

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XV. No. 22

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, JULY 28, 1951

TWO ANNAS

TO PUBLIC SERVANTS AND TRADERS

The attention of the reader is drawn to item 5 (relating to honest life movement) in the Sarva Seva Sangh proceedings published in another column hereof.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has once more said very definitely that controls cannot be lifted, and the public must reconcile and adjust themselves to that policy. He honestly believes that immense harm would accrue to the nation, if any attempt is made to lift them at this stage. Panditji is fully aware of the irksomeness of the controls and the corruption they lead to. But he feels helpless. He has to choose between starving and denuding the poorer sections of the people and the hardships created by controls to, on the whole, a smaller section of the middle classes, and he justifiably feels that he would not be a true servant of the people if he chose the former alternative.

As for corruption, the choice, again, is to be made between dishonesty and corruption attending uncontrolled and controlled markets respectively. The former allows unscrupulous and heartless money-makers to enter into a race for profiteering, and rich and selfish consumers to stock goods far beyond all reasonable needs. The result is that prices rise to soaring heights and an intenser famine is created artificially for the people of limited means.

The corruption resulting from controls has been repeatedly stressed and confessed. But the other corruption is worse and more difficult to check than this. The evils of corruption, Government may hope to reduce, by removing the defects of administration, as more and more experience is gained. Shri Nehru has sought public co-operation in the matter.

After mature consideration, the sponsors of the Shuddha Vyavahara Movement have come to the conclusion that the only way to ensure social justice and to create conditions of *Sarvodaya* — well-being of all — is through the practice of honesty by every one of us. Good moral life means controlled life. If we do not voluntarily put controls on ourselves, a *guru*, religion, society or government endeavouring for the

welfare of the people will impose exterior controls. The sanctions of each of them might differ. Exterior controls being rough and crude and liable to be wrongly applied in a complicated society, are bound to create an amount of hardship and discontent to one or another section of the people. Voluntary and self-imposed controls, on the other hand, will bring contentment, if not abundance of wealth, to the practitioner himself as well as to the society. *Shuddha Vyavahara* is another term for creating self-imposed controls.

In this connection, public services and traders play the most important role. They form an influential pair acting on one side, the other party being the poor-class consumers and a small number of conscientious dealers.

Between the services and the traders, none may say that the corruption of the one is responsible for the corruption of the other. Their contribution to corruption is equal and originates from both the sides, like a clap of the two hands. And though the trader possesses the means of corruption, it is the public servant who wields the power to straighten the trader, however rich and influential he might be. Not even all the wealth of a multi-millionaire can save him from punishment if ministers and public servants are fearless, incorruptible and incapable of being influenced by personal considerations.

Ministers have no excuse for coming under the influence of wealth, either by shielding them or helping them to secure favoured treatment. They have no excuse for being corrupt. Even servants of low grades are on the whole better paid and more securely placed in life than men of their own rank, ability and education outside the service. They are maintained for rendering the same kind of service to their countrymen as that by those known as "national workers" like the members of the constructive *Sanghs*, the Servants of India Society and similar institutions. They can lead a life of contentment and service and earn the respect of the public, without the worry of the "national workers" about funds, regular payments of salaries and other hard conditions of life.

Service under foreign rulers had denationalized public servants and made their patriotic feelings and sympathy for their own nationals blunt. Such temptations were held out before them that their prosperity improved proportionately to their disloyalty and disservice to the nation. The autocratic governments of the Indian States also nourished the same habits. All sense of shame in accepting bribes, *inams*, *bakshis* etc. disappeared, and, indeed, public servants began to look upon such payments as their legitimate fees. Such has been the tragedy of Indian public service under foreign and autocratic government.

But all that should go now. Independence has given them an advantage, over all other people. No other section of the people has reaped the benefits of independence as they. They hold the key to improve or mar the condition of the people. If they rise to the occasion, set a high standard of honesty and perform their duty without favour, fear, or expectation of illegitimate rewards, traders and other sections of the people also will have to improve.

I request every public servant to ponder deeply and seriously over this matter. Riches might bring them more comforts, but fulness of life, never.

Wardha, 19-7-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

A STORY AND ITS MORAL

A small Bengali story book came into my hands. There was only one story of a boy in it. It was like this. The orphan boy's maternal uncles were boatmen and his paternal uncles were peasants. Both tried to win over the boy Phatke to their occupations. The boy actually got himself apprenticed for some time to each of them and picked up efficiency in both the professions. But his mind was not in any of them. He used to slip away now and then and was often found in the company of snake-charmers enjoying their feats. One day both his uncles were together arguing out their cases for their own professions before the boy. The boy was hearing patiently. Suddenly a big cobra crept out hissing towards the group. The uncles took to their heels. But the boy sprang forward and chanting *mantras* caught hold of the cobra by the head and disarmed it of its fangs.

The story has a moral for constructive workers. Is not this 'running into the mouth of violence and checkmating it', a thing to be cultivated by constructive workers? Violence, in all its shapes, subtle and crude, is stalking about. The freshness and the tact for tackling violence born out of simple love and faith are worth the risk they carry with them.

Gandhiji played all his life with violence and braved the noble risk!

GOPABANDHU CHAUDHARY

SHRI VINOBA AT SHIVARAMPALLI

VII

April 9 — morning : Punjab and U. P. workers

Vinobaji opened the discussion. "Large gatherings and conferences hardly provide any chance for personal contacts. Hence this programme of meetings with provincial workers. It is personal contact that is important in influencing life. It happens at times that we meet a person for the first time, and at the very sight of him, we feel as if we had been old friends — of a past birth. In the Dhulla Jall, I had several experiences of this nature. Shri Sane Guruji and I met there for the first time. But in the very first meeting both of us felt as if we had been companions of a past life. Even the sight of the virtuous is sanctifying."

Then giving his reason for inviting them to his own camp Vinobaji said, "If you drink water at a *piou* (charitable water-stand), it is believed that the founder of the water-stand gets a share in your good deeds (*punya*). That is the selfish reason for my inviting you here."

Referring to his speech of the previous day, Vinobaji sought to clear the doubt some workers entertained about the success of the Sarvodaya Samaj without an organization. He did not desire to organize the Samaj according to current methods. But he had no doubt that the free type of organization which they aimed at, could become the widest and the strongest institution. If their organization was spontaneous and unartificial, it would be more intense than the present-day organizations. It could not be said, Vinoba observed, that the loyalty of Shivaji's free soldiers was in any way inferior to that of the present-day soldiers. Love and respect had the power to command such loyalty. Hence love alone should tie them to one another. The absence of a regular organization allowed them greater latitude in their work. If, after mutual consultation and deliberation, they applied themselves to working out their principles, their organization would be spontaneous and yet deep-rooted.

Vinobaji wanted them also to be clear in their views about methods of carrying on propaganda. The present age had made several ways and means of speedy propaganda available to organizers of activities. But they carried only words, and did not move life, which life alone could do.

In this connection, he referred to the village of Sakhi Krishnapur (in M. P.) where he had encamped for a day on his way to Shivarampalli. It was just possible, Vinoba said, that Sri Chaitanya might have halted there on his way to Pandharpur, and the people who came under his influence might have called the place after him (*Sakhi-Krishna*, i.e. Krishna's Chum, as Chaitanya was called). Similarly, Namdev had gone to the Panjab from Maharashtra and had influenced Nanak and Mira. Those were the days of foot journeys. They did not visit any place more than once. Shankaracharya captured the heart of some one or other wherever he went. The true way of spreading ideas was like one lamp lighting another. But today people flew in the planes and believed that thereby they were carrying on a speedy propaganda. Papers printed the news in stream-line headings, with photos and cartoons. But this mode of publicity had no permanent value. Moreover, whether it was a newspaper, or any other weapon, it was owned by the capitalist, and he had attained a high degree of proficiency in its employment. Hence, if the workers tried to imitate him and meet him with his own weapon, he would always beat them. They must, therefore, evolve their own means, such as would defeat his methods.

"On the very first day, I had said that I had walked all the way from Wardha for *satsanga* (company of the good and the virtuous) and for a conference of hearts, which alone are the true objects of this Conference. I know of no more effective means for spreading our message than the company of the virtuous and meeting of the hearts.

"It is my faith that if we make any resolution (*sankalpa*) at the prayer-time, the idea will receive more publicity, spread to a greater extent among the people, occupy a firmer place in our own minds and have a lasting effect on our lives."

This introductory speech was followed by questions. The first to be asked was the perennial one: "Will the village industries survive in this machine age?"

"Well asked," at once came the reply. "The issue is not between village industries and machines, but between life and matter. I have been staying at Paunar for so many years. The train passes by from a short distance, and the river flows in front of my eyes day after day. But neither the train lifts me up to make me sit in it, nor does the river come up to my residence to drown me. You say 'the machine has come'. I ask, has it come, or has it been brought? Does it come and ask you to set it working? It can work only when we want to work it. Even the Prime Minister now doubts how far it is proper to go after this mechanization. This doubt of his is like a drop of nectar in the current of that ideology."

"If you ask me about the future, let me tell you that it is non-violence which will come to stay. The whole world is moving towards it. The more the world marches towards world war, the more does it advance towards non-violence. You all know the maxim अहिंसा परमो धर्मः। (Non-violence is the greatest rule of conduct); but I want to tell you that non-violence is not merely the greatest *dharma*, or merely the best *dharma*, but it alone is *dharma*."

April 9—evening: Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Madhya Bharat workers

The question of converting the Sarvodaya Samaj into an organized body was raised once again. "Despite your views about an organization, we do have a doubt—whether something should not be done to string together all the workers in an institution, like pearls in a necklace?"

"Surely," replied Vinobaji, "but the thread will not be one of institutional rules but that of love. You must realize that ours is quite a different way, and that it is on this way alone that we should tread. I hinted at this in my yesterday's speech. The ultimate foundation of an organization is a rule, an order, which must be obeyed because it is an order. It presupposes disciplinary action in case of disobedience; but where compliance is voluntary, if people act up to a suggestion, they do so deliberately. The force that will be accumulated thus will be as its basis moral, not physical."

Referring to a suggestion for abolishing the numerous different religions, Vinobaji asked, "until we have not established a non-violent society, shall we take the risk of destroying the non-violent influence of these religions? When we commit a sin, we feel like expiating for it; that means, there is some power that is ruling over us. But that power is non-violent and our acceptance of it is wholly voluntary. Buddhism spread into the world, not through power. It failed to spread in India because it aligned itself with power. Religion rules because it has a non-violent control over the hearts of people. *Sarvodaya* also is going to rule over the minds of the people on its own merits. I have not the least doubt on this point."

Q.: But do you not think that the work of the Sarvodaya Samaj should be conducted on the lines of the old religions and sects?

Vinoba: Analogies, at times, make an idea more cloudy. You have referred to old religions. But to give a modern example, do you mean to say that the Sarvodaya Samaj should become a sect of the type of the Arya Samaj?

Q.: Quite so.

Vinoba: Then we shall be the losers. Maybe that the fanaticism of the early Arya Samajists might have achieved something in the beginning; but now the institution has become stagnant. It is, however, clear that you want an organization in some form or another. We have one such

already in the Sarva Seva Sangh. An organization is not necessary so far as the propagation of the Sarvodaya ideology is concerned, because after all in an organization, there is a possibility of dissensions and jealousies. We are not out to become sectarians. We shall injure our cause if tomorrow we inculcate a feeling that one who belongs to the Sarvodaya Samaj must read a chapter daily from a 'Holy Book' prescribed by us. Gandhiji never followed that path. He took the cream of all Culture.

D. M.

PALM GUR INDUSTRY

(By L. Vaidyanathan)

I congratulate the Central and the State Governments, their Palm-gur Adviser, Shri Gajanan Naik and the band of workers trained by them for organizing an excellent rural and cottage industry. Shri Naik deserves special commendation. His is a selfless service and a work of love. He is the only man in the Government of the country who renders service in return of food and raiment only. His example must be an eye-opener to many in and outside the official ranks.

The beauty of this industry is that it will always be carried on a decentralized basis and is not likely to develop into a centralized large-scale industry. But, if sugar manufacture is attempted, the whole of the palm-gur may be diverted to feed the white-sugar mills in their off season. That danger has to be averted.

The *gur* should be extracted from the juice of all the palms—the dates, the palmyra, the coconut and the sago. The *gur* from any one of these four classes is any day better than *gur* from sugar-cane in point of vitamin C nutrition content and *gur* is always preferable to white sugar whose consumption is unfortunately becoming the fashion of the day.

A comparative study should be made of the food values of these palm flowers and fruits and the method of their preservation and utilization in non-producing seasons.

Some trees yield good juice while others abound in good fruits. These two varieties may be kept apart and developed according to their natural capacity.

Researches carried on at my request show that *gur* from date palms excels *gur* produced from other sources, that with more scientific refining agents the loss of minerals and nutrition is greater and that ripe palmyra fruits resemble rice in several respects and form a substitute food, both for cattle and human beings.

If this industry should become a permanent feature in the economy of the nation, prohibition should be introduced throughout the country at an early date. Both *gur*-making and toddy-drinking cannot co-exist in the country. The earlier it is realized, the better is it for the country.

BASIC EDUCATION

By Mahatma Gandhi

Pages viii+114 Price Re 1-8-0 Postage etc. 4 as.

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE

Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD

HARIJAN

July 28

1951

THE CONGRESS MANIFESTO

I

The Congress has published its election manifesto. The principal purpose of such manifestos is to win the voters to the side of the party issuing it. It is a promissory note payable by instalments during the next term of power, if the party is successful. Its second purpose is to inform would-be candidates and future representatives of the people, of the programme which the party will be expected to carry out if it was called upon to form a government.

Voters are like shareholders, and parties are like candidates for the Managing-Directorship of a huge venture. Each party seeks to get the office, and may naturally be expected to give a glowing picture of the good deeds it will perform if it is allowed an opportunity.

From this standpoint, the Congress manifesto must be regarded as having been drawn with moderation and restraint. It does not make extravagant promises, which cannot be fulfilled in a democratic manner. The promises held out by the manifesto are capable of being made good if an honest attempt is made, if the country gives the Government full co-operation, if all persons including government servants play their full part, and if no unforeseen calamity intervenes.

The manifesto confesses that "the objectives of the Congress, which have been embodied in the Constitution of India, still remain, in a large measure, unrealized." Upon this task, the Congress wants to concentrate its energies hereafter. In doing so, "subject only to the maintenance of the freedom and integrity of the country", it wants to give first priority to India's economic progress. The method for doing so will be "one of co-operation and the avoidance, as far as possible, of competition and conflict and in conformity with a definite plan".

Rural India

The first important item of the plan is that stress will be "laid on the progress of the rural areas and the people who live there." The manifesto discloses that the Congress is conscious of the fact that "they (the rural areas) contain the vast majority of our population and are the basis of our economy," and that "they have suffered neglect in the past and this must be made good." For this purpose, the first and vital step under contemplation is the casting away of "old and out-of-date agrarian systems of tenure," and their re-casting on a new pattern.

"The line of advance (will be) co-operative farming with the objective of making the whole village, or a substantial part of it, a unit of co-operative management."

The Congress also realizes that "the conditions of agricultural labour should be improved," and "opportunities for work and employment in small-scale and cottage industries should be afforded to them."

The Congress admits that while "some of them (villagers) can be absorbed in large industries, in the main the scope for absorption will come through small-scale and cottage industries." It further admits:

"These cottage industries are particularly important in India and must be developed and protected with the aid of the State and co-ordinated with other forms of industry."

But, perhaps in order not to raise false hopes in the minds of the workers of *khadi* and village-industries programmes of Gandhian institutions, it frankly informs:

"But it must always be borne in mind that the best techniques should be employed for small-scale and cottage industries in order to make them effective and economic."

Its method of dealing with cottage industries will be "to encourage research", and "to organize industrial co-operatives, wherever possible." But it has avoided any mention of the *charkha* and village industries. However, it is anxious to console the handloom weavers, and promises "to make special arrangements for the supply of adequate quantities of yarn to them." The manifesto does not throw away the *charkha* in so many words, but the hint is clear that the *charkha*, the *ghani*, the *chakki*, the *dhenki* and the like must not expect to get encouragement in the future Congress Government. I would like to be corrected if I am erring in inferring that whatever cottage industries people might like to engage themselves in, they must adjust themselves to large-scale industries of a similar character.

The Congress promises also to give greater attention to

"the preservation of *milk and draught cattle* and upgrading of cattle breeds.....for increasing the supply of milk and improvement of agriculture."

Large Industries

In regard to the large industries, the Congress does not accept the policy of *laissez faire*. Its policy has been "that basic industries should be owned or controlled by the State," and this will be "progressively given effect to. A large field for private enterprise is, however, left over. But the private sector must accept the objectives of the National Plan and fit into it." In this field the aim would be to develop co-operative enterprise on an increasing scale.

Although the basic industries are thus marked out for being taken over by the State, ultimately, the progress in this direction will depend upon various factors. This policy has not been accepted under the influence of a slogan or doctrine, but for the purpose of meeting specific problems of the people, and hence the pace will depend upon the consideration—what is good for the people under a particular set of circumstances.

Controls

The Congress manifesto is insistent upon controls as the only way of ensuring distribution of essential necessities to the poor at fair prices, and for keeping down prices.

"If prices have to be held and reduced, some measure of controlled distribution becomes essential. In the matter of food, the fate of millions of people is bound up with the presence of a nationwide system of controls. But for these controls, the threat of famine might have materialized in different parts of the country.

"We must endeavour to create conditions of relative abundance of articles which are necessary for the masses. As this happens, these controls can be progressively dispensed with. But till we have an adequate supply, we must co-operate to make the controls function more effectively. Hesitancy and opposition to controls themselves produce weakness in their working. It is true that controls have led to corruption. The way to deal with this is to make the controls effective and to improve their administration."

Not that I don't want prices to go down or to ensure fair distribution of essentials. But unfortunately I am unable to understand this attempt to keep down prices through G. O.'s. We are pursuing an economic order, which is based on profit-making, and in which an unstable and arbitrary currency is made to play the major part. The fundamental creed of profit-making is that every one engaged in an occupation should get more than what he has put into it. Nevertheless, our cherished desire is that we shall do this without exploiting any one, and without compelling every one to perform any productive labour whatever. Under the circumstances we can, at best, make only an intermittent and false show of cheap prices. That is to say, that though all prices, including those of controlled goods, must ultimately rise, some commodities could be made available for a while to a class of needy consumers at a less than their price in the free market. It is at its best a system similar to that of cheap-rate shops opened for the benefit of people in distress. The cheap rate would also increase but at a less rapid pace than the uncontrolled one. But in the long run, prices will never come down permanently even if there is abundance of goods. It must be accepted almost as an axiom, that production for profit, which means for trade and commerce, whether under State capitalism or private capitalism, can never bring down prices.

But the discussion of this principle cannot be carried further here. It must be accepted even by de-controllists that the imposition of controls is no excuse for black markets and corrupt practices. Good citizenship and honest life require upright conduct and utmost attempt to abide by the law, however irksome it might appear, on the part of every citizen.

Wardha, 16-7-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(To be continued)

A SORRY SPECTACLE

Leaders and newspapers announced the Bangalore Session of the A. I. C. C. as having achieved remarkable success in creating unity within the Congress. But hardly had the ink dried before the statement and resignations of Shri Kidwai and Shri Jain showed the position to be as bad as before. Every Congress paper frankly welcomed Shri Kidwai's resignation as a happy riddance. The Congress now faces the embarrassing situation which Shri Nehru has created for it by retaining them as Cabinet Ministers along with their leadership in the Praja Party and staunch opposition to the Congress headed by Shri Tandon.

It is difficult for us, members of the public, with little knowledge of the inner discords to appraise all these acts on their true merits. The public can judge only from what appears in the Press and it can take developments only as further indications of the deterioration that has entered the Congress. It cannot also help concluding that the decay has permeated the whole organization from top to bottom. Several ministers occupying the most important portfolios at the Centre and in the States must be spending the major part of their time, intelligence and energies, not in the discharge of their ministerial duties, but in these nasty manoeuvrings. Is the public to believe that a Welfare State will grow on the afforestation of these thorny and thick bushes of intrigues?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru seems like the proverbial Rajah with two Ranis—the senior though crowned, out of favour and the junior though unprivileged, a favourite one. Shri Kidwai, leader of the Praja Party, has also declared him his own leader and beloved friend. And of course he is also the acknowledged leader of the Congress and beloved of the nation. He has the unique honour (or the unenviable misfortune according to the way the situation is viewed) of being simultaneously the leader of the party in office and also of its opposition. However ludicrous the situation might seem to a mere spectator, to us whose fortunes are bound up with these leaders, it is as great a tragedy as were Kaikeyi's intrigues in the Court of Dasharatha to the people of Ayodhya.

Is all this sorry spectacle unavoidable? Self-immolation and straight thinking can improve the situation. May God grant it to every one of us.

Wardha, 25-7-'51

K. G. MASHRUWALA

AN ATHEIST WITH GANDHI

With Introduction by Shri K. G. Mashruwala

By Gora

(G. Ramachandra Rao)

Pages 55 Price Re 1 Postage etc. 3 as.

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
Post Box 105, AHMEDABAD

HIMALAYAN LESSONS

VII

Lessons and Impressions

In the beginning of July we had come up into the Himalayas saying we would test various places to see whether they would suit us. As time went by I began to see that we had made a big mistake in looking upon the Sacred Mountains from such a point of view, and I said to my companions, "It is not we who are testing the Himalayas, but the Himalayas who are testing us, and by the looks of things we are proving unfit! Unless we humble our minds and approach the Sacred Mountains as disciples before a mighty *Guru* we cannot expect to win favour." True to the characteristics of a great teacher the Himalayas demand continual hardship and self-sacrifice, and in return for that discipline they bring realization of man's physical nothingness and the limitless possibilities of his spiritual greatness.

As to our daily impressions of Tehri-Garhwal, they were deeply interesting and instructive. Wherever the motor roads have reached, serious deterioration in self-sufficiency and moral standards had set in, whereas beyond their baneful influence life is still comparatively self-contained, healthy and happy. Now, besides the motor-roads, has come another disintegrating influence, and that is the merging of the State into Uttar Pradesh. Whatever the shortcomings and limitations of the former rule may have been, it was at least Home Rule (*deshi*). Now, with the influx of lowland officials, and especially of the outside police and legal regulations, the peasantry feel themselves in the hands of a "foreign" power. The lowland officials naturally are not used either to the language or the customs and needs of the people; at the same time moving about in the mountains needs a tough highlander. Even with the best intentions it is not possible for a man from the plains to become thoroughly familiar with the mountains in the short time at his disposal. The custom of continually transferring Collectors and other Government officials from place to place, may have some advantages, but I think they are outweighed by the disadvantages, especially in a State like Uttar Pradesh, where there are such tremendous differences as between the mountains and the plains. I am told, also, that the Collectors' monthly touring programme has been curtailed. In the plains it may be possible for a Collector to dash in a car round his district in a shorter time than formerly, but here in the Himalayas the age-old pace of two to three miles an hour has remained the same. In any case, be it on the hills or the plains, anything which reduces the Collector's personal touch with his people and their surroundings is a bad thing. A good administrator is not the man who lives in his office, but the man who is out and about, and familiar with the land and the people whom he

has to guide and control. Formerly crime in Tehri-Garhwal was rare, and if such a thing as a murder or other serious offence took place, there was quick punishment. It may sometimes have been rather rough and ready, but it was certainly any day better than the present "legal" entanglements, as a result of which crime is now markedly on the increase. Formerly Tehri saw the matter through, but now a case can be dragged all the way to Lucknow. Naturally all this goes against the poor man, who succumbs in despair. A telling local comment on the situation is the interpretation of "merger" as *mar jana* (to die)! These matters give any thoughtful person a good deal of food for thought. My plea is that we should at all costs be honest with ourselves, and look things squarely in the face.

Tehri-Garhwal has immense scope for preservation and improvement of village industries and all-round self-sufficiency. The following figures, taken from the Administrative Report of the Tehri-Garhwal State, 1945-46, are of interest:

Population (1941)	..	4,00,184		
Plus (Migratory)	..	1,36,800		
Area	..	4,500	square miles	
Under cultivation	..	350	"	"
Forest	..	2,775	"	"
Snow	..	1,375	"	"

From this it can be seen that far and away the greatest wealth lies in the forests. The Government gains huge sums of money from this timber, but in return gives precious little to the villagers. Water channels and tanks, better mule-paths, and better and more bridges are a crying need. True, something is being done, but it should be on a much more lavish scale, and freed as far as possible from delaying red-tapism and *Panchayat* party politics. Every rupee spent by Government on water facilities will increase the food production of the country. From what I have seen so far, my impression is that there must be hundreds and thousands of untapped little springs and streams which, if harnessed and canalized, could be brought to the fields. These would each be small undertakings, capable of giving immediate results, and of being kept in repair by the villagers themselves. All the peasants need is help in capital expenditure and some technical guidance. With this encouragement they would also undoubtedly respond to intelligent propaganda for compost-making and better bunding of their terraced fields. If these things could be achieved the face of the countryside would be changed.

As I write these lines (May 1951), I am again in Tehri-Garhwal. This time away in the interior, up the Bhilangana Valley, 26 miles from the nearest motor road and 80 miles from the nearest railway. What a blessing!

Geonli, 19-5-'51

MIRA

(Concluded)

FAMINE CONDITIONS IN BIHAR

[Gandhiji often said that what the millions of starving and semi-starving people of India wanted was not charities and doles, but employment, and he placed the *charkha* before the nation. To meet the grave food situation in Bihar grains have now been rushed in fairly sufficient quantities by the Government. But the Government have since discovered that that action by itself is unable to give any relief to a considerable section of the starving people. The reason is that the people have not the money to purchase their rations even from *fair-price* shops. They need first some work which will give them the means of purchasing their necessities; and it is now admitted that there is not sufficient work for them. They did not realize this early. The following extract from a note prepared by Shri Puratan Buch of Sabarmati proves the truth of Gandhiji's statement that the *charkha* is the best insurance against famine in India. But the best insurance must also be safeguarded, even as securities of Insurance Companies are safe-guarded, in a careful manner. This is possible only if the manufacture of cloth is declared one of the "Reserved Industries" of India's villages, and the competition of the power-driven and large-scale manufacture is put to an end to. — K. G. M.]

Causes of Famine

Bihar is in the grip of a severe famine. People in the districts of Darbhanga, Purnia, Monghyr, Madhubani and Sarsa are on the verge of starvation. The chief causes responsible for creating this condition seem to be as follows according to the information I personally gathered after a tour in the famine-stricken areas of North Bihar:

- (1) Four crops have nearly failed, one after another during the last two years;
- (2) The little trade with Nepal which helped the Bihar peasant has ended affecting him badly economically;
- (3) The village trader is not in existence under the newly created conditions; so it hampers the otherwise easy economic approach to the villager;
- (4) The two big rivers Kosi, which is called the river of death, and Kamla, the river of sorrow, have played havoc in creating the present famine conditions in several districts of Bihar, as their flood water cuts off approach to thousands of small villages.

Economic Condition

A surprising fact which we came across during our tour in the affected areas was that no money economy existed in these villages. Villagers carried out their economic transactions mostly through barter. This fact was confirmed even by a Sub-Divisional Officer. So there is no trade in the modern sense of the term in the affected districts. In spite of the fact that ample food, cloth and medicine have reached most of the affected districts, all these things are lying unused in the godowns. The grave problem facing us all is how to create the purchasing capacity in these crores of poor people. It can be done only through providing some work for them. The temporary relief works prove useless in the rainy season and it provides the farmer with only a temporary purchasing capacity. The work to be provided must be of a permanent nature.

The Bihar Khadi Samiti has successfully proved this by expanding the hand-spinning activity in the affected areas with the help of the Government. Now it is for the people in general and the Government in particular to see that the things prepared by these famine-stricken brethren are consumed by them irrespective of the high prices. Bihar proves the fact beyond doubt that if we have to help the economically dying person, we must first of all give him some such work in his hut which would create in him the power to purchase his necessities of life. This is not a day's work. Not only that, we must also have a living faith in this rural economy which is based on human values and not on monetary values. Bihar can be helped to a permanent, normal and healthy

economic life only through the rural economy based on village handicrafts.

Temporary Relief Measures

The farmer in the far off village is now faced with starvation and nakedness, as he has not the capacity to purchase the food, as well as the cloth and medicine. So, till we create his purchasing capacity, we have to provide him with these primary necessities of life free of charge. We have come across some farmers who refused to take food gratis, as they rightly think it below their dignity to do so. It is a factor which would bring about a general moral degradation among the masses. But, we persuaded the people not to take the foods gratis, but only as a temporary relief measure. The people of other provinces as well as the Governments have to seriously keep in mind that we have to tide over a calamity of the first magnitude like the one that had occurred in Bengal, taking a heavy toll of life. We must rush help to Bihar in kind and coin without any delay or discussion of political propaganda. Volunteers with zeal should go to the help of the starving and half-naked people of Bihar leaving aside their political ideologies. We were shocked to find that political rivalry is playing its part and endangering the lives of millions of Biharis. We regretfully submit that this shameful attitude should not exist and human suffering should not be exploited for political ends. Let us be first good human beings and then bad politicians, so that the human factors may not be altogether forgotten while playing a political game.

People's Condition

Bihar villagers live in huts made out of bamboo walls and grass roof. The only possession is a few earthen pots. Their emaciated bodies are clothed in rags. The children are mostly naked. All people are hunger-stricken. Their eyes have sunk and faces have gone fearfully pale. We saw some families where many had succumbed to cholera. We came across children suffering from small-pox. We also saw that there was nobody to attend to these ailing millions except a batch of six Buddha Medical Mission men. Men, women and children have become only living skeletons. They are found wandering here and there in crowds in search of food.

The recent rains have already cut off all the available communications with many of the villages, so we could not visit such places. But, we could realize the enormous difficulty which is facing us in providing those village people with food, as they are surrounded by flood waters. The Bihar Government has sanctioned free rations only to one per cent. The Government is re-considering this rule after which more people will get free rations. But, voluntary help is also inevitable looking to the vast problem we are facing. Philanthropic persons as well as institutions should rise to the occasion and redress the difficult situation by helping the needy in Bihar.

Public Works

Total number of man-days' work provided:	13,44,000
	Estimated cost
	in rupees
(a) Number of Medium Irrigation Schemes sanctioned and taken—554	15,25,000
(b) Number of Medium Irrigation Schemes under execution—2	28,141
(c) Number of D.B. & L.B. Roads taken up—82	4,98,199

King's Canal Project:

Total Number of Labourers employed daily—3,200	17,00,000
--	-----------

Charkha Relief

(a) Estimated number of Spinners	23,000
(b) Amount advanced to Sanchalak, of Bihar Khadi Samiti, Madhubani	50,000
(c) Amount disbursed to Spinners	41,777

PURATAN BUCH

BLOW TO JUTE COTTAGE INDUSTRY

(By Satishchandra Dasgupta)

For some time past the Indian Jute Mills Association prices or market prices of jute twine have been less than the price of raw jute : e.g. on 30-5-'51, the prices for raw jute and twine were as follows :

Raw jute - Rs 105 per maund.
Twine - Rs 83 per maund.

This is adversely affecting what little is left of cottage spinning of jute for household requirements, such as ropes for tethering cattle or household repairs, fencing etc. The jute cultivator now finds it more paying to sell out the little jute stock he has for household purposes and buy jute twine instead and make a profit thereby. He remains idle to the extent he does so. Non-jute-growers who used to buy jute for household purposes, similarly find it cheaper to buy twine than raw jute.

This is to explain how the lower price of jute twine *vis-a-vis* the raw jute price affects employment in cottages.

The writer asked the Minister of Commerce & Industry, New Delhi, to take up the matter and investigate why it is so and how long it is to continue. But there has been no response to it. Maybe that the jute twine is now being sold at less than the price of raw jute, because of its being manufactured from raw jute stock bought cheaper. In that case the levy of an excise duty over jute twine to raise its price to make it accord with the price of raw jute in accordance with the parity ratio that existed, for example, during October and November of 1950 is called for.

The levy of such excise duty or cess is a Central matter. Extra Sales-tax may be levied by West Bengal State also to correct the position.

The matter affects the whole of India wherever jute twine made from raw jute is used for home consumption. It particularly affects jute-growing States, besides Bengal, such as Bihar, Orissa, U. P., Madras etc.

The state of affairs as it stands is an instance of the way in which cottage industries are allowed to be systematically killed without a drop of tear from the Government.

(Note: The trick of driving out a competitor from the field by underselling him is not unknown to trade. After he is ruined prices are again raised and even to an extent higher than ever before. This is done particularly where the competitor cannot be admitted into the ring of the rest of the trade. It is possible that the Jute Industry is deliberately selling twine at a price less than the price of jute in order to capture the village market. Once the villager loses the habit of preparing the twine at home, it is not easily re-introduced as we know perfectly well in respect of spinning, weaving of hand-spun yarn, grinding flour, and *ghani* oil. The machine-made twine after it has once entered the villager's home may be expected to stay on, even if the price is raised to three times its present level.

The villager finds himself in the position that he cannot do without the twine, and his muscles have lost the skill and training of doing it himself, and he cannot afford to have a twisting machine. Thus a home industry is done to death. Only a Government acting as a jealous guardian of its people can prevent this ruin of the villager.

— K. G. M.)

SARVA SEVA SANGH

A meeting of the members of the Sarva Seva Sangh was held at Wardha on 6th and 7th July 1951. The following are a few important items of its work :

1. *Shanti Sena* : Shri Kaka Kalelkar was requested to draw up a scheme for an All-India Shanti Sena organization for consideration at the next meeting (Resolution 1).
 2. *Gandhi Smarak Nidhi Grants* : Instructions were laid down about the commencement of the financial year of the various departments and Sanghs, and for submission of budgets, accounts, payments of grants etc. (Resolution 2).
 3. *Advisory Committees* : Resolution 4 of 5-1-'51 about the formation of Advisory Committees was modified so as to allow the inclusion of expert persons interested in a particular department only, but not in others, and hence not entitled to be regarded as associate workers. The restriction on the number of members of such Committees was also dropped (Resolution 4).
 4. *Exemption from Income-Tax* : It was resolved that attempts should be made to obtain exemption from income-tax to donors on their donations to the Sarva Seva Sangh (Resolution 7).
 5. *Shuddha Vyavahar (Honest life) Movement* : This subject was discussed at the Sarva Seva Sangh meeting on 15-7-'51, and also at Shivarampalli in the Sarvodaya Samaj Conference. This meeting took note of the beginnings made at Bombay, Wardha and a few other places. The Sarva Seva Sangh approved of this movement and appealed to the public in general, and the constructive institutions, their workers, and the members of the Sarvodaya Samaj in particular, to adhere to *shuddha vyavahara* (honest life) and ask others to do so both individually and co-operatively.
- The Sarva Seva Sangh was of opinion that it was difficult for this movement to succeed without the co-operation of public servants. The honesty of the general public depended a good deal on the integrity and honesty of public officers. At this particular and critical period of our life, the purity of public servants was of utmost importance. Hence, it was the duty of all Government Cabinets to give particular attention to the maintenance of high standards of purity and duty in their services (Resolution 10).
6. *The Sarva Seva Sangh and Politics* : The question was discussed and Shri Kaka Kalelkar and Kishorlal Mashruwala were requested to draw up a draft resolution for being circulated among the members, who were to meet again on 29th July 1951.

CONTENTS	PAGE
TO PUBLIC SERVANTS AND	
TRADERS .. K. G. Mashruwala	185
A STORY AND ITS MORAL .. Gopabandhu Chaudhary	186
SHRI VINOBA AT	
SHIVARAMPALLI—VII .. D. M.	186
PALM GUR INDUSTRY .. L. Vaidyanathan	187
THE CONGRESS	
MANIFESTO—I .. K. G. Mashruwala	188
A SORRY SPECTACLE .. K. G. Mashruwala	189
HIMALAYAN LESSONS—VII .. Mira	190
FAMINE CONDITIONS IN	
BIHAR .. Puratan Buch	191
BLOW TO JUTE COTTAGE	
INDUSTRY .. Satishchandra Dasgupta	192
SARVA SEVA SANGH ..	192