9. Chaplin's Fight

It is well known that just four days after Chaplin's birth in England in 1889, Adolf Hitler was born in Austria. By the mid-1930s Hitler was a very powerful man. In newspapers and magazines all over Europe pictures of him appeared frequently. He sported a moustache, and, as many people could not help noticing, his moustache was the same shape as that of the tramp Charlie.

Already in 1937, two years before the start of the war, a famous producer named Alexander Korda had suggested to Chaplin that he should do a Hitler story. It would be based on mistaken identity due to the moustache, and Charlie could play both parts. At first Charlie did not think much of this idea, and besides at the time he was busy trying to write another story for a romantic movie. Then it suddenly struck him that Hitler and the tramp would make a great contrast. With this idea, he immediately rushed back to Hollywood and began to work on the script. The story took two years to develop. It was named The Great Dictator.

Charlie wanted to laugh at Hitler. The story was a good opportunity for burlesque and pantomime, he thought. But not everyone agreed with him. In America and England many people wanted to keep peace with Hitler. They did not want to make him angry. He also received some crank letters from Nazi supporters. These were quite threatening. But Charlie would not budge. He was determined to go ahead, even if he had to hire halls himself to show it.

But while he was making The Great Dictator, things in Europe turned very nasty. England declared war on Germany. This had a big effect on Charlie's work. The Great Dictator began to be seen in a new light, and encouraging messages started reaching Charlie. One day his New York office sent him an urgent wire: "Hurry up with your film, everyone is waiting for it."

Charlie, happy to feel he was being supported, worked harder than ever and finished the picture. However, his troubles were not yet at an end. The crank letters started arriving in greater numbers. They were from pro-Nazis. Some said they would throw stink bombs in the theatre and shoot up the screen wherever The Great Dictator was shown. Others said they would create riots. Charlie wondered what to do. At first he thought of going to the police, but he was afraid of scaring the public away from the theatre. He consulted with some powerful people. They told him not to worry. He had many supporters, they said, and if the pro-Nazis made trouble, his supporters would take care of them.

The Great Dictator was first shown to the Press. They did not laugh very much, and after the show they told Charlie that the film would lose money. As it turned out, however, they were completely wrong. People loved it. It played for fifteen weeks at two theatres in New York, and made more money than any of Charlie's films until then. And while it is true that many of the critics did not like the last speech, the public as a whole loved it, and Charlie received many nice letters in praise of it.

This famous speech lasts six minutes. It has been translated into many languages, and in schools around the world students learn to recite parts of it from memory.

For Charlie, The Great Dictator was another big step in his life. With this movie, he said goodbye to the tramp, the funny and sad little man who had been the hero in so many of his silent pictures. That tramp belonged in the world of silence, where actions and gestures said what words could not say. The arrival of sound brought with it another world. In The Great Dictator, Charlie put those two worlds together. He showed the tramp for the last time, and at the same time, in the person of 'The Dictator,' he stepped bravely into the new world.

EXERCISES (9)

Ａ（　）に適切な日本語を入れ、本文のあらすじを完成させなさい．

チャーリーの４日後に生まれた（ア　 　　　）が権力者になっていたころ、アレキサンダー・コーダは、「チャーリー」の（イ　　　　）が（ア）と同じ形であることから（ウ　　　　）が起こるという映画を提案した．チャーリーは最初、乗り気ではなかったが、独裁者と浮浪者は非常に（エ　 　 ）であると気づき、製作に着手した．

　彼はその映画『独裁者』で（オ　 　　 ）と（カ　 　　　　 ）の両立を試みようとした．しかし、周囲の人々は（キ　 　　　　　 ）を恐れて必ずしもこの映画に賛成しなかった．事実、（ク　 　　　　 ）から脅迫状がきたが、彼の意志は固かった．そしてそれがついに完成してニューヨークで公開されると、大ヒットを記録した．特に最後の有名な（ケ　 ）分間の演説は歴史に残る名場面となった．

Ｂ　本文の内容に合うものにはＴ、合わないものにはＦを書きなさい．

(1) Charlie needed two years to finish the script. ( )

(2) Charlie was encouraged to finish the picture quickly after England began to fight against Germany. ( )

(3) The number of letters from Nazi supporters became smaller after the film was finished. ( )

(4) All the people expected The Great Dictator to be a big success. ( )

Ｃ　［ ］の意味を表すように、（ ）に適語を入れなさい．

(1) His illness is ( ) to bad food. ［～が原因で］

(2) I'll go ahead ( ) if you disagree with me.［たとえ～でも］

(3) He was welcome ( ) he went. ［～するところどこでも］

(4) ( )( ) lives to be over eighty. ［だれもが～とはかぎらない］