

HARIJAN

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TWO ANNAS

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

[The following resolutions were passed by the Conference of the Presidents and Secretaries of the Provincial Congress Committees held at Allahabad on 22-24th February last.

These resolutions regarding the Constructive Programme are to be submitted to the Working Committee, and it is expected that the programme, with such modifications as the Working Committee may make, will be placed before the country by the Working Committee for being worked out. — J. C. K.]

1. This Conference draws the attention of the Working Committee to the fact that the A. I. S. A., the A. I. V. I. A. and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh are bodies created by the Congress and have been working along lines laid down by the Congress in their respective fields, and is of opinion that since economic, social and educational programmes on a big scale are being put into effect by the Central and the Provincial Governments, the Working Committee should call upon such members of the Central and the Provincial Governments as owe allegiance to the Congress, to implement the programme laid down by the Congress in this behalf from time to time and while so doing fully utilize the experience of those bodies.

The main object of the Constructive Programme is to stimulate the initiative of the people themselves to organize their political, social, and economic life on co-operative lines and through *Panchayats* with a view to make them self-reliant and self-sufficient.

Therefore, the primary function of the proposed Constructive Programme Committees should be to develop this initiative. While the Committees may welcome the co-operation of the Governments, they should try to carry out the programme as much as possible through the peoples' own efforts.

2. This Conference requests the Working Committee to appoint a small committee called the Central Constructive Programme Committee and charge it with guiding and advising the Congress organization and the public to carry out the following items, viz. Khadi, Village Industries, Basic Education, Harijan work and Literacy. Each of the members of such committee shall attend to particular items of the programme.

In order to facilitate the work of the Committee this Conference makes the following recommendations:

(a) There should be a permanent secretary in charge of the Constructive Programme Department in the A. I. C. C. office.

(b) There should be a small committee in each province appointed by the Executive of the P. C. C.

to carry on the Constructive Programme in the province with representatives of the Provincial Branches of the A. I. S. A., A. I. V. I. A., and of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh on it. The Committee should be free to co-opt members who would be helpful to the Committee in working out other items.

Each of the general members of such a Provincial Constructive Programme Committee other than the representatives of the Constructive organizations should be in charge of particular items of the programme.

(c) Each P. C. C. should have a Constructive Programme Department in charge of a whole-time secretary who should be appointed by the A. I. C. C. in consultation with the Executive of the P. C. C. His salary, if any, should be paid by the A. I. C. C., all other expenses of such a department and of carrying out the programme being borne by the P. C. C.

(d) The Provincial Constructive Programme Committee should create such agencies as are necessary in the province for implementing the programme.

(e) As regards training of workers in the various fields of the Constructive Programme, it should be done through the A. I. S. A., A. I. V. I. A. and the Talimi Sangh, the cost being borne by the Provincial Committees.

3. The programme and items of work to be taken up should be as follows:

(a) KHADI: The Congress Sub-Committee should restrict itself to the self-sufficiency aspect of Khadi.

The target to be reached by 13-4-'48, that is the last day of the National Week next year, should be enrolment of one lac new self-sufficient spinners as defined by the A. I. S. A., the beginning of the programme being made on 6-4-'47.

*(b) VILLAGE INDUSTRIES: The Congress Sub-Committee should restrict itself to the programme of the production and consumption of food, clothing, and other essentials of life. With that end in view, each P. C. C. should mark out certain small areas (consisting of not more than a lac of population) in its jurisdiction, as an experimental measure for producing sufficient food on the principle of supplying balanced diet to that area. Cattle breeding and Dairying should be given equal prominence in the area.

As regards other village industries, priority should be given to food-processing by hand, especially to gur-making, oil-pressing, paddy-husking, grinding flour, food preservation etc.

* Note: Please refer to Shri J. C. Kumarappa's *A Plan for Rural Development* for a detailed plan regarding item (b).

All Congress Committees and members of committees are expected to use hand-made things unless they are not available.

(c) Provincial Congress Committees should be advised to organize in each province at least one small compact area with a minimum of 5 Basic Schools and if possible with a teachers' training centre in the area, the work being carried out under the guidance of the Hindustani Talimj Sangh.

(d) Each P. C. C. should take up the spread of literacy and work it out on as wide a scale as possible and keep records of the work done. It should be noted that along with literacy, attempts ought to be made to spread national consciousness among the masses by means of programmes of mass education.

(e) Each P. C. C. should concentrate on securing civic rights and removal of social disabilities in any form in respect of Harijans, Adivasis and other neglected communities, and should carry on an effective campaign for the cultivation of public opinion in support of social equality among other methods by the public declaration in the form of a pledge that they shall treat the members of the above communities on a basis of equality.

(f) KISANS: This would be an important department which would among other things study the numerous problems affecting the peasantry and send necessary directions to the district and lower committees for dealing with the varied problems of the peasantry and organizing Kisans for their political, social and economic well-being.

INFORMATION: The work of the department would grow in importance and volume with time. It will compile reports for the A. I. C. C. with regard to numerous matters, bring out a monthly bulletin which would be more than a bare record of resolutions and official decisions and produce other literature for the use of Congress Committees and field workers. Also each province has its own problems with which our workers should be closely familiar. Brochures should be brought out dealing with these problems. This department would have its counterparts in the lower committees.

CONGRESS SEVA-DAL: The necessity for a widespread volunteer organization is obvious. The volunteers should be part time constructive workers and should be trained for citizenship. There would be need for close thought being given to the various aspects of the work.

MINORITIES: Problems with regard to minorities and backward areas and classes of people are continually facing us. These problems have to be carefully studied and necessary facts collected. The department would consider what practical measures should be taken for meeting concrete complaints and what literature should be brought out in this connection.

LABOUR: The need for handling this grave problem with speed, efficiency and necessary knowledge is imperative. The Congress has laid down its labour

policy. The P. C. C.s have now to take effective practical steps.

PARLIAMENTARY CONTACT: Numerous problems that arise in connection with our parliamentary work and its relations to Congress work should be dealt with by a separate department.

In order that the programme of work sketched here is carried out efficiently and in the shortest time possible, it is necessary that our provincial and district committees should set up effective village committees in all the villages of India. It is hoped that in the first year of our reorganization there will be strong and efficient primary Committees in at least 25 per cent of the villages in each province.

This Conference is convinced that if the comprehensive constructive programme is carried out by our Congress Committees with efficient and well-organized offices to serve them, the Congress would grow in strength and power and greatly gain in its capacity to fulfil its great task for the political, social and economic freedom of the people of India and for enabling them to shoulder the difficult responsibilities of self-rule.

Sauce for the Gander

It is easy to see the mote in another's eye and not be bothered with the beam in our own eyes. The Americans are reported to have suggested to Britain that Imperial Preference should be abandoned. Amery, speaking at a Trade Association of which he is president, protests against such a thing happening and shamelessly adds that it would be impossible for British producers to compete in the open market. Is this not a confession of inefficiency? If this is carried to its logical conclusion, seeing that Britain has the controlling voice in Imperial Preference, does it not follow that Britain is trying to weight all the trade of the "Empire Countries" in its favour? Is this fair to India?

The Committee of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment constituted by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations at its first session in London referring to "restrictive business practices" agreed that such practices "were capable of having harmful effects on production and trade and maintenance in all countries of high levels of income." This being so, India being a country of "low levels of income", it will be beneficial to us and we should go ahead with giving protection to our infant industries, although the international organization referred to above recommended that all possible steps should be taken to prevent restrictive practices, of course, in their own selfish interests.

This is the partisan spirit that pervades the United Nations Councils. How can the suppressed nations expect justice?

J. C. K.

PLANNING WITH VILLAGE BIAS

IV

VILLAGE CRAFTS AND INDUSTRIES

In India's village economy a number of village artisans had an indispensable place. They consisted mainly of the black-smith, the carpenter, the carder, the weaver, the potter, the barber, the oilman, the cowherd, the skin-scanner, the tanner, the shoe-maker, besides those who pursued local industries such as mat and basket making, rope-making, toddy-tapping, etc. The capitalist organizer of industries or his concomitant agent or middleman who dumps a standardized consumer goods, foreign or Indian made, and brings unemployment, idleness and penury on vast populations was unknown.

12. AGRICULTURAL TOOLS AND IMPLEMENTS

The foremost item in the list of village industries to be protected and aided, besides the improvement of live-stock — which is the main source of power and energy in India today — is naturally that of the village blacksmith. Agricultural tools and implements are the sole means of livelihood for the bulk of India's population which is landless agricultural labourers. If the manufacture of these migrates from the village smith's workshop to the factory of an Indian town or to foreign countries like England or America, it will constitute an economic drain far in excess of what used to be drained by way of textiles some time back. It is, therefore, imperative that the manufacture of crow-bars, spades, showels, ploughs, pickaxes, sickles and iron-tyres of bullock cart-wheels etc. in the villages should be immediately protected against their manufacture by the factory, and its standardized output by the village smith encouraged. Factory production of these is fast making inroads on the village. Hence the urgency.

13. HAND SPINNING AND WEAVING

Hand made paper, Palm gur, oil *ghanies* etc., have been prominently before the country and the Government for years, thanks to the efforts of Gandhiji and of the organizations created by him. I shall not, therefore, dilate upon them here.

14. PADDY-HUSK BRICKS AND SLABS

Huge quantities of paddy-husk are wasted in our Province. They are hardly used save as manure or as fuel for the potter's kiln in some parts. Bricks and slabs made out of an admixture of paddy-husk and cement solution have been devised during recent years and found to be useful and durable in house-building, mainly as material for inner walls, partitions, etc. Filtering charcoal also has been devised. These should be encouraged and set formulas for their manufacture, certified and published under Government Engineering Departments, should be broadcast and popularized.

15. PADDY-HUSKING, CORN-GRINDING,

OIL-PRESSING

Mills and factories for these should be prohibited by law and tiny machinery which may enable villagers to do these at home like bread-baking, or on a cooperative basis, should be encouraged. Small machinery which can be worked by hand

or by the help of animal or electric energy should be devised and made available to enable village households to pursue these processes at home both for home consumption and as home industries.

16. POTTERY AND EARTHPAINTS

Earth paints of various hues and combinations could be made by instructing village potters into a little scientific treatment of earth and a few synthetic processes. This is an untapped source, rich in potentialities and would be a flourishing village industry if our scientists and chemists devise simple formulas for the benefit of the village potters and if the Government encourage it by prohibiting foreign imports as well as their manufacture by indigenous factories. Similar formulas should be devised and popularized for enamelling earthen vessels such as jars, jugs, cooking pots, bowls, plates, etc. which are still made and used extensively in the villages. Cups, saucers, trays, etc., which are much in use now could be made also. The earthen vessels which are still quite common in the villages are very artistic and unbelievably cheap to this day, their only defect at present being want of enamelling which defect renders them unclean at the first use. Being porous they cannot be satisfactorily cleaned without much effort. This defect could be and should be easily removed.

Large-scale manufacture of tiles, bricks, etc., by factories in concentrated areas should be prohibited and village potters and brick-layers encouraged to produce standardized goods in villages to serve well-marked local areas.

17. CHARCOAL-MAKING

This is a purely village or forest industry in the hands of the aboriginal folk in our Province. These people are terribly exploited and treated as virtual slaves by most of the jungle contractors and traders who monopolize this trade. The conditions have slightly improved during recent years through the efforts of social workers and the conditions created by war. This trade needs urgent and effective protection. It should be reorganized purely in the interests of the aboriginal tribes-folk under Government care on a cooperative basis with the help of social workers wherever the latter are available.

18. BANANA TRUNKS

In the Bassein and Khandesh areas banana plantations are perhaps the biggest in the Province. Millions of banana trunks are cut out after fruition and thrown away every year. They hardly yield anything to the owner beyond a little manure of small value. Yet excellent silky fibre could be made from these discarded banana trunks and utilized for making artificial silk cloth, hessian, ropes, etc. Other uses, too, could be devised by scientific experts.

19. GUNNY CLOTH

This is a big essential industry exclusively in the hands of the Bengal jute mills and the village jute grower does not earn much from it. Like the cotton textiles its decentralization should be desired and the possibilities explored. It may be remembered that like cloth all spinning and weaving of gunnies

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SWORDS INTO PLOUGHSHARES

For decades the Congress has been a fighting organization. Its one purpose has been to shake the foundations of the British Empire from all angles and bring it down and build up a State that will help the people. An army has not the time and thought necessary to produce consumption articles or plough the fields. But when it has fulfilled its purpose it has to return to civilian occupations; otherwise the erstwhile army of defence will turn into a band of brigands. This turning point is a difficult thing to determine. Often the war time chiefs, drunk with power, carry on with the help of the goodwill of a grateful population until the patriots are turned into self-seeking parasites.

The Interim Government, with national leaders functioning in it, has made its appearance at the centre and we must congratulate the *Rashtrapati* for turning his attention immediately to place the Congress on a peace footing. This change over is a much harder task than it would appear to be. It requires a reorientation of the whole life of the leaders and workers. Until now the Congress had left all such peace time occupations to special bodies which were carrying on their allotted duty without interfering or taking part in any belligerent activities. But now the *Rashtrapati* had called a conference of the provincial chiefs and has taken counsel as to how best to make the whole Congress organization into a constructive body. When the Congress takes upon itself the feeding, clothing and the providing of shelter to the masses it would be working towards the economic Swaraj of the people, having freed them from political bondage.

We have in the various provinces Congress ministries functioning. These have been floundering about not knowing which way to serve the people. They have been mostly manned by men who have been in the battlefield all their lives. After having wielded the sword so long they found it difficult to direct the plough. Hence it is a welcome change and a timely act on the part of the *Rashtrapati* to have called this conference to turn the attention of the foundation diggers to the building that is to be put up.

At Allahabad where the provincial Congress chiefs met and discussed with constructive workers the future programme of the Congress the earnestness that prevailed and the keen desire expressed to serve the people in all walks of life have given the country great expectations. We trust the blue print drawn out by them, which would be placed before the Working Committee for being implemented, will be carried through in every detail with the same earnestness and singleness of purpose.

We give elsewhere the resolutions that have been drafted by that conference. These will show

a wide field covered by them in the short three days at their disposal. The despatch of business and the alertness to the situation promise well for the country. We hope when the time comes the executives of the various ministries will co-operate fully in the work of reconstruction that is before everyone of us.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

GANDHIJI'S WALKING TOUR DIARY

10-2-'47

In his post-prayer address at the outset Gandhiji referred to the fact that he was to go to Gopinathpur and was assured that it was no more than one and half miles. He began his trek but Gopinathpur seemed to be receding from view. When they had walked for fortyfive minutes he said he should go no further if he was not to collapse. He therefore retraced his steps. It took full one hour and twenty minutes which was too much for him. In future, those who invited him to walk to a place should measure the time taken by a leisurely walk. He tendered his apology to the Hindus and Muslims of Gopinathpur and they owed an apology to Noakhali for not having been accurate and precise in their speech. He incidentally mentioned that the people were found to have blown their noses on the path. This was dangerous and dirty, especially for a people who had the habit of walking barefoot.

A friend had told him that he found a Muslim trader who had proper scales and a Hindu who had improper scales and asked him whether it was not true that the Muslim traders were honest and the Hindu traders dishonest. He was sure that the inference was wrong. In this imperfect world no community was wholly honest or dishonest. All he could say was that a man who sported false scales for deceiving his customers was a criminal. But he could not take it upon himself to condemn the whole group or community.

He had many questions addressed to him by Muslim friends who had seen him yesterday. He had promised to answer them. They were:

Q. You have said that you will stay here as long as perfect peace and amity between the two communities was not established and that you will die here if necessary. Do you not think that such a long stay here will unnecessarily focuss Indian and world attention on Noakhali, leading people to think that excesses still continued to be committed here, whereas on the contrary no unseemly acts have been committed by Musalmans for sometime now?

A. No impartial observer could draw the mischievous inference from his presence. He was there as their friend and servant. His presence has certainly advertized Noakhali as a beautiful place which would be a paradise on earth if the Hindus and the Muslims lived in hearty friendship. It may be that at the end of the chapter he might be noted down as a failure who knew very little about *ahimsa*. Moreover, it was impossible for him to stay in Noakhali if the Hindus and the Muslims satisfied him that they had established hearty friendship between

them. He was sorry to tell them that he had evidence to show that things were not quite as they should be.

Q. Don't you think that the Hindus are artificially keeping up the appearance of tension by staying away from their homes in spite of promises of good behaviour by the Musalmans which they have also made good in cases where they have been given an opportunity?

A. He did not think that many Hindus were wilfully staying away from their homes. No one would want to be away from his home without attractive inducements. He had heard nothing of such inducements. But he knew that fright and the absence of the wherewithal were keeping them back. Nevertheless, he was assured by the officials that the number returning was satisfactory. They could not cope with a greater number. When these obvious causes were present there was no occasion to draw far-fetched inferences which could not be proved. If, however, there were any instigators keeping them back, the law was there to punish them. The proof of the pudding was in the eating. If it was true that the general body of the Muslims really wanted the refugees back, he was quite sure they would gladly return. But the picture was not so rosy as was painted by the questioner.

Q. Don't you think that the dictates of non-violence and friendship to all demand withdrawal or dropping of cases against the Musalmans?

A. He did not know that there was much non-violence in the air. Even non-violent conduct could not arrest the course of law. And non-violent conduct on the part of the frightened injured party could not operate until the culprits declared themselves and were penitent. The fact was that not only was there no penitence on their part, but they were absconding. He was averse to mass arrests. And he was for severe punishment of those who were proved to have manufactured complaints.

Q. Is not the double-faced policy of the Cabinet Mission at the root of the present trouble between the League and the Congress and ultimately between the Muslims and the Hindus?

A. He would not accuse the Cabinet Mission of double dealing. They had honestly suggested a solution which in their opinion was fair. The beauty of the Paper was that it contained no compulsion. Naturally, after acceptance the clauses became obligatory for the accepting party. But any party could refuse acceptance. Thus if Assam in the east and Baluchistan in the west rejected the grouping, no power on earth could compel them under the Cabinet Mission Paper. Lastly, assuming that the Cabinet Mission Paper was a trap, why should the Congress and the League fall into it?

Q. Pakistan means complete independence for the Muslims in the Muslim majority provinces and for the Hindus in Hindu majority provinces. Why then does the Congress object to it?

A. The answer was simple. If Pakistan meant independence only to the Muslims in the Muslim majority provinces and *vice versa*, it was summarily rejected. Happily not one Muslim leader, certainly not the Quaid-e-Azam, had ever given that meaning.

Were the Hindus in Bihar to be independent and the Muslims helots? Or were the Hindus to be helots in Bengal? He hoped not.

Q. Can there be any hope of establishing Hindu-Muslim unity here in spite of the Congress-League differences which are at the root of all the troubles everywhere? Even if it is established, how long can it be expected to last?

A. He admitted that Hindu-Muslim unity could not be sustained in the face of Congress-League differences. He hoped, however, that apart from party politics, whilst there was time, the Hindus and the Muslims in Noakhali would act together as real friends. They should set an example to all India and especially to the League and the Congress. Any way, that was the mission that brought him to Noakhali. He wanted to pass his examination in pure *ahimsa*. If it was pure, it must result in establishing that friendship which he desired at heart. Therefore, if it was not established, the failure would be his. And as *ahimsa* knew no failure, he had said he would do or die in Noakhali. Let the questioner and those who thought like him help the fruition of the effort.

13-2-'47

After congratulating the audience on the manner in which they had kept time during the *Ramadhun*, Gandhiji dealt with the two questions which had been put to him in course of the day.

Q. We agree that intrinsically a movement for reducing the share of the owner from half to a third of the crop is justified. But could not the present *Tebhaga* Movement in Bengal be postponed until such time as when the affected persons can be smoothly absorbed in other occupations according to some long-term plan sponsored by the State?

We know you have said that the only way to effect such a radical transformation in society is through non-violence. But interested parties will sleep over that portion of your advice and parade your moral support to their demand and carry on the Movement in their own violent way. Hence is it not wrong for you to lend support to the Movement under the present circumstances when there is every chance of the entire middle class of Bengal being completely ruined as a result? The common villager will also suffer no less because he will also be deprived of the services now being rendered to the village economy by them.

A. In reply, Gandhiji uttered the warning that he only dealt with principles as he knew them. He had not studied the local question. Therefore, the questioner ran the risk of his ignorance causing injustice.

He felt that the question betrayed exaggeration on the part of the questioner. There was no ruin impending for the landlord. His land was not being confiscated. His portion, which he could take even if he was in Timbuctoo, was merely to be reduced from 50% to 33%. He could see no ruin in the proposal. He was afraid they were too much obsessed by the communal question. They should rise above it and examine every problem strictly on merits. Then they would never go wrong. Therefore

they should accept the moral principle underlying the demand for reduction of the owner's share and work for solid amendments in which they were likely to succeed. Let them not face confiscation rather than moderate reduction. Let them remember that for years past India had lived through confiscation. Industry after industry had been ruined and both the artisans as well as the farmers of India had been progressively reduced to poverty.

If the desired change were brought about through non-violent means, the world would not be deprived of the talents of the classes, but then the latter would not exercise them at the expense of the labourers. In the non-violent order of the future, the land would belong to the State, for had it not been said '*sabhi bhumi Gopalaki*'? Under such dispensation, there would be no waste of talents and labour. This would be impossible through violent means. It was therefore a truism to say that the utter ruin of the land-owners brought about through violence would also involve the ruin of the labourers in the end. If the landowners, therefore, acted wisely, no party would lose.

Q. Some women workers who earn part of their living by weaving mats were advised by you the other day to work on cooperative principles. Bengal's agriculture has been reduced to an uneconomic proposition through extreme fragmentation of holdings. Would you advise farmers also to adopt cooperative methods?

If so, how are they to effect this under the present system of land-ownership? Should the State make the necessary changes in the law? If the State is not ready, but the people so desire, how are they to work through their own organizations to this end?

A. Replying to the first part of the question, Gandhiji said that he had no doubt that the system of cooperation was far more necessary for the agriculturists than for the mat weavers. The land as he maintained belonged to the State; therefore, it yielded the largest return when it was worked cooperatively.

Let it be remembered that cooperation should be based on strict non-violence. There was no such thing as success of violent cooperation. Hitler was a forcible example of the latter. He also talked vainly of cooperation which was forced upon the people and everyone knew where Germany had been led as a result.

Gandhiji concluded by saying that it would be a sad thing if India also tried to build up the new society based on cooperation by means of violence. Good brought about through force destroyed individuality. Only when the change was effected through the persuasive power of non-violent non-cooperation, i. e. love, could the foundation of individuality be preserved and real, abiding progress be assured for the world.

14-2-'47

Gandhiji read two passages from Abdullah Suhrawardy's collections of the sayings of the Prophet. Three Muslim friends of the place had

come to him and asked him to pray that God might make both live in peace and friendship. When these friends came he was reading the sayings which he proposed to read to them. They were as follows:

'Be in the world like a traveller, or like a passer on, and reckon yourself as of the dead.' He considered it as a gem of gems. They knew that death might overtake them any moment. What a fine preparation for the event if all became as dead. The very next question was who was the best man and who was the worst. The Prophet considered him to be the best who lived long and performed good acts and him the worst who did bad acts. It was a striking saying that man was to be judged by what he did, and not by what he said.

These sayings were for all men and women and not merely for those who called themselves Muslims. Was the Hindu part of the audience doing good acts? Was untouchability a good act? He had shouted from the house-top that it was a blot on Hinduism. So long as that blot remained, there was no peace and freedom for India. The British would go but their freedom would not come without the complete removal of untouchability.

15-2-'47

Gandhiji dealt with two questions left with him by Nirmal Babu who had gone on duty elsewhere.

The first question was: All over the district of Noakhali there is talk that the Muslim population should boycott the Hindus in every way. Some Muslims who have worked for the Hindus recently or helped them during the riots report that they are under threat of boycott. They ask: What should be the duty of those Muslims who genuinely desire peace in this connection.

Gandhiji replied that he had heard of the boycott before. But he entertained the hope that such was not the case on any extensive scale. He had one case brought to his notice three or four days ago by a Muslim traveller from Gujarat who had come to see him. He was rebuked for daring to want to see him. The traveller stood his ground and came out of the ordeal safely. Another poor Muslim who had come today was threatened with dire penalty if he dared to go to him. He did not know what truth there was in the description. The speaker then instanced printed leaflets that were pasted on the walls in the name of the *Muslim Pituni Party*. These instances gave colour to the question. He would say to the Muslim friends and others that these things should not frighten or disturb them. They should ignore these things if they were isolated instances. If they were on an extensive scale, probably the Government would deal with the situation. If unfortunately boycott became the policy of the Government, it would be a serious matter. He could only think non-violently. If they gave proper compensation he would probably advise acceptance. He could not think out there and then the *pros* and *cons*. If, on the other hand, they resorted to confiscation, he would advise people to stand their ground and refuse to leave their homesteads even on pain of death. This he would say of all provinces whether Muslim majority

or Hindu majority. He however hoped that no Government would be mad enough to subscribe to the policy of boycott whether with or without compensation. Those who belonged to the land for ages could not be removed from their homesteads for the simple reason that they found themselves in a minority. That was no religion, Hindu, Muslim, Christian or any other. It was intolerance.

The second question was: At East Keroa you advised peasants to work cooperatively in their fields. Should they pool together their land and divide the crop in proportion to the area of the fields they held? Would you give us an outline of the idea of how exactly they are to work in a cooperative manner?

Gandhiji said that the question was good and admitted of a simple answer. His notion of co-operation was that the land would be held in co-operation by the owners and tilled and cultivated also in cooperation. This would cause a saving of labour, capital, tools, etc. The owners would work in cooperation and own capital, tools, animals, seeds etc. in cooperation. Cooperative farming of his conception would change the face of the land and banish poverty and idleness from their midst. All this was only possible if people became friends of one another and as one family. When that happy event took place there would be no ugly sore in the form of a communal problem.

16-2-'47

Gandhiji had a fairly busy Sunday at Raipura. There was a no-caste dinner provided by the Hindu merchants of Raipura where a meal for nearly 2000 visitors without distinction of caste or creed was provided. It was meant principally to signify abolition of caste distinctions among the Hindus. He was assured that Muslim or Christian friends were equally welcome at the dinner. He was desirous of visiting the Juma mosques of which there were two in Raipura. The Imam in charge at one showed eagerness to have him at his mosque. Maulvi Baharuddin Saheb, his friend, took him and his company round and showed everything including the underground cellar where Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani had stayed when he was in Raipura. To the other mosque he could not go because the Maulvi in charge had not the time to see the trustees and obtain permission.

Gandhiji referred to the two visits and expressed his gratefulness for being able to pay them. He then referred briefly to the speech reported to have been made by the ex-Premier Maulvi Fazlul Haque Saheb. He was reported to have said that as a non-Muslim Gandhi should not preach the teachings of Islam. Instead of Hindu-Muslim unity he was creating bitterness between the two communities. Had he (Gandhiji) been to Barisal he would have driven him into the canal. He also wondered how the Muslims of Noakhali and Tipperah could tolerate Gandhi's presence so long.

Gandhiji said that he had grave doubts about the accuracy of the report. If it was the correct summary of the speech, he would consider it to be most unfortunate as coming from a man holding the responsible position that the Maulvi Saheb held and aspiring to be the President of the Muslim League. He was not aware of having done anything to

create bitterness between the two communities. The speaker had never claimed to preach Islam. What he had undoubtedly done was to interpret the teachings of the Prophet and refer to them in his own speeches. His interpretation was submitted for acceptance or rejection.

In the same speech he (Fazlul Haque Saheb) had said that when he (Gandhiji) returned from South Africa he (Fazlul Haque Saheb) had asked him (Gandhiji) to embrace Islam, whereupon Gandhiji said that he was a Muslim in the true sense of the term. Mr. Haque requested him to proclaim it publicly, but Gandhiji refused to do so. He said that he had no recollection whatsoever of the conversation and he was never in the habit of suppressing from the public what he had said privately. The audience, however, knew that he had stated in various speeches in the district that he considered himself as good a Muslim as he was a Hindu and for that matter he regarded himself an equally good Christian or Parsi. That such a claim would be rejected and on some occasions was rejected, he knew. That, however, did not affect his fundamental position and if he had said what was attributed to him by Fazlul Haque Saheb, he (Gandhiji) would gladly declare his repentance if he would believe what was represented to him. Indeed he had put forth the claim in South Africa to be a good Musalman simultaneously with being a good member of the other religions of the world. He would repeat for the sake of the ex-Premier of Bengal that he was misreported and he would welcome the correct version from him.

PLANNING WITH VILLAGE BIAS

(Continued from p. 55)

required for packing and transporting of grains and other merchandise was done in olden times by the crew of big caravans who continually plied the inter-provincial and inter-national trade routes. Every one spun on the *takli* even while walking and wove or knitted gunny bags in their camps in the course of their long journeys.

20. MATS, BASKETS, ROPES, BROOMS, BRUSHES

These are mainly village industries and should be made such exclusively. In areas where date, cocoanut, pamyra palms, bamboos, hemp and other fibrous growths abound as nature's gift, cottage-dwelling villagers make these articles and many more of similar varieties. In fact these small industries have survived up to now as cottage industries in many parts of the country. They should be now protected against the factory who should not be allowed to make any inroad upon them. Besides cocoanut, *ketki*, *ghaypat*, *bhendi*, *ambadi* and other fibres grow in abundance in many parts of our Province which make excellent raw material for rope-making in the villages. Small hand-worked machinery could be introduced in the villages in order to aid and ease human labour and to turn out standardized goods of given specifications.

21. CONSUMER GOODS

With the almost unlimited possibilities for generating electricity and of its universal use in the near future all over the country both in the urban as

well as the rural areas, there would be an equally universal and unlimited demand for small accessories such as fitting materials, plugs, catches and such little things most of which could be made easily by the villagers in their cottages from waste materials just as they do in Japan and Switzerland. Nails, bolts and screws of all current sizes are another item which is essential even for the remotest villager in his house-building and other daily household use. Match-boxes and washing soap is the third item of daily household use.

Besides these, buttons, combs, wicks, tapes, twine, toys, bangles, fountain-pens, pencils, nibs, pens and pen-holders, gumpastes, envelopes, watches and clocks and their parts, shaving and toilet materials, celluloid and plastic goods, umbrellas and a vast variety of what is now being termed as "Consumer Goods" could and should be prohibited by Government to be imported or manufactured by Indian factories and their manufacture should be restricted to the villages as cottage handicrafts. Factories should manufacture only small machinery needed to aid the villager. Short-term and technical training courses, chemical formulas, processes and similar aids should be devised and made available to the villager by the State so as to enable him to turn out standardized production.

Since the termination of war over one crore rupees worth of consumer goods, I understand, are being dumped on us every week and all our sterling balances will vanish and evaporate in a few years if we fail to prohibit their import by stern measures.

22. SEED-OIL LAMPS

Lamps capable of burning any seed-oil have been devised before now under the efforts of the All India Village Industries Association. These should be perfected and popularized so as to enable the villager to consume his own farm products or even wild oil-seeds, which can be gathered from the forests.

23. BIDI (COUNTRY CIGARETTES)

Temburni or *Timru* leaves growing wild in the jungles are used all over the country in Bidi (country cigarettes) making. The villagers who collect these get very little return for their labour compared to tobacco-growers and others engaged in this trade. The jungle villagers should be protected, in this so long as the tobacco evil retains its hold on the country.

24. HIDES AND BONES

This industry is fast being snatched away from the villager by the factory, although most of the pre-tanning processes are still done by the village Harijan. For this labour he hardly gets an adequate share of the price fetched by the factory-made finished article. This position must be made a subject of careful investigation and their economic interest afe-guarded as against the shareholder, manufacturer and his agents or middlemen.

Large-scale foot-wear making by Bata and others should be prohibited so far as the use of leather goes and the village shoe-makers taught to make standardized patterns.

Bones, mostly of dead cattle, are collected for a song through village Harijans and transported to factories while factory-made goods made out of them—including bone-meal for garden manuring etc.—are sold at fabulous prices. This rank exploitation must stop and the village Harijan should be taught to make various consumer goods out of bones as a cottage craft.

Bone-meal too could be made like lime-stone grinding with the help of a stone-mill driven by bullocks or buffaloes while they are without farm-work in the villages. Government should help village Harijans by providing a site and a grinding stone free by way of encouragement for a time and by prohibiting factories or taxing them heavily.

25. RAW MATERIALS

Innumerable kinds of raw materials are available in our country which are drained away by the foreign manufacturer or his agents or his Indian prototype. The return to the villager on these is meagre and wholly inadequate. Various medicinal herbs, gum, lac, minerals, guts, sinews and other organic materials, sizing materials, etc. are only a few of them. All these sources should be explored and investigated in the interest of the villager as against his exploiting employer or manufacturer of finished factory products.

CONCLUSION

Any scheme of National Planning would indeed be a misnomer and defeat its purpose if it is not conceived in terms of and conducted with the sole object of benefitting mainly the bulk of the nation's population, viz. the masses, who inhabit the 7,00,000 villages of India (of which the 23,000 villages of our Province form part and parcel) and make them industrious, self-reliant and happy.

(Concluded)

Vapi, 21-1-'47

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