The Congress Manifesto – II

Reg. No. B3092

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XV. No. 23 AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 1951 TWO ANNAS

SHRI VINOBA AT SHIVARAMPALLI
VIII

April 10 — morning: Tamilnad, Malabar, Karnatak and Andhra workers.

After a brief introduction of workers, and a few words of request to give them guidance by a member or two Vinobaji began by explaining how he decided to undertake his foot-tour. As to guidance, he said that it was always available, if desired, but the fact was that he did not receive reports of the work that they were doing, except from a few workers. It was in their own interest, to send reports, because writing out a report would make them meditate on their acts. A person who did not write, cared still less to read. *Karma* (physical work), if not accompanied by meditation, made a man a robot. *Karma* is different from *Karma-Yoga* (spiritualized and methodical performance of work). When a man puts his soul into his *karma* and meditates on it while doing it, it becomes *Karma-Yoga*. In the absence of this, the minds of the workers lag behind, and dullness consists in lagging behind mentally. Hence, a person must retire every day for some time from the daily routine and note down his thoughts. He should also read and study regularly for some time. This is indispensable now after Swaraj. It is also necessary that workers should have mutual consultations among themselves side by side with their studies and meditation. Vinoba asked them to remember the verse of the *Gita*,

मच्चित्ता मद्गतप्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥

(With their mind and their activities immersed in Me, counselling one another, and always speaking of Me, they get contentment and joy.)

He believed that they did put in all their energy to the work that they were doing; but the *Gita* gave them a special and wholesome injunction of counselling and conferring mutually. Conferring with one another was an essential part of *bhakti* (devotion). Its absence was not desirable, and he regretted that there was not sufficient thought-sharing among workers. Some of them did not think much of it. They were *workers*, they would say, and had regularly plied their *takli* for twenty years. Indeed, they span their *taklis* but they did not use the new instruments that had been introduced from time to time. Gandhiji used to spin for half an hour only, but within that half hour, he made so many experiments in spinning. "He once asked me what the highest speed in *takli*-spinning should be. I told him that the Ashram had scored a speed of two hundred yards per half hour, but the average good speed was reckoned at a hundred and sixty yards within half an hour. He tried to improve his speed and added about eight to ten yards to his former speed; but how he used to be engrossed in that work!"

At this stage, Vinobaji's voice broke down for a while. Evidently, the image of Gandhiji engrossed in working upon the *takli* stood before his eyes, and his throat was choked. But he soon controlled himself and continued:

"Work done in this way no more remains work but is transformed into worship.

"We spin but neglect to do all that is necessary to do side by side with spinning. It is we alone, — I mean our inertia, — that is responsible for the failure of the *charkha* to spread in the country. It is on account of this that the Communists get the 'line clear'."

Along with meditation, study and mutual conferring, it was also necessary, Vinoba said, to hold *kathas* (beneficial discourses etc.) in every village. It should not be as if the workers knew nothing else except spinning. Otherwise, they would lag behind, and become dull. Gandhian literature has practically not entered Andhra. The few books that had been published, sold because their author happened to be ndhiji. There was also an utter lack of imagination i hese publications. Even such books as were publishe years ago had not gone through a second edition yet. They had to be alert in this respect. He had been writing these days in the columns of the *Sarvodaya*. The thoughts must spread to every village. They supplied a necessary food to the workers.

"The *Sarvodaya* is dear (costly)," a worker who was once at Maganwadi complained. Vinobaji answered that at least the questioner could not regret that fact, since it was published on hand-made paper, which was always 'dear' (beloved) to a Maganwadi worker. But, leaving aside the *Sarvodaya*, workers did not read or propagate even Gandhiji's writings.

Vinoba said that he did not look upon the quantity of work, which they executed, as a sufficient test of their worth. In order to grow strong, faith in an activity requires study and meditation. From a little talk with them, he could see that they were in great need of increasing their study, without which proper thinking was not possible. They knew that their Ministers did not find sufficient leisure to think on the problems that faced them from day to day; and had to rely upon their secretaries, who did the thinking for them. It was a state of affairs not free from risk.

Q.: How far should we go in maintaining our relations with the Socialists and the Communists so far as the constructive work was concerned?

Vinoba: To the extent of the goodness in them. When a house is on fire we do not enquire about the caste of either the owner of the house, or the quencher of the fire!

Q.: You have said that even a soldier in the army can become a member of the Sarvodaya Samaj. Will you please explain this?

Vinoba: Now, you are a Hindu, and I ask you as such, can a Hindu eat fish? If he can, then in the same way, a soldier can become a member of the Sarvodaya Samaj. Even a profligate, says the *Gita*, may become a man of God. That is the beauty of devotion. He who eats fish only in order to satisfy his appetite is a better devotee than he who relishes fruits with attachment and taste. Non-violence is our goal. Whosoever makes efforts to move towards that goal can join the Sarvodaya Samaj.

A friend then wanted to know Vinobaji's objectives in carrying on the experiments of self-sufficiency in agriculture.

"We have embarked upon this work for all possible purposes. Mathematician that I am, I aim to derive the fullest benefit from the smallest of tasks. Small talent yields small benefits. We have taken to agriculture, first to make improvements in it; secondly, to identify ourselves with the life of the farmers; thirdly, to introduce new things in their lives to enable them to live a fuller life; and fourthly, to free them from the slavery of the markets. All these things are not possible unless we ourselves take to agriculture. If a commune of, say, a hundred or two hundred persons makes experiments, in which the market is eliminated and a life complete in itself is demonstrated, villagers may also be expected to follow that example some day. There is one more purpose behind it and that is a fundamental one, namely to raise the dignity of body-labour and build up faith in it. People today do not wish to do any work themselves and want to exploit the labour of others. This exploitation can be stopped only when every one will work in the fields. According to my scheme every one should have to do some work in the fields. The carpenter, the professor and the magistrate — all must come into contact with nature.

Q.: Will every one be able to get land?

Vinoba: Surely, if we are prepared to accept the land which today we call fallow. It is up to us to transform a hunchback into a handsome figure.

Q.: But that will need money?

Vinoba: Not money, but the pick-axe.

Q.: But in the beginning, for some days, at least for a year, provision will have to be made for the beginners, because land does not yield crops from the very beginning, and people cannot be expected to work without food.

Vinoba: If I shall have to starve even after putting in eight hours' work, I shall prefer to die by such starvation. People will not have to take the trouble of cremating my body, which will conceal itself in the ditches of the farm.

April 10 — evening: Gujarat, Saurashtra and Bombay workers.

In his introductory speech Vinobaji expressed his delight at meeting them. In fact, he had himself wanted to see them. They knew that he was not a propagandist. If he had been one, he would not have let his youth pass without doing any propaganda for himself. But he believed that he would not have achieved his self-development if he had not lived the way he had been doing till then — away from the public eye.

He had always considered himself to be a Gujarati, Vinoba continued. "The *guru* has a greater claim over a disciple than his father. Gujarat has a similar claim over me, although, I have not acknowledged any, either as my *guru* or my disciple."

Recollecting his memories of the Sabarmati Ashram, Vinobaji said that generally he used to teach Sanskrit in the Ashram. But, later, upon a demand from students he had to teach Gujarati also until he went over to Wardha. Thereafter he maintained his contact with Gujarat through the *Navajivan* and the *Harijan-bandhu*. Although, he rarely got occasion to speak Gujarati thereafter, and his practice of it was not great, he still regarded himself a Gujarati. "Out of this feeling of identity I was tempted to speak these few words by way of introduction. Now I am at your disposal, and you are free to put me questions if any."

The atmosphere of the meeting was transformed into a domestic gathering, and friends did not at once know what really they had to ask. But they had some very living doubts, and ultimately one of them broke the silence and asked, "The disagreement between the Government and the Congress is growing, and it has become a matter of everyday talk that the Congress has deteriorated. Will you give us your opinion?"

Vinobaji counter-asked, "Does not the tongue stay in the midst of the teeth? It can do so because the function of the teeth is different from that of the tongue. Similarly, if we realize that the function of the Government is different from that of ours, there will be no clash between the Government and us. Not that there will be no occasion of working together. That is why I have given the simile of the tongue.

"Let me give you an example. We are doing some work among the Meos. The Government does not act as we would have it. However, they have slowly carried out about 80 per cent of the scheme. About 20 per cent is still pending. But whatever they have done has been done slowly. It has caused much harm and has put our patience to test."

Hence, Vinoba's advice was that there should be selfless servants of the people, who by rendering their service from a high moral level would serve as a link between the Government and the people. It was absolutely necessary to discriminate between what pertained to the Government, and what their own work was, and to carefully bear in mind the limitations of each. Both could thus be helpful to each other. If thereupon occasions arose where they had to protest against Government their protest would carry great weight.

Then followed the question about the *Sarvodaya* scheme of the Bombay Government. It may be mentioned here that the Bombay Government have reserved some funds for doing constructive work at Government level, and have been successful in obtaining the co-operation of responsible constructive workers. The question raised was whether it was proper for constructive workers to join the *Sarvodaya* scheme of the Government.

"There is no harm," said Vinobaji; "you can remain there, so long as you feel that you do not lose your freedom to work. There is no objection to some people joining that scheme, but some must remain outside. The Government scheme has its limitations, and workers must possess the ability to work within limitations also. They can resign if they feel that they do not get sufficient freedom to work. I have not myself worked on any Government committee, nor in any Government scheme, nor have I advised my nearabout workers to do so. Government organizations are not based on the practice of austerity. The worker, who goes there, gets an opportunity of leading a life of ease and comfort. Hence, we want men who, if they go there, shall live like Janaka (the philosopher king); while those who stay outside should be like Shuka (the philosopher hermit). But at present we have neither Janakas to go there nor Shukas to stay here."

Q.: Should we accept the help given by the Government for the *khadi* self-sufficiency programme?

Vinoba: I am told that even those who were producing their own *khadi* when no such aid was given have been taking advantage of this help. If it is so, you yourselves can judge how far those who do so are doing good to themselves. How can *khadi* profit through such unmerited donations?

Q.: What precautions should be taken in this connection?

Vinoba: Such gifts do not help but injure our cause. What the Government should do is to bear the cost of teaching spinning to all. I had placed a scheme before the Government. If a war breaks out tomorrow, it will not be possible for the mills to provide the necessary cloth. It is therefore essential that spinning should be universally taught as a preservative war-measure. Only a fifty *lakh* people out of a population of thirty-five crores know spinning. How do you expect to solve the problem of cloth in this way? It is therefore necessary that at least one-fourth of the people know spinning.

Q.: According to your scheme, yarn worth one crore of rupees will be produced daily. That means worth

360 crore rupees per year. Do you think that it can be sold ?

"Those who have an international outlook will easily appreciate my point," said Vinobaji. Obviously, the suggestion was that in case of war there would be such a heavy international demand on the mill-cloth, as to leave the field open for *khadi* within the country. However, if they did not wish to take that step as a war measure, they might well go on with their mills, said Vinnobaji. Workers need not feel concerned about it, nor be afraid of it, because they had their own *khadi* scheme for it. *Khadi* which had successfully rooted out the British rule would also overthrow the mills. Vinoba then suggested that if they wanted to create an atmosphere for *khadi*, the Government should declare that they were in favour of *khadi*. The Congress also should speak in favour of *khadi*. Then the people would feel that *khadi* was wanted. It was not a question of offering or donating one's labour in the form of yarn. If a person span for himself, and used the cloth made out of his yarn, that itself was a donation of labour. When people desired to donate the fruits of their labour to him, he told them that if they span for themselves he would reckon it as donated to him.

Then followed a question on elections. Whom should they vote for, if the Congress put up candidates who did not live up to the principles for which the Congress stood ?

Vinoba: Before Swaraj we used to exhort the people to vote for the Congress irrespective of the qualities of the candidate. We did so because at that time the Congress was the only institution which fought the British Government. Any stone then became a deity by the mere application of red lead; but now after Swaraj any stone won't do. Only such stones can be selected as are useful for installation. This was our test in the selection of the members for the Constituent Assembly and that is why we made provision for men like Drs. Ambedkar and Jaykar. Congressmen, therefore, should select only good candidates and the voters also should vote for the good ones.

Q.: But how would you define a good candidate ?

Vinoba: I shall give you an exact and proper definition like that given by Euclid. He must know his job, be impartial, be able to make his contribution to the work assigned to him and, last but not the least, there should be absolutely no doubt about his integrity. But, why do you presume that the Congress will select bad candidates ?"

A friend wanted clarification. He put his difficulty thus: In a Government, loyalty to the party is an important matter. Hence, such candidates alone can be selected who will be loyal to their party. And if you go out of your way to vote for a Socialist, because he is a good man, he may not help us in the work of propagating *khaddar*.

Vinoba: Any Government will help in such work, because at the Government level *khadi* work becomes one of giving relief and not of creating a revolution. If you want to uproot the mills, it is a different question. Then it is a revolutionary programme, and you may not expect any help from the Government.

Q.: In selecting a candidate should we consider the question of rewarding his services ?

Vinoba: When the choice is between ability and reward, the reward may be made, but not in the form of a seat in the Assembly, but in the form of assistance; and such reward must be given by the society. For instance, where his family members had to undergo hardships, such assistance by the society is but proper."

And the last question was to know from Vinobaji the tests whereby a *sevak* of the Sarvodaya Samaj might be judged.

Vinoba: The *sevak* of the Sarvodaya Samaj is a free man. He may do any work, provided he can swear and say to himself that he is not swerving from truth and non-violence.

D. M.

NOTES

A Correction

Referring to my article "What is Secular ?" (*Harijan*, 7-7-'51), Shri Ghanashyamsinha Gupta, Speaker, M. P. Legislative Assembly, draws my attention to the fact that nowhere in the Constitution of India has the word *secular* been used as an adjective of 'State'. This means that the statement that India is a secular State is a popular phraseology and not a legal one. He, however, agrees with my explanation of the term as given in that article.

The words *secular activity* occur in art. 25 of the Constitution. The meaning there is clearly 'temporal'.

Wardha, 20-7-'51 K. G. M.

The Case against B. C. G.

Time of June 4, 1951 thus summarizes the points made by Prof. Jay Arthur Myers, TB authority at the University of Minnesota :

> 'Since an ordinary attack of TB does not produce dependable immunity, there is no basis for hoping that a mild, artificial infection can do so.
>
> 'The bacilli in the vaccines often are so weakened that they soon die, having had no effect, or are so virulent that they actually cause tuberculosis.
>
> Such induced tuberculosis is mild at first and may stay dormant for years, then flare up as a serious disease.
>
> 'Those vaccinated with BCG give a positive reaction to tuberculine afterwards; hence this test for the presence of tuberculosis is useless in their case.
>
> 'The greatest decreases (in TB) and the lowest mortality rates have occurred in places where BCG has not been used. In Denmark where it has been extensively used, the death rate was cut in 30 years from 174 to 30 per 100,000 but in Iceland with similar people and conditions it has been cut in 20 years from 203 to 26 without BCG. In Rio de Janeiro the death rate has dropped among unvaccinated adults but increased among BCG-vaccinated infants.'

V. G. D.

By Mahatma Gandhi

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HARIJAN

August 4 1951

THE CONGRESS MANIFESTO

II

We resume the examination of the Congress Manifesto.

Scientific Research

It asserts that "considerable progress has been made in the development of scientific research and the application of science to industry" and that this will be continued and adequate provision will be made for technical education, if the Congress returns to power. It is possible that this is so and will be so, but the public would have been benefitted if a few instances had been given to enable it to know the place and value of these researches and industries in the life of the masses. If technical science is to be applied for the purpose of peace and prosperity of all and for bringing down prices, the approach towards it must not be industrial application (in the sense of making it a profit-earning business), but for providing the people with better means of making use of the abundant nature surrounding them.

From this point of view, I regard the top-priority given to river-valley schemes as good on principle, though it is difficult to agree with Pandit Nehru saying that if you had to choose in a particular area, say between a river-valley scheme and prohibition, you should choose the former, and allow prohibition to come later when you have developed your resources better. I, for one, have no hesitation in saying that if the price of developing the river was the retardation of the development of the people even by a few years, I would give priority to the development of the people. But I believe this is merely a hypothetical position, and there is no real necessity of choosing the one or the other.

But there is another important factor associated with the river-valley schemes. Miscalculations and dishonesty practised in executing these schemes are said to have caused enormous preventable losses to the nation. Hence again, it is necessary to emphasize that not even a top-priority scheme is possible of achievement unless topmost priority is given to honesty, economic use of every material, prevention of every type of waste and careful surveys and calculations. All our excellent dreams of a prosperous and happy India will vanish like a mirage if these essential qualities are wanting.

The manifesto accepts the importance of maintaining high moral standards of public work, and admits that "various forms of corruption exist as social evils today". It declares a pious wish to put an end to these evils, and is in favour of devising some form of summary method to deal with such cases. I made a suggestion some time ago that once it was shown that a great loss or defalcation of money had taken place, or that the standard of living or economic condition of an office-holder or his relatives and friends had glaringly improved in an unknown manner, the burden of proving his honesty, innocence or non-negligence should be laid on him. No less an authority than Shri Gorwala, I understand, has endorsed this suggestion. The manifesto appears to disclose a similar approach. But where is the necessity of waiting till a new Parliament is summoned to purge this evil? Government can do so immediately, and if they begin with purifying their own cabinets and secretariats, that one step will make the country more blessed than all other good things put together. But the way in which every political party is trying to strengthen its organization and to add to its numbers, and the way in which recruitments and appointments to services are made leave little room for hoping that any great improvement will be made in this direction even after the elections.

Education

The manifesto does not reveal much insight into the subject of education. Though the new terminology, "basic education", "learning through a craft", "non-divorce from the productive aspect and other needs of the community" etc. has been employed, it is clear that the principle on which India's *Nai Talim* should be based has not been clearly grasped.

The paragraph on education concludes with the words,

> "Art and literature, music and drama, singing and dancing should be encouraged."

I dare say that this part of education is going to succeed fully well, and no Government effort beyond gracing such functions with their presence and inaugurating cinemas etc. would be necessary for its progress. Prohibition has not been mentioned at all in the manifesto. And in the course of the debate on the manifesto, Pandit Nehru rejected the suggestion to include it. He even said that it should not be introduced "in the tribal areas where the whole life of the people was evolved round certain customs and dances. You will break up their lives, if you suddenly introduce prohibition. You will have revolutions there."

So, with the non-extension of prohibition among *adivasis*, grant of liberal permits to people moving in the "cultured" society and a liberal provision of cinema shows, such as we have at present, there need be no doubt that highest targets will be reached in the realm of "art and

literature, music and drama, singing and dancing", even though all other schemes, including that of distribution of food to starving masses fail.

Economic Equality

The manifesto has some ideas also for advancing towards the reduction of economic inequalities of the people. The measures suggested are the ones usually talked of, such as death duties, graded income-tax, prevention of black-marketing, profiteering, increase of production etc.

Miscellaneous

Public Health, Backward classes, Minorities, Displaced persons, Women and Linguistic provinces are some of the other subjects on which the manifesto has expressed its views. I do not think there can be much difference of opinion on these subjects in the country, except with people who are communally minded and are keen on the preservation of long-enjoyed privileges.

Foreign Policy and Kashmir

The manifesto accepts Jawaharlalji's lead on these matters. The question of Kashmir is one on which it might be said with reasonable confidence that the whole country is one and supports the Nehru policy. On the question of foreign policy I am afraid that there is a feeling in some quarters — including some Congressmen, that India should join the Anglo-American bloc. On the other hand, the Communists would naturally prefer the Soviet bloc. There is also some difference of opinion on India's retaining its connection with the Commonwealth. As I view it, I feel entirely at one with Panditji on these matters.

To speak generally upon the whole manifesto, it does not come up to the expectations of the *Sarvodaya* ideal. Its attitude towards some of the most important items of the Constructive Programme is halting or even reactionary: for instance, prohibition, *khadi*, village industries, education. Some of the targets aimed at e.g. lowering or stabilizing prices through mere control of prices and distribution, are, I am afraid, not likely to succeed for want of attention to the fundamental causes of the evils. Thus so far as constructive workers are interested, there is not much to choose on these matters between the different parties. Moreover, manifestos are not always implemented.

The most important thing for the voters at this stage of our life is not the contents of the manifestos, but the purity of the administration, and the high personal character, integrity, and sense of public duty of the candidates.

Wardha, 23-7-'51 K. G. MASHRUWALA

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SOCIAL WORK AMONG HILL TRIBES OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

(By Swami Anand)

Some two years ago I wrote in these columns about the reform — and social-uplift work conducted among the Adivasi Harijans and other backward hill tribes of Jaunsar under the auspices of Ashok Ashram, Kalsi, Dt. Dehra Dun. This area has now passed under the newly formed State of Himachal Pradesh. On my way up the hills this year I happened to visit once more the Ashram and was greatly delighted to find its work thriving.

Shri Dharmadev Shastri who heads the Ashram is a stalwart social worker and organizer of the late Thakkar Bapa's choice. He is assisted in his work by a band of devoted workers, mostly local. He gave me all the information I wanted in respect of their activities and also took me to the interior mountain centres where I had the opportunity to watch the work conducted among Adivasi Harijans and other backward communities. The work of the Ashram is spreading and has now reached the inmost areas close to the snow-clad ranges of Indo-Tibetan borders.

Last year, Shastriji made an economic and cultural survey of these distant borderland peoples in company with a deputy of Thakkar Bapa, and has now opened over a dozen primary schools there with the co-operation of local men who were found to have heard vaguely of the changes that had come over India, were of a progressive bent of mind, anxious to contact civilization and to let in the light of knowledge inside their benighted world. These areas are Indian territory, but so inaccessible that even pony ride is impossible in places and it takes a fortnight or more of rough and dangerous mountain hiking to reach some of them. According to Shastriji, hardly any high Government official other than those of the Geological Survey ever visits them.

The programme of social reform against polyandry, traffic in girls, venereal diseases and other social evils, and of economic uplift by way of finding employment and subsidiary sources of income for the Adivasi Harijans and other backward landless communities, or of securing relief against the tyrannies of the privileged classes who own most of the land in these hills — is gaining strength and the response from young men of the classes receiving education at Dehra Dun and other towns is heartening. These young men are taking up enthusiastically the Ashram's programme of fighting the social evils.

Shastriji has, besides, started last year a leper asylum. This new activity was launched upon with the approval and blessings of Thakkar Bapa while he was yet alive. Leprosy in these hills is widespread, as in many other parts of our

country, particularly among the economically poorest Adivasi Harijans. The work is conducted with the help of Dr A. K. Varma and other qualified colleagues of Shastriji whom I had the privilege to meet. Besides at the Ashram, weekly outdoor treatment is given to patients at a number of village centres on fixed days. They are also instructed in cleanliness, sanitary habits and segregation in the village, and as far as possible within the family in respect of eating, drinking, clothing, sleeping etc. The workers carry a new gospel of hope and faith to these castaways of the society, and I was deeply moved to watch their little groups sitting on hill slopes chanting '*Raghupati Raghava Raja Rama*' and taking their turns with the doctor and his assistant for the free treatment on the latest lines. And while I took their snaps and Shastriji was delivering the New Gospel by recounting to them how greatly the Father of the Nation loved the lepers and himself ministered unto them, I could see tears in women's eyes and their disfigured faces beamed with a new hope.

While conditions in the hill tracts of Himachal Pradesh have somewhat drawn public attention during recent years and the work conducted by social workers there has received recognition and steady appreciation from our leaders and public bodies like Gandhi Nidhi, a slight and obviously unintentional discrepancy in the new Indian Constitution had hitherto deprived these unfortunate tribes of Himachal Pradesh of special aid and attention to which they are entitled under it. The Constitution has a clause which empowers the President to proclaim certain tribes and areas in A and B class States as backward, and these are to be entitled to his special care and protection. But the provisions of this clause were not applicable to C class States. Himachal Pradesh being a C class State the backward tribes and communities living within its boundaries did not come within the purview of the said clause.

The social workers of Himachal Pradesh had thus been working under a serious handicap these two years. The position was brought to the notice of Thakkar Bapa who, I was told, promptly explained it to the late Sardar Patel in a detailed communication securing an assurance from the latter to the effect that the Central Government would remedy it and treat the Himachal Pradesh backward tribes on a par with those of the tribal areas in A and B States providing adequately for their uplift and help. Though both are now no more on the scene, the recent amendments to the Constitution have now rectified this defect, and it will be now open to the President to give the benefit of this clause to the backward classes of those States. This was very important and we are grateful to the two great men for bringing this about.

Kausani, 16-5 '51

THE HANDLOOM PROBLEM

In his statement published in *Harijan* of 2nd June, Shri Hare Krushna Mahtab, "congratulates the weavers of India on the success they have achieved by their agitation in drawing the attention and sympathy of even those who were committed to the theory that problem of hand-loom cannot be solved unless there is universal hand-spinning." It is indeed a tragic irony of a situation that the *khadi* lover even in the face of this sarcasm has to plead for the supply of mill-yarn to the handloom weaver as the *charkha* has yet to develop its full strength to come to the immediate relief of over two million looms. It is now more for the mills and those who swear by them to prove their claim as the protectors and guardians of the handlooms.

To Shri Jajuji's logical suggestion to reduce weaving in the mills to release more yarn to the handlooms, Shri Mahtab says that "it is not the question of profit of the mill-owner that matters much, but the question of retrenchment of labour and of the continuance of mill as an economic unit has to be borne in mind...."

This is a fundamental and vital question of values to be settled once for all by the State as it arises in all policies affecting the welfare of the masses. Does the State consider the retrenchment of a few thousand workers operating in the looms in the mills and the risk of mills temporarily becoming uneconomical units more serious than the sufferings of about a crore of people solely depending on handlooms? When the use of machinery results in vast unemployment and human suffering, simple humanity requires suspension of such machines. The following extract from Gandhiji's article in *Harijan* dated 27-10-'33 will give a hint to the Government as to their duties.

> "My very simple mind cannot go beyond the little spindle of the little wheel which I can carry about with me from place to place and which I can manufacture without difficulty. In this connection a friend sends me the following paragraph which is going round the Press:
>
> > 'To relieve unemployment in certain industries the Nazis have ordered the stoppage of the use of machine which were displacing human labour. Commenting on this interdiction the *Manchester Guardian* remarks: "There has been a great deal of discussion about the effects of machinery in aggravating the unemployment crisis, but it has been left to the Nazis to do the logical thing and stop using it. It is only a little while since the world was asked to admire the miraculous triumph of labour-saving rationalization in Germany. Now the Government is bent on fighting the machine, either by prohibiting its use or by compelling employers to work shorter hours and employ more men. Mr Gandhi's efforts to replace the spinning frame by the hand-wheel and the mechanical loom by the handloom are being paralleled closely in the German cigar and glass industries."'

"The *Guardian* concludes its remarks by observing that if Germany's ethics become mediaeval, there is no reason why her economics should not become mediaeval also. Replying to these comments, a correspondent writes in the *Guardian*:

> 'Hitler, Gandhi and others who in different ways are endeavouring to slow production to a point at which all goods are consumed may be reverting to mediaeval methods, but handicrafts are neither retrograde nor barbaric. They are taught in every progressive elementary and secondary school....Unless unemployment is abolished within a reasonable time, even by means that appear novel and unorthodox, then the machinery age will disappear in revolutions and wars that will destroy us all. So long as machinery promotes the happiness and the prosperity of the masses as well as the classes it is a beneficent agent. But when it leads to the unemployment and starvation of millions, as is happening in the highly industrialized countries of the West, it becomes a curse. Machinery exists for man, and not vice versa, and must be made subservient to the well-being of the people and should not be allowed to become their master.'"

After all it is a question of choice between moral — Sarvodaya economics and materialistic — utilitarian economics.

Virapandy, 22-6-'51 N. RAMASWAMI

SWARAJ POLITICS

(*By J. C. Kumarappa*)

Values dictated by belligerent conditions differ from those demanded by peace. To a soldier a rock affords a hiding place and a shelter from enemy fire, a hillside will enable him to cover his enemy from advantageous heights. But to a farmer a rock is so much unproductive surface, hindering his furrows from running straight. He wants no hiding place nor sloping fields. His purpose is not waging war but production to supply his needs. He wants his soft soil to be open to sun and rain and the surface flat enough to retain sufficient moisture. Such is the case also in the field of politics.

While we were fighting British Imperialism we had recourse to a certain strategy. In personnel, the city people had definite advantages. The lawyers, physicians, professors and students presented a formidable front which looked impregnable. They needed little or no time to prepare for the wordy warfare on the platform and for the onslaughts on the evils of British Imperialism and to decry the exploitation of the masses. Hence such men were recruited in large numbers and given a short training in group discipline through congenial mass drill under the *charkha* programme. To what extent all this proved successful, history has now recorded in the inauguration of the Indian Republic.

We have now turned the corner and a new situation faces us. Our problem is not to turn out a foreign imperialism but to build up, out of a culturally disintegrated population with a history of several centuries of slavery, a self-respecting nation which will pull its weight in the council of nations for the betterment of humanity and the advancement of civilization.

The personnel for this programme will differ according to the work to be done by them. We have now adult franchise. Every head counts and the largest number of them are in the villages. Therefore, our field of political labours has to be shifted to the rural areas. The subject matter to be dealt with is not British Imperial history but the vital problems facing the villagers. Hence, the present-day politician, to be effective, must be well versed in rural life and should be able to present a scheme of rural development that will satisfy the villagers and bring them economic and social relief. For these purposes who should be better qualified than the villager himself?

Unfortunately, these differences in the political field before and after Swaraj were not appreciated and the soldiers who fought the British Imperialist were left in the saddle, with the effect that their notions do not help in any way to solve today's problems. Therefore, what is needed is not a wordy manifesto of flowery poetical ideals, but a grip of the rural life and its needs.

To this end those who would interest themselves in politics should burn their boats and settle in villages, identify themselves with the villagers and take up rural problems as their own and thoroughly understand the situation, gain the confidence of the villagers and work up the democratic organization from below. Agriculture being the principal occupation in the village, politicians should take it up or be closely associated with it.

The days when the "white-collared" gentry could dabble in politics are gone. The times have changed and demand different tactics.

The Congress has (till now) failed to show any adaptability to the difference in the environment and circumstances and is not responsive to public opinion. (Unless it removes this defect) its days are numbered. If any other body wishes to serve the nation it should formulate its programme to suit the present environment. It should go to the villages, abandon the Delhi mentality and accept the rural way of approach to the problems facing us. Power politics can serve us no longer. What we need is an approach through service. The village voter has to be educated to appreciate the change in his own status and responsibility and shown the way to discharge his duties properly. Hobnobbing with city life will not help matters.

We trust those who are contemplating a change of political allegiance will keep these fundamental truths in view and act accordingly. Only that way can we implement the practical aspect of life under real Swaraj. Without this political work will be a mere game of chance and not worth the candle.

HONEST LIFE MOVEMENT IN WARDHA

As inquiries have been made about the progress of the Honest Life Movement in Wardha itself, I publish a brief account of the work done at Wardha in this direction.

The work was organized in Wardha under the auspices of the Sarva Seva Samiti, which is an association, formed mainly of local constructive workers, for the purpose of carrying on the constructive programme in Wardha taluka. Shortly after Shri Kishorlal Mashruwala's article, "Shuddha Vyavahar Andolan" (Honest Life Movement) in the *Harijan* of 31-3-'51, a meeting of the Samiti was called to deliberate upon this matter. A few citizens of Wardha were also specially invited at the meeting. The subject was fully discussed in all its aspects including the difficulties that lay in the path of *shuddha vyavahar* (honest life). All those who were present welcomed the movement in view of the immense potential good which it may do to the nation if perseveringly worked out. It was also felt that Wardha afforded perhaps a favourable field for carrying on the movement. Wardha has a band of constructive workers and being a centre of several all-India constructive institutions, many students and visitors come there from various parts of the country. They try to put into practice principles of honest life with care and diligence in their day-to-day work. Moreover, the Madhya Pradesh Government permits an open market in food-grains after it has met its requirements for the purpose of controlled distribution. Though the prices of these grains in the open market are a little higher than in the ration shops, there is no black-marketing as such about them. All these conditions presented a favourable ground for the movement, and though we realized that it was a heavy responsibility, we felt heartened. Thereafter, we approached some friends, a few traders, merchants, and members of other sections of the society, so that they were set thinking about it.

Then as a first step we started collecting signatures for the initial pledge, the form of which was given in Shri Mashruwala's article referred to above. We had not approached the constructive workers, as we thought that for most of them the pledge was superfluous, their life being so adjusted that there was not much for them to vigilantly endeavour after. But some of them forwarded their pledges voluntarily, and they were accepted. Nor did we try to enlist women, since ordinarily they do not have a predominant voice in the management of affairs.

In this way we obtained 48 signatures as follows:

Constructive Workers	16	Government and other employees	4
Doctors & Physicians	8		
Villagers	7	Students	2
Teachers	5	Lawyer	1
Merchants	4	Woman	1

Next we thought of putting the work on an organizational basis. A meeting of the Samiti was called on 17-6-'51, to which besides pledgers, others were also invited. It was presided over by Shri Jajuji. The report of the work disclosed that most of those who had offered to become members were consumers. Merchants and producers were very few. A Sub-Committee, called *Vyavahar Shuddhi Samiti* (Committee for Honest Life Movement) was appointed to take charge of this activity. It consisted of Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju (Chairman), Shri Rishabhdas Ranka (Secretary), and Prof. Baliram Vanmali (Asstt. Secretary) with power to co-opt four more members to itself. The members discussed the form of the pledge in detail, and ultimately adopted the following draft:

Honest Life Pledge

I,.....pledge that

(1) I shall not purchase articles which are scarce in the market in a larger quantity than I reasonably need, nor shall I lend a helping hand to forces creating artificial scarcity;

(2) I shall purchase controlled articles as far as possible at controlled rates, i.e. I shall not purchase them from the black market;

(3) I shall not purchase things secretly and in evasion of laws for leading a life of comfort and luxury, or for holding "social functions";

(4) I shall not be a party to a bribe;

(5) I shall always endeavour to lead my life honestly and justly, and shall try to induce as many people as I can to become *shuddha vyavaharis* (honest citizens).

Place..... Signature.....

Date..... Address.....

We are now seeking signatures to this pledge and in this connection we are more keen on the quality of men taking the pledge, than on their numbers. We seek to bring into the movement only such people of whom we may feel reasonably sure that they will be as good as their word. So far we have collected 24 signatures. The following analysis shows the number of members from the different sections of the society:

Social workers	4	Government and other employees	6
Doctors	4		
Villagers	2	Teachers	6
Merchant	1	Student	1

Our experience is that every one whom we approached was set thinking seriously about the subject even if he did not agree to become a member. He became conscious of the dishonesty which he was so far practising unthinkingly and almost as an accepted business custom. This awakening towards self-introspection indicates that, given sincerity and sustained work, the movement possesses the potentiality of expansion.

People from outside often write to us of their experiences and difficulties and seek guidance. Shri Jajuji attends to them.

Address:
C/o Shri Shrikrishnadas Jaju
Bajajwadi, Wardha
(Translated from Hindi)

RISHABHDAS RANKA.
Secretary,
Vyavahar Shuddhi Samiti

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Subscription Rates — Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 s. or $ 2.
Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 9.