

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XII. No. 19

AHMEDABAD — SUNDAY, JULY 11, 1948

TWO ANNAS

## UNCLEAN MEANS

I referred last week to a circular addressed by the Bihar Government to several mining concerns in a narrow provincial spirit. My attention has been drawn since to another which is perhaps even more serious and suspicious than the first one. For, it appears to have sinister politics behind it.

It is known that regarding one or two districts of Bihar there is a section which desires their amalgamation with Bengal. Another, led by the Bihar Government itself, want them to remain in Bihar.

I do not wish to enter into the merits of the controversy. I am concerned with the method adopted by the Bihar Government for strangulating the movement of its opponents. Plebiscite is the latest fashion in politics. Politicians now instinctively scent it from a long distance, and lay their plans beforehand to ensure that the result of the plebiscite should go on one particular side. Necessarily, the party in power has better opportunities and means to organize a vote in its favour. The Bihar Government appears to take the fullest advantage of its position in this respect. It has planned out a programme, apparently for propagating Hindi in the Manbhum district, but really for ensuring that in the event of a referendum the district does not secede from Bihar. I have received from the Secretary of the District Congress Committee of the Manbhum a copy of this programme. I give below some of the clauses of the instructions issued (*Italics mine*):

"1. The D. I. (Director of Instruction) of schools should be requested to enforce the new syllabus in all U. P. (Upper Primary) and M. E. (Middle English) schools, under which teaching of Hindi is compulsory. *If the Board opposes the move the matter should immediately be reported the Government. (sic).*

"2. The D. I. of schools should be requested to open training centres to train the teachers of all L. P. (Lower Primary), U. P. and M. E. schools in Hindi and he should try to open as many such centres as possible in each *thana*. *The work of training be entrusted to Biharis only and not to Bengalis or persons who are opposing the actual work as from experience it has been found that at several centres Bengali teachers were given the*

*charge of training of the teachers in Hindi and the result has become far from pleasing.*

"3. *The activities of the Mass Literacy campaign should be confined to Hindi only; and the campaign be vigorously launched in all earnest. This work should be done in collaboration with the under mentioned scheme and the D. I. will please approve of the suggestions made by the persons named below, here-in-after known as organisers.*"

"14. *Steps should be taken to supersede the District Board and Municipality as they become the easiest vehicle for the propaganda work of the agitators of the amalgamation movement.*

"15. As the organizers will have to make extensive tours throughout the length and breadth of the Sadar Sub-division, some motor vehicles must be kept at their disposal and arrangements for the supply of petrol etc. be also made. Some separate fund for this purpose therefore is absolutely essential.

"16. For the month of May and June intensive work is to be carried on in almost all the *thanas*, especially the bordering areas. So early steps are to be taken to make this plan effective.

"17. *To receive applications for agricultural loans, Land Improvement Loans and Irrigational Loans and free minor irrigation schemes and complaints and to forward them with recommendation to proper authorities.*"

The Secretary of the District Congress Committee in an enclosing letter indignantly protests against the above circular. The italicized portions show the ulterior motive lying behind the so-called literacy campaign. The District Congress Committee of Manbhum has passed a long resolution protesting against the above circular. It is worded in a language which, except for its great length, one must admire for its approach to the problem in the spirit of satyagraha. The Committee's plea deserves to be carefully considered by those to whom it is addressed.

As the Committee says, from the broad national outlook it is immaterial whether the district in question remains with the Bihar Government or goes to Bengal. What is important is that whatever decision is taken, should be taken in the interest of the country and the people, and that the province administering it must provide



the fullest opportunity to all its residents for the achievement of their legitimate aspirations. No unscrupulous or high-handed methods should be employed. The means must be clean and above suspicion.

I must say that the Bihar method reveals a high-handed approach to the question. It is commendable that Bihar has adopted a single language—Hindi—for its province, even though it is not, so far as I am aware, the mother-tongue in any part of Bihar. It has thereby saved itself from a quarrel over languages, of which there was every possibility if every local region of that great province had put forth the claim of its particular dialect. But the question of Bengali stands on a different footing from that of the various dialects of Bihar. These dialects have not developed into or claimed to be literary languages, as Bengali is. The latter language is spoken and written by millions in the neighbouring province, which is greater than Bihar itself. It is a rich language to which Hindi itself owes much for its own present status. There should, therefore, be no desire to suppress the Bengali language to the extent it has come to stay in particular areas of Bihar in the natural or historical course of events.

Even if there were all linguistic provinces, every province is bound to have some border areas which will be multi-linguistic with almost an equal mixture of people of two languages. Thus in Belgaum there is a mixture of Kannada and Marathi, in Rayalaseema of Kannada and Telugu, in Berhampur of Oriya and Telugu, in Dang and in some areas of Thana, Surat, Navsari and Khandesh of Gujarati and Marathi. These regions have to be in one or the other province. They cannot be in both. They cannot even be partitioned. The only just solution is that the province possessing it should consider its duty to see that both the languages in that region are equally respected; that in that area it guards it as jealously as the other province itself would do, if that area were transferred to it. If necessary, it might allow even an ultra territorial jurisdiction in the educational sphere. Perhaps that might be the only way to solve the difficulty. But it does not matter what the solution is, provided the people willingly acquiesce in the solution. An attempt to suppress the language, or drive away the people speaking it, or treating them as anything less than full citizens must necessarily breed hatred and ultimately lead to a sort of civil or border warfare.

I hope that the Commission set up by the Constituent Assembly to go into the question of linguistic provinces will make suggestions which will create such sense of safety in the people living in the border districts of any two linguistic provinces, as will make them equally disposed to remain in the jurisdiction of any. Then only can it be said that all India is one.

Wardha, 28-6-'48

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## MYSORE NOTES—II

### 4. A MATERNITY HOME IN FAMINE TIME

Here is an instance of a Kasturba Maternity Home doing very good work for the relief of expectant mothers and women in confinement, at a time of distress in a famine area. It is all done by *sevikas* of the Kasturba Trust. The District of Chitaldrug in the north of the Mysore State was in the grip of famine in 1946. The *sevikas* were then under training under Shrimati Yashodhara Dasappa. One of them was Shrimati Siddamma, an experienced public worker in the constructive field. She met Gandhiji at Madras in January, 1946, when he was touring for the Hindi Prachar Silver Jubilee Celebrations. I quote below from Shrimati Siddamma's own report of work:

"Gandhiji said, 'In view of famine conditions prevailing in Chitaldrug District, I want you to take up the cause of women and children and help them as best as you can, in that area.'

"Bapu's word was law to me and I approached the Famine Relief Committee for help. The members of the Committee extended to me all help and co-operation with the result that the *Matri Mandir* (Maternity Home) was started on 3-6-'46 in Chitaldrug town. Shri L. S. Venkaji Rao, Chairman of the Famine Relief Committee, took upon himself the responsibility of feeding the inmates (pregnant women) so long as the famine lasted. He did so for a period of seven months.

"Later the Institution was named *Kasturba Smarak Matri Mandir*. The Mandir was shifted to the village of Gannayakanhalli on 14-4-'48, keeping in view the Mahatma's express desire that such work should be done in rural parts only.

"The population of the village is 700. There are one or two well-to-do families; the rest are very poor. The Reddy community predominates. They are all agriculturists. Vakkaligas, Harijans, goldsmiths, and others also reside in the village. The village is 22 miles from Hiriyur, the only place where any medical help is available. This is a malarial place. Almost everyone suffers from malaria and develops spleen. People suffer from skin diseases also.

"Deeply moved by the miserable conditions of the villagers and earnestly desiring to improve their lot, Shrimati C. T. Gangamma has donated a sum of Rs. 6,000 to the institution for a building. She has also lent her own house temporarily for the use of the Mandir.

The following table gives the necessary figures.

	From 3-6-'46 to 31-7-'47	1-8-'47 to 14-4-'48:	Since 22-4-'48
No. of women admitted:	86	97	10
Successful deliveries	74	83	6
Still born	2	2	—
No. of women who left without permission	10	12	—

"Pregnant women are admitted a month before and are sent home a month after delivery. The idea underlying is to bring them under healthy influence



and teach them as many useful things as possible. By this two months' residence in the Mandir, they get the much needed rest, which they would otherwise never get at home."

#### 5. A PROSPERING VILLAGE

Mayapadi is a beautiful and flourishing little village near Kasargode in South Kanara. The population is 940; almost all cultivators. There is plenty of rain, enabling them to take four crops in a year. The people speak Malayalam, but Shrimati Sunanda Kamat, the Kasturba worker, who is organizing the centre speaks Kannad, and conducts a Balwadi, Hindi and Kannad classes. The attendance in each is respectively 12 and 36 including 16 women. She also conducts regular evening prayers, attended by about 20 persons. A beginning has been made in spinning also. The progress is slow. The attendance in the dispensary department is fair: 77 people having taken advantage of it.

The houses are fairly clean and tidy, though the people are highly caste-ridden and superstitious. There is a regular primary school in the village.

May, 1948

A. V. THAKKAR

#### "PUTTING THE CLOCK BACK"

(1)

[The following A.P.I. message on the use of chemical fertilizers appeared in the Press on June 8th:

"A warning against modern methods of agriculture was given to the people of India by Prof. Einstein in an interview with Dr. Amarnath Jha, the Vice-chancellor of the Benares Hindu University, who returned from Quebec recently after attending the International Rotary Assembly there. Prof. Einstein said that though with the use of huge tractors, machinery and chemical fertilizers the people could force up production for a time, the eventual result was likely to be complete loss of the fertility of the soil, causing incalculable and irreparable injury to the country." — Ed.]

Great many experts before Prof. Einstein have advised Western farmers against the use of these instruments of a short-sighted policy. Our country is always about a century behind. What has been discarded by Western scientists our experts cling to as the last word in progress! It would not matter much if our scientists were left to hold their antiquated views in their laboratories, but the tragedy of it is that our vested interests have used them for propaganda purposes and have induced our Government to squander crores of public money on importing tractors and establishing fertilizer factories.

As it is the pressure on land is such that it is not able to provide adequate food for the people. What we need is a programme of rational use of land combined with provision of ample fuel resources to release farm yard manure for the fields. Instead, we are faced with converting, what is today, a reasonably fertile soil into desert land by our greed for quick returns. No doubt the use of fertilizers will stimulate the soil into yielding more for a time but soon, like the energy of the

drunkard, it will disappear, making the second state worse than the first. Shall we be guilty of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs?

If it was merely Prof. Einstein's personal view, it may be dismissed lightly. This opinion is the result of extensive use of fertilizers and tractors under very favourable conditions both in the U.S.A. and Australia.

We may remind our readers that not long ago Mr. Collin Grant Clark, the Australian economist, invited to advise our Government, said that he would develop India on the basis of cottage industries regarding the factory as a necessary evil. Surely, these men cannot be accused of being fanatical Gandhi-ites trying to put the clock back! Shall we heed to the call of wisdom based on experience or go our own way to destruction?

The impact of the West disintegrated our industrial set up. Is it left to a national Government to convert our fields into deserts? May God forbid.

(2)

Another student of science, Sri N. M. Dave, sends the following in further support of Prof. Einstein's advice:

"Sir Herbert Gepp before a meeting of the Chicago Section of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in November, 1947 cites China as an extraordinary country in which the people have learned how to support a tremendous population on a closed cycle of soil productivity. In China, when the land has produced the food and the people have eaten it, the residue is carefully returned to the soil, where with the aid of rainfall and atmospheric nitrogen and oxygen food is again grown and so *ad infinitum*.

"The so-called civilized peoples have no real conception of a closed system. Instead of returning residues of food to the land they waste them by disposal into the ocean or discharge the elements into the atmosphere by burning. Even the mineral residues are wasted into the rivers or the sea.

"Sir Herbert added:

"One of the most productive small areas of which I know is a few thousand acres of land situated some 30 miles from the city of Melbourne in Australia — a city with a population of a million people — upon which the whole sewerage of this city is used. I have actually seen crops of grass hay weighing 3 tons of dry hay to the acre being taken off this irrigated land. And one of the interesting points in this connection is that the chemists say high productivity is due, to a material extent, to the supply from the sewerage of the city of the necessary small quantities of various rare elements which are not supplied either from ordinary soil or from the fertilizers which are added to the soil."

"The above remarks were part of a review of observations made during a five months' visit by Sir H. Gepp to Europe. Food . . . problems in Europe are reported to have been aggravated by the worst drought stretching from Italy to Scandinavia in over 100 years."

J. C. KUMARAPPA



# HARIJAN

July 11

1948

## RHETORICS

Last week I promised to give further reasons which contribute to the deterioration of the Congress. One of them is the habit of making statements and promises without any serious faith in them or any intention of working for them. This is an old fault, and has been common to almost all, from some of the top-rank leaders to the local lights.

Let me point out a few. With Gandhiji, working of the constructive programme was even more important than the political programme which, in those times, consisted mainly in running elections for legislative bodies, local boards and municipalities, and later on for getting positions on Congress Committees. Both these programmes became dormant whenever a resistance movement was started, and Congressmen whether of the political side or of the constructive side, all thronged into the jails. Inevitably, lull came over it after some time and those who were released in due course but before the release of the all India leaders found themselves in a peculiar position. They did not know how to justify their existence during the period when the movement was neither withdrawn nor carried on. Generally, this was the time when all were unanimous in extolling the constructive programme of Gandhiji.

Unfortunately for Congressmen, the people often took them seriously. Constructive workers and their associations entertained the hope that when the Congress came to power the Gandhian constructive programme would find the place of honour in the economic reorganization of the country. Therefore, when the Congress Ministries were about to be formed, they built upon going ahead with the constructive programme.

But no sooner did the Congress begin to function again as a party organization, the constructive programme was forgotten and elections and appointments became the only activity. Those who had been preaching the Gandhian programme a few days before were now found expressing doubts about its practicability. Whether the programme was social or economic, the average Congress worker considered that he had no particular connection with the programme. It was the sphere of the constructive workers. Some of them were frank enough to say that they did not understand the constructive programme. Some of them said that it was the programme for those who had not the capacity to work in the political field, or rather, were too 'good' (which meant 'dull') for that field. When the political programme was in the full front, even the doctrine of non-violence became a doubtful proposition.

Disillusionment did not take long to come even in the 1937 régime. But optimism is never in want of finding an explanation for disappointment. They thought that the lukewarm implementation of the constructive programme in 1937 was due to insufficient attainment of power. When full Swaraj was attained, the policy would change. So when the Congress was installed at Delhi, there was again a revival of hopes. But it did not take long to be disillusioned again.

If the Congress had not declared any economic policies of its own, had not issued any manifestoes, or appointed committees to draw up programmes, or in doing so had made it quite clear that the Congress plan of economic and social reorganization must not be confused with the Gandhian Programme, and had not created the constructive associations under its auspices, or even after taking power had expressly said that somehow or other they found themselves unable to put into force the programme which the Congress had declared from public platforms, and that having regard to the realities of the situation they must make large modifications in its implementation; or even if they had said that it was doubtful whether the people, including the villagers themselves, were anxious for the village industries and other policies of the Gandhian programme, and that since there was no demand from the people for the constructive programme of the Gandhian type, they would not impose it upon the people, the people would not have expected what they do at present and felt disappointment or anger for not getting it. But they did not say even that. They did not and do not deny their faith in the constructive programme of de-centralization and the village industries and the *charkha*. But there is very little doing. With the declaration of faith unwithdrawn, what people see being done is the launching of big schemes and sanctioning of big factories straightaway — even for vegetable *ghee* and textile mills, — while there is yet vagueness about regeneration of village agriculture and industries.

So too, in the policy of the Governments in regard to basic education, medium of education, the national language and the University teaching; the ordinary man is entirely forgotten. As the industrialist and the big industrial and city labour have predominated, the economic policy, so the English-knowing professor and High School teacher, and the pedantic man of letters and communally or provincially minded politician practically dictate the educational and language policy. They do not wish to change their old habits of thinking through and speaking English (if not pro-English) or to imitate Sanskrit or Persian masters of a bygone age. So they declare that nothing can be done in the realm of education without English, or in the realm of provincial languages without classical Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian.

The attitude towards Hindustani, or whatever name you want to give to the all-India language, is as if it was not to be developed more than what



was necessary for just dealing with or entertaining railway porters, shop-keepers and peasants. It was not expected to be the language in which laws could be written, judgements could be delivered, carefully worded pronouncements could be made, science could be expressed and best prose and poetry could be created. Few are proud of Hindustani as such.

The purpose of mentioning all this is that the actual practice differs widely from that laid down in various Congress resolutions year after year. This conduct amounts almost to hypocrisy. But I have not called it hypocrisy, because I feel that most people were not conscious of making statements which at the time of making them they knew to be unreal. I would say that they were taken and repeated light-heartedly, as pieces of rhetoric in a manner more resembling the reproduction of the speech of Brutus and Antonio from Shakespeare in college days at social gatherings, than genuine utterances of their own. The habit has persisted and even hardened ever since. Add to this caste, communal and provincial wrangles in which holders of responsible positions are also involved. The result is that several constructive workers have been losing faith in the Congress as such. They cling to the Congress out of a personal sense of respect and loyalty to some of the top-most leaders of the High Command, whom they revere more for their strong and sterling character, statesmanship and age than for their faith in the Congress programme. The same respect prevents them from expressing their disappointment and indignation in too frank a manner. But whether they frankly express it or not, the fact remains that the faith in the Congress has weakened, and has created a sense in the minds of the people that after all Congressmen too are no better than politicians generally are all over the world — more interested in securing their seats in elections than in serving the people.

In this connection I am reminded of an incident which took place nearly thirty-two years ago. I happened to travel by the same train in which Lokamanya Tilak was travelling. I was in a compartment with an Irish passenger. Although it was almost midnight, people thronged on the platforms of every important station to greet the Lokamanya. The Irish soldier enquired of me the reason for the crowds and the noise. I told him who Lokamanya Tilak was and what his place was in Indian leadership. "All bosh!" he said. "I know all these politicians. There are so many in my country. Not one of them should be believed in and taken seriously." I protested that it could not be the case, with Indian leaders. "Oh! you will know it when you are grown up enough," he said, "unless you too become a politician!"

We shall next consider how we can prevent the rot.

## HARIJAN CAUSE IN BHOPAL

The other day (3rd June) I was invited to preside over the Bhopal State Harijan Conference inaugurated by H. H. the Nawab of Bhopal. It was not without some hesitation that I accepted the invitation. Presiding over functions is not in the line of us, who belong to what Gandhiji used to call the "Grand Order of Coolies", or willing *hamals* of the least in the land. I would have felt more at home if the leading citizens and the State functionaries of Bhopal had invited me to join them with broom and bucket in hand in a campaign for the cleaning up of all the *bustees* of Bhopal.

After Gandhiji's death I often feel forlorn and disconsolate and miss that dear familiar face. But I catch glimpses of Gandhiji whenever I am in the midst of the Harijans in a Harijan *bustee* and that consoles me somewhat. Gandhiji's death has orphaned the nation but the nation need not feel orphaned so long as the causes for which Gandhiji lived and died are not orphaned by his physical absence.

Nay, I shall make bold to say that of all the great causes that Gandhiji had served, of all the dazzling victories that he had achieved, none was so great perhaps as the demolition of the ages-old citadel of untouchability. I recall how Gandhiji's far-seeing eye had enabled him (Gandhiji) to predict as early as 1921, when I first met him, that a time would come when the Harijan question would become the main stumbling block in the realization of India's dream of independence. People did not believe him then. They thought that if the Congress identified itself with the removal of untouchability, it would disrupt their united political front and cause a set-back in the struggle for independence. Ten years later, at the Second Round Table Conference, Gandhiji's prediction was amply fulfilled and he had to launch upon a fast unto death in the Yeravda Central Prison to prevent the perpetuation of the bar sinister as a result of what is known the British Premier's Award. It ended in the signing of the Yeravda Pact and the Premier's Award was set aside. Before ending his fast Gandhiji laid an obligation on the *savarna* (caste) Hindus as an indispensable condition to remove all social and legal disabilities attached to the Harijans as such, so that the very distinction between caste and outcaste in Hindu society should be obliterated. To implement the pledge Gandhiji founded the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

The first part of the pledge has been fulfilled. All legal disabilities on the Harijans have been removed. Under the new constitution, the Harijans have been ensured equal fundamental rights with the rest. But that is not the end of the work. The question is: Has Hinduism completely purged itself of the evil? Have we made full expiation for the wrong done to the Harijans by ourselves and by our ancestors down through the ages? Gandhiji had suggested that the first condition for that was that we should all become Harijans, i. e. *bhangis*, by choice, as he became one himself. He



encouraged inter-marriages between the *savarnas* and the so-called untouchables, since abolition of untouchability must mean complete absorption of the Harijans in Hindu society.

As I had not had the opportunity to see for myself the actual living conditions of the Harijans in Bhopal yet, nor had a full talk with the workers in the Harijan cause, I must reserve any detailed suggestions as regards the future line of work in Bhopal till a later stage. But for the present I wish to indicate a few broad principles which should guide their work. The first is the realization of the essentially expiatory character of the reform. If the Hindu citizens of Bhopal realized that basic fact, it would solve many of their conundrums. The State and members of other communities could help, but the actual reform must be carried out only by the Hindu society itself. Penance could not be done by proxy.

The second is that it would be a fatal mistake to mix up the question of the Harijan uplift with party politics. It is too grave and vital an issue to be treated like that. To make the Harijan community a pawn in the game of power politics is a sin against man and God. All parties including the State should agree to leave the Harijans free to ameliorate their condition on non-party lines.

Thirdly, no vested interests should be encouraged to grow on the foundation of untouchability. Leadership is not a prize to be manoeuvred for. It is a burden which in natural course is entrusted to those who are the fittest to carry it. Similarly, formation of mushroom parties for the capture of power for oneself is the mark of short-sighted self-seeking.

Lastly, I should ask the Harijans to remember that all efforts to liquidate untouchability must fail unless the Harijans themselves co-operate in it. Gandhiji has repeatedly told us that rights flow automatically from duty well-performed. If they wanted to secure in Hindu society the place which was their due, they must banish drinking, gambling, eating of carrion, unclean habits, use of foul language and other degrading practices. They must correct their attitude towards their womenfolk.

As to Bhopal I do hope that it will be possible with State help to improve the sanitary condition in Harijan *bustees* in Bhopal and provide the Harijans suitable tenements and other amenities of life. There should be special provision for them for extra clothing, soap and bathing facilities. The State should enforce prohibition in respect of them as I understand has been done in regard to the Muslims. I wish that scavenging should be as clean and "respectable" an occupation as any other. There is no reason why a scavenger should not be as clean, educated and culturally advanced as a person engaged in any other occupation. But this requires that the reformers should themselves seriously take to scavenging as a voluntary occupation as Gandhiji had done. Then alone would they be able to devise and introduce improved

implements and techniques that would make this most vital of all occupations a clean and attractive occupation. I would go even further and suggest the introduction of the science and art of scavenging and sanitation as an essential item in the curricula of our educational institutions. As a further corollary to it I suggest that if the Harijans were expected to stick to their traditional occupation and not to give them up as soon as they were sufficiently enlightened and advanced, certain vocations and avenues to service should be specially earmarked for them, as for instance, public health and sanitary services, tanning, leather manufacture and the utilization of the by-products of dead cattle disposal. A fixed number of promising Harijans should be specially trained for the same every year by the State.

We are at the threshold of a new era. We all look forward to the day when in the near future the dream of complete transfer of power into popular hands would be realized in the State of Bhopal. But unless the Hindus of Bhopal purge themselves of the taint of untouchability in its entirety, their newly-won freedom would slip through their fingers and they would not be able to realize its contents. P.

## SHRI VINOBA AT AJMER-IV

(7)

12-5-'48

### WOMAN'S ROLE

Shri Vinoba was taken to *Nari Shala* (Women's Class) conducted by some refugee daughters of Sind. Sewing was one of the principal occupations taught. Before the exodus much of this work was done at Ajmer by Muslims. After their emigration to Pakistan there was a shortage of hands in this work and, it was felt, Sindhi women were well-fitted to take their place. Shri Vinoba exhorted the audience to encourage these workers. He said that it was usual for people to feel liberal while making donations and miserly while making purchases. The proper and true economy consisted in having a liberal frame of mind at the time of making purchases. The purchaser should feel a desire to pay such fair price as would give an adequate wage to the worker. If the purchaser realized his duty to purchase at not less than the fair price, there would be less need for charities. A good charity consisted in not allowing others to know about it. Liberal payment of wages was a type of such charity, because therein neither the payer nor the receiver was conscious of having done an act of charity, and still it conferred all the benefits of charity.

Shri Vinoba also expressed his delight at hearing the congregational and chorus singing of devotional songs by the daughters of Sind. He said that he had often heard women singing good devotional songs in Maharashtra. But in Maharashtra congregational singing was done only by men. This was a new and welcome feature brought by Sindhi women, and he would request the ladies to teach the women of other provinces to do the same. Congregational devotional singing was an inspiring force, and if ladies made good use of it, they would be able to render valuable service to the people.



If it became popular among local women, it would help the solution of the refugee problem a good deal. Where two factions of the people were about to quarrel, if somebody started congregational singing among one of them, it might stop a possible riot. It would be an effective way of stopping disturbances.

Gandhiji had often said that women were more fitted than men to display the strength of non-violence. Shri Vinoba said that Gandhiji had good reasons for saying so; for, they had witnessed with their own eyes how women, who had never left their homes for centuries came out in thousands in the days of non-cooperation and took an equal part with their male comrades. They bravely bore *lathi* charges of the police. Hundreds of them went to jails. They picketed toddy and liquor shops. There was an apprehension that women might not be able to stand in picketing these shops, but they put the drinkers to shame and obtained success. Gandhiji could get women to do all this because his technique of fighting for independence was non-violent and it gave full opportunity for the growth and display of feminine strength. If he had adopted the technique of violence, women could have played no part in the struggle. On the contrary, it would have become necessary to take precautions for their safety. But Gandhiji showed a way in which women could stand side by side with men. Women must not forget this lesson and should come forth in rendering service to the people along with men.

The men of the world, with all their vaunted intelligence and learning, have made such a mess that within the space of 25 years they plunged humanity into two great world wars and are now preparing for a third. This only means that men's intellect had run bankrupt. Non-violence alone could save the world and that mission was suited to the temperament of women. It was therefore necessary that women should take part in public activities and give them a proper turn. The service of the sick was their special work; besides, the training of children should also be taken up by them. They should also take part in the political affairs of the world and try to set right the confusion created by men. But Shri Vinoba said that he regretted to find that instead of taking to their proper mission, namely of establishing peace, women were anxious to imitate men and desired to go into war-like occupations. They wanted to go even into the army! He would say that that was not their proper task. They must throw over the methods which men had employed till then and which had created the evils of the world. In order to raise our motherland and the human race, women must perform the function of mothers and sisters, i.e. nourishers, nursers, trainers, feeders, and jealous protectors of their children and brothers, — and not their destroyers.

(Translated from Hindustani)

D. D.

#### CENT PER SENT SWADESHI

By Gandhiji

Price Rs. 2-0-0

Postage 0-6-0

#### THE GITA ACCORDING TO GANDHI

By Mahadev Desai

Price Rs. 4-0-0

Postage 0-11-0

## DE VALERA ON COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

In the course of an interview the other day, Mr. De Valera, the ex-Prime Minister of Eire, who was on a short visit to India, is reported to have observed:

"I am in agreement with Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on the development of cottage industries to improve the economy of the country. I am aware that there is a school which holds that large-scale industries alone would lead to improvement of the standard of living. But I have come to the conclusion that Gandhiji's programme of cottage industries is the right one."

Mr. Colin Clark, the well-known Australian economist who also visited India last year had remarked:

"If I were an Indian Minister, I should say: have as much of your development in the form of cottage industries as possible; regard the factory as a necessary evil."

Such observations by foreign leaders and thinkers are, undoubtedly, significant; but they are also curious. If these foreigners really believe in the development of national economy on Gandhian lines of decentralized cottage industrialism, why do they not earnestly advocate such planning in their own country? We do not know how far Mr. De Valera tried to develop cottage industries in Ireland. Even now, without being in power, he can render a great service to his own country and the world by attempting to develop Ireland on Gandhian principles.

But remarks of this nature by foreign thinkers should also serve as eye-openers to our own leaders and economists. Despite Gandhiji's emphasis on cottage industries for well-nigh three decades, very few Congress leaders have real faith in the soundness of decentralized economy. They argue that, although cottage industrialism is a scientific and rational proposition, India cannot stand alone in a world which is rushing headlong towards large-scale industrialization. The evils of such industrialization are now patent to everybody and if the Western countries do not revolutionize their outlook and economic policies in time, we shall soon be in the midst of another catastrophic holocaust of unprecedented disaster. Should India not try to give a fair trial to a system of national economy which was outlined by the Father of our Nation as a panacea for the ills that plague the modern world? India should not think only of following in the footsteps of Western powers; she is destined to lead other countries to a better and saner socio-economic organization. Or shall we wait till the Western countries adopt decentralized industrialization as a definite policy, and then import Gandhism from the West? This, to my mind, will be a national tragedy of the highest order!

Wardha, 20-6-'48

S. N. AGARWAL



## COMMENDATION

[The following is from a friend in Switzerland.]  
Namaste!

Such is the delay in mail from India that our copy of the *Harijan* dated 2nd May reached us only today. It may not be too late, however, to add a word of commendation and praise of your editorial, *The name of This Paper*.

The name *Harijan* should and must be retained for several reasons:

1. The name has gained a definite *mantric* force through its adoption by Gandhiji as the *vahan*—vehicle of his voice. That force would be lacking in any other name. To many of us, the *Harijan* means not only the Voice of Gandhiji, but his philosophy, his life—finally: his sacrifice.

2. Do those who contend that the *Harijan* can serve no longer as such a *vahan* for Gandhiji's voice imply that Gandhiji has been silenced by the assassin's bullets? Do they believe that because Gandhiji's spirit has been driven away from his body, it has therefore been driven out of India? Where is their philosophy?

3. But supposing that death did still Gandhiji's voice; supposing India rose as a man to combat his teaching of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, would that not prove an incontrovertible argument for the continuation of the name—of a heralding of that name from every house-top?

4. Was Krishna's voice stilled by the arrow, or Jesus' by the cross? Has Mahommed nothing to say simply because he has ceased to walk about among us as a man among men? We may make a hollow mockery of the *Gita* by our distorted understanding; we may fight shy of *The Sermon On the Mount* because of its too lofty ethics; we may take up the sword in defence of the Prophet who denied its use as a means of propagation of the Faith. But the worst of us would lay the blame on our own deafness; we would not say the Teacher's Voice had become still.

5. Shall we drop the names of the *Gita*, of the Bible, of the *Koran*?—we shall not thereby silence their Voices.

6. For the sake of argument let us visualize an India freed from the inhumanities and degradations of caste. We shall have done away with untouchability: but shall we have reached a millenium? There will always be the oppressed and the down-trodden who, like the poor, will always be with us. There will still be *Harijan* work to be done—there will still be the crying need for help, for understanding and for brotherhood. For, in so far as we have cut ourselves off from the most degraded of our brothers or sisters, we have cut ourselves off from the SELF, from Brahman, from Allah, from God.

7. Let us then not fall victims to that baleful tendency to quibble about words and, forgetting their meaning, cause the downfall of the structure into which Gandhiji has instilled his very heart's blood. For, who is there to say with a surety that the Spirit of Gandhiji is not a more potent help today than it was while hampered by the limitations of his flesh?

8. Let us put aside all childish wrangling over words and get on with the job!

Cologne-Geneve

11-6-'48

DONALD C. TOWNSEND

## NOTES

### Communal Representation with Vengeance

While the Government of India have reiterated their policy of not recognizing (except so far as the Harijans are concerned) sub-communal or caste distinctions within the Hindu community in regard to appointments to Central Services, the Madras Government seems to pursue the opposite policy with vengeance. It is reported to have laid down the following rule of communal representation even in the matter of granting admission to Engineering and Medical Colleges of its province: 6 Non-Brahman Hindus, 2 Brahmans, 2 Harijans, 1 Indian Christian, 1 Muslim and 2 Backward Hindus.

I can understand the necessity of encouraging educationally backward sections to come in line with the advanced ones. But the method should be other than that based on principles of community and caste.

Wardha, 1-7-'48

K. G. M.

### Khadi Ashrams

[In the course of a letter to a co-worker Shri Vinoba writes: —Ed.]

"I am definite that the gut (i. e. the carding bow) must not be used for preparing slivers. I do not see any reason for changing this opinion. Let us confine ourselves exclusively to *khadi*-for-self programme. Do not worry whether other *khadi* producers do so or not.

"Weaving must be taught to women. If women perform all the processes,—from ginning of raw cotton to weaving—*khadi* will not be dear and it will come to stay. This subject deserves to be experimented upon. But I find that our old colleagues have not much aptitude and enthusiasm left for making new experiments. It will be done only when new workers take to it. Everyone of us must know weaving. The double-twisted yarn necessary for learning weaving must be produced by all in co-operation.

"Every province must have at least one Sangh of the Ashram type, where such experiments could be made. If Pavnar, Sevagram, Nalwadi, Dhulia, Uruli-Kanchan and other centres, which we have established, nourish or maintain the Ashram mentality, such experiments will be possible.

June, 1948

VINOBA"

(Translated from the original in Marathi)

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