

THE MAHATMA'S OWN STORY

(Continued from previous page)

When the Boer War broke out Gandhi organised an Indian Ambulance Corps on the British side which saw a good deal of active service, and was mentioned in General Buller's despatches. After the Boer War he had for a while a large legal practice in Johannesburg, and in 1904 he launched the paper *Indian Opinion* which later, under the influence of Ruskin's book *Unto This Last*, he decided to operate from a community farm. In Johannesburg he organised the Indian community to fight and beat an outbreak of the black plague, and during a Zulu rebellion in Natal he again led an Indian Ambulance Corps. About this time Gandhi's ideas on strict sexual continence began to crystallise; also his famous technique of *Satyagraha* or "non-violence." His name for it, *Satyagraha* (*Sat*-truth; *Agraha*-firmness) was coined as the result of a competition in his own newspaper.

Settlement With General Smuts

THE first major opportunity for putting this technique into practice arose when, to the issue of the £3 poll tax on Indians, was added a decision in 1913 that marriages by Indians in South Africa were not considered legal unless celebrated according to Christian rites and registered by the Registrar of Marriages. In protest, a number of Indian women (including Mrs. Gandhi) courted arrest and imprisonment; Indian miners went on strike, and Gandhi led a march of about 6,000 "passive resisters" from Natal to the Transvaal. Gandhi and many of the others were arrested and sent to gaol. But when the South African Government became embarrassed at the same time by a strike of European railway employees, Gandhi refused to embarrass it further and held aloof. Conditions thus became favourable for a settlement of the Indian dispute with General Smuts. The General himself has said that Gandhi is the only man who has ever beaten him.

Then Gandhi went to London, arriving just as the Great War broke out. He urged Indians to volunteer, but because of an attack of pleurisy was himself forced to return to India.

Civil Disobedience In India

IN 1917 the struggle which Gandhi had launched in 1894 against indentured immigration from India ended with the abolition of the system by the British Government. But in that year occurred the first direct case of civil disobedience in India, when Gandhi made an issue with the Government of India over the condition of the Indian peasantry in the Champaran district. Gandhi was convicted of an offence, but the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon, ordered the charge against him to be withdrawn and he continued with his inquiry into the condition of the peasantry.

About this time, Gandhi engaged in recruiting speeches to persuade Indians to support the British Government's war effort. About this time also he almost died of dysentery.

Hardly had he recovered when he started mass civil disobedience (the Great War was then over) against the

Rowlatt Act. It started with a general *hartal* (a closing of all shops and places of business as a sign of mourning) but violence developed, and Gandhi called off the campaign, condemned his violent followers, and himself went on a penitential fast, in admission of his own grave mistake—his "Himalayan miscalculation" he called it—of launching non-violent resistance on a large scale before his people were, as he said, properly trained and disciplined for it.

By 1920 Gandhi had launched another type of campaign, this time of non-violent non-co-operation, involving in its programme a boycott of imported and mill-manufactured cloth and, bound up with this, the development of the *Khadi* or hand-spinning movement, one of Gandhi's favourite hobby horses.

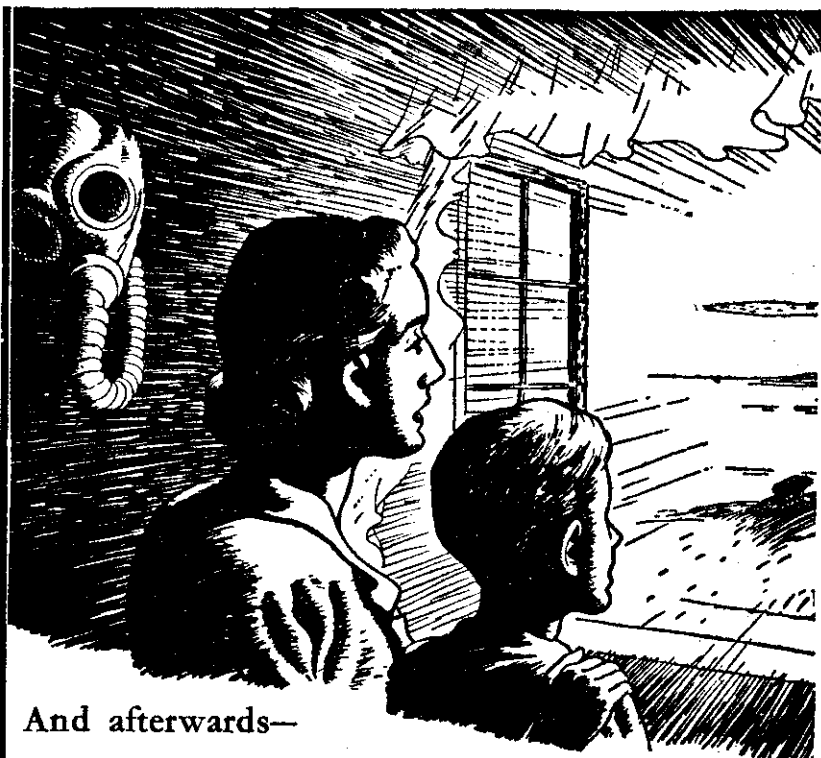
Gandhi's own story, as told in his autobiography, ends at this point. Since then his career has become increasingly bound up with the rise of the Indian Congress Party, with him leading the party at one time, at another time at odds with its policy, and with the figure of Jawaharlal Nehru coming more and more into the picture. But by 1921, the year at which Gandhi's autobiography closes, the pattern of his life was well formed, with his prejudices and principles crystallised, and with his title of Mahatma ("The Great Soul") already bestowed, and with his technique of *Satyagraha* already well-developed, and tested in action. The remaining chapters, with their record of civil disobedience (sometimes undertaken en masse, sometimes singly) of periods in prison and out of it, of fasts, penances, conferences, and attempts to solve the problems of Hindu "untouchability" and Hindu-Moslem disunity, and to gain *Swaraj* (self-government) for India, add little to the story already told here.

A "Crank" About Food

GANDHI cheerfully acknowledges himself to be a crank. But some of his ideas—about fasting and diet restriction for example—seem to have been inherited. He records that his mother was a deeply religious woman who was constantly observing fasts. Once she vowed not to take food without first seeing the sun; and since this happened in the rainy season, when the sun often fails to appear for day after day, she missed many meals. Meat-eating is abhorrent to pious Hindus, but as a boy Gandhi once tasted the forbidden dish because he had been persuaded by a friend that it was meat that made the British strong enough to rule India; unless the Indians also took to eating meat they would never be able to "free India from the foreign yoke." But Gandhi's first meal of meat made him physically sick; in addition he was overcome with remorse at having violated the code of his parents and ancestors. He decided that some other way must be found to free India.

Since then he has never tasted meat—nor cow's milk either, though once, during a very severe attack of dysentery which brought him to death's door, he broke his vow to the extent of accepting goat's milk. He suffered pangs of conscience as a result—but recovered from the dysentery.

He is now 73, and insists that whatever else they have done for him his fasts have lengthened his life.



And afterwards—

What sort of World?

When the last shot is fired and the men come home, what then? Shall we begin a vicious circle of class conflict, unemployment and depression? How will men and women settle down to ordinary work and family life after the excitements of war? How shall we get rid of the injustice, the poverty in the midst of plenty, the suspicions and fears that helped to bring the war on us?

We face great tasks and difficulties that will affect the lives of every one of us and of our children. All these problems can be solved, but only by men and women who will bring strong religious faith to the everyday questions of family life, business, education, politics and leisure.

'It all depends on God, but God depends on me.' What are the divine laws of life which we must know and obey if we are to be free and happy? How does God work, and how does He expect us to work? The National Campaign for Christian Order will try to give New Zealand the Church's answer to these questions. The Campaign opens with four great broadcasts on the Monday evenings of September. Listen to any YA Station next Monday at 8, and hear the second mass meeting in the Auckland Town Hall, when the subject is 'Who Wants Freedom?' and the speaker is Professor F. Sinclair, M.A., of Christchurch.

Many Churches are arranging special addresses and discussion groups. You are warmly invited to take your part in this national effort to find and do the will of God in our personal and social life.

Any Questions?

If you have any questions about Christianity and the Social Order, send them to the National Commercial Broadcasting Service (Wellington, C.x) for discussion over the air in a new feature coming to the ZB Stations.

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