

IF I WERE A JEW

IF I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest Gentile German may, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon. I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment. And for doing this, I should not wait for my fellow Jews to join me in civil resistance, but would have confidence that in the end the rest would be bound to follow my example.

If one Jew or all the Jews were to accept the prescription here offered, he or they would not be worse off than now. And suffering, voluntarily undergone, would bring them an inner strength and joy which no number of resolutions of sympathy passed in the world outside Germany can do.

Indeed, even if Britain, France and America were to declare hostilities against Germany, they could bring no inner joy, no inner strength.

The calculated violence of Hitler might even result in general massacre of the Jews by way of

his first answer to the declaration of such hostilities. But if the Jewish mind could be prepared for voluntary suffering, even the massacre I have imagined could be turned into a day of thanksgiving and joy that Jehovah had wrought deliverance of the race even at the hands of the tyrant. For, to the God-fearing, death has no terror. It is a joyful sleep to be followed by a waking that would be all the more refreshing for the long sleep.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that it is easier for the Jews than for the Czechs to follow my prescription. And they have in the Indian Satyagraha (civil disobedience) campaign in South Africa an exact parallel. There the Indians occupied precisely the place the Jews occupy in Germany. The persecution had also a religious tinge.

President Kruger used to say that the White Christians were the chosen of God, and Indians were inferior beings created to serve the whites. A fundamental clause in the Transvaal constitution was that there should be no equality be-

tween white and colored races, including Asiatics.

There, too, the Indians were consigned to ghettos described as locations.

The other disabilities were almost the same type as those of the Jews in Germany. The Indians, a mere handful, resorted to Satyagraha without any backing from the world outside or the Indian government. Indeed, British officials tried to dissuade the Satyagrahists from their contemplated step. World opinion and the Indian government came to their aid after eight years of struggle.

And that, too, was by way of diplomatic pressure and not of threat of war.

The Jews of Germany can offer Satyagraha under infinitely better auspices than the Indians of South Africa. The Jews are more gifted than the Indians of South Africa. And they have organized world opinion behind them. I am convinced that if someone with courage and vision arises among them to lead them in non-violent action, the winter of their despair

can be turned into the summer of hope.

And what has today become a degrading man-hunt can be turned into a calm and determined stand offered by unarmed men and women possessing the strength of suffering given to them by Jehovah. It will then be a truly religious resistance offered against the godless fury of dehumanized man.

Let the Jews, who claim to be the chosen race, prove their title by choosing the way of non-violence for vindicating their position on earth. Every country is their home, including Palestine, not by aggression, but by loving service.

Given the will, the Jew can refuse to be treated as the outcast of the West, to be despised or patronized. He can command the attention and respect of the world by being man, the chosen creature of God, instead of being man fast sinking to the brute and forsaken by God. He can add to his many contributions the surpassing contribution of non-violent action.—*Gandhi in San Francisco Chronicle.*

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