devote themselves to their work. If they do so, they are bound to serve Gujarat, India and the whole world, for their work is inspired by ill will to none.

From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-9-1925

## 271. VIOLENCE IN AGRICULTURE

A regular reader of *Navajivan* asks:<sup>1</sup>

It is indeed true that agriculture involves the destruction of countless insects. But another statement, equally true, is that the process of living, even respiration, involves violence of the same kind. But just as by committing suicide one does not completely get rid of the body, so also by refusing to take up agriculture one does not abolish it. A human being is made of earth. His body springs from the earth and derives its sustenance from the various forms which earth takes. Anyone who lives by begging his food in order to avoid the sin that is involved in agriculture commits a twofold sin. He is guilty of the sin involved in agriculture since the food which he begs was produced by the labour of some farmer. He who fills his stomach by begging shares the sin of which that farmer is guilty by virtue of his farming. Secondly, he is guilty of the sin of harbouring ignorance and the indolence which results from it.

If it is desirable for one individual to keep away from agriculture, it is so for all. If too many people live by begging their food, a few poor farmers would be crushed under the burden of supporting beggars. Who would have to answer for this sin, if not the latter? Such essential work as farming is, like bodily functions, a form of violence which cannot be avoided. Such violence does not cease to be violence but, being unavoidable, is less sinful and, through spiritual knowledge and devotion to God, man secures deliverance from such sins and thereby also saves himself from the necessity of violence of this kind. This is why, if man's body is a form of bondage for him, it is also a means of attaining deliverance. Likewise, farming becomes a cause of bondage to anyone who takes it up in order to become rich,

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that he was very eager to take up farming, but shrank from it because of the violence which it involved.

but for him who takes it up to earn a livelihood it is a means of attaining deliverance.

No work or activity or profession is blameless. All essential work involves the same degree of evil. Business in pearls or silk and the profession of the goldsmith are far more sinful than agriculture since these are not absolutely essential. They certainly involve much violence. Pearls cannot be obtained without violence. Silkworms are boiled. If one could ask the insects that are burnt in the blue flame lighted by the goldsmith and if they could reply, we would get some idea of the violence involved in this profession.

All reverence to that great man who lit the lamp of the dharma of non-violence in this world afflicted with a universal reign of violence.

It is our natural dharma to be careful not to destroy even an ant as we walk. Anyone who walks on proudly, holding his head high and not caring to look below, does not even give a thought to the innumerable insects being crushed under his feet, wilfully commits a sin for which there is no justification and opens the gates of hell for himself. He cannot be compared to the farmers, who should be regarded as relatively innocent. Countless numbers of these latter walk carefully in order to spare the lives of ants and such other insects. There is no pride in them, they are humble. They sustain the world by their toil. Nine-tenths of the world's people are engaged in agriculture, and this is to the good of the world. Agriculture is a necessity and a form of pure sacrifice. Even the most conscientious man can take it up, and anyone who gives up some inessential occupation to take it up earns holy merit.

The correspondent has mentioned the use of goads without thinking about the matter. All farmers do not use goads. Many of them look upon bullocks and other animals as members of their household and treat them with love.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-9-1925



## 272. PRAYING TO GOD

I do not know how to pray and sing devotional hymns and to whom to address the prayer and the hymns, and you constantly advise people to pray. Will you kindly explain how one may do so?

A correspondent has put this question. A devotional hymn is in praise of God, and prayers are a confession of our unworthiness, of our weakness. God has a thousand, which means countless names, or say rather that He has no name. We may sing hymns to Him or pray to Him, using any name which we prefer. Some know Him by the name of Rama, some know Him as Krishna, others call Him Rahim, and yet others call Him God. All these worship the same spiritual Being. However, just as everyone does not like the same food so all these names do not find acceptance with everyone. A person knows God by that name which is familiar to him, and He, who ever dwells in our hearts and is omnipotent, understands our feelings and answers us according to our worthiness.

This is to say that one can pray, sing devotional songs not with the lips but with the heart. That is why even the dumb, the stammerer and the brainless can pray. What avails honey on the tongue when there is poison in the heart? Can a paper rose ever smell sweet? Hence, anyone who wishes sincerely to cultivate devotion to God should purify his heart. Hanuman's<sup>1</sup> strength was boundless because the same Rama who was on his lips was the lord of his heart. It is faith which fills the sails of one's ship, which enables one to lift a mountain or to leap across an ocean. That is, a person can achieve almost anything if the omnipotent God dwells in his heart, be he a leper or a consumptive. Whosoever has God in his heart will have all his diseases destroyed.

How may one attune one's heart in such a manner? This question is not put by the correspondent but is suggested by what I have said above in reply to him. Anyone can teach us to utter certain words, but who can teach us the language of the heart? Only a lover of God can do so. The *Gita* explains, at three places in particular and everywhere generally, what is meant by a devotee. But one does not find such a person simply because one knows his marks or can describe him. It is almost impossible to meet any in this age. I have,

<sup>1</sup>*Vanara* hero, devoted servant of Rama, in the *Ramayana*

therefore, advocated the way of service. God comes unsought, comes because He must, and dwells in the heart of one who serves others. Hence it is that Narsinh Mehta, who had gained knowledge through experience, has sung:

He is the true *Vaishnava* who understands the sufferings of others.

What class of people suffer? The *Antyajās* and the poor. We should serve them with all means at our command. How can those who regard *Antyajās* as untouchables serve them physically? Those who are indolent, those who take the trouble of plying the spinning-wheel for the sake of the poor and invent all manner of excuses; do not know the meaning of service. Those among the poor who are disabled may be helped with free doles, but feeding those who have their limbs sound without their having to work has the effect of demoralizing them. Anyone who sits before a poor person and spins, persuades him to do the same, serves God in the best possible manner. God has said, "Anyone who offers me a leaf, a flower or some water with devotion serves me."<sup>1</sup> We see it proved again and again that God dwells more often in the homes of the poor. Hence spinning for the sake of the poor is the supreme prayer, the supreme sacrifice, the supreme service.

The correspondent's question can now be answered. We can pray to God by any name. As for the manner of praying one should pray with one's heart, and one can learn to pray in this manner by following the path of service. In this age, those Hindus who serve the *Antyajās* sincerely offer the best prayers. Whoever spins with love for the poor among the Hindus and among Indians of other faiths also follows the path of service and offers prayers from his heart.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-9-1925

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita* IX, 26

### 273. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

PATNA,

*Sunday [September 20, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MAHADEV,

You may or may not follow the other rules, you may or may not have [my] address, but do write to me even if you should be sitting on the stake. May this devotion bring you fruit. It is for the same reason that I too am ever desirous of writing to you; but I am only an object of worship. How can I write so long as I do not become a devotee? Many an idol may be falling, whereas innumerable devotees have crossed over. Many attained *moksha* with the help of Krishna's name. But poor Krishna of the *Mahabharata* had to die without glory. For how could he have Krishna's name on his lips? Now tell me who is greater. Is it not the devotee rather than God?

That you would fall ill I certainly knew. I hope you are quite well by now. Yesterday I sent you about 12 columns and I shall try to send you some more today. Without worrying, stay there. Let Durga be completely satisfied. I want you to observe one condition: do not get bed-ridden.

Maulana Shaukat Ali reached here only yesterday. Jawahar<sup>2</sup> and others are arriving today.

I am sending you Urmila Devi's letter just for fun. I had asked Devdas for the *Indian Opinion* file. I have not yet got it.

Keep writing to Rajagopalachari. He is just now both happy and unhappy.

Here they have found the best accommodation for me. It is right on the bank of the Ganges. From where I sit I can see the river flowing before my eyes. I am writing you this letter early in the

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was in Patna on this date.

<sup>2</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru

morning. Indescribable peace prevails. Rajendra Babu who thoroughly tried me yesterday, has compensated for it today.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I do not know my tour programme, but today I shall ask them to send it to you.

I see I have destroyed Urmila Devi's letter as is my custom.

I have entrusted Devdhar's case to Perinbehn<sup>1</sup>. Devdhar did not meet me. Vallabhbhai was to decide about Dahyabhai<sup>2</sup>. I shall write to Perinbehn. If Vallabhbhai decides about Dahyabhai, I shall promptly follow it up.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11451

## 274. *SPEECH AT PATNA*

*September 21, 1925*

It is understood that at the informal meeting Mahatma Gandhi was heckled with numerous questions. Some suggested that the spinners should not be Congressmen.

The Mahatma asserted that they were doing the most patriotic work and a spinner must have equal claim on the Congress with the subscriber of money.

Replying to a question whether a professional spinner could be a Congressman, Mahatmaji answered in the negative and said so long as one did not sign the Congress creed one was ineligible to become a member.

As to the question of instituting a political sufferers' fund, Mahatma Gandhi declared that it was most impracticable at the present time.

*The Hindustan Times, 23-9-1925*

<sup>1</sup> Perinbehn Captain, a congress worker of Bombay, grand-daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji

<sup>2</sup> Son of Vallabhbhai Patel

## 275. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

PATNA,  
*September 22, 1925*

DEAR MOTI BABU,

Do you not think that pure khaddar does not sell because you are still selling half-khaddar? When you give your buyer the choice, he will take what he is more used to. Everyone who has tried to sell both has failed. If you are convinced of the error or the fallacy of half-khaddar, you must give up the latter at all cost.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 11020

## 276. SPEECH AT A.I.C.C. MEETING, PATNA<sup>1</sup>

*September 22, 1925*

Mahatma Gandhi, in opening the proceedings, observed that a very heavy responsibility rested upon his shoulders because they had to revise one of the most important sections of the Congress constitution. He did not propose to give any ruling on the merits of the question as to whether the A.I.C.C. could revise the constitution, but wanted to leave the ultimate decision on it in the hands of the members themselves. He would give rulings on matters of procedure only. He emphasized the fact that the two questions of revising the franchise and of revoking the Pact<sup>2</sup> entered into last year were very important. It was for them to consider, in a free and frank manner but with calmness, the various difficulties involved in it and settle them, so that in Cawnpore they might be ready to revise their national programme in a manner conducive to the early attainment of swaraj.

<sup>1</sup> The afternoon session of the A.I.C.C. was presided over by Gandhiji and attended by about a hundred members.

<sup>2</sup> The Pact entered into between Gandhiji and the Swaraj Party, restricted Congress activity to specified items of the constructive programme and provided that the work in connection with Central and Provincial legislatures be carried on by the Swaraj Party as an integral part of the Congress. *Vide* "Joint Statement with Swaraj Party Leaders", 6-11-1924.

But if they all thought that the entire question should be left to the Congress to decide, then they should not hesitate to say so. On the contrary, if they thought that they should make the way clear for the Congress, they would say so. First of all, what they had to decide was whether the matter was urgent enough to be taken up and decided by the A.I.C.C. He once more appealed to them to consider the question with a full sense of responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

*The Searchlight, 25-9-1925*

### *277. SPEECH AT A.I.C.C. MEETING, PATNA<sup>2</sup>*

*September 22, 1925*

Mahatma Gandhi said that they must vote unfettered by any consideration for himself or for his opinions. If they did not want the yarn franchise, they might reject it altogether. They might with equal freedom reject the suggested use of khaddar if they did not want it. He wanted them to vote with the full comprehension of the implications of the clause relating to the proposed Spinners' Association. They must remember that the new Association would not be controlled by the Congress. But it would use the prestige of the Congress and help the Congress. There was a view that the All-India Spinners' Association should have a separate existence and should try to create a prestige for itself. The All-India Khadi Board and its funds were the properties of the Congress. They might say that they did not want to part with the properties of the All-India Khadi Board in favour of the Association. They were fully entitled to say that. But the All-India Spinners' Association was intended to be an active body. There was nothing [dubious] behind the creation of the All-India Spinners' Association. It was intended to be a purely commercial body to look after the economic side of khaddar. Proceeding, Mahatmaji said that he knew very well that khaddar by itself had no capacity to bring about an atmosphere for civil disobedience. It was for them to make it so and some of them felt that it was possible for them to do

<sup>1</sup> In the discussion that followed, R. K. Sidhwa (Sind) objected that the A.I.C.C. was not competent to initiate any change in the constitution which only the Congress could do. Motilal Nehru held that the A.I.C.C. possessed competence. S. Srinivasa Iyengar believed that nothing was sacrosanct and they should favour a change for better conditions in the country. J. M. Sen Gupta complained that the existing franchise prevented functioning, while Madan Mohan Malaviya wanted elections on the basis of a new franchise. On Gandhiji's putting the resolution to vote 93 supported a change in the constitution while 7 opposed it. Motilal Nehru then moved the "New Franchise" resolution.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji intervened in the debate on the Constitution Amendment Resolution.

so. Those who believed in civil disobedience wanted some evolution of power, in India, something as a cohesive force. And therein lay the political significance of khaddar. The All-India Spinners' Association would invite Englishmen to be its members; it would invite Sir Ali Imam to become its member if he agreed to put on khaddar; it would invite the Maharaja of Bikaner to be its member if he patronized khaddar. The All-India Spinners' Association thus would have the means and would have the strength to boycott foreign cloth which, to their utter shame, they must confess, they had not done so far.

If they wanted willingly to part with the All-India Khadi Board funds they might do so. But the Congress would not shape the policy of the Spinners' Association. It would not have the same franchise as the Congress. But it would only act as the agency of the Congress at its pleasure. In reply to a question as to who will form the Spinners' Association, Mahatmaji said:

I am going to form the Spinners' Association. It will be a very small association. I have not fixed the number [of members] as yet. But the Congress could not bind the policy of that Association.

Mahatmaji said he had received a large number of amendments, but instead of putting each one of them successively he would take up the main principles covered by the amendments and take the sense of the House on them.

The first item that Mahatmaji proceeded to take vote on was whether they wanted spinning as an alternative franchise.

Only five voted against and the alternative spinning franchise was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that All-India Khadi Board was faced with tremendous difficulties. They were only changing the name of the Khadi Board by founding the new organization—which he was founding only to give a permanent footing to khaddar work. The All-India khadi Board had well-nigh exhausted its funds and they would be removing the present obstacles in the way of the Khadi Board by giving it the new orientation he was proposing. As long as the Congress believed in khaddar, they could not but see that the proposed Association would be an invaluable asset to it.

Mahatmaji again explained the resolution and put Pandit Malaviya's amendment to vote. The result of voting this time was as follows: For habitual wear of khaddar—36; against 51. Habitual wear of khaddar was lost this time.

Babu Rajendra Prasad wanted to know from Mahatmaji, if he and his friends were in honour bound to vote for the proviso.

Mahatma Gandhi said there was no question of honour involved in it. The Pact was between Pandit Motilal Nehru on behalf of the Swaraj Party and himself and those

who had any conscientious objection were at liberty to vote as they thought proper. He might be doing unintentionally a disservice to the Congress and the country, but he for himself thought that the congress could not do better than support the Swaraj Party in the ensuing elections. The No-changers ought to surrender the Congress to them and make it a political organization for all purposes. He himself had not contributed a single pie to the Swaraj Party nor did he intend to pay one, because whatever he got, he would prefer to spend on the charkha and khaddar as he considered them to be above everything else. All the same, the Swarajists had, no doubt, his moral support. But no one on that account should vote for the resolution if he honestly felt otherwise about it. He wanted everybody to vote freely. There was no point of honour involved in it. Some people were of the opinion that some evil genius had possessed him at the present moment and that he was selling himself to the Swaraj Party. He honestly felt that they should surrender to the Swaraj Party. But it was their duty to resist him if they felt otherwise. Put to the vote 61 voted for the proviso and 22 against it. The proviso was therefore retained as it was.

The whole of the resolution was then put to the vote with following result: Part A—Carried unanimously. Part B—For 74: Against 12. The meeting adjourned till the day following.

*The Searchlight, 25-9-1925*

## 278. SPEECH AT KHILAFAT CONFERENCE, PATNA<sup>1</sup>

*September 22, 1925*

After the recitation of an *ayat* from the holy Koran and an opening song, Mahatma Gandhi was the first to address the gathering. He said that when he was invited to attend the Conference, he had told the Secretary not to ask him to make any speech there. But he was told that some ladies were also expected to attend the Conference and that he should tell them something about khaddar and charkha. That was certainly a source of great temptation to him to speak to them on khaddar and that was why he had immediately agreed to do so.

People were heard saying that the Gandhi of 1921, who always spoke to them about the Hindu-Muslim unity then, did not do so now, but that the moment he was asked to speak on khaddar and charkha he immediately consented to do so. The question was a very pertinent one and he was ready with his reply. He had told them so many times, both in his speeches and in his writing in the Press, that he

<sup>1</sup> The Patna District Khilafat Conference commenced its sittings in the Anjuman Islamia Hall at 7 p.m. Among those present were Shaukat Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, Mahomed Ali, Zafar Ali Khan, Shafi and Rejendra Prasad.



had now lost his hold on both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Today neither of the communities listened to him nor was ready to act up to his advice as was the case in 1921. And he claimed the same was the case with the Ali Brothers as well. They too had lost their hold on both the communities. Under the circumstances nothing was left to him but to pray and pray to God. Why should he go and speak to one who was not ready to listen to him? That was why he preferred to remain silent on the subject. In other matters as well, in respect of the matter of attaining freedom for the country, he had lost his hold on the educated people of the country. But he had trust in both of them. Even today he was for non-co-operation. That was his creed yet, as was Hindu-Muslim unity. But he did not find that unity existing today. That was why he was silent about it, and preferred to speak to them once again about khaddar, of which he had already spoken so many times, khaddar was vital both to the Hindu and the Mussalman who regarded India as his own.

They would have to realize that it was a sin both for the Mussalmans and for the Hindus to put on anything but khaddar, made of the yarn spun by the poor in the villages. Let Hindus and Mussalmans fight one another and fight to their heart's content. Let them break each other's heads and let there flow a stream of blood out of it. But let not the Government interfere with it. And despite all this, let not the Indians persist in saying that even in their degradation, they would use the cloth made in Manchester, Lancashire or Japan or even made in the mills at Bombay. He reprobated the use even of the latter in comparison with khaddar. They knew very well that in India millions of both the Hindus and the Mussalmans in the villages knew not what was called two meals a day. The speaker had seen the miserable condition of such people in villages in Bengal during his recent tour in that province. And if they also saw with his eyes, their eyes would, no doubt, be at once filled with tears. In villages near about Atrai, 90 per cent of the people were Mohammedans and in that very area Babu Satis Chandra Das Gupta had been carrying on his khaddar work under Dr. P.C. Ray, as a result of which, if the women in that area were able to earn even two and a half rupees a month, they were immensely pleased. Those who were well-off might laugh at it and not be able to realize the value of it. But it was no doubt of considerable value to those families whose entire income from agriculture amounted to but seven rupees a month. The constables and the orderlies in the employ of the Government would readily be able to realize the value of it. If these people got an increase of even one rupee, how immensely pleased they were and grateful they felt to the officers concerned. Concluding, Mahatmaji eloquently appealed to the people in the name of the millions of starving people in the villages to take to khaddar and the charkha. Let them, for the sake of these poor people, spin and give their yarn to him so that he might be able to cheapen the cost of khaddar, mainly for these starving millions and ultimately for all. He had heard a Mussalman saying that Mahatmaji must have gone mad to expect that the Mussalmans would at all take to khaddar. The

Mussalmans of the United Provinces wanted fine cloth like nainsook, *malmal*, etc., for their use. The rough and coarse khaddar was not to their taste. But he did not agree with them. The Mussalmans also were born in and belonged to India. They also had the sense of humanity in them and they also felt for these starving millions in the villages. He hoped they would also take to khaddar as, in fact, many of them had already done. They would be serving two purposes thereby. They would get cloth for themselves as well as help the starving millions in the villages. For God's sake and for the sake of the starving poor of the country, let them all, today and, if possible, at that very moment, take to the charkha and spinning.

*The Searchlight*, 23-9-1925

### 279. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

[Before *September 23, 1925*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I wrote to you on the train. You must have received the letter. It seems sickness has visited everyone there. Let me know how all of them are doing.

I believe Nimu<sup>2</sup> is not yet old enough to be bothered with the question of when she would like to marry. I personally would wish that we wait for two years. If Ramdas is willing to wait, I will insist on waiting. I am thinking of Nimu's interest only. After marriage she is sure to live with Ramdas, and I shudder at the thought of her becoming pregnant, which would be but a natural consequence. Nimu is by no means fit to carry the burden of a child. I have agreed to this engagement out of consideration for you and Ramdas. Had Ramdas not been agreeable, I would have opposed your wish. I gather from Jamnadas that they were on the point of selling off Nimu. I would not then have held myself responsible for it. In the present case the responsibility lies on your head and mine.

Get Nimu engaged after telling her that I would like her to wait for two years for the marriage. Whatever religious ceremony is necessary for the engagement should be done at Amreli. If she wants the marriage to be celebrated at Lakhtar I will not oppose it, but will try to dissuade her. I shall take part in the marriage as a religious rite only. Ramdas too is of the same opinion. If Ba objects, put her at ease.

<sup>1</sup> The letter was received by the addressee on 23-9-1925

<sup>2</sup> A niece of the addressee

I have already written to her. Now you may do as you think best. If Nimu happens to grow very fast, I will not insist next year on waiting further. I hope she does not grow that fast. May God help her.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7744. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

## 280. BIHAR NOTES

The tour in Bihar commenced with my attending the Bihar Provincial Conference at Purulia. The chief business of the Conference was to pass a recommendatory resolution endorsing the proposed change in the spinning franchise. The presidential speech was delivered in English. I wish Moulvi Zubair had delivered it in Hindustani. I know that half the audience did not understand this otherwise admirable speech. There was, too, the Hindu Sabha and the next day the Khilafat Conference in the same *pandal*. It was a most pleasing thing for me to find all the presidents respecting my wish not to speak at any of the conferences. I have grown weary of speaking. I have nothing new to say. I travel because I fancy that the masses want to meet me. I certainly want to meet them. I deliver my simple message to them in a few words and they and I are satisfied. It penetrates the mass mind slowly but surely.

Annexed to the Conference was a well-arranged Industrial Exhibition. You saw there the undoubted evolution of khaddar. There was the spinning competition and the distribution of prizes. Osman of the Khadi Pratishthan carried the first prize which consisted of a gold medal. A little girl six years old was also a prize-winner. Her spinning was not bad at all. She carried the prize in that she was only six years and yet could steadily spin for the competition. The lantern-slide lecture on khaddar, which Khitish Babu of the Khadi Pratishthan delivered to an appreciative audience, was another feature.

The usual addresses and purse were there. The purse was intended for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. There were collections, too, on the spot both at men's and women's meetings. The collection at the latter was as usual larger.

I was taken too to a village called Golunda, a co-operative centre where spinning is being tried. It is an interesting experiment and, if it

is carried out scientifically, it is bound to succeed and yield startling results.

Purulia has an old Leper Asylum managed entirely by the London Missionary Society. I saw the first Leper Asylum at Cuttack. But there it was a hurried visit. I was able only to see the lepers and the Superintendent. I had no time to see the appointments. At Purulia I was able to see the quarters and understand the working of the institution. In both the places the superintendents and their wives have become devoted friends of the lepers. There was no unhappiness on the faces of the inmates. They were able to forget their distress through the loving care of their Superintendents. I was told at Purulia that leprosy was brought under subjection by means of oil injections, especially in the initial stages. The Superintendent also told me that the cases that looked horrible—burnt-up skin or burnt toes and fingers—were not contagious at all. In such cases the disease had done its work. There was no contagion and no cure. The contagious cases were those which neither the public nor the patient recognized as such. These are the cases that admit of complete cure through injections. It is a matter of humiliation for us that the very necessary and humane work of looking after this portion of distressed humanity should be taken up solely by Christian foreigners. All honour to them, but what of us? The reader will be sorry to learn that leprosy is on the increase. The general reason assigned was unchaste living and wrong dieting.

Unlike other parts of Bihar, Purulia and the surrounding country is a predominantly Bengali-speaking tract. It has a comparatively better and cooler climate than Calcutta. The Bengalis use Purulia as a health resort. Deshbandhu's father built a beautiful home in Purulia. I was put up in this house. I felt sad having to be in Deshbandhu's house when he was no more. His father's and his mother's *samadhis* were in this house. They lie in a corner. A simple unpretentious stone platform marks the spot where their ashes lie buried. Yonder was a dilapidated building which was built by one of Deshbandhu's sisters which she was conducting as a Widows' Home. With her premature death the Home died a natural death. Yet another dilapidated building was pointed out to me as a block of rooms which were built for housing poor people. The whole surroundings seemed to be in keeping with the mystic charity of this family of philanthropists. It was therefore a privilege for me to be asked to

unveil Deshbandhu's portraits and uncover two plates directing the stranger to a Deshbandhu Avenue and a Deshbandhu Road.

I must deal with my entry into the territories inhabited by the Hos, the Mundas and the other aboriginal tribes among whom a silent reform movement is going on.

*Young India*, 24-9-1925

## 281. UNTOUCHABILITY AND GOVERNMENT

A correspondent writes:<sup>1</sup>

Here there is evidently a confusion of thought, I know all about the manufactured addresses by Untouchables during the visit of the Prince of Wales. And whilst I know nothing about the British Government being at the back of the movement referred to by the correspondent I should not be at all surprised to find that the charge is well founded. The tendency of the Government is undoubtedly to divide us. Its strength lies in our divisions. Our unity will dissolve it. But such a policy of the Government is no proof of its interference with our work for untouchables. The Government, for instance, does not directly or indirectly obstruct us in removing untouchability, conducting schools for untouchables, digging wells for them or sharing our own with them. Reform on the part of the Hindus is a totally different thing from the exploitation of the untouchables. Indeed, that exploitation is a certainty if we obstinately refuse to do our duty and purge Hinduism of the curse. And we shall not be able to exert ourselves to the utmost in this direction if we put the blame on the shoulders of the Government and thus wait for the removal of untouchability till swaraj is attained.

*Young India*, 24-9-1925

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not reproduced here. The correspondent referred to Gandhiji's remark in *Young India* of 27-8-1925 that he did not know of "a single instance where the Government have obstructed the public in its programme of removing untouchability". The correspondent held that "the Government, if not actually hindering the reform, has been certainly trying to pervert it." He cited instances of the "addresses of welcome" by chamars of Meerut manoeuvred by the Government at the time of the visit of the Prince of Wales, and of a "Adi-Hindu Andolan" or movement in Manipuri, Itawah, Etah and Kanpur districts instigating the untouchables to demand separate representation and fair proportion in the services and to rise in revolt against caste Hindus. In the correspondent's opinion, "it was an open secret that the authorities are at the back of this movement."

## 282. *WHAT OF THE BRITISH LION?*

Here is a letter all the way from California:

Enclosed please find a small cutting. Read this cutting first:

“Kennedy was seated in the ranch house and happened to glance into the yard where his four-year-old grand-daughter was playing. He saw a mountain lion stealthily creeping upon her. Kennedy rushed for his rifle and fired through the window at the lion as it was ready to spring. The bullet pierced its heart.”

Now give your opinion regarding the method used by the child’s father. Please answer the following questions:

“Was he justified to kill the lion? Should the father remain non-violent and let the lion devour his child? Should the father appeal to the soul of the lion and thus endanger the life of his child? Was it possible for the father to plead mercy in order to save the child? Are you going to keep on appealing to the soul of the British lion and let them devour the lives of many million Indians?”

My answer to his first question is that the father was justified in killing the lion. In asking the other questions the correspondent has betrayed his ignorance of non-violence and its working. Non-violence is not so much a mental or intellectual attitude as a quality of the heart, the soul. If Kennedy had no fear of the lion—fearlessness being the first and indispensable condition of non-violence—if he had a heart-recognition of the fact that the lion possessed a soul as much as he himself did, instead of rushing to his rifle and relying upon the problematical chance of the lion waiting till he reached his rifle and of taking an unerring aim, he should have rushed to the lion and put his arms round him in the fullest confidence of being able to appeal to the soul within him and rescuing his child. That such non-violence is reached by the fewest possible is only too true, and therefore mankind in general will always kill lions and tigers in order to save their children and cattle. But the fundamental position remains unaffected. The phenomenon of real sadhus fearlessly meeting and remaining unharmed without harming the wild beasts of the jungle is not an unknown thing in Hindustan. We have a historical record of such instances in the West also. The writer has further committed the error of imagining an unimaginable case with brave men. If Kennedy had remained a passive spectator of his child being devoured, the case would have been one not of non-violence in any shape or form but of rank and heartless cowardice, the very opposite of non-violence.

The last question put by the correspondent is really what his letter is intended to lead up to. In it the correspondent has shown woeful ignorance of the history of our own times. He must know that the movement for which I have made myself responsible is not an appeal of the kind he imagines to the soul of the British lion, but it is an appeal to the soul of India to find itself. It is a movement to develop internal strength. In its final form, therefore, it is undoubtedly an appeal to the soul of the British lion. But it then becomes an appeal from an equal to an equal, not an appeal of a beggar to a possible donor, or the vain appeal of a dwarf to a giant to save him. It will then be an irresistible appeal of soul to soul. In the process of development of internal strength, the inevitable devouring will no doubt go on. But it will not cease even when and if India rushes like Kennedy to the rifle. But whereas Kennedy tried to reach the rifle which he possessed and whose use he knew, the Indian Kennedy unlike the Californian would be trying to destroy the British lion without possessing the necessary weapon or the skill to use it. Under my method, there is the present possibility not of destroying the British lion but of changing his nature. Again, under the Kennedy method India will have to develop the same qualities which we at present deplore in the British lion. Lastly, the third course which evidently the correspondent imagines to be not merely possible but the alternative to his method does not arise at all in the case of India, as it did not in the Californian case. India to be free has only two choices. She must either become, for the purpose of achieving her freedom and to that extent only, non-violent, or must endeavour to develop the Western methods of violence with all its implications.

*Young India*, 24-9-1925

### 283. NATIONAL ARBITRATION ?

I am supposed to be Chairman of the National Arbitration Board appointed at Delhi last year regarding communal disputes. I had wires and letters seeking my intervention at Delhi, then at Panipat and now at Allahabad. I was regretfully obliged to advise these parties that I claimed no longer to exercise influence over the respective communities. An arbitration is useful when the board of arbitration has influence over the disputing parties and when they are ready to abide by their award. Times have changed since the Delhi meeting. Parties are just now better organized for quarrels than for settlement.

No doubt they will finally meet. But it seems that they will do so only after they have finished with the arbitrament of the sword. I think I know my limitations and believe that I shall serve the cause of peace by remaining away from all intervention in communal disputes.

*Young India*, 24-9-1925

## 284. NOTES

### MISUSE OF MY NAME

A correspondent from Madras has addressed to me a printed open letter describing what are in his opinion the many misdeeds of the Swarajists in Tamilnad and drawing my attention to the uses to which my name has been put in connection with municipal elections. Here are some samples:<sup>1</sup>

If the foregoing is a correct picture, it is certainly deplorable. The correspondent asks me to dissociate myself from such methods. His suggestion either means that he does not know me, for I have more than once expressed my strongest disapproval of untruth and violence including rowdyism. I have even done penance more than once for an illegitimate use of my name when there was even the remotest chance of my position being misunderstood. It is impossible for me, however, to hold myself responsible for the acts of those who will do evil deeds in my name without the slightest warrant for it; or the suggestion of the correspondent means that if what he has related is true, I should cease to help the Swaraj Party. I cannot do it so long as men like Pandit Motilalji guide its deliberations, and so long as its creed remains what it is. My general help to the Swaraj Party does not mean endorsement of every method adopted in the name of the Party, or of the acts of individual Swarajists. I have no doubt that there are loafers and humbugs in the Swaraj Party, but I am sorry to have to confess that I have not yet belonged to a single democratic institution which has been able to keep itself clear of such types of humanity. The utmost that a man can do to keep himself clean is to examine the creed of institutions and the general character of those who run them, and to sever his connection when the creed itself becomes questionable, or an institution though safe as to its creed passes into

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. The letter cited breach of promise, bribery, corruption, misuse and exploitation of Gandhiji's name, misrepresentation to voters or tipping them with wine etc.



the hands of men proved to be unscrupulous. If bad men have crept into the Swaraj Party it can also claim many able, honest, self-sacrificing and hard-working men. It will not suffer in comparison with the other parties. The correspondent may rest assured that no amount of encouragement from me of any party can possibly save it from extinction if the adoption of methods such as he describes becomes general. The question, therefore, for the correspondent, the public and me is to find out how far the methods described are adopted and countenanced by the Swaraj Party. My duty in this direction is discharged by publishing the digest of such charges and expressing my disapproval of crooked methods even for gaining a laudable end. The probability is that the charges brought by the correspondent will be refuted by those against whom they are levelled. I am chary of believing them because experience has taught me that where party spirit runs high unfounded accusations are made by opponents one against the other. Even my mahatmaship has not rendered me immune from charges which I know to be untrue. Recently I was charged whilst at Calcutta with prevarication and with gross inconsistency. Many of the Punjab patriots during the Rowlatt Act agitation were charged with wickednesses of which they were absolutely innocent. I do not know a single public man who has not been under the shadow of suspicion at some stage or other of his public life. There is reason to be cautious, therefore, in believing charges against parties or party leaders.

#### TRUE SATYAGRAHA

For a long time I have purposely refrained from writing anything in these columns about Vaikom and its struggle against unapproachability. Nor do I want as yet to say anything directly bearing on it. But I do want to tell the reader how the satyagrahis at Vaikom are passing their time.

A letter was received at Calcutta from Vaikom dated the 1st of August. It has remained unpublished through oversight. But the substance of it is as fresh today as it was when it was received. I reproduce it below:

Now there are only ten volunteers including myself. One of us daily does the kitchen work while others except one offer satyagraha for three hours each. Including the time taken to go and return, the time for satyagraha comes to four hours. We regularly get up at 4.30 a.m. and prayer takes half an hour. From 5 to 6 we have sweeping, drawing water and cleaning vessels. By seven

all of us except two (who go for satyagraha at 5.45 after bath) return after bath and spin or card till it is time for going to the barricade. Most of us regularly give 1,000 yards each per day and some of us even more. The average output is over 10,000 yards per day. I do not insist on our doing any work on Sundays when each does according to his will. Some of us card and spin for two or three hours on Sundays too. Anyhow no yarn is returned on Sundays. Those who are Congress members spin for the Congress franchise on Sundays. Some of us are now spinning on Sundays and other spare hours for our humble gift towards All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund which you have instituted. We wish to pack a small bundle of yarn to you on the 4th September (G.O.M. Centenary Day). I hope you will be glad to receive it. This we shall spin apart from our routine work. We mean either to beg or to spin the whole of that auspicious day and to send whatever is obtained. We have not yet settled what we should do.

This shows that the satyagrahis of Vaikom have understood the spirit of their work. There is no bluster, there is no fireworks display; but there is here a simple determination to conquer by exact conduct. A satyagrahi should be able to give a good account of every minute at his disposal. This the Vaikom satyagrahis are doing. The reader cannot fail to notice the honesty in spinning Congress yarn, and the yarn for the G.O.M. Centenary during their off-day. The idea too of spinning for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial is in keeping with the rest of their doings. The letter before me gives me details of each member's spinning during the preceding week omitting Sunday. The largest quantity spun by a single inmate in 6,895 yards of 17 counts. The lowest is 2,936 yards of 18 counts. The remark against his name is that he was absent on leave for three days. The average per man per day during that week was 866.6 yards. I have also before me the figures for the week ending 26th August. The highest during that week was 7,700 for a single individual, and the lowest was 2,000, the spinner having spun only two days during the week. The reader may ask what connection is there between the removal of untouchability and spinning. Apparently nothing. In reality much. It is not any single isolated act which can be called satyagraha apart from the spirit behind. Here, there is spirit behind the spinning which is bound to tell in the long run; for spinning to these young men is a sacrificial

national act calculated unconsciously to exhibit true humility, patience and pertinacity—qualities indispensable for clean success.

#### COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING

An Allahabad Graduate writes:

I am a registered graduate of the Allahabad University. I am entitled to vote for a candidate seeking election to the Allahabad University Court.

Exception has been taken to my opposition to making military training compulsory in the universities. On this point I seek your opinion through the columns of *Young India*. My view briefly is this:

I admit that under a swaraj government our young men would be required to take to the Army as a career and we shall have to encourage that spirit. But under an alien government I feel there is absolutely no security that these university corps would not be used against the Indian nation, as the Indian army has been used in the past. Moreover would it not be adding another link to the chain of moral slavery if our young men are *compelled* to take up military training? Does it not clash with the ideal of a university, where at least we can expect a free atmosphere for growth? Would it not cast our ideals in a militarist mould? My information about foreign universities is limited, but so far as I could gather I understand there is no compulsion even in universities of free countries like England and America. Even if we ignore political considerations should we not allow the individual his freedom of conscience to preserve which large numbers of Englishmen went to jail during the War. All of them were not afraid to die.

These are considerations which deserve fullest attention. On the other hand compulsion in physical training I would gladly support—as a matter of fact, I advocate. I feel that if it is made compulsory all the requirements of a university would be met.

We should not shut the doors of the University against those who hold different views on life or politics. There is already too much of cramping in these institutions.

As a pacifist by religion I heartily endorse all that my correspondent says about compulsory military training in the universities. But the argument seems to be sound even from the purely utilitarian and national standpoint. Not only can there be no security against the use being made of university corps for purposes antagonistic to the national interest, but whilst the Government retains its anti-national character there is every likelihood of these corps

being used against the nation on due occasions. What, for instance, could prevent a future Dyer from using these university men for enacting another Jallianwala Bagh? May not young men themselves offer their services for an expedition against the innocent Chinese, or the equally innocent Tibetans when their subjection is felt necessary in the interests of imperial commerce? Some of the young volunteers who served during the War justified their action by saying that thereby they gained experience in the art of war, just the reason which consciously or unconsciously prompted some of the Frontier expeditions. Those who run empires successfully have an instinctive knowledge of human nature. It is not deliberately bad or wicked. It acts excellently under a high impulse. And thousands of young men who, before they join any corps, must take the oath of allegiance and must on scores of occasions salute the Union Jack, will naturally want to give a good account of their loyalty and willingly shoot down their fellow men upon receiving from their superiors orders to fire. Whilst, therefore, even as an out-and-out believer in ahimsa, I can understand and appreciate military training for those who believe in the necessity of the use of arms on given occasions, I am unable to advocate the military training under the Government of the youth of the country so long as it remains utterly irresponsible to the needs of the people, and I should be against compulsory military training in every case and even under a national government. Those who do not wish to take military training should not be debarred from joining public universities. Physical culture stands on a different basis altogether. It can be and should be part of any sound educational scheme even as many other subjects are.

#### PLIGHT OF MILL-HANDS

A letter from Calcutta gives me the following figures about, and description of, its mill-hands:<sup>1</sup>

I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the figures or the description, but both may be safely taken as generally correct. The writer of the letter says that Deshbandhu had promised “to relieve them of their sufferings,” and asks me to complete the work that death prevented Deshbandhu from even beginning. He then suggests that I should find a capital of ten thousand rupees for helping a

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. The report showed a total of 6,62,000 mill-hands, complained of their being illiterate, addicted to vice, and prone to run into debt, and asked if there was no way to save them.

cinema company worker so that he may give exhibitions in the mill areas and that looms and charkhas may be established in their midst.

The writer is well-meaning but it is clear that he does not know that the cinema will not make the men and women literate or wean them from the vices he mentions. He does not know also that these labourers are not likely to take to the looms or the spinning-wheels as a supplementary occupation for they do not need it; they may learn spinning and weaving to help them in hartals or when they are out of employment. Moral and social reform among the labourers is most difficult and taxing. It is slow work and can only be done at the hands of reformers who will live practically in their midst and by their sterling character affect the lives of the mill-hands for the better. Such work requires no capital and whatever is required will be gladly paid for by the mill-hands themselves as is actually happening today in Ahmedabad and will presently happen in Jamshedpur.

*Young India*, 24-9-1925

### 285. *THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ALL-INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION*<sup>1</sup>

[September 24, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

Whereas the time has arrived for the establishment of an expert organization for the development of hand-spinning and khaddar, and whereas experience has shown that such development is not possible without a permanent organization, unaffected and uncontrolled by politics, political changes or political bodies, an organization called the All-India Spinners' Association is hereby established with the consent of the All-India Congress Committee, as an integral part of the Congress organization, but with independent existence and powers.

The said Association shall consist of members and associates and donors hereinafter defined and shall have an Executive Council consisting of the following persons who shall hold office for five years:

<sup>1</sup> Evidently, the constitution was as per draft which Gandhiji mentions having circulated and which was in some respects amended by others. The article "All-India Spinners' Association", 1-10 -1925, refers to a provision or two in the original draft which had to be dropped or changed.

<sup>2</sup> The constitution was finalized at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held at Patna on this date.

1. Mahatma Gandhi
2. Maulana Shaukat Ali
3. Syt . Rajendra Prasad
4. Syt. Satis Chandra Das Gupta
5. Syt. Maganlal K. Gandhi
6. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj, Treasurer.
7. Mr. Shuaib Qureshi
8. Syt. Shankerlal G. Banker } Secretaries
9. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

#### POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council shall take over all the funds and assets belonging to the All-India Khadi Board and all Provincial Khadi Boards with full powers to administer these and other funds and shall discharge their existing financial obligations.

The Council shall have the right to raise loans, to collect subscriptions, to hold immovable property, to invest funds under proper security, to give and take mortgages for the furtherance of hand-spinning and khaddar, to give financial assistance to khaddar organizations by way of loans, gifts or bounties, to help or establish schools or institutions where hand-spinning is taught, to help or open khadi stores to establish a khaddar service, to act as agency on behalf of the Congress to receive self-spun yarn as subscription to the Congress and to issue certificates, and to do all the things that may be considered necessary for the furtherance of its objects, with power to make regulations for the conduct of affairs of the Association or the Council and to amend them, as also the present constitution, as may be considered necessary from time to time.

Vacancies in the existing Council by death, resignation or otherwise shall be filled by the remaining members .

The Council shall have the right to add to its numbers which shall not exceed 12 at any time and four members shall form the quorum for a meeting of the Council.

All decisions shall be taken by majority of votes.

The Council shall keep an accurate account of all subscriptions, donations and fees, whether in cash or kind, and of expenditure. The books shall be open to public inspection and shall be audited by competent auditors every three months.

The Central office of the Association shall be at the Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, and those who are desirous of becoming spinning members of the Congress shall send their yarn subscriptions to the central office with particulars in the following form:

To

THE SECRETARY,  
ALL-INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION,  
SABARMATI.

SIR,

I enclose herewith \_\_\_\_\_ yards of yarn \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in weight spun by me being my subscription to the  
National Congress. I am or wish to become a member of  
the \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup> Congress Committee. My age is  
\_\_\_\_\_. My occupation is \_\_\_\_\_. My  
address is \_\_\_\_\_.

*Yours faithfully,*

(Signature in legible hand, and if a woman state  
whether married or unmarried)

Upon receipt of the subscription the Secretary shall examine the quantity and quality of yarn and if found satisfactory shall send to the Congress Committee concerned a certificate in the following form:

This is to certify that \_\_\_\_\_ has sent to the  
A.I.S.A. \_\_\_\_\_ yards of yarn being subscription for  
membership of the Congress for the year \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Congress Committee of \_\_\_\_\_ P.C.C.

A duplicate of the certificate with signature of the Secretary shall be sent to the sender of the yarn.

The central office shall keep a separate ledger containing a list with full particulars of all yarn received by the A.I.S.A. for membership of the Congress.

#### MEMBERS

There shall be two classes of members of the Association, A and B:

(i) The A class shall consist of persons above eighteen years of

<sup>1</sup> The source has here "State address".

age and habitually wearing khadi, who deposit regularly from month to month with the treasurer or any agency duly appointed thereto by the Council 1,000 yards of self-spun yarn well-twisted and uniform.

- (ii) The B class shall consist of persons above eighteen years of age habitually wearing khadi who pay an annual subscription of 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn, well-twisted and uniform.

Any yarn paid to the Association for membership of the National Congress shall be considered part of the subscription to the Association.

#### RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS

The duty of every member, both A and B classes, shall be to carry on a propaganda for hand-spinning and khadi.

The members shall have the right to elect from among members of the A class the Executive Council after the expiry by efflux of time of the present Council. The members present at a meeting duly convened may by a three-fourths majority change the constitution of the Association after expiry of five years from the date hereof.

When in any province fifty members have been enrolled, they may elect from among the members of class A, an advisory committee of five to advise the Council about provincial matters relating to the objects of the Association.

#### ASSOCIATES

Those who pay the All-India Spinners' Association Rs. 12 per year in advance and habitually wear khaddar shall be considered Associate Members of the Association.

Any person who wears khaddar habitually and pays in advance a consolidated amount of Rs. 500 shall become a Life Associate of the Association.

All Associates will be entitled to receive free of charge copies of statements, balance-sheets, and minutes of proceedings of the Councils.



Every person wishing to join the Association shall apply in the following form:

To

THE SECRETARY,

ALL -INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION,

SABARMATI

DEAR SIR,

I have read the rules of the A.I.S.A. I desire to become a member of class/an associate member and I forward herewith my subscription for—Please enrol me as a member.

*Yours faithfully,*

*Young India, 1-10-1925*

### *286. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PATNA<sup>1</sup>*

*Septem*

Replying to the address Mahatmaji, first of all, thanked the people of Patna and the members of the District Board for the addresses presented to him. Referring to the observation made by Khan Bahadur Nawab Sarfaraz Hussain Khan<sup>2</sup> about Hindu-Muslim unity, he said that there was a time when he did claim that there had come about a real unity between the Hindus and the Mussalmans and that it was going to stay for ever. And he could have justly claimed for himself, then, a great deal of the credit for that result. But he was grieved to say that the same was not true of today. He had already said it so many times, and he would say the same thing that evening, that he had now lost his hold both on the Hindus as well as on the Mohammedans. In that meeting there were present both the Hindus and the Mussalmans but he did not at all deceive himself that their presence was any indication of their acceptance of his creed of Hindu-Muslim unity. Indeed, it went against his grain to go to such meetings, which were attended by people whose hearts were not pure and whose relations with one another were not cordial, and thereby deceive the world and himself regarding the unity between the two communities. He did not like to go even to such meetings as were attended solely by the members of either community. He was trying to look equally on both the Hindus and the Mussalmans and treat them impartially. It was true, as both Indians and even the Westerners had admitted, that his ideal of swaraj and

<sup>1</sup> The meeting, attended by a large number of people, was held in the Baptist Mission Compound at 7.30 p.m.

<sup>2</sup> Member, Bihar Legislative Assembly and Chairman, Reception Committee

non-co-operation was not intended to do any harm to anyone. It aimed at the well-being of the whole world. And so when the members of the two communities quarrelled among themselves and tried to associate him with one side or the other, he could not go to such meetings. He could not be partial to any one of the communities. He was not prepared to say that Hindus always did the right or that the Mussalmans did no wrong. In fact, both of them were in the wrong and both of them had gone mad. In the circumstances, therefore, the least that he could do was to keep himself away from them, and pray to God to relieve him of the pain and the pang that the existing state of things caused. Let the Hindus and the Mussalmans fight out to their heart's content and, perhaps, then it would be time for him to interfere and ask them what they had gained? He had not wanted to tell them even those few words about the communal trouble, but he had been led to make those observations by the few words uttered by the Chairman. But all the same he had hope and trust that despite the present quarrels, Hindus and Mussalmans would unite once again and that soon. In the words of Maulana Shaukat Ali, it was but a temporary fever which was sure to pass off ere long.

Mahatmaji proceeding dwelt upon the importance and necessity of the charkha and khaddar and said that in the present circumstances though Hindus-Muslim unity was no doubt dear to his heart the only thing which was no less dear to him and which he could work was the charkha. It was his firm belief that if there was anything capable of removing the poverty of the country, it was the charkha. If they wanted to remove the poverty of the starving millions in the villages, if they wanted to provide useful occupation for the people in the villages who remained idle at least for four months in the year, they could do it only by the charkha. Those who were opposed to it, Mahatmaji thought, could not suggest any substitute for it. But the charkha could only succeed when all the people took to it. Proceeding, he referred to the newly-formed All-India Spinners' Association and congratulated Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan and the people on his becoming the member of the Association and his agreeing to ply the charkha. The use of khaddar was necessary for the membership of that Association. If the people of Bihar took to khaddar and the charkha, then alone could they remove the poverty of the people as only then would they be able to send millions of money direct to the poor without any intermediary agency. If they purchased, for instance, a yard of khaddar for ten annas, the whole of that amount, including the price paid for cotton, went directly to the poor. But where they used cloth made even in the mills of Bombay and Ahmedabad, not to speak of Manchester and other foreign-made cloth, the major portion of the money went to the capitalists and only a very small portion of it to the poor. When he said that it did not mean that he was opposed to the capitalists amassing wealth—he could not be—but what they had to consider was whether it was just to feed the overfed or the millions of the starving poor. Undoubtedly those who satisfied the hunger of the poor deserved all

blessings. The khaddar, in spite of its dearness, was cheap and preferable to mill-made cloth because through khaddar they could directly help the poor. That was why he had decided to devote his life to the cause of khaddar and the charkha and thereby save both the Hindus and the Mussalmans from utter ruin. He therefore wanted them all to become members of the All-India Spinners' Association. There were two classes of membership of the Association. The "A" class of members were required to contribute 1,000 yards of self-spun yarn every month. But those who could not do so might become "B" class members and contribute annually 2,000 yards of yarn. Besides, the members would have always to wear khaddar and khaddar alone.

But all this could not be done without money. He would, therefore, appeal to all to contribute their mite to the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund which would be utilized for the propagation of khaddar and the charkha.

Concluding, Mahatmaji condemned untouchability and said that he as a *sanatani* Hindu would tell the *sanatanists* that untouchability was a great sin. Tulsidas preached that their religion demanded that they should be kind unto all. Hatred and contempt had no place in their religion. Let every Hindu be true to his religion and live in terms of peace and amity.<sup>1</sup>

*The Searchlight, 27-9-1925*

## 287. *SPEECH AT NATIONAL SCHOOL, KHAGAUL*<sup>2</sup>

*September 24, 1925*

Mahatmaji thanked the people who had been helping the school and hoped that they would continue the help that they had been giving for so long. He felt grieved to hear that the number of students had come down to ninety from one hundred and twenty-five. But, for this he was not going to blame the teachers. He knew of many schools where in spite of the very best teachers trying their best, the number had gone down. This was due to the mentality of students and guardians to whom the only end of education was money making.

He was more grieved to learn that their students had not made much progress in spinning. The reason was before him. To expect students to go on with spinning, with as bad spindles as they had been supplied with was impossible. For this he would

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the speech a collection was made for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund.

<sup>2</sup> The School was inaugurated by Gandhiji in 1921, as a national institution under the Bihar Vidyapith. On the present occasion, he was laying the foundation-stone of a new building for the school.

blame the teachers. If they could not create in the students the love for it, how could they expect them to stick to it with pleasure. The teachers, it seemed, knew nothing of the science of the charkha. They must study it and know that hundreds of charkhas working together must not make a lecture impossible. A very small humming sound was the best.

As to weaving, now there was no excuse for saying that weavers did not accept hand-spun yarn or preferred mill-spun to it. They must know that even badly- spun yarn can be doubled, twisted and made fit for weaving some kind of cloth or another. The best thing was to use better charkhas and to see that the yarn was well spun.

Before he laid the foundation-stone, he wanted to ask them once more to continue their help to the institution so long as it was teaching spinning, teaching Hindi as the common language and fostering national feeling. This was the definition of a national school as conceived by the National Congress. But if it failed in these things, it certainly did not deserve any help and they should from that moment cease to help it.

Then, in the end, with an appeal for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund, he concluded his speech and went to the ladies' meeting where a good collection was made.

*The Searchlight, 27-9-1925*

## *APPENDICES*

### *APPENDIX I*

#### *LETTER FROM B. C. CHATTERJEE*

Sir,

Your recent pronouncement that Deshbandhu's Faridpur speech is to be the basis of future action has struck a vibrant note of hope and inspiration. For one cannot but read into it an open invitation on your part to all the country's workers to reunite on a common platform. The Presidential speech at the Faridpur Conference had this great end transparently in view. Your endorsement of that speech could only signify your acceptance of that end. Let me be a little clearer. Deshbandhu left none in doubt about his considered opinion that the country would be well-advised to subscribe to the Reforms in the event of the Government carrying through the recommendations of the minority of the Muddiman Committee, and enlarging the men detained under the Bengal Ordinance. By this one declaration he cut away the real ground of difference between the Swaraj Party and the other political groups. The Liberal Party as a whole, and, indeed, all believers in the Reforms who have not ceased to respect themselves or their country are bound in honour to stand away from the Montagu-Chelmsford dispensation, unless and until Government have given legislative effect to the minority report embodying, as it does, the practical experience of those who have so finely faced unpopularity in making an honest effort to work the Reforms. And, in the next place, no Indian worth the name could think of offering co-operation to Great Britain on the basis of her sufferance of measures like the Bengal Ordinance. In the name of every Indian Nationalist who has rendered you the homage of his heart in spite of differences of opinion, I conjure you with all my soul's prayer and passion to tell the country with that explicitness, which is of your essence, whether you will or will not subscribe to the Reforms if Government do actually carry out the Deshbandhu's two fold suggestion.

Your answer in the affirmative would be the opening of a new—and may I beg leave to add?—a greater chapter in the history of your personality, and of India's destiny. It would mean a gathering of all India under your banner, the taking of a fresh oath of allegiance to your cause by the Swarajists, the Liberal and the Nationalist alike, by all the children of the mother in fact, if one may only leave out those who are ready to leave their brothers just for a handful of silver or a bit of ribbon to stick in their coat. Such men have not counted in history, nor ever shall.

You would clear, the issue, by your single promulgation, between Great Britain and a united India—the issue of on which side the spirit of sincerity abides on the question of responsible Government for India. Does Great Britain really mean to advance India on the road to responsible government, or is she out merely to confer favours on the henchmen and pick-thanks? That is the question you shall ask from the platform of the coming Congress that shall have been reunited by reason of your reaffirmation of Deshbandhu's parting message of Faridpur. The test of Great Britain's sincerity shall be in her readiness, to respond to the demand of a united India for the removal of the minor obstacles barring the way of the Minister, and the release of the men detained without trial. And that of our people under your leadership shall consist in their whole-hearted co-operation in the cause of the Reforms after England has acquiesced in India's twin demand.

Pray, do not listen to the man who will prattle of prestige. I can almost hear the muttered protest of numbers of your followers calling upon you to desist from lowering your prestige by going out to make an offer to England. But my faith in you bids me to feel sure that considerations of prestige—that moral curse of a country ridden by snobbery—never can and never shall strangle the straightforwardness of your course of life. I would conclude with my final appeal to you to offer Great Britain this chance of proving her sincerity and India this chance of achieving her unity.

B. C. CHATTERJEE

*Young India*, 9-7-1925

## APPENDIX II

### LETTER FROM W. H. PITT

*July 22, 1925*

MY DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I was in the midst of a long letter to you when the post arrived with your letter of the 16th instant for which I thank you. It was very kind of you amidst your many important engagements in Bengal to find time to write to me.

1. I had already received a copy of your telegram to Mr. Kelappan Nair advising him to picket the eastern gate only of Vaikom temple and it was on this subject that I am writing to you. My belief was that you had misunderstood the position and my suggestion, but from your letter I see that your advice was given after full consideration of the facts then before you and for reasons that appeared to you to be adequate.

2. With regard to an unequivocal declaration by Government on the subject

of roads which you would like to see you are probably not aware that there is already a Royal Proclamation, having the force of law, in Travancore declaring all public roads to be open to all subjects of His Highness the Maharajah. It is questionable whether it is capable of extension or has ever been authoritatively interpreted by the law-courts. The diehards of the orthodox party are now talking of seeking an injunction from the courts restraining the *avarna* Hindus from using any of the roads round Vaikom temple. If they do so, I believe they will fail and the whole question will be settled once for all. However this may be, so far as my information goes, there is no prospect of another Proclamation being issued. Personally I do not think one necessary.

3. There is one point that I have not yet mentioned to you, but which deserves your consideration. The authorities in Travancore are bound to see that the customary pujas and ceremonies connected with the State religion proceed uninterruptedly and are duly performed. In fact, certain officers have pledged their word that if innovations are permitted with regard to the use of temple roads, these will not interfere with public worship. At the present moment some difficulty is being experienced in redeeming this pledge and in fact it has not been altogether redeemed. Given time, the authorities will overcome all difficulties but they have to be cautious and examine the ground before advancing.

There can be no question of taking any action that will lead to a general interruption of public worship. The fight of your volunteers on the eastern road alarms even those orthodox Hindus who have agreed to the advance already made and the authorities are embarrassed by this silent threat from you to penetrate to the eastern gate. That you will get there is to most people, a foregone conclusion but this is not the moment to press forward or even to threaten an advance.

I have no hesitation in stating positively that the picketing of the eastern road is extremely detrimental to your cause and I say with confidence that in making this statement I am supported by a majority of the local democrats and all the *avarna* Hindu leaders. The authorities require a calm atmosphere in which to deal with those orthodox Hindus who fear that their religion or perhaps their community's interests are in danger and everything that tends to disrupt the atmosphere retards further advance. I appreciate your point that principle and discipline demand that the volunteers should not withdraw, but I am doubtful whether the morale of a handful of volunteers ought to be set above the interests of 2,000,000 *avarna* Hindus. I therefore put it to you (i) that the picketing of the eastern road is a source of embarrassment to the authorities in pacifying the orthodox Hindus; (ii) that the authorities cannot and will not advance further without carrying the vast majority of Hindus with them; (iii) that the advance will be quicker if you withdraw and I would ask you kindly to consider whether if you still think it necessary to occupy the local

*Ruhr*, you cannot withdraw the standing picket and abstain from all demonstrations against the eastern gate of the temple.

Mr. R. Krishna Pillai, Devaswom Commissioner, is engaged in negotiations with the orthodox Hindus at other places having temples and is confident, if left in peace, of being able to induce them to abandon any claim they may have to the exclusive use of, at any rate, roads of general public utility.

With kind regards,

*Yours sincerely,*

From a photostat : S.N. 11099

### APPENDIX III

#### *LETTER FROM K. KELAPPAN NAIR*

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,

VAIKOM,

*June 18, 1925*

MY DEAR MAHATMAJI,

The first class Magistrate, the Asstt. Supdt. of Police and the Devaswom officials are come here ready to open tomorrow just half the roads in question (*vide* the plan enclosed)<sup>1</sup>, if I would thereupon stop satyagraha. We cannot accept this solution which is no solution at all. We never had any fascination for these Vaikom temple roads. We fought to establish a principle. Our contention was no man should be excluded from the use of public roads on the ground that he is an unapproachable. The Govt. by shutting them out from the use of half of the roads, in fact perpetuates the contention that certain public roads ought to be closed against certain individuals on the ground that they belong to a particular caste. If we stop the satyagraha it would mean that we acquiesce in the old principle which the Travancore Govt. newly enunciates. We certainly cannot do that. I therefore said that I could not abandon the fight.

The cure is worse than the disease. Till now we could at least give the people the hope that we shall succeed in the end. If we stop satyagraha now we cannot face the people holding our heads erect. Why is the eastern road not open? Not because the *savarnas* who opposed our entry into any of those roads are agreeable to this arrangement. If three roads are to be opened in spite of them they do not at all mind if the fourth road is also opened. Then why has the Government adopted this stupid course which satisfies no party? I cannot find any conceivable reason for it except

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here



that the Govt. also uphold unapproachability. If it be that the priests will not perform puja they have already secured better men from the point of view of their learning, to perform puja in case the present men strike. The Government could not have conceived of a more silly solution.

We shall have failed deplorably in the eyes of the people if we abandon the fight in these circumstances. Please advise me what to do.

Awaiting your reply by wire,

*Yours obediently,*

K. KELAPPAN

PS.

Today I have also sent to you a telegram for your instructions.

From a photostat : S.N. 11093

#### APPENDIX IV

#### *LETTER FROM MOTILAL NEHRU*

CALCUTTA,  
*July 21, 1925*

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

The Swaraj Party is under a deep debt of gratitude to you for your generous support on the irreparable loss it sustained by the premature death of its great leader, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das. You have now redoubled that debt by the noble offer contained in your letter of the 19th July. It seems to me that the only way to repay that debt is to accept your offer in all humility and strive with your help to meet the situation created by Lord Birkenhead's speech in the spirit of the last pronouncement of Deshbandhu made at Faridpur.

Lord Birkenhead seems to have spurned the honourable co-operation offered by Deshbandhu and to have made it clear that in our struggle for freedom we have still to face many unnecessary obstacles and many ill-informed opponents. Our plain duty at this stage is, therefore, to go ahead along the line chalked out for us and prepare the country for an effective challenge to irresponsible and insolent authority. In the words of the great Faridpur speech "We shall fight, but fight clean, not forgetting that when the time for settlement comes, as it is bound to come, we have to enter the Peace Conference not in a spirit of arrogance but with becoming humility, so that it may be said of us that we were greater in our achievement than in our adversity." You have now enabled us to fulfil the message of Deshbandhu with the united strength of the Congress at our back. Under such auspices we need entertain no misgivings

about the result which can only be what it has invariably been in all ages and countries : the ultimate triumph of right over might.

I desire to say one word about the Pact from which you have so generously absolved the Swaraj Party. As you know, both Deshbandhu and I had no desire to have the conditions of the Pact altered in the course of the year. We wanted to give it a full and fair trial and it was our wish to help personally in every way in making it a success. Ill-health and many preoccupations prevented us both from doing as much for it as we had wished, but I entirely agree with you that a new situation has been created by recent events and under the circumstances the Congress should without loss of time adapt itself to this situation by making itself a predominantly political body. I therefore, welcome your offer. This, however, does not mean that the Congress should give up in any way the constructive programme. All our efforts would be of little avail if they are not backed up by the organized strength of the nation.

We shall now go ahead in full confidence with our work inside the Councils and outside in the country and if the occasion demands organized action in the country I need not assure you that the Swaraj Party will whole-heartedly help in such activity.

*Yours sincerely,*

MOTILAL NEHRU

*Young India, 23-7-1925*

## APPENDIX V

### *LETTER FROM MADELEINE SLADE*

63, BEDFORD GARDENS,

CAMPDEN HILL,

LONDON, W. 8

PARIS

*May 29, 1925*

MOST DEAR MASTER,

I thank you profoundly for having answered my first letter to you—I had never dared to hope such a thing! I have eagerly taken to heart all you said, and I now venture to write to you again, my year of self-imposed trial being more than half over.

The first impulse has never faded, but on the contrary my desire to serve you has grown ever more and more fervent. It is impossible to express in words the

greatness of the inspiration which impels me but I pray God with all my heart that I may be able to give expression to my love in work—in acts. However humble they may be they will at least be utterly sincere.

And now I want to put before you my *most earnest request* :

May I come to your Ashram to study spinning and weaving, to learn to live your ideals and principles in daily life, and indeed to learn in what way I may hope to serve you in the future? In order to become a fit servant of your cause I feel the absolute necessity of that training and I will do my very best to be a not too unworthy pupil if you will accept me!

In the meantime I continue my preparations as best I can. I spin and weave (only with wool, nobody seeming to know about the management of cotton in France or England). With the aid of many kind Indian friends I perplex my head over long Hindustani exercises I read. What a revelation is that reading! The more I enter into Indian thought, the more I feel as if I were reaching at last, a long lost home.

In matters of daily life I simplify as much as is possible under present circumstances. I have given up the drinking of all wines, beers or spirits, and I no longer eat meat of any kind.

My being is filled with a great joy and a great anguish. The joy of giving all I have to you and to your people and the anguish of being able to give so little.

I pine for the day when I shall come to India. Alas, there are still five months to wait! I reach Bombay on November 6th, and if I am permitted to join the Ashram I will take the train that evening arriving at Ahmedabad the next morning.

Dear Master, may I come?

Please do not think of troubling to reply to this letter yourself, but perhaps you could send me a word of answer through someone else.

Ever your humble and most devoted servant,

MADELEINE SLADE

PS.

Enclosed are two little samples of wool which I have spun.

From a photostat : S.N. 10541

## APPENDIX VI

### SWARAJ OR DEATH

In your *Young India* of the 25th June, I find things which I utterly fail to understand. On page 219 under the heading "On the Verge of It" you have, I think, asked your correspondent to explain—"Why do you think that we cannot spin and wear khaddar or remove untouchability or be friends with the Mussalmans till we get swaraj? How will the withdrawal of Englishmen help Hindus to trust the Mussalmans or *vice versa*, or open the eyes of blind orthodoxy and better the lot of the oppressed people or induce the idle to work the spinning-wheel and those whose tastes are degraded to revise them and revert to khaddar? Surely, if we cannot do these things now under the pressure of adversity, we are not likely to do them when we are lulled into a sense of false security by nominal swaraj. What is there to prevent us now from attempting or accomplishing all or any of these three things if it is not our own unwillingness, lethargy or worse?"

I cannot say what the correspondent will answer to these your queries but I respectfully like to point out to you that your assertion—that without khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability there can be no swaraj—also appears to be based on wrong premises. There appears to be some truth also in the alternative assertion of your correspondent, and in his support I say this:

(1) The spinning and use of khaddar will be wholly popularized only after the establishment of swaraj and not before. The reasons are as follows:

The Government is a part and parcel of every society. Everybody seeks its help every moment. For the time being life, honour and property of all individuals under the Government are entrusted to it. Some have to win cases, some to get titles and honours, some are to be provided with appointments and so on. Everybody can do without the Government help only for a fixed period of time and that only a small one, but nobody can do without it (the Government) for a longer period. Everywhere in the country, specially in my district, the use of khaddar is a symbol of anti-Government sentiment. It is regarded as the dress of the rebel. It may not have been enacted in any code of law, but in practice it is so. You must be knowing that, in this country, law is one thing and its administration is another. Everybody is afraid of incurring the displeasure of the Government side. How can it, viz, the use of khaddar with its antecedents be popular? The heroes and the soldiers alone will take it up, but not the masses. Thus the use of khaddar will not be popular before swaraj. In fact, the use of khaddar is a crime now. You may ask: How will the people fight and overthrow this Government when they are so cowardly as not to use even khaddar? Mahatmaji, any great event takes place in the world only through divine agencies and the reasons are inexplicable to men. Overthrow of

such a mighty Government will be effected really through divine agencies and outwardly through a great national excitement amounting to a temporary madness on the part of all or at least the majority of the Indian people. And everybody will afford during the great national excitement to be so mad, fearless and brave for some time for this purpose.

After swaraj it will be popular, for there will be no necessity of fear from the use of khaddar. Besides, the people will be encouraged to use it and they will also try to seek the favour of the nationalists forming the Government as we find in District Boards and Municipalities these days under nationalists. Above all, there will be a legislation declaring the use of foreign cloth as a crime, as every nation has done and is doing to encourage home industries.

(2) There can be no permanent Hindu-Muslim unity before swaraj. The reasons are as follows:

During my boyhood one of my paternal uncles told me a story which runs thus— “Once there were two young men who were fast friends. They appeared to have had two bodies but one soul. Their parents did not like it and were on the look-out to effect enmity between these friends. They proclaimed probably by a beat of drum a handsome reward to anyone successfully effecting a breach between the friends. One old woman popularly known as ‘Kutni’ undertook the task. She went to the friends and called only one of them apart from the other but within his (other friend’s) sight. She took her mouth to the ears of the friend whom she had called apart, pretended to say something to him, said nothing and went away. The man returned to his friend who was left behind and was asked to state what the woman had told him. The poor man stated that she had said nothing. Suspicion naturally arose in the mind of the other man who saw so many performances with his own eyes and was in the dark as to their purposes and result, and it developed. In course of time their friendship came to an end and the woman got the reward.”

Exactly in the same way, Mahatmaji, please do not expect perfect unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans so long as the third party, with not only all the available resources of the country but also with those of the whole British Empire and with a clear knowledge that its very existence depends only on the disunion and quarrel among the several races inhabiting this country, is always persistently trying every moment to keep the people fighting among themselves. You are too anxious for Hindu-Muslim unity as a road to swaraj but if you please think of it over and over again, I am sure you will arrive at a conclusion that the overthrow of this Government and establishment of swaraj in this country are the road to peace and unity among the several communities of the country and not the *vice versa*. Permanent unity is impossible before swaraj.

(3) Untouchability even cannot be removed before swaraj is established in

this country. The reasons are as follows:

Anything and everything done for the good of the country is opposed by the present Government and at its insinuation by its native allies. The removal of untouchability is for the good of the country and hence it has been and will be thwarted by the Government. You are a reformer. Your followers in Travancore were so much harassed by the Government there at Vaikom. If you want that the untouchables be given certain rights and privileges in a certain Hindu temple, there will be a protest from the orthodox section of the Hindu community but is it not a fact that this Government comes and will come to help them against the untouchables? How can you succeed in this matter unless and until you remove this Government? At present, Mahatmaji, for any thing evil in this country this Government is alone responsible. You are supported in this your programme by the majority of the Indian people but it is not fulfilled only owing to the existence of this Government.

There is much truth in what you say in regard to your triple programme but I most respectfully suggest that the practical side of the human affair is certainly overlooked by you in a certain degree. The country and we, your soldiers, are faithfully carrying out your orders to the extent we can. But it is my prayer that you kindly think of swaraj first and of any other thing afterwards. Swaraj alone will solve all national troubles. You have already declared that if the people fail to complete the khaddar programme by the end of this year, you will give the country a programme by following which there will be either swaraj or death to all patriots. I think you remember it. Please make haste or everything will get dull. The time has almost arrived when you should publish your programme and call upon the nation either to win swaraj or to die.

*Young India*, 27-8-1925