

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

Speaker or Judge ?

It is reported that the Speaker of the Madras Legislative Assembly has ruled that a newspaper commenting upon a matter which is pending before the Assembly is guilty of a breach of the privileges of the House, as such comments might influence the voting on that matter.

Evidently, the Speaker appears to make a confusion between the forum of the Assembly and that of a Court of Justice. It is the right and duty of the public (and of newspapers as makers and publishers of public opinion) to induce the members to come to a particular decision rather than to another in a matter pending before the Assembly. Hence, except where the comment carries with it an inducement or a threat to the members personally in case they voted in a particular manner, newspapers are within their rights to try to influence the voting by discussing the merits of the subject. The Speaker and his members do not constitute a Judge and his jurors in the matter pending before them. I hope by now the Speaker must have seen his mistake and withdrawn his ruling. Otherwise self-respecting papers would have either to ignore it, or to cut off publication of Assembly proceedings from their papers.

Wardha, 20-2-'51

K. G. M.

Lord Samuel on Gandhiji

[The following is a paragraph from a broadcast talk by Lord Samuel reported in *The Listener* of January 11, 1951. — V. G. D.]

'In India, some years ago, I was his guest at one of the great annual assemblies of the Congress Party: it was attended by thousands of delegates and more than half-a-million supporters. Sitting at his side at his beautiful open-air services at sundown, the ritual drawn from the best in all the faiths; faced by an immense audience of thirty or forty thousand people — one had a sense of the reverence as well as the affection which surrounded him. Consider the vastness of the scale on which Gandhi worked — a country containing nearly a fifth of the human race, with reactions affecting all Asia.

Consider the loftiness of his aim — to raise the self-respect of the people; to establish their liberties; to lift them out of poverty and ignorance; to emancipate the women; to rescue the outcasts. Remember that he was resolute throughout in seeking his ends without violence — without armed revolution or war; his weapon self-sacrifice. Take account of the amazing measure of success that he achieved before he was cut off by a martyr's death at the hand of a reactionary fanatic. Sum this all up, and then search for another man of our age more worthy than he of the honour and reverence of future generations.'

'Each Day Fresh Houses are Going Up'

How Southern Rhodesia set about solving its housing problem is thus described by Peter Hanson in *Overseas* of January 1951:

'What lessons has Rhodesia for us at home ?

Primarily those of unorthodoxy and courage. It needs courage to decide that a need is sufficiently urgent to demand new methods. The bottlenecks in building are skilled labour and materials. Hence prefabricated temporary houses. But in Rhodesia the temporary houses are not in our sense prefabricated. The idea of using moistured earth instead of the usual brick has been known in this continent for many centuries. It lends itself to adaptation in Rhodesia on a large scale in *pises de terre* and cut down the requirements of skilled labour which was released for permanent buildings.

'The *pises de terre* did not alone solve the problem; but by releasing building materials and labour for private building they ensured a steady flow.....

'At the 1946 census, the European population of Umtali was given as 2,800; the estimated figure in 1949 was 4,200. This year it is well past the 6,000 mark, and each day fresh houses were going up.

'Southern Rhodesia... accepts no problem, housing or otherwise, as insoluble.'

What about India ?

V. G. D.

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"GUESS-WORK" PLANNING

In reply to a question about the Damodar Valley Corporation, the Minister for Natural Resources and Scientific Research told the Parliament on February 21 that the present estimate of the Damodar Valley project was Rs 110 crores and that the original estimate of Rs 55 crores was based "more or less on guess-work". Coming from the Minister of "Scientific Research", the reply sounds most ludicrous. We can understand a difference of 5 or 10 per cent between the original and revised estimates of a project. But to announce quietly a difference of 100 per cent involving an additional amount of 55 crores is, surely, a highly irresponsible administrative procedure. What guarantee is there that even these revised estimates have been prepared "scientifically"? If the nation had known earlier that the Project would cost such a huge amount of 110 crores, perhaps, the scheme might not have been sanctioned at all.

Shri B. R. Bhagat, a member of Parliament from Bihar, revealed that in spite of repeated demand by the Advisory Committee of the Corporation, detailed estimates for the Project have not been submitted properly. The estimates submitted in May 1949 were found to be insufficient and after great pressure the Corporation had submitted estimates in November 1950. The Corporation had put the blame for the slow rate of progress on "shortage of hard currencies". But this excuse was found baseless. Moreover, the Corporation had not maintained any regular schedule of rates of contract. Shri Shiva Rao also drew the attention of the House to the remarks of the Auditor-General that "some of the Damodar Valley projects might prove uneconomical and that work should be taken on a project only if, in spite of additional costs, the project was economical." This is, undoubtedly, a very significant observation and must be taken into serious consideration before finalizing any schemes of the D. V. C. The Minister informed the House that it had been decided to construct the Bhakra Dam "departmentally". But the honesty of the P. W. D. officials has also not been above reproach and every precaution must be taken by the Government to see that no "leakage" occurs there also.

On the same day in the Parliament, another Minister, in charge of the nation's Health, told the House that the Government (Pre-Feb.) Housing Factory had stopped production of houses for sale, although test production for overcoming the technical difficulties was still carried on. The expenditure incurred so far on the factory included Rs 52 lakhs capital expenditure and Rs 44.04 lakhs working expenditure

amounting to Rs 96.92 lakhs. "The capital expenditure included Rs 2,79,733 as charges paid to consultants who had not given any guarantee regarding the strength and life of the wall panels to be produced in the Factory."

In contrast with the above staggering figures of wasteful expenditure from the public exchequer, the Home Minister boldly announced to the Parliament the same day that a "magnificent" amount of 7½ lakhs had been saved owing to the reshuffling of portfolios of different Ministries. These replies of Ministers in Parliament during the Question Hour on the same day can, surely, be very useful to a teacher for illustrating the meaning of the well-known English saying, 'Penny wise and Pound foolish.'

Another scandal of the Food and Agriculture Ministry was announced on February 7. "A total quantity of 5,48,000 tons of fertilizers of the value of Rs 16,86,63,300 was indented during the 1½ years from July 1949 as against which the financial sanction was for 4,00,000 tons for one year. Nearly 1,50,000 tons were lying unused with State Governments and above 20,000 tons with the Central Government." Mr Menon, the Finance Secretary, drew attention to the fact that the agents entrusted with the work had sold about 1,300 tons of fertilizers and had collected Rs 4,41,000 without crediting this amount into a Government Treasury for nearly six months. It was also found that the contract for the work had remained unsigned for nearly a year. It was complacently announced by the Minister that Shri C. D. Swamy, the Director of Fertilizers in the Ministry, was dismissed. It is patent that an official who has pocketed tons of money through foul means cares a two-pence for such dismissal. Moreover, I learn on good authority that the dismissed officer has now been employed by the Company which had been supplying fertilizers to the Government. If this is true, it is the height of administrative impotence. Not one but half a dozen officers connected with the scandal ought to have been immediately sent to jail to serve long terms of rigorous imprisonment.

If the economic planning of a poor country like India is going to be administered in the manner narrated above, perhaps, not even God would be able to save us! And the pity of it all is that such shocking facts of wasteful and dishonest expenditure which are more than sufficient grounds for the resignation of Ministers in other countries are only made convenient and interesting topics for question sallies in the Parliament. Such "guess-work" planning undertaken by inefficient and corrupt officials would soon land this unfortunate country into complete economic ruin.

Wardha, 22-2-'51

S. N. AGARWAL

HELL IN THE MIDST OF HEAVEN

It was a quiet and cloudless morning of this early spring.

To soothe and refresh my weary body and nerves I did not go on my regular round of work, but slipped away to the solitary spot where the little Rambha Nadi passes into Gangaji's holy waters. I sat down on a big stone and watched and listened. Blue as blue and crystal clear, the Great River was flowing by on my left, and on my right little Rambha was rippling and dancing over the stones, singing a soft and sweet melody. All around were birds of various kinds, and every now and then a silvery fish would leap into the sunlight and vanish again with a merry splash into the water. Looking across and up the Holy River, the soft and rhythmic lines of wooded mountains met the eye, and overhead was the vast and cloudless dome of Heaven filled with the radiance of the morning sun.

That is Nature's heavenly *satsang*, which never fails or falters.

* * *

How beautiful God made the world, but man—what has he turned it into? And a shudder passed over me as I remembered Rishikesh just three miles away up there round the next bend of the Sacred River.

Rishikesh, once the dwelling place of *rishis* and their disciples, wise and saintly men who lived in commune with God and drew strength and purity from the glory of surrounding Nature, what has become of this once holy place? Alas, it is now the seat of unmentionable unholliness! Intrigue, avarice, lust, vice and crime—these dominate this biggest centre of *sadhus* (so called) in Bharat-desh today. I will but mention what has been seen, during one year's residence in Rishikesh, by the wife of one of the Pashulok workers. She is a quiet and sensible woman, and just by the way, when talking to me, she mentioned these things. They are of such common occurrence that people no longer think much about it. They just say to themselves "Oh, it is Rishikesh." Here is what she saw:—

1. The body of a man hanging from a tree in a thick jungle.

2. The stiff and stark naked body of a dead woman with the legs sticking up in the air and the head and shoulders buried in the sand and water.

3. Twice, the bodies of tiny babies (just born) buried in the sand, and half unearthed again by dogs and crows.

If this much she saw with her own eyes, the many more things she heard of from others can be imagined! Such is the Hell that man has created in the midst of these heavenly surroundings. The deeds that such sights tell of are bad enough in ordinary society, but when they appear in the very centre of the *sadhu* world, they stink unto High Heaven!

Pashulok, 28-1-'51

MIRA

SARVA SEVA SANGH

Proceedings

A meeting of the All India Sarva Seva Sangh was held at Wardha on January 5 and 6. It passed altogether 12 resolutions and took important decisions on several questions. We reproduce here Resolutions 3, 9 and 11. The main points of some other resolutions are also given below:

Resolution No. 1: By this the meeting decided to hold the next Sarvodaya Conference at Shivaramapalli, P.O. Shalibanda, Dist. Hyderabad, on April 8, 9, 10, and 11 of 1951.

Resolution No. 4: By this it was decided that the executive body of the Sangh be asked to appoint advisory committees for each of its departments with a view to bringing the constructive workers into closer contact with the Sangh. These committees will be made up of workers and friends engaged or interested in the various constructive activities. The term of office of these committees will be 1 year only.

Resolution No. 6: By this the meeting, on the suggestion of Shri Vinoba, recommended to the Charkha Sangh that the present spinning wages be raised as much as possible.

Resolution No. 8: By this the budget for the next year ending 31 March, 1952, providing for the expenditure of Rs 1,04,000/- was passed.

Resolution No. 3: Shri K. G. Mashruwala's letter of 25-12-'50 was placed before the meeting. He had suggested that the Sarva Seva Sangh should undertake to lay before the country a clear picture of what a society based on *Sarvodaya* would be like. It should also provide a machinery to make available to the people its considered opinion on the questions of the day, specially economic questions.

The meeting agreed with the suggestion. It was resolved that a permanent committee with the following members be constituted for the aforesaid purpose: 1. Shri Kishorlal Mashruwala, 2. Shri J. C. Kumarappa, 3. Shri R. R. Kethahn, 4. Shri Shrimannarayan Agarwal, 5. Shrimati Sushila Nayar, and 6. Shri Shankarrao Dev (Secretary).

The committee was empowered to co-opt three members.

The functions of the committee will be as follows:

1. To produce literature designed to give a picture of the society based on the principles of *Sarvodaya* and point out the ways and means whereby it may be achieved.

2. To make a survey of select densely populated regions from different provinces and to describe in detail their present state, how it can be altered, and the man-power, money and time required for effecting the change.

Resolution No. 9: The practice of offering a hank of self-spun yarn has been started for the past two years in many of the *Sarvodaya melas* held on February 12. The yarn offering is a symbol of the dignity of labour, of the liberation from the bondage of money to the extent that is practicable and of decentralized economy which is the very foundation of *Sarvodaya*. The workers as well as the people have welcomed this practice of offering yarn. The time has now come when it should be more widely propagated and better organized. A register of persons who make the yarn-offering should be kept and workers should approach them and establish personal contact with them. Efforts should also be made to enlist their co-operation for furthering the constructive activities.

Resolution No. 11: In pursuance of resolution No. 11, passed in the meeting of the Sangh held on 14-7-'50, it is decided that the following list of subjects for discussion in the next Sarvodaya Conference be sent to the members and other interested persons for consideration, and the Sarvodaya Samaj Samiti be entrusted with the work of drawing a detailed programme for the conference and finalizing the list of subjects after taking into consideration the suggestions that may be received:

1. What is the exact meaning of economic equality envisaged in the Sarvodaya society? How can this economic equality be implemented through truth and non-violence under present conditions?
2. How can the Sarvodaya *sevak*s contribute their best to the work of national reconstruction?
3. What can the Sarvodaya *sevak* do under present conditions to help raise the character and moral standard of the nation?
4. The propagation, organization and utilization of *sutanjali* (yarn-offering).
5. Will it be more useful to hold the conference every year at one place?
6. Should the date of the Sarvodaya *mela* be changed from 12th February to 30th January?
7. In what manner can we run our institutions on the basis of physical labour and non-possession?
8. Would it be useful to devise a plan for a countrywide tour with a view to propagating the importance of constructive activities and the Sarvodaya ideology?
9. A plan for regularization of reports from various constructive organizations and associations.
10. Consideration and criticism of the work of different constructive organizations and guidance for improvement.

HARIJAN

March 3

1951

FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY: A BASIC POLICY?

Referring to my article "A Rift in Food Self-sufficiency" (*Harijan*, 23rd Dec., 1950) Shri R. K. Patil, one of the members of the Planning Commission, writes as follows:

"I have read your article in the *Harijan* of the 23rd Dec. 1950, as well as in the December issue of the *Sarvodaya*. I feel that the article does not give full weight to certain considerations which have influenced Government in directing that those areas which can grow more cotton and jute should grow them, even by diverting existing lands from food-grains to these crops. This decision was taken at the end of December, 1949, when we were faced with the problem of importing all these three commodities, after the stopping of trade relations with Pakistan on account of a dispute over the exchange ratio. As Pakistan, as a source of supply, had to be ruled out, the alternative lay in either growing jute and cotton ourselves or importing them from outside. A curtailment of our jute industry in proportion to the level of our raw materials already available in the country could not even be considered, as that was the main industry, which earned us a large proportion of our foreign exchange and employed a large number of persons. Even apart from the loss in foreign exchange, any curtailment in the jute industry would have given rise to various problems like absorption of surplus labour, labour unrest etc., which, so far as possible, had to be avoided. The import of jute from any other country not being possible, the only alternative was the growing of as much jute in India as possible, even at the risk of diverting land from food-grains to jute.

"2. The same considerations apply in the case of cotton also, except that if we were to pay a suffi-

cient price, there were alternative sources of cotton in Egypt and America; but the prices were very high, as compared with the prices of our Indian cotton. The Egyptian cotton sold at Rs 1,300/- per 2 bales, while the price of our cotton was from Rs 700/- to Rs 800/-. The alternatives, therefore, were either to grow more cotton ourselves, pay a higher price for foreign cotton or restrict production in the textile industry in proportion to the availability of Indian-grown cotton. Government adopted the first alternative, as we could not provide the foreign exchange required for importing high-priced cotton and a curtailment of production had to be avoided as far as possible.

"3. The Ministry of Agriculture hoped to put up schemes to increase food production to cover the loss of food caused by the diversion of food areas to jute and cotton, but this idea was subsequently given up. It may be accepted that this decision involved a temporary decrease in the area under food crops and a rift in the immediate programme of food self-sufficiency. From the short-term point of view, it is really growing more cotton and jute at the expense of food, but the Ministry of Agriculture hopes to make up for the loss of food caused by the diversion in a year or two, and after the lapse of a few years, our programme is to be self-sufficient in food as well as in jute and cotton.

"4. Such a decision was also necessitated by the considerations of feeding India in an emergency. Our food self-sufficiency plans were based on the assumption of normal harvests, and did not provide for large-scale crop failures, which occasionally occur in our country on account of the irregular monsoons.

"A larger target under the Grow More Food schemes to cover such calamities could not be provided, as even the existing targets were considered by many to be too ambitious and unrealizable in practice. The question then arose how India was to be fed in the event of widespread calamities, as actually happened this year. Under ordinary conditions, the Foreign Exchange Budget would provide a certain amount for purchase of food from abroad. If cotton and jute had to be imported, in addition, this would have had to be reduced or our industries starved; but in the case of an emergency, it would have been difficult to find more money for food purchases over and above the normal provision in the Foreign Exchange Budget, and this contingency could only be avoided, by providing for the earning of the maximum amount of foreign exchange by as large a production of jute and cotton as we were capable of.

"5. Your article proceeds on the belief that Government has adopted a policy of food self-sufficiency because,

'under the present circumstances there is no alternative to becoming as much self-sufficient in food as possible. But if circumstances altered, as for instance, a country like America were prepared to supply cheaply a large amount of our food requirements, and there was a chance of our obtaining good prices for our own agricultural products, it cannot be vouchsafed that even the petty limitations of this self-sufficiency will be respected.'

"I do not think this is a correct representation of the present policy of the Government of India. It is not possible for me to say if the food self-sufficiency policy has relation to 'the present circumstances', i.e. the difficulty of obtaining food from abroad, the danger of war, the high cost of foreign food etc., or is actuated by a genuine desire for self-sufficiency itself; but the inference drawn by you that the growing of more jute and cotton at the expense of

food crops indicates the contrary attitude, i.e. 'Self-sufficiency in food will not be much bothered about, in case imports of cheap foodgrains were possible with the help of some country' is not justified, and I submit that it cannot be drawn from the policy hitherto followed. It could have been drawn if we had grown jute and cotton for export—not for our mill consumption as at present, but for export to earn dollars—while importing foodgrains: that is not the case at present.

"6. The policy had to be changed to provide for the continuance of our jute and cotton industries and the provision of foreign exchange to meet an emergent situation, and it is intended to patch up the rift in the food self-sufficiency so caused as quickly as possible. So far as I know, there is no intention of continuing to remain deficient in food and trying to meet the deficit by importing food from abroad and growing cash crops to pay for it."

I am grateful to Shri Patil for his clarification of the Government policy; but I regret to say that it has left me unconvinced. On the contrary, it has confirmed my suspicion which I had expressed in my article and which was its main theme, namely, that the Government did not accept self-sufficiency in food as its basic policy. I do not find a reply to it in the above letter. I did not suggest that in no way were the temporary measures taken by the Government justifiable. But my main charge was that as a result of the exceptions specifically reserved by the Government for making a departure in the food self-sufficiency policy their will to become self-sufficient is weakened, almost to the extent of abandoning that policy.

I had observed, "the policy was advanced not by way of a basic policy of the Government, but because under the present circumstances there is no alternative to becoming as much self-sufficient in food as possible." Referring to this Shri Patil writes:

"It is not possible for me to say if the food self-sufficiency policy has relation to the present circumstances, i.e. the difficulty of obtaining food from abroad, the danger of war, or is actuated by genuine desire for self-sufficiency itself."

Herein lies the root of contention. If it is not possible for Shri Patil to give a clear and definite reply to the basic question raised by me, the proper authority that can do so should clarify it in a manner, which would leave no room for doubt.

Paunar, 5-2-'51

VINOBA

(Translated from *Sarvodaya*, February, 1951)

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HERALDING THE REVOLUTION

[The following is a free rendering of the speech delivered by Shri Vinoba before the mass gathering of the Sarvodaya Mela at Paunar on 12-2-'51. — K. G. M.]

We have assembled here in this place at this odd hour under the hot mid-day sun. What is it that has prompted us to do so? I know that many of you have come from far off places. Some have even walked the whole distance. Shri Tatyaji Wazalwar, whose burning passion for serving the people is well known, and the untiring worker Shri Punamchand Ranka have come on foot from Nagpur accompanied by their friends and families. Among them I saw a lady with a suckling baby of seven months. Similarly, from the Chanda district too, some friends have come on foot covering a distance of more than a hundred miles. All this enthuses me and leads me to conclude that your hearts are filled with a common powerful idea. It is that common idea that has brought us here at this uncomfortable hour.

But what is that powerful idea that has possessed us all in common? Three years ago Mahatma Gandhi shook off his tiny physical body and spread himself throughout the universe with the powers of his soul. We have all since then become instruments of his spirit. His strong spirit is at our back and gives us inspiration and initiative. It is this power which has prompted us all to come down here regardless of discomforts. The common idea which has seized us all is experienced by us all. But perhaps you do not know how to express it in words. And you want me to speak audibly what we all experience within ourselves.

Why have we assembled here? I have only one answer to this question, namely, we want to change the face of the earth. What bold words you have made me speak! But today these words alone will please God. Lord Shri Krishna, that master player on the famous flute of divine music, is now voicing His desire through us. We all are His broken—literally broken—flutes of reeds. We do not get enough to eat, nor enough to put on. There is nothing that we get in sufficient quantities. But God has already started His work with such broken instruments. At one time he took work from monkeys and at another he raised shepherds and cowherds to eminence and glory. That Lord now desires to take some work from the suffering millions of India whose miseries have a centuries old tale to narrate. Just see! four years ago nobody cared to hear us, none had the leisure to do so. Rather it would be more correct to say that our voice was not regarded as of men but of animals. But that voice of ours, the world has now to listen to. We should, therefore, understand the gravity of our responsibility. We are now no longer insignificant people. If we but renounce our ego, we shall begin to experience that a great power is working within and through us. Like Tukaram each one of us

shall feel that his body is no longer his; it is as if seized by some other power. God speaks through it now.

In fairs such as these, you will see that money plays a prominent part. In fact it occupies the central position. Cast a glance all over the world, you will see that the whole world is caught in the grip of money. But now it has dawned upon us that we shall have nothing to do with money. We want only body labour. The sacred products of the labours of those who earn their bread with the sweat of their brows — peasants, labourers and workers — will alone be acceptable to God as offerings. And hence you offered yarn hanks today. Those who could not come personally sent them with others. What madness this! When we shall be able to say what Tukaram said, this yarn will manifest itself as a living force and work wonders. Tukaram said: "Money is beef (unholy) for us." Who can utter harsher words than these? Similar words you too have pronounced today. And hence your task is not small. It is unique and capable of effecting a revolution throughout the world. It is a 'do or die' mission with us. We shall either change the face of the earth, or meet with death in the attempt. You all know the well-known Marathi prayer, in which, we pray: "Grant that I may remain in constant communion with Thee, and my body wear out in Thy service." This is our aspiration, and these our efforts. It is for this that we have assembled here today.

The A.I.C.C. at its recent Ahmedabad session has fixed Re 1/- as the annual membership fee. Formerly it was four annas. But the present-day rupee is worth only four annas of old. Such is the ever-changing characteristic of money. It utters one thing at one time, another thing at another — a thoroughly unreliable measure. But even then our attachment to money does not lessen! So we fix the membership fee in terms of money. I ask you, "How long will you go before Money with bended knees? How long will you endure this abject submission to it? What has the moneyed man with him after all? Has he milk? curds? butter? — what has he got? He is only mad after money. He is in a delusion. Immediately we shake ourselves free of this delusion and the charm money has cast upon us, the strength of the people and the power of the villages will manifest itself and there will emerge in truth "the revolution" for which India and the world are crying hoarse night and day. We have assembled here today to bring about such a revolution.

Let the practice of bringing the offering of labour, which has commenced from the last year, spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Let each one of us, from a child of eight to an old man of eighty, offer a hank of self-spun yarn in the name of God. Let the voice rise from every throat that we respect not money but the performance of labour. Let the whole of India utter this with one voice.

I am asked: "How many hanks do you expect from each person? How much yarn will be enough to satisfy you?" My answer is: "Every Indian from a child of four to an old man of eighty or ninety should each offer a hank of self-spun yarn." One hank of yarn in a year is not much. It should be a symbol of your love: your love for truth, for humanity, for *Satyadaya*, for manual labour. No one who feels so will fail to

give this offering. My earnest request to you all is to propagate this message to the best of your ability, by your practice, to every home in the country.

In fact my request is superfluous; for, as I said at the outset, it is you who have made me speak audibly what is passing through your own minds. For, how could I have otherwise that power in me? It is the power of Mahatma Gandhi's spirit. And how did Gandhiji get that power and that idea? It is the power of God that inspired it. Friends, let us take His refuge, abandon our small egos and take to labour.

VINOBA

(Translated from Hindi)

THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT AND THE A. I. S. A.

[Readers might remember that a statement by the Secretary of the A. I. S. A. in answer to the charges made by the Madras Government against that Association was published in *Harijan* of October 7, 1950. The Madras Government has issued a Press Note No. 223, dated 22-12-1950 in reply to this, and desired us to publish the same. This along with the rejoinder of the A. I. S. A. is published below in fairness to both the parties. But it seems to me that this controversy through the Press serves no useful purpose. In the first place, the whole subject is a recorded matter, and if it is necessary to investigate on which side the blame rests, the best thing would be to place the record before an impartial judge for opinion. On reading the statements on both the sides, my own impressions are that it does not appear to me justifiable on the part of the Madras Government to refer to a position accepted by Shri Jajaji under conditions and on assumptions, which do not exist and are not meant to be brought into existence. Also the Government's criticism of the efforts of the A. I. S. A. appears to be, to say the least, unappreciative and not supported by facts. From the point of view of the public, of greater importance and interest than the apportionment of blame to one or the other of the parties is how the Government proposes to go ahead with its *Khadi* Scheme hereafter. A clear restatement of the place which the Madras Government aims at giving to *khadi* in the economic set-up of the State, the way in which it hopes to achieve it, and the nature of co-operation which it wants the A. I. S. A. and the people to give to it will be more useful than this discussion, which does not lead to anything but discontent and a sense of frustration to all the parties concerned.

For the convenience of the reader the Press Note and the A. I. S. A. reply are so given that each section of the Note is followed by the reply to it by the A. I. S. A.
3-2-51 — K. G. M.]

Preamble

Press Note

"1. The attention of the Government has been drawn to a statement issued by Shri Krishnadas Gandhi, Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association on the "Madras Government's Intensive Khadi Scheme and the All-India Spinners' Association" published in the *Harijan* dated October 7, 1950. The Government regret to observe that the All-India Spinners' Association having withdrawn from the Scheme of its own accord has, instead of leaving the Government to work the Scheme as best as they could, chosen to publicize allegations calculated to prejudice the working of the Scheme by the Government."

A. I. S. A.

(1) This is an unfair charge. The A. I. S. A.'s attempt to correct a wrong statement of the Hon. Minister-in-charge, should not be interpreted as prejudicing the working by the Government of the Intensive Khadi

Scheme. We would request the reader to read again our statement published in *Harijan* (7th Oct., 1950) in order to refresh his memory. It contains a complete and conclusive answer on the main point for which we had to issue that statement and the reader can find out for himself if the Government Press Note is any answer at all to the main contention of that statement.

Ban on Mill-cloth

Press Note

"2. The main point of difference between the Government and the All-India Spinners' Association was over the latter's proposal that the sale of mill-cloth and handloom-cloth made of mill-yarn should be banned within the Intensive Khadi centres. The Secretary of the All-India Spinners' Association says that it was one of the two conditions essential for the success of the scheme, the other being the elimination of uncertified *khadi*-dealers from the areas. If it was really a condition absolutely essential for the success of the scheme, it should have been incorporated in the scheme which was drafted by the A.I.S.A. itself and approved by the Government in G.O. No. 4678 Dev. dated December 23, 1946. On the other hand, Shri Jajuji, the then Secretary of the A.I.S.A. had himself insisted at the time of the framing of the scheme that "stoppage of mill-cloth etc. should not be forced down from the top and should be ordered only in response to the public demand." The Government consider that what Jajuji had stated was a fundamental principle and that nothing has since taken place, which would justify a departure from that wholesome principle. There has been no demand from the public in the centres for the banning of mill-yarn and mill-cloth.

"3. The Government's final decision against imposing any ban was based on other practical considerations also. Mill-cloth and handloom-cloth could not be kept out of the centres, merely by cancelling the licences of the dealers within the centres. There was nothing to prevent any person who wanted mill-cloth or handloom-cloth from buying and bringing such cloth from outside areas. It would be impossible also to keep out hawkers of mill- and handloom-cloth from entering the areas."

A.I.S.A.

(ii) It is incorrect to say that the scheme was drafted by the A.I.S.A. It was conceived and drafted by the Madras Government themselves for achieving self-sufficiency in 27 *Firkas* in a period of 18 months. When the A.I.S.A. felt that such a scheme was sure to fail, it approached the then Chief Minister. It was then restricted to 7 *Firkas* and amended in consultation with the A.I.S.A.

(iii) Four out of the five and a half columns in which our former statement was printed were devoted to refute the statement of the Minister, that "the A.I.S.A. were themselves not particular in enforcing the ban." Strangely enough the Press Note has not a single word on what we said therein except harping on Shri Jajuji's statement at the time of the discussion of the Draft scheme. Are the Government right in saying 'nothing has since taken place'? Was it 'nothing' that the Government went back on their mill-restriction policy? Was it 'nothing' that they decided to impose a ban in four centres later on (1947)? We have narrated in our statement how the A.I.S.A. began its co-operation with the Government when they declared their policy of controlling the spinning and weaving mills in favour of *khadi*, how, when they went back on it, the A.I.S.A. urged that a ban on mill-cloth in the areas was essential, and how the Government agreed to impose the ban in 4 out of 7 centres, but first delayed execution of the decision for more than two years and then ultimately declined to give effect to it. We further stated: "The Government may or may not do certain things but the question is whether they are justified in now quoting what Jajuji said four years ago in a different

context and against definite undertakings by the Government." Instead of candidly withdrawing the wrong statement complained against by us, the Government have now thought it fit to blame us on various other grounds. We are here reminded of that part of the technique of advocacy, which says that in case one's case be weak, he should abuse the other side and create confusion by raising irrelevant issues.

(iv) The Government say: "there has been no demand from the public in the centres for banning mill-cloth." As the Government were not prepared to take that step, naturally there was no interest in moving in that direction. However, in one instance, at Avinasi, the Centre Committee passed a resolution requesting the Government to ban mill-cloth in that area and this was unanimously approved in a public meeting presided over by the Minister Shri Bhaktavatsalam. Why did not the Government take any steps in respect of that area at least?

A. I. S. A.'s Neglect of Work

Press Note

"4.5. The framework of the scheme itself will show that it did not depend for its success on any pressure exercised by the Government but on constructive measures to be carried out by the Centre Khadi Committees and Village Khadi Committees under the instructions and guidance of the All-India Spinners' Association.

"The Centre and Village Khadi Committees were entrusted with the responsibility of creating the necessary enthusiasm for the scheme by the intensive propaganda including house-to-house visits. The aim set before them was to see that every family in the centre equipped itself with at least one *charkha* and contributed at least one efficient spinner. This was a very important provision, as only those families who installed a *charkha* in their home could imbibe the *khadi* spirit. The usual objection to *khadi* that it is costlier than mill-cloth does not apply to a family, which can produce yarn during spare time. It can then have *khadi* at less price than it has to pay for mill-cloth. The first step towards self-sufficiency was, therefore, to introduce *charkhas* and enlist spinners from non-spinning families and thus make all the members of the family potential consumers of *khadi*. Ample provision was made in the scheme for the supply of the *charkhas* and other implements required. As an inducement to the spinners to use the *khadi* produced at the centres, they were offered a subsidy of 4 as. per yard of *khadi*, which they took for their own use and for the use of their family. The Government provided all the assistance expected of them under the Scheme. But the A.I.S.A. officials in charge of the scheme neglected the constructive measures contemplated under the Scheme.

"The following figures offer a commentary on the work done by the A.I.S.A. in respect of the constructive side of the Intensive Khadi Scheme. The total number of families in all the centres was 84,636. The total number of *charkhas* at the inception of the scheme, including idle *charkhas*, was 26,459. The total number of *charkhas* on April 1, 1950, including idle *charkhas*, was 26,426. The number of new *charkhas* supplied since the inception of the scheme up to April 1, 1950, including replacements, was 2,667. Thus it will be seen that very few families have been brought under the scheme during all these three years. Neither the Honorary Regional Khadi Officers nor the Centre Khadi Officers took steps to convene the Committees regularly. House-to-house visits were totally neglected. Almost the only work that was done under the scheme was to continue the production that was going on under the A.I.S.A. in the centres, previously."

A.I.S.A.

(v) There are several incorrect statements in paras 4 and 5 of the Press Note. It is not correct that a family

can have *khadi* at a lower price than it has to pay for mill-cloth if it can produce yarn during spare time. The cost of cotton and weaving charges alone would not be less than the price of the mill-cloth, not to speak of the carding charges if one does not card his own cotton. Hence, it was that a subsidy of annas 4 per yard was provided in the scheme. But even that cannot serve as an inducement for self-sufficiency.

(vi) What purpose would the addition of a large number of *charkhas* have served when most of the *khadi* that was being already produced could not be locally consumed, leading to accumulation of large stocks?

(vii) It is good that the Government now admit that so far the scheme has been a failure. Till some time ago they used to report that it was making progress. The A.I.S.A. has, however, been all along maintaining that it was not progressing and could not be a success unless the essential condition of the ban of mill-cloth was fulfilled which is now the main subject of the present controversy. The Government, however, lay the blame of the failure on the A.I.S.A., conveniently forgetting that it was their own scheme and all the workers were working directly under them. If the workers did not work satisfactorily why did not the Government do away with them so long and make the change as they have now done? The Government's indictment of the A.I.S.A. is wrong and unjustified. The A.I.S.A. is in a position to state what it did and what it could not do. We claim a good record to our credit. On the other hand the A.I.S.A. has a long charge-sheet against the Government. Full details of both can be given. But would it serve any useful purpose by unnecessarily lengthening this statement? If the Centre and Village Khadi Committees did not work well, is the A.I.S.A. to be blamed for it? We emphatically say that if we could not do enough it was because of the difficult nature of the scheme itself of which the Government do not seem to have an adequate idea and the circumstances and also the negligence on the part of the Government. The A.I.S.A. repeatedly brought to the notice of the Government the drawbacks in the prosecution of the scheme. Ultimately on 26th August, 1949, the A.I.S.A. wrote to the Government, 'The Government do not seem to consider the scheme as a Cabinet Programme. The Ministers have not tried to create the necessary atmosphere in the areas. Except at the time of the inauguration of the scheme there was no propaganda worth the name from the ministerial or high official level. Naturally the officers in the districts and the areas did not take sufficient interest in making the scheme a success. Except in the matter of finance the scheme did not appear, in the eyes of the public, to be Government Khadi work.....' It is now easy and convenient for the Government to say that the A.I.S.A. was responsible for doing all those things, but the then Chief Minister, who knew the situation well, wrote on 11th March, 1948, "As regards the question of propaganda I am instructing the Provincial Textile Commissioner to formulate proposals in consultation with the Honorary Regional Khadi Officers for carrying on propaganda in the centres on an intensive scale, and on receipt of his proposals the Government will take suitable steps in that direction." This was in response to our letter dated 28th Feb., 1948 which, after laying stress on the need of imposing a ban on mill-cloth in the areas said, "Unless we take all the measures necessary for achieving the success of the scheme in a reasonably short period of time it is futile to go on spending money and then find after some time that it was a waste. The A.I.S.A.'s reputation is also at stake. It will have to consider whether it should continue to be a party to the prosecution of the scheme which, because of the proper circumstances not having been created by the Government, may not succeed. The whole of the Ministry and all the officers connected with the

Intensive Scheme should take a live interest in doing propaganda....."

(viii) The Government have recounted what was not done. Is there no positive side of the picture? In spite of the adverse circumstances the workers did their bit to increase self-sufficiency. The test of the progress is not the number of wheels distributed but the quantity of *khadi* locally consumed and the use of yarn for one's own use. We regret we have no complete figures to show the increase from year to year. The full record is with the Government. We, however, give below some figures which have been available to us. They may be negligible in the eye of the Government which has now to condemn the A.I.S.A., but which, we are sure, will be appreciated by those *khadi*-lovers who realize the difficulty of effecting self-sufficiency on a mass scale amongst poor and ignorant people who cannot easily understand the ideology of self-sufficiency.

(ix) The value of *khadi* produced in all the seven Intensive Khadi Centres from the beginning of the scheme till 30th June, 1949 was about Rs 21 lakhs, which was disposed off as follows:—

A. Local sales	Rs. 7,00,000 i.e. about 33 per cent
B. Sales to A. I. S. A.	Rs. 2,50,000 i.e. about 12½ per cent
C. Sales to Govt.	
Depts.	Rs. 4,00,000 i.e. about 20 per cent
D. Stock on hand	Rs. 7,50,000 i.e. about 37½ per cent

Total yarn production and deposits of yarn in hanks collected from spinners for giving them *khadi* against that yarn in the two centres of Avinasi and Vellakoll in Tamilnad, in round figures:—

Year	Yarn Production Rs.	Deposits Rs.	Percentage
1947-48	4,06,000	29,100	7 per cent
1948-49	3,72,000	1,07,400	29 per cent

Local *khadi* sales to spinners and others in the above two centres:—

Year	Production Rs.	Sales Rs.	Percentage
1947-48	6,19,000	1,38,000	22 per cent
1948-49	6,65,000	2,37,000	35 Per cent

Khadi woven for self-wear in the three centres of Andhra, in linear yards:—

Period	Total Production in Yds.	Average per month in Yds.
1-1-'47 to 31-12-'47	12 months	1,64,695 13,725
1-1-'48 to 30-6-'48	6 months	34,693 5,782
1-7-'48 to 30-6-'49	12 months	1,78,037 14,836
1-7-'49 to 31-3-'50	9 months	1,28,637 14,293

(It may be noted that the rate of subsidy was reduced in subsequent years, no doubt, on the suggestion of the A.I.S.A.)

KRISHNADAS GANDHI
Secretary,
A. I. S. A., Sevagram

(to be continued)

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