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## “Gandhi, Spinner of a Nation's Destiny”

By C. H. S. KOCH

ACCLAIMED almost as a demigod by millions of his fellow-countrymen, and for years accorded the title of *mahatma* (great spirit), a title of honor accorded to the ancient *rishis* (seers) who communicated divine knowledge to men; execrated as an enemy of the British paramount power and arch disturber of the peace by the Tory imperialists, who today hold the reins of power at Whitehall; laughed at by the conventional “blood and iron” militarist who scorns the program of “non-violent non-co-operation”; misunderstood by the Occidental plutocrat, grown powerful by the witchery of machine mass production; a joke to the conventional politician, in whose philosophy a weekly day of silence and a life of voluntary poverty are unthinkable; a man of many inconsistencies, who proclaims himself a Hindu, yet adopts a child of the untouchable outcasts into his immediate family and reserves to himself the right to interpret the ancient scriptures, though he is himself not a Sanskrit pandit; to multitudes of idealists a new prophet of the first magnitude; to others a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense;—Mahatma Gandhi is today one of the most potent and enigmatic figures that contemporary society has to reckon with.

Whether the reader consider him prophet or charlatan, no explanation is adequate that leaves out of the story the early religious development of this unique character. India is a land of religions, and life at every point is conditioned by and influenced by religion. From birth to death, every act in the life of the regular Hindu is tinged with a religious coloring, and has its religious implications. Understanding this, the student of human nature can at least attempt to appreciate Gandhi's statement that he is primarily a man of religion, and only secondarily a politician. Some go to

the extent of calling him a religious fanatic, but at least a fair evaluation of the man must take his religious background into consideration. For the Hindu, religion is not a body of special rules, a creed, a set of ceremonies for times or seasons—it is an atmosphere, in which he lives and moves and has his being.

Born in 1869, of a virile and aggressive clan, at Porbander, on the peninsula of Kathiawar, the westernmost part of India, Gandhi's religious and spiritual ideals are rooted in his childhood training. Of strict Hindu parentage, his people belong to one of the so-called "twice-born" castes, the Vaisya group, which contains the solid middle classes of Indian. Religiously, his people were followers of the god Vishnu, one of the Hindu trinity or triad, who in primitive times was the sun-god. During the early years of the Christian era, Hinduism developed the idea of incarnation, and the two ancient heroes, Rama and Krishna, who figure in India's two great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and who in the fifth century B. C. were purely human heroes, had by this time become incarnations of the god Vishnu. The followers of Vishnu, called Vaishnavas, do not sacrifice animals, but make offerings of fruit, flowers, grain, and milk. Gandhi is today in many respects not an orthodox Hindu, as he reserves the right to criticize his religion, and rid it of accretions, but he does not disbelieve in idol-worship, the symbolism of the idol being of help to worshippers of lower spiritual attainments.

His mother was a deeply religious woman, and after the death of her husband, gave herself even more devotedly to religious exercises. She it was, who took her son before a Jain priest before letting him go to England, where he took the three-fold vow of abstinence from meat-diet, wine and sexual intercourse—a vow that he rigorously kept, and which he said, saved him from many a pitfall in London. This fact suggests another source of influence in his early religious training. The Jains, one of the minority religious groups in India, closely allied to the Buddhists in teaching,

strongly hold the tenet of "ahimsa," i. e., "absolute harmlessness towards all animal life," which is one of the main points of Gandhi's faith. If all animal life is sacred, how much more human life? This idea lies at the base of his doctrine of "non-violence."

The dewanship, or office of treasurer, of the Porbander state, had been held by a Gandhi through two generations, but Gandhi's father moved to Rajkot, a town farther inland. This place had a high school, and made possible a better education for the boy. The father's service here was cut short by illness, and during his last five years he was compelled to keep to his bed. The boy—Mohandas Karamchand is his full given name—youngest of his children, spent many hours caring for the invalid father, doubtless learning lessons in tenderness and self-denial, which so strongly marked his later career.

Gandhi was married at the age of twelve years, and while he opposes early marriages, he holds that under the conditions prevailing in Hindu society, they often terminate happily. Mrs. Gandhi has been a true helpmeet to her husband, and has suffered with him in all his trials. She heads the movement for civil disobedience among the women, even when her husband is in prison.

During his high school days, Gandhi, with others, went through a period of atheism, and at one time turned to meat-eating to show his independence, but later became disgusted with it, and returned to his mother's teaching. When nineteen, he made up his mind to go to England for further education, and persisted in the idea in the face of much opposition. This was in 1888, and though it meant expulsion from caste to cross the "black water," he finally had his way, and even received pecuniary aid from the family to carry out the project. This power of initiative, and independence of judgment have been one of his marked characteristics. He spent three years in London, and it was his early promise to his mother that kept him true to his religious ideals. For a time, he attempted to be an English gentleman, but his sin-

cerity and sense of humor soon got the upper hand, and he gave himself to his work in his own way. He made friends among the Theosophists, who turned his attention to the "Bhagavad Gita," the best known Hindu religious production of the intelligent classes, which he had formerly neglected; and also attended several Christian churches, being specially interested in the services at the City Temple under Dr. Joseph Parker. These experiences broadened his religious outlook, and brought into his thinking formative ideas from all sources. Gandhi told his first English biographer, "Even now, I would rather live in London than any other part of the world, next to India."

After being called to the bar, Gandhi returned to India, to meet the sad news of his mother's death, which had not been reported to him. It was to him a great blow. On his return to Rajkot, he was received back into caste, but to this day the caste-leaders in Bombay do not receive him into religious fellowship.

Profesional success came very slowly, and he finally removed to Bombay to practice his profession. Here he gave himself to the study of law and religion, being deeply influenced by a gifted young poet of the Jain communion, whose belief in a good life as the most essential part of religion, and whose moral idealism, made a strong impression on him.

The slow progress in his profession, and the necessity of making a better livelihood, persuaded Gandhi to accept the offer of a Mohammedan firm with connections in South Africa. The contract was for a year and this enterprise launched him on a new stage in his career. The contrast between London and South Africa could not fail to impress anyone, and on the sensitive soul of Gandhi the acid of racial bitterness etched lines that have never been erased. Through suffering from loneliness and from misunderstanding in London, due to ingrained habits of life so essentially different from those of the West, Gandhi, like every educated Hindu, was accepted as a citizen of the Empire. In South

Africa, the East Indians were an inferior and an outcaste race. True, many of them were of the lower castes, who had come to this "white man's land" as "coolies," i. e., indentured laborers, and were subject to the disabilities that the white settlers heaped upon them. After serving their period as indentured laborers, many of them settled in the country as traders and small farmers. But every type of indignity was heaped upon them. They were compelled to pay a poll tax of \$15 per annum, a heavy tribute in view of the small income which the generality of them received. Later, laws were passed demanding that they register by thumb impression with the police authorities; again, their marriages, according to the Hindu and Mohammedan customs, were not recognized before the law, so that many were found guilty of bigamy. Gandhi himself, though at this time in the habit of wearing European clothes, was personally insulted in railway and in tram cars, and suffered every type of indignity that was heaped upon members of the "colored" races. The iron bit into his soul, and he was resolved to shake the dust of South Africa from his feet at the expiration of his contract at the year's end. But Fate had a different task in store for him.

During this first year in South Africa, Gandhi continued his study and reading of ethical and religious literature, and pondered deeply the bitter experiences through which he was passing. He was greatly impressed by the writing of Tolstoy, Thoreau, and Ruskin, and studied anew the teachings of Jesus, especially the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount.

At the end of the year, when his contract expired, he planned to sail for India, but just before leaving, the proposed bill for the disfranchisement of Indians was published, and, on the urgent representation of his fellow-countrymen, he cancelled his passage, and prepared to defend their cause in the courts. Thus opened up an undreamed avenue of service, which lasted for twenty years, during which he forged his weapon of "non-violent non-co-opera-

tion" or passive resistance, and developed his characteristic theories of life and politics, which he has maintained in essence ever since.

Of this long period of training and service in South Africa, the distinguished French internationalist, Rolland, says: "That Gandhi could carry on the South-Africa campaign for more than twenty years without awakening any special comment in Europe is a proof of the incredible short-sightedness of our political leaders, historians, thinkers, and believers, for Gandhi's efforts constituted a soul's epopee unequalled in our times, not only because of the intensity, and the constancy of the sacrifice required, but because of the final triumph." (21. Rolland, pp. 5, 6.)

Taking up the cause of his countrymen from the legal aspect, Gandhi won the case against the Asiatic Exclusion Act, despite the most virulent opposition. In every way he identified himself with his compatriots, organizing and instructing them. He began the publication of a paper in three of the Indian vernaculars spoken by his people, domiciled in the land, founded a colony on Tolstoyan lines, and gave himself to a program of education and reform that absorbed most of his income, and eventually took up his whole time, compelling the abandonment of his private practice. However, Gandhi's religious ideas had been developing all along, and he eventually added the vow of poverty to the other religious vows that he had taken.

In two South African military campaigns, Gandhi gave his personal services to the Empire, for he considered himself a true son of Britain, and he still had genuine faith in the essential integrity of British political institutions and leaders. During the Boer war, he organized an Indian ambulance corps, which served in the front lines, and performed notable service. Gandhi was twice cited for personal valor in carrying wounded men out of the firing line. Again in the Zulu rebellion, he organized a corps of stretcher-bearers to assist the British. In this so-called rebellion, one task of the Indians was to bathe the wounded

backs of the Zulus who had been cruelly lashed, and Gandhi saw as never before how the use of unrestrained force brutalizes those who use it. Nor were the lessons of the Boer war lost upon him, as he saw a small group of determined colonists, their wives and children resist the power of a great empire. Their devotion, their persistence in the face of great odds made a deep impression on one who was pondering the problem of his country's freedom. He came to the conclusion that non-violent resistance was the only weapon by which such liberty could be attained. "He had found it to be the only weapon which people, placed as the Indian colonists were, could use with any hope. It was the weapon of the weak. But he had adopted it not merely as a policy, but as the most expedient way of resisting evil. He believed it to be the only right method. It should be also the weapon of the strong. If a greater conflict than any which he had led before was awaiting him on the soil of the Motherland, it was this weapon which he would have to use. For he had no other. He was willing to work with men who did not share his faith, provided that for the time they would adopt his method. He was prepared to argue for it on the ground of expediency, and to co-operate with men who held wholly different views, provided that they would accept it as the best policy. But for him it has always been far more than a policy. It is part of his religion." (12. Gray and Parekh. p. 32.)

It is necessary to dwell on this period of his life at some length, because it was this harrowing experience, with its struggle, its study and its meditation that made Gandhi what he is—the prophet of a new age for India. He suffered deeply but he suffered with his people. He endured imprisonment, insult and injury with the lowest of them, but he learned that the lowest of them would respond to his leadership, and leadership like his. He became a great patriot, but not in the narrowly nationalistic sense. His British connection made him feel that every race had a contribution to make to an integrated world civilization of brotherly men.



He continued to believe in the British political system, as granting the largest degree of liberty to the individual, and he left South Africa for the larger task of furnishing political and religious leadership for the people of India, still maintaining faith in the essential soundness of British political ideals. What is this weapon of passive resistance which had been forged in the fire of toil and suffering during those twenty years of struggle in South Africa? Let us give it in Gandhi's own words.

These had been published in a small and comparatively unknown volume by the Rev. J. J. Doke, Baptist minister in Johannesburg, who was one of Gandhi's closest friends. The record is given of a conversation concerning the way in which passive resistance, or soul-force, became a living inspiration to Mr. Gandhi himself. Dr. Doke writes as follows:

"One day I questioned Mr. Gandhi concerning the source from whence he derived his original idea.

"I remember," he told me, "how one verse of a Gujerati poem, which I learned at school as a child, clung to me. In substance it was this:

"If a man gives you a drink of water and you give him a drink in return, that is nothing.

Real beauty consists in doing good against evil."

"Even as a child this verse had a powerful influence over me and I tried to carry it out in practice. Then came the Sermon on the Mount."

"But," said I, "surely the Bhagavad Gita came first?"

"No," he replied. "Of course I knew the Bhagavad Gita in Sankkrit tolerably well; but I had not made its teaching in that particular a study. It was the New Testament which really awakened me to the rightness and value of Passive Resistance.

"When I read in the Sermon on the Mount such passages as "Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also," and "Love your enemies; pray for them that persecute you, that

ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven." I was simply overjoyed, and found my own opinion confirmed where I least expected it. The Bhagavad Gita deepened the impression, and Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* gave it a permanent form.

"I do not like the term "Passive Resistance." It fails to convey all I mean. It describes a method, but gives no hint of the system of which it is only a part. Real beauty—and that is my aim—is in doing good against evil.

"Still I adopt the phrase because it is well known and easily understood, and because at the present time the great majority of my people can only grasp that idea. Indeed, to me the ideas that underlie the Gujarati hymn I have quoted and the Sermon on the Mount should, in time, revolutionize the whole of life.

"Passive Resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it, and also him against whom it is used, without drawing a drop of blood. It produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen. The sword of Passive Resistance does not require a scabbard, and one cannot be forcibly dispossessed of it!" (Quoted in I. Andrews, pp. 191, 192.)

Here it is necessary to halt and go back briefly into the history of Indian unrest. The story is given in its entirety in Sir Valentine Chirol's volume "Indian Unrest," and more briefly in Thompson, (23). Just a few points by way of relating it to Gandhi's work during and since the war.

Even before the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857; there had gradually grown up estrangement between England and India. One native state after another had been annexed to the paramount power; railroad and telegraph lines had been built and these modern innovations aroused question and wonderment among the illiterate population. Missionary propaganda and education were pushed, and it seemed as if the ancient faiths might be displaced by the religion of the West. Of this period Thompson says, (23, p. 25.) "This period, and its closing episode, the Mutiny, is the heroic age

of the British tradition in India"; and then of the Mutiny itself makes this keen appraisal. (Ibid. p. 34.) "The war was without pity, and has been chronicled by the victors without the least tinge of magnanimity. It is certain that their version must go. Ultimately the cruelties of both sides will rest in the same pit of infamy. The more we hasten that day, the more willingly we welcome it, the quicker will come a spirit of co-operation between British and Indians, equally guiltless of the crimes of a dead generation. Nothing can prevent the British from cherishing the suffering and the heroism of their own people, and the memories of the women and children who perished. Nothing—least of all, British histories—can prevent Indians from regarding their own flesh and blood as genuine soldiers and martyrs for independence. Nor would any Englishman, aware of the truth refuse a salute to such courage as was shown by gallant old Kumar Singh, by Feroze Shah, by Tantia Tupi and the Moulvi of Faizabad. They are figures as truly heroic as 'Nikal Seyn' (Nicholson of Delhi.)"

The Mutiny resulted in putting India directly under the Crown, and a new period begins. Slowly the spirit of nationalism grew, with here and there an intellectual renaissance, which developed the local vernaculars, and resulted in literature of primary excellence. These movements have culminated, for instance, in such splendid achievements as the work of Rabindranath Tagore in the Bengali language, first brought to the attention of the West by British and Swedish scholars, and acknowledged by the granting to him of the Nobel prize for literature in 1913. The National Congress, a voluntary body, was organized in 1882, and has been functioning ever since. It is this National Congress that forms the head and the front of the present nationalistic movement, the extreme wing of which demands immediate and complete independence. It has had a checkered career, at times giving itself chiefly to measures of reform, and then again becoming a forum of violent political agitation. And it was the treatment of Indians in the British

dominions abroad that has always been one of the bitterest grievances. In 1905, when the writer arrived in India, the movement was tinged with anarchy in the province of Bengal; and bomb outrages, aimed at the lives of British officials, were the order of the day. The attempt on the life of Sir Andrew Fraser, at that time lieutenant-governor of Bengal, by the bombing of the special train in which he was riding, caused repressive measures on the part of the government, such as are being renewed in that same province today. The Bengalis are the most intellectually gifted of the various groups in India, and lacking in the physical robustness of the more northern elements, they find in this method, relief for their high-strung animosity. The recent shooting in cold blood, (*Time*, Dec. 28, 1931. p. 13) of a British magistrate by two Bengali schoolgirls, who came to present a petition, is the type of deed that has characterized violent nationalism from time to time, though this is the first case I recall where women have been the perpetrators.

When the World War broke out, Gandhi again offered his services to the British government and assisted in recruiting, and in raising funds to be loaned to the government. It was his expectation, and that of many others, that India would be suitably rewarded for her services. Despite the fact that Turkey had joined the Central Powers, Indian Mohammedans were loyal to the British Raj and Indian Mohammedan troops did notable service, especially in Palestine and Mesopotamia. When the war closed Indian Mohammedans were greatly disgruntled at the terms quoted by the allies to Turkey and the proposed treaty of Sevres was never signed. Gandhi took this favorable political moment for initiating a rapprochement with the Mohammedans. Unfortunately came the repressive Rowlatt Act for the suppression of treasonable activity, resulting in the still more unfortunate affair at Amritsar, where some 400 Indians were shot down by troops under General Dyer. This enraged the whole country, and doubtless marks the final break between Gandhi and the British government. Even

Tagore, apostle of mediation between the culture of the East and the West, was moved to the depths. "He became the national voice, once again finding a theme worthy of his greatness. No man in all India spoke with anything approaching his loftiness of protest. His burning indignation reached classic utterance in his letter to Lord Chelmsford, renouncing his knighthood, the letter of a very great and representative man to an unfortunate man who had been confronted with a situation too much for his powers. 'The accounts of insults and sufferings undergone by our brothers in the Punjab, have trickled through the gagged silence, reaching every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people have been ignored by our rulers—possibly congratulating themselves for imparting what they imagine a salutary lesson.'" (24. Thompson. "Rabindranath Tagore." p. 55).

From this time forward, Gandhi was to become the steadfast foe of the existing relationship with England. He now instituted his nation-wide labors of initiating the population in the doctrines of non-co-operation, and of imposing his policies on the National Congress. Though he lost the confidence of some of India's wisest men, like Tagore, he carried with him the large proportion of the literate classes, and "established a personal ascendancy over the masses which is unexampled in Indian history." (12. Gray, p. 67.) "At the Congress itself his motion was carried by a majority of 1,855 to 873." In this movement the following recommendations were made: "(a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices, and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies; (b) Refusal to attend government levees, durbars, and other official and semi-official functions held by government officials or in their honour; (c) Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided, or controlled by government, and, in place of such schools and colleges, establishment of national schools and colleges in the various provinces; (d) Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants, and establishment

of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes; (e) Refusal on the part of the military, clerical, and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia; (f) Withdrawal by candidates of their candidature to the Reformed Councils, and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress' advice, offer himself for election; (g) The boycott of foreign goods." (Ibid. pp. 68, 69.)

It was impossible to expect that the masses of India would or could follow Gandhi's idealistic program, though it remains a marvel how extensively his fellow countrymen have been educated by and responded to the program set forth. In this mystic, ascetic, shrewd leader and politician, India found a voice in one of her own sons, who inextricably mingled the old and the new, and who voices the deepest aspirations of the intelligentsia, and the poverty-stricken outcaste, and was able to phrase these aspirations in a way that appealed to men everywhere. Gandhi and his co-workers were indefatigable in writing, speaking and educating the masses in the principles and in the practical workings of the program. Deeply religious as he is, Gandhi is also an astute politician. Were he is profound a thinker, as he is a sincere lover of humanity, he might not be so well known, or so deeply loved, but he might have avoided some of the pitfalls into which he has stumbled. But that is expecting too much, and we must study the man as he is.

As a result of this manifesto, disturbances of a very severe character arose. With the boycott of British cloth, huge bonfires of the hated material were made. This shocked and alienated many of his friends—that he should permit and condone such waste in a land as poverty-stricken as India. Some of his keen European critics feel that Gandhi, in this element of his program has been playing into the hands of Indian capitalists, whose money is invested in cotton mills, and who are using the present situation in supplying coarse cloth to suit the popular demand. One writer goes as far as to say that the Indian capitalists are

generously financing Gandhi's propaganda in order to reap the rich fruit that will be theirs when British-made goods are entirely driven out. (One is reminded of some of the shrewd financial ventures that were made by individual patriots of 'seventy-six!) Nineteen twenty-one was a year of disturbances. On the west coast, the fanatical tribe of Mohammedan Moplahs attacked their fellow-Hindus, and unspeakable outrages were committed. There was heavy rioting in Bombay at the landing of the Prince of Wales, also rioting in the Punjab and Madras. In February, 1922, twenty-two native policemen were murdered in Chauri-Chaura, and in March Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years' simple imprisonment.

This trial will probably go down in history as one of the most remarkable political trials on record. "There have not been many more remarkable trials in the history of mankind," says Gray. (12. Gray, pp. 83, 84.) "Perhaps there have been only two. It was conducted with the most perfect dignity and courtesy, with the utmost consideration of the character of the accused. He pleaded guilty. He read a statement explaining why he had become a non-co-operator. It ended with these words: '. . . I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a government which, in its totality, has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a brief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

"In fact, I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England, by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the

evil-doer. I am endeavoring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil, and that, as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the judge and the assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourself from evil, if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country, and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal.' ”

The fact is that Gandhi's patient faith in the good intentions of British statesmen had reached its utmost limits. Again and again had promises been made, only to be broken, or only nominally kept. When, after the Mutiny, India had been taken over by the Crown, Queen Victoria had personally proclaimed, "We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects; and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfill. It is further our will, that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge." (25. Thompson, *Hist. of India*, pp. 367, 368.) Instead of interpreting this promise with any degree of liberality, the bureaucracy in India has been as slow as possible in admitting Indians into the Civil Service. At first, while the letter of the law was followed, it was practically annulled in that the examinations were given in England alone, and so the cost of travelling to the



examination centre made attendance impossible except for the wealthy candidate. In the stress of the war (August, 1917), Mr. Edwin Montagu, then Secretary of State for India, had made the announcement, providing for "increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." When this pronouncement was embodied in a reform scheme at the close of the war, there was unfortunately promulgated the repressive legislation of the Rowlatt Act, before mentioned, giving summary powers to local governments for the suppression of sedition. This piece of stupidity largely annulled any good that might have come from Montagu's plans, and so angered the radical elements, that they refused to co-operate in putting the reform scheme into operation.

This reform scheme, christened a dyarchy, divided the tasks of administration between British and Indian officers, giving to the Indian control over agriculture, roads and bridges, education, medical service and excise, but "reserving" under strict British control finance and revenue, the army and police, the judicial services, and foreign relations. Had the public temper been favorable, such a plan might have worked, but now the reform scheme was laughed at as having the form of authority, but denying the power thereof. It seems most unfortunate that British policy has been generally one or two moves behind the game.

The imprisonment of Gandhi brought about a lull in the storm, but after he became ill, and had to submit to an operation for appendicitis, from which he made a satisfactory recovery, he was unconditionally released after two years of imprisonment. This was in 1924. On leaving the jail, he wrote as follows in his letter to the public; "I had, during the last two years, ample time and solitude for hard thinking. It made me a firmer believer than ever . . . in the unity between the races, the charka (spinning-wheel), the

removal of untouchability, and the application of non-violence in thought, word, and deed to our methods, as indispensable for swaraj (home-rule). If we fully and faithfully carry out this programme we need never resort to civil disobedience, and I should hope that it will never be necessary; but I must state that my thinking, prayerfully and in solitude, has not weakened my belief in the efficacy and righteousness of civil disobedience. I hold it, as ever before, to be a nation's right and duty when its vital being is in jeopardy. I am convinced that it is attended with less danger than war, and while the former, when successful, benefits both the resister and the wrongdoer, the latter harms both the victor and the vanquished." (Quoted in 12. Gray, p. 126.)

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Scheme (Chelmsford was viceroy at the time) was to be on trial for ten years, and at the end of that period was to be subject to revision. It had a most checkered career during the decade, and can hardly be said to have received a fair trial. It has met the same frustration that prohibition has met in this country, and opinion varies a great deal as to its success. It has been a period of uncertainty, often marked by communal strife and riots. The editors of the *International Review of Missions*, in giving their survey of conditions at the close of 1927 (18. pp. 33-43) say: "The political outlook, in some ways unusually hopeful, is clouded by the Hindu-Moslem tension which grows worse rather than better. Between August, 1923, and July, 1926, seventy-four communal riots took place, resulting in the death of 258 persons and the wounding of 2,311. These conflicts still continue, and were the subject of the deeply moving and impressive appeal made by the Viceroy at the opening of the legislature in August, 1927. To this appeal, made with a religious earnestness which recognized the depths that are stirred by even a perverted religious emotion, certain of the leaders have made some response, but it does not appear that any noteworthy action is to be taken." But Gandhi believes in the

possibility of uniting Hindus and Mohammedans, religious opponents for generations. Hindus, who venerate the cow, grow frantic when Mohammedans, at their annual festival of Bakr-Id, sacrifice cattle; and Mohammedans, who abhor idol-worship, become equally frantic, when processions of Hindus, at their festival times, march past their mosques with images, music, and dancing, all of which are forbidden by the Koran. Gandhi is very tolerant of all religious faiths, entirely too much so for the orthodox Hindus, and given his tolerance, Hindu-Mohammedan unity would doubtless become a practical possibility. Most unfortunately, in the earlier reform scheme of Lords Morley and Minto, in 1909, the principle of communal or economic, rather than geographical representation for the elected members was introduced, which has developed into bitter division and strife between the various communities in India, each demanding adequate representation. So we have Hindu versus Mohammedan, Brahmin versus non-Brahmin, peasant against landlord class, orthodox against liberal, each seeking adequate guarantees. "The initiation of this principle in India was the greatest blunder which the British have ever committed," says Garratt, formerly in the Indian Civil Service. (Quoted in 8. Eddy, p. 47.) It is only fair to say that Gandhi has attempted and at least made a beginning in a task that the British administrator has not even dreamed of, and which even the Christian missionary had only hoped for in the remote future. But the communal idea is today one of the principal barriers in the way of forming an Indian constitution.

The end of the ten year period of trial for the Montagu-Chelmsford reform scheme came in 1929. "Meanwhile, the reforms had been in a bad way. With the abstention of the Non-co-operation party, a large element of political India, influential, experienced, and educated, were outside the councils. Many of the electors were of a poor grade of intelligence. Since they could not read, colours sometimes had to be put above polling-boxes; and, if there were more than

five candidates, then figures of animals, horses, and snakes had to eke out the colours, since many rural voters could not count beyond five. The new Ministers of the Crown found dyarchy a cumbrous tool. The transference was not on entirely logical lines. Agriculture was transferred, but not irrigation, on which all Indian agriculture depends. The reason for this was a good one. Government has vast schemes of barrage and reservoir-making in progress. But the reservation, however natural, was unfortunate. Law and order was reserved. So was finance; ministers often found themselves helpless, a humiliating condition in which to have to face a legislature that was hostile and has no duties but the pleasant ones of obstruction and jeering. They could draw up schemes, but had to ask the nominated ministers, members of the permanent administration, for money." (23. Thompson, pp. 160, 161.)

In 1927 was appointed the Simon Commission, named for its distinguished head, Sir John Simon, British jurist. Its task was to make a thorough investigation of dyarchy during the preceding decade, and to make necessary recommendations for any changes with a view to larger extensions of self-government. Unfortunately, being without Indian members, it was widely boycotted in India. "The explanation of its composition since given is that it was not meant to decide or judge, but merely to advise the House of Commons, and therefore was a solely British and solely parliamentary body. It is now widely admitted that the appointment of the commission was surrounded by tactlessness." (ibid. p. 169.) Eventually Sir John Simon issued an invitation to seven Indian leaders to write a joint report to be presented with his own, and such a report was prepared under the chairmanship of Sir Sankaran Nair, and finished and presented before the report of the Simon Commission was published. The Nair report was unacceptable to the Moslems and to the Indian princes, rulers of the native states.

It may here be interjected that the Indian Native States, in contradistinction to British India, which is under direct British administration, number 562, according to the official Butler report; most authorities say about 700. They differ in size, population and in importance. The Kahn of Kelat, in Baluchistan, rules 54,000 square miles with 300,000 subjects. Larger and far more important is Hyderabad, the premier state with an area greater than that of the island of Great Britain and 121½ million inhabitants. At the other end of the scale are minute holdings in Kathiawar of a few acres only, whose rulers are country squires, or less.

In December of 1928, the National Congress demanded dominion status at the end of a twelvemonth, a proposed constitution having been previously drawn up, which largely favored the extreme Hindu element. This action was repudiated by the All India Moslem Conference on the last day of the same year. In February, 1929, the Chamber of Princes passed the resolution, "in view of the drift of certain politicians of British India towards complete independence," affirming that they cannot contemplate transference to any new system, "except on the basis of the British connection." In October, the viceroy, acting with the secretary of state for India, reaffirmed dominion status as the goal of British policy, and announced that after the publication of the Simon report, a round table conference would be held, of the people of British India, the princes, and the British government. The viceroy, Lord Irwin, sought for a preliminary meeting with Gandhi and other leaders before that year's meeting of the National Congress to be held at Lahore. This private conference was scheduled to meet at the capital Delhi, and en route to the meeting, Lord Irwin's train was wrecked by a bomb, though he escaped injury. The conference proved abortive. The Congress convened over New Year's, and its president unfurled the colors of the new Indian Republic, white, red, and green, and wished a Happy New Year to the era of indepen-

dence. Later in the month (January, 1930,) Gandhi presented his nine points to the viceroy, on the acceptance of which he would withdraw the threat of civil disobedience, i. e., the refusal to pay taxes. These nine points are: total prohibition; the reduction of the rupee exchange rate from one and sixpence to one and four pence; halving the land tax; abolition of the salt tax; cutting down the military expenditure to half its present total; a scaling down of the salaries of the higher services; general amnesty for political prisoners; reservation of coastal shipping for Indian enterprise; protection of textiles. The demands were refused, and the extremist wing of the National Congress compelled Gandhi to go ahead with his program.

Then came the repudiation of the salt tax, the dramatic march to the sea to make salt from its waters, and Gandhi's arrest under an old ordinance of 1827, by which he could be kept under restraint interminably without trial. American sympathizers, such as Professor Dewey, Mr. Norman Thomas, Dr. Jabez Sunderland, and others had denominated Gandhi's "nine points," social and economic reforms, and now Gandhi was in jail again on behalf of his "reforms"! In June, came the publication of the long-delayed Simon report, with a call for a round table conference in October. That conference has failed to satisfy the extreme Indian aspirations, as has also the second conference of 1931, in which Gandhi sat as the most important member; though the door of possibility has not been closed, as it is proposed to hold a third one in 1932. The great fruit of these round table conferences is that a new dream of a United States of India, with a constitution very closely modelled on that of the Western Republic has been evolved, and if Gandhi can only restrain the hotheads of the Nationalist party, a possible compromise may yet be reached without the terrors of civil war. The draft of this constitution proposes an upper house of 200 members, chosen by the legislatures of provinces and native states in proportion to relative populations. The viceroy is to nominate a few candidates to represent

minority and neutral opinion, on the advice of his ministers. The lower house is to consist of 300 members, chosen by popular ballot, one third to represent the native states. This involves for the two thirds, equal constituencies, averaging 4,000 square miles, and from one to one and one-quarter millions in population. There is also proposed a supreme court to interpret the constitution. (*Current History*, Vol. XXXV. No. 3. December, 1931—"Indian Affairs." pp. 449, 450.)

In the meantime, or rather while the last round table conference was in session, there came a general election in Britain, with the Labour party violently repudiated, and a strongly conservative party in power, though Ramsay MacDonald is still nominally at the helm. Gandhi has sorrowfully returned home, and gives expression to deep fears for the future.

With this review, brief as it is, of events in India's political history, a few of the elements of Gandhi's program must be considered from the economic standpoint. This aspect of his work is very ably presented by H. N. Brailsford, liberal British publicist, who has recently visited India, and writes an illuminating account in "Rebel India." (4) To one who has lived in India for years, her poverty is one of the outstanding phenomena, and the danger is that even the missionary and the philanthropic worker may gradually forget the first shock of contrasts. The most casual cold-season visitor cannot fail to be struck by the awful poverty of the great masses of the people, a poverty so abysmal, that it is with the greatest difficulty that the ordinary intelligent American can grasp or appreciate it. Doubtless, the present depression, if at all long continued, will impel large numbers of ordinary Americans to think on the economic problems of life more realistically than they ever have before; and the problem of poverty and the possibility of its abolition may become a major theme of study and discussion. It is Gandhi's identification with India's poor that is one element of his greatness and influence; the poor can

understand a man who subsists on their fare, wears a bit of homespun, and seeks to come to their level. He is one with the great prophets of Israel, who throughout the generations have nursed the "hope of the poor." (15 a. McCown, pp. 245, ff.)

Members of the lower castes live in a condition of squalor that beggars description. Practically the slaves of the higher castes or of the landlords, their lot is pitiable. A little rice or millet is the main element of their diet, resulting in a malnutrition that is a precursor of malaria, hook-worm or tuberculosis. They live on the very margin of existence. The Chamars, workers in leather, get from the landlord the cattle that die of themselves, it being a sin for a Hindu to kill a cow. "India is cursed with a superfluity of perfectly damnable cows, and even those that still do something besides devour the all-too-scanty fodder are depressingly meagre and inadequate animals." (23. Thompson, p. 144.) Clothed in a few filthy rags, living in small one-roomed adobe huts, poorly thatched; ignorant, superstitious and illiterate, it is no wonder that the mortality rate, both infant and adult is very high; where a European expectation of life is over 50 years, that of the Indian is just a little over 20. And yet to these impoverished multitudes, there shines a ray of light in the darkness, and the teachings of Gandhi have penetrated even amongst these wretched groups. They are learning that non-co-operation is a weapon that any group can adopt, and for that reason Gandhi's proposition of refusing the payment of land-rent (tax on land) is meeting with widespread approval. In South India, in the Madras Presidency, a non-Brahmin party, now known as the Justice Party, is making strong gains. A great contribution that Gandhi is making to modern political thought is that in non-violent non-co-operation, any oppressed group has a valuable weapon. The Japanese are learning again to their bitter sorrow, how heavily the weapon of boycott costs them, and if the Chinese learn Gandhi's program, and utilize it in its entirety, they will not



have to resort to militarism to maintain their integrity. Oppressed groups in India are rapidly learning that non-co-operation can be used against the rapacious landlord, the lordly Brahmin, the Kabuli money lender; against all all oppressors, whether sacred or secular.

From the economic side, Gandhi will have to modify some of his views to meet the stern realities of life. One can sympathize with the glorification of spinning, for during the dry, hot months, before the coming of the monsoon rains, which makes possible the cultivation of the fields, the agriculturist (and he constitutes roughly 73% of the population) has practically nothing to do, and finds in litigation his chief indoor sport. Egged on by impecunious lawyers, who are at their wits' ends to gain a competence, he spends his time and money in the law courts. The statistics show a very definite upward trend in the curve of litigation during every hot season. And while the *charka* (spinning wheel) is a primitive instrument, there is sound economic instinct in seeking to persuade the peasant and his wife, idle at this season of the year, to supplement their meagre income by spinning.

When it comes to Gandhi's characteristically Hindu, and yet somewhat poetic ideas about the cow, he somehow fails to meet the problem realistically. Perhaps he astutely conjectures that too liberal a program would mean its entire defeat. Mr. Andrews, one-time English missionary, who has endeared himself to the people of India by a life of devoted service, and now an intimate friend and collaborator with Gandhi—also one of his chief apologists—attempts to illuminate this attitude of the Hindu, and of Gandhi, and only mentions the other side most briefly. "Combined with this (kindness to animals) unfortunately runs parallel a neglect of animals, which is due to the extreme callousness of poverty." (I. Andrews, p. 33.) Andrews fails to show that this veneration of the cow is one of the chief causes of that extreme poverty, as Brailsford clearly points out. "One must mention the unchecked ravages of monkeys and other

wild animals, especially rats. It has been reckoned that this taboo on the taking of life costs India, through the maintenance of aged and defective cattle, four times the land-revenue, and through the toleration of rats, more than the military defense of the Peninsula." (4 Brailsford, p. 156.)

Those who believe in prohibition, can sympathize with Mr. Gandhi's efforts to wean his people from the use of liquor and narcotic drugs, the sale of which is a government monopoly. The degradation from these is most noticeable among the depressed classes. However, the right to picket the liquor-shops, and to use peaceful persuasion on prospective customers to refrain from purchase, has been conceded.

Religious men of all persuasions are convinced that Gandhi has made and is making a most vital contribution to the ethical implications of religion. To Gandhi, religion is not "an opiate of the people," but a "soul-force"—*atyagraha*—that removes all fear, and gives a man the moral courage to face injustice of every sort. Sherwood Eddy, who resided in India for fifteen years, and who has worked with student groups in the Near and the Far East for thirty years, describes his visit with Gandhi as follows: "Of four Christ-like personalities the writer has known during a lifetime, Mr. Gandhi stands first and alone—first in utter integrity, in courage, in dauntless faith, in love or sympathy with suffering humanity, and in boundless self-sacrifice for his cause. As we talked with him for hours, for he gave us most lavishly of his crowded time, it seemed as though we were speaking with Gautama Buddha twenty-five centuries ago in India; or with Francis of Assisi, suddenly stepped out of the thirteenth century; or, as a trained lawyer, speaking the language of political independence, yet always in the spirit of the gentle St. Francis, as if we were talking with Thomas Jefferson. Indeed, he seemed to combine these three contradictory men in one—Gautama Buddha, Francis of Assisi and Thomas Jefferson." (8. Eddy. pp. 30, 31.)

E. Stanley Jones, who refused the Methodist episcopacy to continue his special work among the educated Hindus and

Mohammedans of India, has a most suggestive chapter in his "The Christ of the Indian Road," (13. pp. 67 ff.) in which he points out how realistically Mahatma Gandhi is applying the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount to the tasks he faces. "He (Gandhi) saw clearly that there were two ways that India might gain her freedom. She might take the way of the sword and the bomb—the way that Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali, the Mohammedan leaders, untamed by Gandhi, would have taken; and the way that the Bengal anarchists have actually taken. The fires of rebellion were underneath. The flash of a bomb here and there let the world see in that lurid light what was there. Gandhi brought all this hidden discontentment to the open . . . . For the first time in human history a nation in the attainment of its national ends repudiated physical force and substituted the power of the soul or soul force, and has made inward national regeneration a vital part of its program . . . The daily Anglo-Indian paper, the *Statesman*, after bitterly fighting Gandhi and his movement, acknowledged in its editorial columns that Gandhi 'had put sincerity into politics.'" For some politician and statesman to do that in America would do more to bring the millenium than anything else one could dream of. Would Raskob and Fess sit at Gandhi's feet?

Jones wrote those words in 1926. Can this aging leader—he was sixty-two last October—keep down the spirit he has called from the vasty deep, and hold in check the natural resentment that will be aroused in an emotional race, when the drastically repressive measures of the new British government are put into operation? Having been too slow with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, too tardy with the promise of dominion status, will the conservative government now quicken its pace, and grant the new constitution to a United States of India, that will make possible the opening of a new era? Only time can show. "One no longer discusses whether Indian self-government is possible or desirable: it is inevitable. History, in its march, has

overtaken us. If we did not know two years ago that destiny had made her decision, we know it now." (5. Brailsford, p. 206.)

Time and space will not suffice to describe all of Gandhi's work of social amelioration; his campaign for raising the untouchables; for the relief of poverty; for ridding India of her "slave-mentality." And no matter whether immediately successful in his dreams of political independence or no, the historian of the future, looking back, will put Gandhi in the ranks of those "other wise men" of the East, great social and spiritual reformers, who, like Zoroaster, Isaiah, Buddha and Confucius, have been master-spirits, helping humanity out of its shackles, and flooding the souls of the down-trodden with the new bright light of freedom.

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