

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

ALTERNATIVE TO INDUSTRIALISM

(By Gandhiji)

A correspondent writes :

"Do you then believe that industrialization of India—to the extent of India producing her own ships, locomotives, aeroplanes, etc.—is necessary? If not, will you kindly suggest the alternative means by which India shall discharge her responsibilities as a free and independent nation?"

"If you believe in the establishment of such industries, who should, in your opinion, exercise control over the management and the profits that will accrue?"

I do not believe that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India. Indeed, I believe that Independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly.

There may be sensation in living dangerously. We must draw the distinction between living in the face of danger and living dangerously. A man who dares to live alone in a forest infested by wild beasts and wilder men without a gun and with God as his only Help, lives in the face of danger. A man who lives perpetually in mid-air and dives to the earth below to the admiration of a gaping world lives dangerously. One is a purposeful, the other a purposeless life.

Whether such plain living is possible for an isolated nation, however large geographically and numerically in the face of a world armed to the teeth, and in the midst of pomp and circumstance, is a question open to the doubt of a sceptic. The answer is straight and simple. If a plain life is worth living, then the attempt is worth making even though, only an individual or a group makes the effort.

At the same time I believe that some key industries are necessary. I do not believe in arm-chair or armed socialism. I believe in action according to my belief, without waiting for wholesale conversion. Hence, without having to enumerate key industries, I would have State ownership, where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products

of their labour, whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through the State. But as I can conceive such a State only based on non-violence, I would not dispossess moneyed men by force but would invite their co-operation in the process of conversion to State ownership. There are no *pariahs* of society, whether they are millionaires or paupers. The two are sores of the same disease. And all are men "for a' that."

And I avow this belief in the face of the inhumanities we have witnessed and may still have to witness in India as elsewhere. Let us live in the face of danger.

Harijan, 1-9-46

THE LAND-OWNER AND THE FACTORY-OWNER

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

In the Harijan of 27-6-'53 we had reproduced a portion from Shri Rajaji's speech in which he had spoken of abolishing zamindari not only in land but also in mills and factories. His suggestion is worth serious thought. He says that just as we find land on which a large number of tenants and agricultural labourers work and toil lying in possession of a zamindar who practically takes no part in raising the yield, so we also find mill-owners holding in their possession a vast number of spinning and weaving machines in the form of mills and thus giving rise to what may be aptly called 'industrial zamindari'. Therefore along with the zamindari in land, this other form of zamindari in industries should also go. Then only shall we be able to put an end to the present conflict and chaos in the industrial life of the country and to reconstruct it on a secure foundation. A vast majority of the population of our country consists of peasants and weavers. If they are provided for adequately, if they are equipped well to carry on their work without hindrance and earn their bread peacefully, then we may be said to have laid a strong and secure foundation for rebuilding our Indian economy.

Shri Rajaji holds this to be the pivot of our national policy and says that his efforts are directed to the achievement of this end. It is, however, a pity that our planners at the Centre do not yet accept this, which has led to a grave defect in our Five Year Plan. I recently came

across a significant remark in the well-known sociologist of Britain, Shri R. H. Tawney's recent book, *The Attack*. He says,

"Planning, like parliaments and public education, is not a simple category. Its results depend, not on a label attached to it, but on the purposes which it is designed to serve, the methods which it employs in order to realize them, and the spirit which determines the choice of both... the essential characteristic of a planned economy (does not consist) in a detailed budget of production, but in the transference of responsibility for the higher ranges of economic strategy from profit-making entrepreneurs to a national authority...."

Looked at from this point of view, Shri Rajaji's demand to restore peasants and weavers to their due and honourable place in our economy may well be regarded as possessing the essential attribute of a real plan, inasmuch as it is instinct with the motive force necessary for making a new departure and initiating a revolution. Shri Rajaji says in course of this speech that there are two types of zamindars in our country—the zamindar proper and the industrial zamindar or the factory-owner. One thrives on the ownership of land and the other on the ownership of capital. Both are after making profits. They are not directly concerned, as they should be, with producing food and clothing and other necessities for the community. Similarly the merchants and the traders are also not directly concerned with it. They do not primarily work to distribute at due economic rates consumer goods. They are primarily concerned with their profits. That is why clandestine methods of making profits, such as hoarding and black-marketing, are regarded as skilful tricks of their trade.

The emphasis on the profit-motive thus constitutes a very serious drawback in our economy. Only a plan drawn up after full and careful consideration with a view to removing this evil can be called a real national plan. The peasants and the weavers of India should be enabled to become self-sufficient. It will at once solve the problem of food and employment for a very great majority of our population. The readers will remember that when Gandhiji was first arrested in India by the British Government, in the course of his trial when the court asked him about his profession, he had replied that he was a farmer and weaver. He included the spinner in the farmer, for he always impressed on the nation that the leisure left to the farmer from his work in the fields should be occupied by doing some common productive work useful for the nation, and that carding and spinning were eminently suited for this. We realize today that our principal problem is that of providing food, clothing and shelter to all. It means that the farmer and the weaver, i.e., their land and *charhka* and the loom should be rehabilitated in the economy of the country. But they are being crushed today under the dead weight of the two types of zamindaris referred to above, and are not able to contribute the best

of which they are capable. We have to create suitable conditions, provide proper facilities and make other necessary arrangements so that they may be enabled to do so. This is our main task. A plan will have attributes of a real plan to the extent it successfully undertakes to fulfil this task. This shows that we should abolish or at any rate keep under check the mischief which private ownership of land and capital is playing with our economic life.

The question will naturally arise as to how we are to do it. We will have to devise just and peaceful, in short, democratic means of achieving this change. The means we adopt for working out this change will be based on the principle that a just order of society must provide for the utilization of the entire resources of the nation in land, labour and capital in the interests of the entire population and secure to each section its rightful place in the society, and not on the pernicious assumption of inherent class-war i.e. society will continue to be a camp of warring employers and labourers, zamindars and peasants, the rich and the poor. The yawning gulf which divides them at present will have to be filled in. Land, labour and capital—all are for the society, not for private aggrandizement. Not only all land but wealth also belongs to society. They should therefore be exploited for the wellbeing of the entire society.

The Bhoodan Yajna Movement and various legislative measures of the States for the solution of the land-problem are based on this main principle. It is necessary to extend this principle to the sphere of capital and labour, the two other factors of production also and to reorganize industry on its basis. The way to do it peacefully will have to be found out by the various labour-organizations on the one hand and banks and industrial organizations on the other. It should be remembered that this is not merely a political or an economic ideal. It is aimed at the reorganization of our society on a newer basis and therefore requires a broad-based people's movement for its fulfilment. We must therefore immediately draw up a definite programme conducive to this aim. Looking at the problem from this point of view, it appears that there is no such integrated programme before the people. It has now become necessary to place it before them. Then only will the people show forth their innate power of doing things themselves.

(From the original in Gujarati)

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RAISING THE STANDARD OF LIVING**(By J. C. Kumarappa)*

It has become a fashion in these days for all and sundry to include 'raising the standard of living' as one of the objects of our planning. Our Prime Minister incessantly repeats this sentiment. And there is hardly any public man who does not refer to it at some time or other. But we are yet to find even a single person giving a courageous lead in this direction either in theory or practice.

No person needs to be told how to live better. If he had the wherewithal he would eat well, he would clothe himself well, he would educate his children well, he would obtain satisfactory medical care and will live under conditions of hygiene and sanitation as would be desired. The main trouble lies in his economic position. Therefore we have to consider how to provide him with satisfactory income.

In capitalistic economics labour is dealt with as a commodity to be bought and sold. So the wages appear as a price for this human commodity. But it is completely detached of fundamental human considerations. An industrialist buys human labour with the same heart as he buys high-speed steel. Naturally therefore he is out to beat down prices and get the most he can out of the bargain. This is the order of exploitation and cannot be changed as long as human labour is dealt with as a commodity.

Where we desire to deal with man as a human being, the consideration should be based on social values. The price we pay for human labour should be calculated, not on the basis of the market prices that will be fetched by any commodity to be produced, but on what it will cost to maintain the producer. If (for example) a tapper requires a balanced diet, like any other human being, and he requires also a weather-proof house to live in sanitary and hygienic conditions with enough amenities and facilities to bring up his children in the way that a worthy citizen would be expected to maintain, then such a standard of living should be worked out for a tapper's family. And this should form an irreducible minimum cost of the human labour. Supposing his requirements are equivalent to a present day money income of Rs 150/- per month, then we should calculate how much marketable commodities a conscientious and skilled tapper will produce with his labour in a month and spread that money income of that tapper over the market price of the commodity. One may even imagine, by so doing we may raise the price of gur to Rs 1-8-0 per seer. But we should not be afraid of high prices if we aim at bringing about social justice. As a matter of

fact, when the Government fixes prices and undertakes to sell commodities, we shall be eliminating quite a number of middlemen and the intermediate commissions. Once we fix the prices in this fashion, the Government should cut down various forms of competition such as from capitalists and industrialists and from foreign imports. Actually only by this way we can ever hope to raise the standard of living of our producers. All other talk is nonsense. If we mean business we must go out in right earnest. Otherwise let us not beat about the air and waste our time and energy.

*(Adapted from Gram Udyog Patrika, July, 1953)***A VICIOUS CIRCLE***(By M. P. T. Acharya)*

All are ready to help the unemployed — to solve the problem of unemployment — provided there come the chances of making profits. It is a vicious circle. There is plenty of material available, plenty of labour ready to work at any price, and plenty of needs of the people; but nothing can be done to produce what is needed, for profits cannot be made for a long time. We cannot get the materials and means of production till we pay for them and we cannot employ people till we are sure of profits — a large margin of profits to allow possible losses.

The Government plan is to employ people on construction. Of course, there is not enough money to employ even a large number of people, i.e. to pay them and also pay for the materials required to make them work. It can only employ a limited number of people.

Most of the money expended by Government goes into the pockets of contractors, experts, and offices. Only in a period of construction a certain number of people can be employed. But as soon as the construction is over, most of them will be thrown out of employment, for only a few hands will be required to maintain and run the works. In order to re-employ the discharged, new constructions will have to be started with new capital.

I was in the erection of a Vanaspati factory. It was employing hundreds of people during erection, but on the day of the opening of the factory, the proprietor discharged hundreds of men. But on that day, the gate had a cloth stretched on which was inscribed: Industry abolishes unemployment! The proprietor of the factory advertised: "Use no ghee, use only Vanaspati, for ghee contains microbes bad for health. Vanaspati is untouched by hand." (I told him to add: Touched only by Brahmin hands!)

I asked the boss if what he advertised was true, did he use Vanaspati? He said: "Never, I use only ghee."

* From a summary of a speech delivered by Shri J. C. Kumarappa at the All-India Palm Gur Conference held at Tuticorin in June 1953.

HARIJAN

July 25

1953

HANDLOOM, CHARKHA AND TEXTILE-MILL

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

"The Committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has, in a memorandum to the Textile Enquiry Committee of the Government of India, urged that in any form of assistance to be given to handloom industry, steps be simultaneously taken to ensure that the number of persons dependent on handlooms was not only not allowed to increase, but was reduced in an orderly manner.

"As a contribution in this direction, the Committee has suggested offering of 'active encouragement' to all those who were willing to leave that industry and encouraging weavers' children to enter other occupations.—P.T.I."

The news-item reproduced above is significant in various ways. Does the Federation represent and speak for the handloom industry? Or is it its gratuitous advice to the Government and an unasked for offer to the weavers? And why should the handloom industry be not allowed to prosper? Why should the number of persons dependent on it be reduced in an orderly manner? As Shri Rajaji once put it, does the Federation realize that "the question is not a question of yardage, but of human families whose care is the obligation of the... Government"? (*Harijan*, 20-9-'52, p. 250).

And if the offer of other occupations is made to weavers and their children, why does the Federation not take steps to employ so many others that are already unemployed, but require weavers to be made unemployed? And how many people can the mechanized industry employ? Do we not know that conditioned as it is by the use of the machine, it can prosper only by eliminating as many men as it can through rationalization? Again it is never its primary intention nor object to give work to the people and remove unemployment. It exists for its own profit and exclusive enrichment. It can never employ all the weavers, who are really being starved today by the mills through supplying insufficient yarn to them. If at all the Federation is so minded, it may better advise its textile mill constituents to produce and supply as much yarn as the great weaving population wants. That would be serving themselves as well as hungry weavers and thereby the people.

But the news quoted above betrays the real mind of the industrialist. He, in self-defence and to perpetuate the economic order that is to his

interest, goes to such length as of suggesting what virtually amounts to not exploiting to the fullest our great national industry—viz. the handloom and its immense potentialities to remove unemployment. The Federation, blinded by self-interest, does not see that, as Pandit Jawaharlalji said in Parliament when presenting the Five Year Plan to it, "Ultimately you have to deal not with steel and cement and things that you can measure, but you have to deal with 360 million human beings in this country, each different from the other."

The Textile Enquiry Committee, we hope, will note that it is not a Textile-mill Enquiry Committee, but it is a committee to see that our composite textile industry which is carried on through the Charkha, the handloom, and the machine also is so re-arranged and co-ordinated that thereby we secure to our hungry millions an honest and decent occupation through working for our textile need. Let not the organized capitalist interest of the few who are well entrenched and very vocal be allowed to be too overpowering for such a reshuffle in national interest. Rather, the textile mills must be controlled, in the nation's larger interests, to supply all the amount of yarn necessary for our very expansive handloom industry. Let us note that the handloom and the Charkha are very potent instruments in the hands of our people to combat unemployment scattered as widely as the expanse of our land. They must be fully exploited. Therefore providing for the yarn need of the handloom should be the first concern and purpose of the textile machine if at all it exists or is allowed to exist in our new economy. And further, as our village people learn to see the wisdom of using their enforced leisure in producing yarn by spinning for their own cloth need, and as a result we have more and more good handspun yarn available for our weavers, the mills might gradually lessen their yarn supply. Let us also remember that it is an axiom of full employment of our people that production of food and cloth must not be mechanized and in that way centralized in the hands of the industrialist-cum-capitalist, but that it must be the decentralized activity of our whole people and free from the clutches of modern finance and money-market, and the profit motive. Then only can we have all of us food and cloth without which people can have no meaning in freedom.

11-7-'53

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AS A TOKEN OF UNDERSTANDING

(By Vinoba)

Excepting Bhoodan and Sampattidan we will not take or ask for any other form of gift or *dan*: this is a condition which we have voluntarily accepted in the interest of our work. We are engaged in solving a mighty problem which calls for the mobilization of all our energy. Raising of money-subscriptions I regard as particularly dangerous. Similarly *go-dan* i.e. giving of cows has no use for us.

We should certainly ask for one-sixth of the total land, but we cannot refuse if what is offered is less than that. Of course, if it is extremely little, it should not be accepted because it degrades the donor.

About Sampattidan, we should observe very great care, because he who signs the pledge is required to continue the *dan* year after year for his life. One may sign it on the impulse of the moment but fail to fulfil it subsequently. This should be avoided, because it will spoil the atmosphere. We should therefore make sure that the donor signs with full faith and after full consultations with the members of his family.

The donor of the Bhoodan may suggest the name of a deserving recipient. But generally our method of distribution before an open assembly of the local population is to be preferred. The donor will do well to realize that it is better to donate without any limiting conditions.

Our work may be conceived as an attempt on our part to explain to the people the right view of things and securing the land-gift as a token of their understanding and accepting it.

(From Hindi)

CRIME AND UNEMPLOYMENT

(By Suresh Ramabhai)

Hardly a day passes when Uttar Pradesh's leading English dailies published from Allahabad and Lucknow, let apart the Hindi or Urdu ones, do not report a village dacoity or murder on their district news page. At times a number of cases, often serious, are brought before the public eye.

The concern of the State Government for this sad situation is natural. Herein is a news-item, dated Lucknow, May 24, culled from the *Statesman* (Delhi) of May 26th last:

"The need for organization of village defence and welfare societies, combined with rifle clubs, has been emphasized in the course of a review of the crime situation in U.P. during the last fortnight of April. The police could assist in training the villagers.

"It is felt that besides administrative and legal measures, a strong sense of self-help in villages and *mohallas* could be a sure means of effectively countering the goonda element...."

So one may look forward to the opening up and growth of village defence bodies, rifle clubs, watch-and-ward units, arms-supply depots, ammunition establishments, and the like, in the

province which has more than a lakh of villages. Further may be envisaged a multiple increase in the strength of the police force and the armed constabulary as also the army units. But would all this succeed in defending the village better than today? It could not.

According to me, the real causes leading to this unhappy development in our village (as also city) life, in brief, are:

1. Deepening collapse of village industries and the consequent unemployment of the village weaver, tanner, miller, potter, carpenter, smith etc., almost every village artisan;

2. Introduction of mechanized or 'improved' agricultural implements and tubewells resulting in the unemployment of the landless or semi-landless labourer;

3. Eviction of peasants on a mass scale by the former zamindars who got land (tilled by the cultivator for generations) and even gardens recorded as their own *khud-kasht* (self-cultivation);

4. Lift given to goondas by disgruntled and *zamindari-nahin-ja-sakti-wallah* (zamindari-must-remain-wallah) zamindars; and last but not the least,

5. Behind the curtain encouragement by police officers who enjoy share in the booty.

There are other factors also which have indirectly led to this unfortunate crime wave, viz., a levy of fresh taxes in irrigation, new charges or taxes increasingly imposed by the District Board authorities in the form of octroi, toll-tax, camel-tax etc. etc. the biased behaviour of the *gaon-sabha* chief or *sarpanch adalat* and the group rivalry on party lines, specially Congressmen and ex-Congressmen or new Praja-socialists.

Now the raising of village defence societies does not touch either of the issues mentioned above. On the contrary, it will give rise to a new terrorization perpetrated by the richer section of the population or the vocal ones who command influence with the revenue and police authorities. The poorer or the dumb and resourceless villager has thereby nothing to gain: he would rather lose the little what he happens to have for he cannot easily approach courts or authorities.

The real remedy of the disease which is eating into the life of our villages consists in progressively making our villages self-sufficient on a decentralized basis. That would wipe out village unemployment, stop the British-founded process of exporting village raw-materials to cities or mills and importing bare necessities of life—like clothing, Vanaspati or oils, shoes, utensils etc.—from cities as also the exodus of educated men to cities. But that is possible only when the Government is prepared to bring about a radical change in its economic, financial, industrial, educational and allied policies; in fact, to change its very outlook and

approach. There is a crying need for decentralization in every sphere of national life. Let us not forget the immortal truth: That Government is the best which governs the least.

Allahabad, 12-6-'53

COLIN CLARK VS. MALTHUS

III

Can I now detect some cloven hoof in our reasoning? There is a narrow and greedy type of businessman, who supports Malthusian propaganda simply because he hates the idea of Indians and Japanese competing with him for export markets. There is also the imperialist who thinks that Britain has some sort of natural right whereby food surpluses produced anywhere in the world should be reserved for sale to us at low prices. Can I see the academic scientist, objectively minded but not very well informed on economic and geographical facts, unwittingly becoming their bedfellow? Some people are subconsciously annoyed with the rest of the world because it will not oblige us by going back to the conditions of the late nineteenth century, when Britain was indubitably 'Top Nation' (if I may make use of that invaluable slang phrase), when British exports sold with little serious competition, and we could take our pick of available world food supplies?

Many perfectly disinterested scientists who have joined the Malthusian movement should stop and consider the highly unsavoury nature of their imperialist bedfellows, and ask themselves what sort of reputation our Malthusian talk is going to get us with other countries. Will they not gibe at us as a people who cannot reproduce themselves and do not want any other country to do so either? Away with this mean and futile propaganda! Can we not envisage England once again as a country of large families, of people with the vigour to start new industries which shall be the envy of the world, to emigrate once again in millions to the huge vacant lands which the British Commonwealth still possesses, to have a future as glorious as anything in the past?

A deeper issue than economics is raised by Malthusianism namely, the whole nature and purpose of man. Is man to be regarded as the end or the means? Is the economic system of the world there for the purpose of serving man, or are we entitled to ignore the natural rights and duties of man if we can thereby, as we think, make the economic system work better? Was economics made for man, or man made for economics? I do not see that we can have any hesitation about the answer. No political leader, however powerful, no economist, however learned, has the slightest right to interfere with the birth of children. No—it is the other way round: It is parents who have the right to demand of Prime Ministers and economists that they should so organize the world that children should have enough to eat.

'God will Provide'

May I recount a conversation which once took place between a British administrator—a very good man, according to his lights—and an Indian peasant woman?

'How many children,' he asked her, 'do you think a woman should have?'

She replied: 'Mother Earth is not satisfied with the amount of her rain, nor is the mother woman with the number of her children. A barren field and a barren woman—who will take them?'

'But cannot a woman have too many children?'

'Without children how can we have men, and without men who will look after God's creatures, and who will dig the tanks that we may have water to drink?'

'But if there are many children, will they not be poor?'

'To run the world both the rich and the poor are needed. If all are rich like you, who will cut the grass for your horse?'

'How will you feed many children?'

'It is not a mother's work to do this. Her work is to bear them and to rear them. Other things God will provide.'

'Can a woman, then, not have too many children?'

'No number is too great. In four days the disease of *khattak* (the influenza epidemic) took away three men from my family.'

'In Europe people would have few children, for they have anxiety how they shall live and what they shall eat.'

'They are fools to think like this. God has given them to rule over other countries, and we have lost this country because we killed our daughters.'

This uneducated Indian woman in her wisdom has clearly placed God at the centre of her universe and many of us have placed economics at the centre of ours.

(Concluded)

GHANI AND THE OIL-MILL

At a meeting of the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board held recently in Bombay, it was resolved to recommend the Union Government to adopt the policy of reserving for the Village Oil Industry a portion of the edible oil-seeds available in the country. To achieve this object a portion of the edible oil-seeds crushed by the oil-mills should be diverted for use by Ghanis. Another line of action that is proposed is that the Government should restrict the number and capacity of the oil-mills to their present strength.

The Government of India have delegated powers to State Governments under the Essential Supplies Act (Temporary Powers) 1946 to check the indiscriminate establishment of oil-mills. In virtue of the powers assumed by the Government under the amended Industrial Development and Regulations Act 1951, it is competent for the Union Government to ensure that there is no addition to the total crushing capacity of (edible oil-seeds in) the oil-mills. For the purpose of enforcing a common production programme for the large-scale and small-scale industries the Government should assume powers even by resorting to further legislation.

The specific proposal of the Board is that sesamum oil-seeds which are at present crushed in small quantities by the oil-mills should be completely reserved for the Ghanis. The oil from sesamum oil-seeds being sweet is in demand all over the country for domestic consumption. Because it is in short supply there are chances of adulteration, which can be practised easily where there is mass production as in the case of all mill-oils. Restriction of use in the manner proposed will check adulteration.

The common Production Programme Committee of the All India Khadi and Village Industries Board has gone into the details of the reorganization of the Village Oil Industry and has suggested the allocation of quantities of different oil-seeds to mills and to Ghanis. The increase in consumption of oil-seeds by Ghanis is to be secured by diverting a part of the certain edible varieties of oil-seeds from mills to Ghanis as well as by an increase in the production of the edible oil-seeds.

All this will require an organization which the Board is expected to assist in building up. Hence the mere fixing of ceiling of mill-oil is only a part of the programme. An organization for supply of raw materials, capital required for stocking oil-seeds, supply of improved implements and methods of oil-seed crushing and provision for the sale of the Ghani-oil are necessary. These plans have already been drawn up by the Board and steps have been taken to bring them into operation in various parts of the country.

(From a bulletin issued by the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board)

[We would like to know what the Central and State Governments do about these very helpful recommendations of the A.I.K.V.I Board.

13-7-'53

M. P. J

AN URBAN ILLUSION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

A correspondent from Bombay writes to say as follows :

"Mahatma Gandhi in his time recommended use of Khadi cloth because India at that time used to import cloth from outside worth crores of rupees, while she herself produced less than even half of country's requirements. Times have now changed. India is now in a position to export surplus of her stocks of cloth as well as so many other finished articles in place of exports of raw materials. This position mostly has been due to her industrial advancement all round. Hand-made cloth has naturally receded in the background chiefly because of its high price.

"The arguments that so many thousands of workers have been put out of work does not sound well, as recently so many new industries have taken up and further will take up a good number of those workers who have been or are being turned out from one or the other centres.

"In the present age of machine we simply cannot put the hands of the clock back. There is no sense in suggesting to bring back the bullock cart in place of motor cars, railways and aeroplanes as being used nowadays."

It is unfortunate that such naïveté on the part of some of our urban people in regard to our real problem still persists. Have the times really or fundamentally changed? Have we solved our problems of poverty and unemployment, our food and cloth need? Do we not find people without cloth in the very heart of our textile mill areas, in spite of all their produce? Was Khadi suggested by Gandhiji merely to oust British cloth? Was it not a fundamental change suggested by him for rebuilding our national economy shattered to pieces under alien rule of foreign trade and commerce? Does not the challenge of Khadi still stand that it alone has the message of Sarvodaya and full employment for India and not the mechanized industries or even the Five-Year Plan?

The argument that Khadi puts back the hands of the clock of progress is puerile and begs the question, what is progress! As such it needs no discussion, as it has been answered by Gandhiji himself so often before. The correspondent does not seem to realize the great and baffling problem of economic reconstruction in India and its unique nature. He will be a very bold man indeed who can come out today with saying that the machine will solve our economic problem. The very land which gave the frankenstein of the machine to the world is groaning under that—its own terrible creation. Let our ultra-urbanized people not draw conclusions from what little they see around them in our few isolated cities, but be humble enough to revise their ideas in the true background of our people. The great majority of the Indian humanity live in villages; they are mostly without sufficient work and are consequently reduced to intolerable wretchedness and utter frustration. The order under which they are required to live is more a want of order if not total disorder; and it is for them that we are required to think out an order and

an economy that immediately, here and now, cheer and make them function. This is not a task for a machine, howsoever big or capable. It is a human problem. However this is not to decry the place of machine in human economy. This is only to remind ourselves that it is meant to serve us and not to lord us, that it must adjust itself to our need, and not vice versa.

20-6-'53

NOTES

Rising Prices and Falling Employment

This is perhaps the worst economic distress that can befall a people; and we are today in it. However, it is a good sign that in spite of its compelling need for official attention to the immediate requirements of piloting the Five Year Plan, Government has noted this distress and turned to amend the Five Year Plan, so as to meet the new and unexpected challenge.

Shri C. D. Deshmukh has tried to argue that the position is one of dwindling purchasing power and employment. That may be so. However price structure also is closely connected with it, because what purchasing power we might have will be further reduced by soaring prices. Therefore it will mean a distinct gain to the poor purchaser if prices are not only stabilized but brought down by a wise financial and price policy which should be in the interests of the consumer and not the export-import trader or the excise duties.

Increasing employment also may be another helpful remedy. It can be tapped only by encouraging small-scale village industries on a large scale, which requires diverting the attention and also not-too-forthcoming resources of the nation to these rather than to centralized and large-scale industrial schemes. Will Government realize this before it is too late?

14-7-'53

M. P.

Is it not Improper Expenditure?

We learn from a PTI message, New Delhi, July 11, that—

"A Committee of seven members has been appointed by the Government of India to undertake preliminary work in connection with the establishment of the National Research Development Corporation.

"The functions of the Committee include the drawing up of the memorandum and articles of association of the proposed Corporation and its registration. The Committee will also appoint staff and undertake preliminary examination of projects awaiting development and decide the order of priorities.

"The Corporation will be constituted as a Government-sponsored private company under the provisions of the Indian Companies Act and will be financed by a long-dated loan by the Government.

"The initial cost of the Corporation is expected to be over Rs 25 lakhs.

"The Corporation is intended to fill the gap between research and development and its functions will begin where the functions of the country's research laboratories end. The Corporation will arrange practical trials of innovations in existing Government or private industrial plants, where necessary, by reimbursing the organizations concerned with the cost of such trials.

"In cases where this is not possible, the Corporation's object is to install pilot plants, prototype or even full commercial units to demonstrate the practicability of inventions and their economic possibilities.

"Quite a few processes completed in various laboratories in the country are awaiting development and a detailed examination of these will be taken up by the Corporation as soon as it begins to function."

The Committee mainly consists of those who are chiefly interested in the problems of development of industrialization in the country. Obviously they will give priorities to projects that may be helpful to these interests. Should Government utilize public fund to aid projects which will obviously profit only such people? Rich and resourceful as they are, can these people not be expected to undertake to institute research work themselves? The question becomes specially pertinent as Government at present requires money and as much of it as it can have to combat unemployment and poverty, disease and illiteracy etc. in the land. The removal of these is the topmost national priority. All the money that we can find must first go to this vast project and not works that will benefit only a few, who themselves are in a position to undertake them themselves. Let this not be misunderstood as opposition to scientific research. There is much to be done in that field, that will benefit the poor. Unfortunately our eyes are off from it, and the powers that be today only see the claims of the upper few, to the neglect of those of the poor, for whose amelioration we are pledged to pool all our resources. Should not diverting of public funds in secondary projects like the one under discussion be considered unjustified and improper?

17-7-53

M. P.

The Unhappy Continent

Africa is groaning under the white man's burden. But that is not the whole story. For Arab slave-raiders are still at their nefarious job in Central Africa. Human beings are sold for prices from Rs 200 to Rs 700 in the slave markets of Arabia, where the slave population is estimated at about three millions. The prices vary according to age and sex. Young girls bought for harems sell at the top price. Strong men, useful for manual labour, fetch as much as Rs 500. Each month 2,000 prospective slaves are smuggled from the African to the Arabian shore for sale.

Unprotected native villages are the favourite hunting grounds of the raiders who operate at night. The villages are surrounded; the inhabitants are rounded up and tied together in small groups. They are then driven far into the desert where no European soldiers are likely to interfere.

Then for weeks, the men, women and children are driven relentlessly through desert and forest to the Red Sea Coast to be shipped to Arabia in *dhow*s carefully camouflaged to look like vessels carrying cotton bales and other merchandise.

The British patrols are unable to put down this abominable traffic, and Livingstone's estimate that only one in ten of the captured slaves survives the mere journey is still said to be true. (*The National Standard*, June 29, 1953, p. 6).

V. G. D.

'Gandhi Has Shown the Way'

The newsletter of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science (U.S.A.) publishes the following statement by Albert Einstein.

'To kill in wartime is in no way better than common murder. As long, however, as nations are not ready to abolish war by common action and to solve their conflicts in a peaceful way on a legal basis, they feel compelled to prepare for war. They feel moreover compelled to prepare the most abominable means, in order not to be left behind in the general armaments race. Such procedure leads inevitably to war, which in turn, under today's conditions, spells universal destruction.

'Therefore there is no hope in combating the production of specific weapons or means of destruction (such as the atom bomb).

'Only radical abolition of war and of danger of war can help.

'Towards this goal one should strive; in fact nobody should allow himself to be forced into action contrary to this goal.

'Gandhi, the greatest political genius of our time, has shown the way and has demonstrated what sacrifices man is willing to bring if only he has found the right way. His work for the liberation of India is a living example that man's will, sustained by an indomitable conviction, is stronger than apparently invincible material power.'

V. G. D.

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