

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor : K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

NOTES

The New War Tax

We have seen that bicycles made in our country cannot compete with British bicycles because the latter are by-products of their armament industry in peace time. So by using British bicycles we are supporting British war preparedness.

Similarly, in our new budget we have an unseen military subsidy. It has been stated that with the exception of one company all airways concerns were working at a loss. The passenger aeroplanes of today will be the bombers of tomorrow. So our war preparedness demands that we maintain the machines, pilots and the ground crew in trim condition whether passenger traffic pays its way or not. So the Government has to subsidize it without swelling "Military" budget provision. What is simpler than increasing postage rates and paying mail subsidies and pretending that all letters can be sent by air? These higher postal rates are in effect a war tax and a payment for war preparedness willy-nilly.

J. C. K.

Savings on Post-cards and Letters

But even with war preparedness there were other ways of making savings on post-cards and letters, without taking away the facility of the half-anna post-card and the 1½ as. letter. The size of the post-card could have been slightly reduced as in the time of Queen Victoria one-pice post-cards, or writing on the back could have been dropped. They could have also helped the poor class of citizens by introducing a "quarter sheet letter" (the same as what is known as "air mail letter") at 1½ as., alongside the raising to two annas on the envelope. The latter increase in that case would not have been a burden to the above class. Indeed, they would not have minded even if the charge on heavier letters had been raised to, say, 1½ as. for every tola or 1½ tola (half ounce).

It should be realized that millions are never going to be served and do not need to be served by air mail and that they need and appreciate even slight relief in their domestic budgets. As a matter of fact air delivery is later than normal rail delivery particularly at stations for which the transmission is partly by air and partly by rail. And such places are by hundreds, while the air-stations are hardly two dozen!

Cost of Post-cards

But there is a further grave charge laid against the Government for the statement reported to have

been made on its behalf that the rate on post-card had to be increased because the manufacture and printing of a post-card cost 8.2 pies to the Government. It means that the half-anna post-card meant a loss of some lakhs every year for its manufacture and print.

A calculating critic indignantly comments upon this. "If the cost of paper and printing is 8.2 pies I think the people who run the Government Press deserve to be sacked for their extravagance." He enquired of about three or four presses in Bombay and found out that the total cost should not be more than 2 pies at the most and on a large scale production ought not to be more than one pie. My own enquiry confirms this calculation. It is suggested that the cost ought to have been found to come to .82 pies and not 8.2 pies—just a shifting of the decimal point!

The Government and the M. L. A.s owe an explanation to the public as to how the figure 8.2 was made out by the former and accepted by the latter, and if there was a mistake, to apologize and make amends.

Wardha, 11-4-'49

Illegal Dinners

A correspondent writes:

"Seventy young men of Kadi (Gujarat) resolved not to take part in dining parties where more than twentyfive persons were invited. About four or five parties were held since, in which, excepting four men, all kept their pledge even though some of the parties were given by their own relatives. If this step is followed elsewhere by others, what a great effect it might have!"

There was a time when young men were guided by elders in the path of religion and morals and were taught to follow the advice and footsteps of their elders. Today the position is the other way round, and young men have to prevent the elders from breaking rules of right conduct. Though on the one hand this indicates a deteriorating situation, on the other one sees rays of hope in it. It means that degradation, which had enveloped the whole society including the old, is slowly taking a turn towards improvement. The test is whether the step is indicative of a moral awakening, or just an outcome of imp spirit, usually accompanying youthful age. If there is a moral awakening, we should see self-restraint in other spheres of life also. But one finds that in other matters, there is unlimited indulgence. One notices a good deal of

enthusiasm in fighting for justice and equality in society. If the same enthusiasm is shown in reforming personal character, indeed we can make good progress. Internally, faith in God and outwardly, cleanliness and spinning would be signs of moral awakening in the present context of India's life.

Wardha, 29-3-'49

(Translated from the original in Gujarati)

"Nai Roshni"

The suspension of the Urdu edition of the *Harijansevak* has disappointed some readers of that paper, and enquiries are being made for a suitable alternative. Those who wish to have in Urdu healthy reading from the nationalist point of view will find it in the *Nai Roshni*, a weekly, which, I believe, will satisfy them. It is published under the auspices of Jamia Millia from Jamia Nagar, Delhi, under the editorship of Dr. Sayyad Abid Hussein. Among its regular features are a weekly review of important events in the Indian Union, Pakistan and the world, a page of poems, a column of light reading, a page from some articles in the *Harijan*, along with the editor's leader and other contributions. A specimen copy can be obtained by writing to the editor of the paper.

Wardha, 7-4-'49

Food and Agriculture

Students of problems relating to Food and Agriculture will find some valuable reading matter in the April issue of *Rural India*. It also proposes to publish in a combined issue for May and June a special number containing speeches and proceedings of the All India Food Production Conference at Pohri, Gwalior. This monthly is published from Ishwardas Mansions, Nana Chowk, Bombay, 7.

Wardha, 7-4-'49

K. G. M.

Fifth Basic Education Conference

It has been decided to hold the Fifth All India Basic Education Conference under the auspices of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh at the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Perianayackenpalayam, near Coimbatore (South India) on the 7th, 8th and 9th of May, 1949. Dr. Zakir Husain, President of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Founder-President of the Jamia Millia Islamia, now Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh University, will preside over the Conference.

Many educationists, Ministers of Education and workers in the practical field of basic education are expected to take part in the Conference. The office of the Reception Committee has been opened at the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, P. O., Coimbatore District. Any particulars regarding the Conference can be had from the Secretary.

Along with the Conference, a Sarvodaya Pradarshini will also be put up. Institutions and workers engaged in the work of rural reconstruction are invited to take part in the exhibition.

A meeting of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh will also be held at the Ramakrishna Vidyalaya, Perianayackenpalayam on the 6th May, 1949. Dr. Zakir Husain will preside.

E. W. ARYANAYAKAM
Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh

Pohri Food Conference Postponed

The All India Food Production Conference which was scheduled to be held at Pohri (Madhya Bharat) on the 12th and 13th of April has to be postponed to future dates due to some very special reasons. The altered dates of holding the postponed Conference will soon be fixed up and announced very shortly. The Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Conference very much regrets inconvenience due to this unavoidable postponement caused to all those, who were to attend the Conference and trusts that it will be largely attended when resummoned.

VIGILANCE

The British Houses of Parliament recently appointed a Special Tribunal "for the purpose of inquiring whether there was any justification for allegations that payments, rewards, or other considerations had been sought, offered, promised, made or received by or to Ministers of the Crown or other public servants in connection with licences or permissions required under any enactment, regulation or order or in connection with the withdrawal of any prosecution and, if so, under what circumstances the transactions took place, and what persons were involved therein." The Tribunal consisted of a judge of the High Court of Justice of England and two of the King's Counsel. Their report, which is unanimous, is since published by the order of the British Government. The high persons concerned were Messrs. John Belcher, M.P., George Gibson (once a Director of the Bank of England and at the time of enquiry, Chairman of the North Western Electricity Board), C. W. Key, M.P., and seven others, one of them being Dr. Hugh Dalton, once the Finance Minister of England.

A thorough enquiry was made. It has resulted in an adverse report against Messrs. Belcher and Gibson, discharge of Mr. Key, and the honourable exoneration of the rest. It is instructive to note the charges made against the three accused.

MR. BELCHER

"There is no reliable evidence that Mr. Belcher received any sums of money in respect of any of the transactions which we have investigated or indeed in respect of any transactions. The only benefits which we can find he did receive were the small gifts and hospitality from Mr. Matchan, the wines and spirits from Sir Maurice Bloch and the benefactions by way of gifts and hospitality from Mr. Stanley."

MR. GIBSON

"We are satisfied that Mr. Gibson was offered by Mr. Stanley the chairmanship of a new company as a consideration to induce Mr. Gibson as a public servant to assist in obtaining from the Treasury upon the recommendation of the Capital Issues Committee permission for a public issue of the shares of the new company and that Mr. Gibson realized the reason for this offer. Although for other reasons he refused the offer, Mr. Gibson continued to assist Mr. Stanley in his efforts to

secure this permission for a public issue and to assist in any other enterprise in which Mr. Stanley sought his help. We are satisfied that Mr. Gibson did this in the hope of material advantage to himself although in fact all that he received apart from some trivial gifts was the present of a suit of clothes."

MR. KEY

"Any gifts or hospitality which Mr. Key may have received were neither sought nor received by him in connection with any applications which might be made to him or his Ministry, and that Mr. Key's official actions were not influenced in any way thereby."

It will be seen that the gifts involved were very small. But vigilance consists in not neglecting small lapses. We all know the high standard of integrity that once prevailed in India, and which Bapu set before us in public life. He publicly censured Kasurba on a matter of about four rupees and laid bare the lapses of his own nephew. What heights may we not reach if we follow his example?

Wardha, 29-3-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE MILITARY AND FOOD SHORTAGE

Since the attainment of independence there appears to be a definite tendency towards increasing the armed forces. The recruits to the army are drawn mostly from rural setting. They have frequently been drawn from peasant stock. While at home, these young men have been brought up on a frugal diet, may be one meal a day. This starvation level, in itself, has often driven them into the forces where they are given two *nastas* and two square meals per day in addition to being introduced to such habits as smoking and perhaps even drinking. In the usual parlance this may be called "raising the standard of living". Such raised standard is maintained at the cost of the public and it also means a greater draft on the existing stock of food grains. Therefore, the mere increase in the forces would mean a shortage of food, as the consumption increases.

On the other hand, these recruits, while they were on the farm, would have been producers and in so far as they have run away from production it is a strain on our food supply. Thus we see that increasing the armed forces means decrease in the productive forces and a strain on the existing supplies.

Rich countries have been able to maintain large armies by drawing on the supply of other countries even to the danger of starvation and famine in the supply countries. But India is not in a position to command such resources. Hence she has to pay through the nose for imports of food-stuffs to make up the shortage caused by the increase in the armed forces.

Thus the armed forces are largely parasitic in relation to food. If we wish to check this to any extent, it will be necessary to draft in their man-

power into our food production. A good deal of the energy and time of the military forces are non-productive, if not destructive. Their energies during peace time could well be channelled into production of food. Though it may not be possible to completely make up the shortage caused by armed forces, such an effort will at least ameliorate the evil.

During the foreign rule the officers preferred to stay in big cities in specially constructed cantonments. Now there is no reason why such sites should be occupied. Army units may well be stationed away from the civil population, in cultivable waste lands and with the enormous resources and engineering skill at their disposal, they could be made to bring in cultivable waste land under the plough. It may be possible for them to grow most of their requirements by way of food grains and vegetables.

This method of occupying the armed forces during certain seasons of the year has many advantages. It relieves the housing problem, as the houses in cantonments will be available to the civil population. It will enable the young men in the army to be trained in up-to-date agricultural practices, as the military forces can be properly staffed and the young men in the army who are probably potential farmers will be made manure-minded and better-seed-minded. These two defects in our conservative farmers will be corrected. Above all, a certain amount of the food shortage could be made up. Perhaps, if justification were possible, some part of the increase in military expenses could even be justified if these forces take up production without making undue inroads on the existing stock of food materials. We hope, therefore, that the military authorities will be agreeable to such an agricultural spare time occupation being given to their men and in co-operation with the Agricultural Department, be able to some extent defend the country against its great enemy — starvation.

J. C. KUMARAPPA

SOME USEFUL BOOKS BY GANDHIJI

An Autobiography	7-0-0	0-13-0
Key to Health	0-10-0	0-2-0
Non-violence in Peace & War		
Vol. 1	7-0-0	0-10-0
Cent Per Cent Swadeshi	2-0-0	0-8-0
From Yeravda Mandir	0-8-0	0-2-0
Hind Swaraj	0-8-0	0-2-0
Self-Restraint v. Self-Indulgence	2-0-0	0-8-0
Women & Social Injustice	3-0-0	0-8-0
Delhi Diary	3-0-0	0-10-0
The Nation's Voice	3-0-0	0-10-0
Gandhiji's Correspondence with		
the Govt. (1942-44)	2-8-0	0-7-0
Constructive Programme	0-6-0	0-2-0

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SLOW AND STEADY PROSPERITY

Dream, man will; and he can dream only for happiness. But a dream may be wise or wild according as it depends for its realization more upon oneself or more upon a set of fortuitous circumstances outside one's control. We must dream wisely.

False dreams mislead us, mislead the people, launch the nation into irredeemable obligations, and ultimately create a feeling of frustration and discontent, ending in open or veiled violence.

Several formidable schemes have been framed in recent years for bringing about a millennium. Some promise fructification in five years and some in ten years. When the Sargent scheme put down a period of forty years, it was condemned by politicians and educationists. The present Government have promised to implement it in 12 to 15 years.

Formidable schemes require equally formidable amounts of money, materials and right type of men. There is a desire to borrow from foreigners. Foreigners, particularly U. S. A., appear to be too willing to help. They have helped so many in the past. But it reminds one of a peasant's advice to his son: "When a banker is too anxious to advance a loan, beware, and avoid taking it."

Let us be realistic and not deceive ourselves and the people. Several gigantic schemes of real consequence to the masses cannot be worked out in five or ten years. They are not possible even in twenty years in terms of universally available balanced and sufficient food, thirty yards of cloth, decent houses, clean villages, electricity and small mechanical factories worked by petrol, electricity or atomic energy, and other comforts. Not even universal primary education may be possible in fifteen years, if by education we mean schemes based on *old Talim* that is, non-productive educational equipment.

Modern science has undoubtedly achieved wonders. Its contribution is not confined only to what are regarded material fields of life, but also in those of the spirit. Its ultimate aim is to see, as much as possible, Truth face to face and work for the peace and happiness of mankind.

But at the same time, it must be borne in mind that even modern science is still as much a ship without a wise captain as the witchcraft of the middle ages. In a way it is more dangerous than the latter. For modern science has placed dangerous instruments in the hands of hundreds of men, who are old enough to know how to use them, but are not wise enough to know the purposes for which they should not be used. And so before science comes to be employed in fields of constructive

industries and for producing essential needs of life, it is vigorously harnessed in fields for prosecuting wars, which are placed in the class of priorities.

War-mongering statesmen need to promise immense prosperity and glory to keep up the spirit of a nation engaged in war. In the past people could be led in a war by raising before them the picture of a fairy land for those dying on the battlefield. Builders of peace must not imitate them. Life and prosperity built up in the course of centuries can be demolished within an instant by an earthquake, in a few hours by science and in a few days by incendiarism. It can be rebuilt only by hard and patient labour. We must acknowledge this to ourselves and the people must be told so frankly.

Swaraj particularly after centuries of incessant internal warfare and at least two hundred years of intense foreign exploitation—and closely following a world war—cannot bring plenty and prosperity in five or ten years. Far less so, if the obligation rests on the Government alone to bring it about, and capital becomes 'shy', and labour wants to be 'light'. Swaraj only means cessation of outside drain and exploitation if the people would have it, and an opportunity and a reason for working harder than before for self-uplift. The only way to attain prosperity is what was laid out by the proverbial *bania* until about a century and a half ago. He left his home with a pot and a string, worked hard for two or three decades, spent less and laid by pennies spending the greater part of his life in exile in a distant province or country, and only towards the end of life had the satisfaction of seeing the family progressing towards prosperity. *Banias* existed even in the pre-British period. But they did not claim attention as a marked out and unlikely community, though even then, they were always a little better off than others. "A *bania* might earn a whole bread or a half one, but he never dies of starvation" went a saying. But he built his prosperity slowly and through generations.

It was only in a speculating and gambling age of the "industrial revolution", and during the British period, which gave him the facility to become a landowner and investor without himself actually tilling the land or manufacturing goods that he began to think of earning by thousands and lakhs in a short time and became an object of jealousy. As a matter of fact only a few individuals progressively succeeded in this. The rest have been ruined in a few years. So far as the whole nation is concerned, the way of the old *bania* is the only sure one for steady prosperity.

Let me humbly repeat what I have been feeling for at least eight years: If we aim at a rapid import of 'scientific civilization' we cannot escape facing baffling problems of all sorts, including politics and disturbances of a violent nature. We must give up the frantic hurry of introducing every invention and labour-saving device, which knowledge of the laws of science may suggest. Let us not mind being considered still living in a Victorian or even the

mediaeval age. It is enough, if we can provide unto the last of our countrymen sufficient food, clothing and a house to live a healthy and sturdy long life and nothing more in the immediate future. If we are content to build slowly, we can reconstruct our country and a robust nation with confident self-help. To dismiss simplicity as a sub-human standard of life is a mistake similar to that made by eaters who prefer white to whole-meal bread for its external appearance.

If we give up wild dreams and look straight into the hard facts of life, it would not be difficult for us to see that the only way to feel hopeful and well-organized for self-uplift is through the *charkha*. Pandit Jawaharlalji called *khadi* "the livery of freedom". Even its repetition parrot-like and a lip-loyalty to it through the flag ceremony organized by Swaraj as nothing else did. How strong an organization would there be if *khadi* is really adopted as its weapon in active operation?

Wardha, 13-4-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

FIGHTING CORRUPTION

I felt unhappy on reading the article *Corruption Galore* in the *Harijan* dated 9th January 1949. I get similar reports from other sources also. It provokes a chain of thoughts which I would like to share with the readers of the *Harijan*. In the first place I think it is not the corruption of the *chaprasis* and *sirastedars* that is so depressing, but the fact that the rot has gone much deeper. The *chaprasis* may have some reason for being corrupt, because their pays are too low to enable them to live decently—rather live at all. They badly require other sources of income, whatever those may be. We must go into the causes of the corruption if we want to get rid of it. The man at the bottom has certainly too little. But the man near the top also complains that he has too little! I have been amazed to hear some of the most highly paid men say that they can hardly make the two ends meet. The reason is that they compare themselves with men in similar positions in other countries, where the average income *per capita* is more than 200 times that in India, and try to imitate them in the way of life, entertainments, cocktail parties and what not. These people being more vociferous and being able to make their voices heard, may even get increments, whereas no one thinks of the man at the bottom. In any event, no one thinks of touching their (topmen's) salaries. In spite of high salaries, there are high officials who do not hesitate to make use of opportunities that are equivalent to bribery even if they may not accept bribes in a crude form. I understand there are those who even accept crude bribe in money, etc. There are many at all levels who have no sense of responsibility. Unless we can do something to cultivate the two basic qualities of honesty or integrity and

responsibility and reliability, I do not know where we might end. I am afraid there is no other way in the world today except levelling up and levelling down. We must produce more, no doubt, but in the meantime we must share the scarcity and share it voluntarily. That is Bapu's way. Otherwise we will have to share under communism, i. e. a violent upheaval. Corruption, poverty and discontent are the most fertile soil for violent revolution and unless our leaders can do something to demonstrate a living acceptance of Bapu's philosophy, nothing in the world can prevent India from following in China's footsteps. We can never fight ideas with force. They have to be fought with superior ideas and actual reform in life. And what can be better than what Bapu gave us? Could there be a greater tragedy than India being swept by communism after what all Bapu has done? Yet that is inevitable unless we do something radical to change the situation quickly. Let us not be smug and say communism is not a threat to India. It is a very real threat if things continue to be what they are.

Baltimore, U. S. A., 11-3-'49

S. N.

[Note: I should add a word of caution to the above. *Chaprasis*, *sirastedars*, or any other public servant, whether under-paid or illiberally paid, should not carry the idea that they at least have some justification for receiving bribes or *bakshis*. It is a dangerous fallacy and leads to self-pity and self-debasement. The necessity for a better standard of life has been accepted on all hands. But a low standard of life is not by itself sub-human life. Honesty with other concomitants of high character is human; dishonesty, fraud, selfishness is sub-human. Virtue is an end by itself and not just a policy or useful means of worldly enhancement, and it has no connection with either genius or satisfactory economic and social status. A High Court judge may be a drunkard and receiver of bribes. His poor *chaprasi* and *sirastedar* may be above these vices. The sophisticated world will still show outward respect to the judge but the honest *chaprasi* and *sirastedar* will carry with them a sense of internal peace and dignity, which the judge will never enjoy. The judge himself will always feel small and diffident before his honest subordinates and if he is a coward, might even try to get rid of them, even as the communalist Hindu, getting afraid of too much goodness in Gandhiji, killed him.

It will be a mistake to think that the moral improvement must wait till it begins from the top. Often the movement starts from a low level and envelopes the whole society and the change of heart in the upper ranks follows the mass movement partly out of necessity and partly genuinely. We must adopt higher moral standards whatever may be our status in society and its handicaps.

Wardha, 29-3-'49

—K. G. M.]

SATYAGRAHA IN U. S. A.

Among the foreign Pacifist visitors who came to India at the time of the Jaipur Congress was one Mr. Bayard Rustin, an American Negro. He was kind enough to call upon me at Bombay to give me an account of the Satyagraha movement among the Negroes of U. S. A. for defying racial segregation laws prevailing in its Southern colonies. He narrated to me what he and his friends had done to obtain the right of travelling non-racially. At the time of his visit to India, he was on bail for a sentence of 30 days hard labour passed against him in North Carolina.

The case arose as follows:

Bayard Rustin, one other Negro, Andrew Johnson and two Whites, Joseph Felmet and Igal Roodenko, "were arrested in April 1947 when an interracial group took a bus trip through the South to determine whether Southern States are adhering to a 1946 decision of the U. S. Supreme Court banning segregation of Negroes in interstate travel.

"Despite the ruling by the highest court, Southern States are continuing to enforce segregation. Using the non-violent technique of Mahatma Gandhi, the two Negroes seated in the White section of the bus and the two Whites seated in the Negro section defied police orders to move to their respective segregated sections. Remaining seated, they calmly told the police officers that the Supreme Court had outlawed the segregated seating system and that they would insist on their right to remain where they were.

"When the four took this stand, they were immediately arrested. Following their release on bail, they narrowly escaped a White lynch mob which pursued them to the home of a White minister. However, they managed to get out of town unharmed to continue the bus trip with the rest of the group.

"When they subsequently returned for trial, they were convicted and sentenced to 30 days hard labour on the road gang which is the maximum under North Carolina's jim crow law. They appealed as high as the North Carolina Supreme Court. Their case however, was complicated by the fact that they were making stopovers for meetings in North Carolina before crossing to Tennessee. The ruling of the U. S. Supreme Court only applies to buses and trains going from one State to another and the prosecution argued that since the four were making the stopovers, they were not interstate passengers.

"It was because of this complication that the four decided to forego their appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court."

Accordingly immediately upon returning from India, all the four *Satyagrahis* have decided to voluntarily surrender to the authorities for serving their sentences.

One more Negro, Howard N. Lee, has also offered similar *Satyagraha* by refusing to sit in the Negro section of a train. He has been convicted

by the lower Courts. As there are no complications involved in his case, an appeal has been preferred against his conviction in the U. S. Supreme Court.

This shows how Gandhiji's message and method are working far and near.

Wardha, 22-3-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

STARTLING FACTS—II

COMPOST VS. ARTIFICIAL MANURE

"Lord Portsmouth has made an interesting contribution to this question in connection with keeping quality. Wheat straw is used for thatching many of the cottages of his Hampshire estate. By keeping careful records over a number of years he found that, although the crops in question were grown side by side on the same type of soil, thatch made with straw from wheat grown with humus lasted twice as long as that grown with artificials." (*The Living Soil*, E. B. Balfour, page 108, para 4).

"Not the least important of replacing chemical fertilizers by farmyard manure or compost, is the increase which brings about in the earth-worm population. Darwin found that the weight of worm casts deposited on the surface of ordinary field soil in good heart may exceed ten tons per acre per year. The importance of this and its direct bearing on plant nutrition, becomes clear when you consider the estimates of other experts, notably Dr. L. C. Curtis of the Connecticut Experimental Station, that worm casts contain five times more nitrogen, seven times more available phosphate, eleven times more potash, and 40 per cent more humus than is normally to be found in the six inches of soil, and this is not their only contribution to soil fertility. The late Sir Bernard Greenwell attached great importance to the part played by earthworms in pest control and in the production of the healthy crops generally. In a paper which he read to the Farmers' Club in 1939 he stated:

"I am afraid very few of us realize what a good friend this little fellow is to the farmer, and if we can only increase the population of the earthworm in the soil, he will do a lot of our deep cultivation for us and aerate the soil gratis. Where we manured our grassland with artificials, we found worms disappeared, but the following year a compost was applied made from town rubbish mixed with dung, and immediately the worm casts reappeared. It is a known fact that the nomad tribes in Central Africa always pitched their camp on ground covered with worm casts as they found that this was the best grazing!" (*Ibid*, pages 113-114, paras 3-1).

"When a dressing of artificial manure is given it might be imagined that all that was being done was to introduce quickly and easily at a comparatively late stage in the chain of processes, an additional supply of those salts which are being laboriously produced by the soil organisms; the plant should proceed to feed abundantly on this enhanced foodstore; the whole thing should go forward more rapidly. But this is not what happens. The chain of processes instead of being sped

forward is diverted or may even be described as reversed. The additional salts do not simply lie there while the plant gradually eats them up; on the contrary, they start another cycle. They stimulate the life of the soil organisms, and do this to such an extent that these organisms begin to comb and devour the soil humus for everything they can get. . . . The result is a strange degree of super activity. The slow crumbling down process, the making and the remaking of humus, yields to an intense glow, a sort of fire, the soil is correctly described as burnt up. This fire, like all fires, is destructive, for the glue once consumed is not restored. The compound soil particle falls apart; a dusty condition sets in; the land 'blows'. . . . This wasteful and extravagant practice has all the results we might foresee. At first there is considerable stimulation of plant growth; large dark green foliage is formed; fruits and flowers increase in size: there is an apparent initial success. This may last sometime and it is obvious that the period depends on how great is the original store of humus which can be burnt up. But when this precious capital is exhausted, the true effects are to be observed." (*The Earth's Green Carpet*, Louis E. Howard, pp. 144-46, paras 3-1).

"On the earthworm population the effect of artificial manures, especially of the acid-forming manures such as sulphate of ammonia and superphosphate, is of the nature of a cataclysm; a single heavy dressing overnight of sulphate of ammonia will screw them on the surface so that their dead-bodies can be swept up by the shovelful in the morning." (*Ibid*, page 147, para 2).

"The running out of the variety, i. e. the failure of reproductive powers, that bane of our modern agriculture, is unknown in the East. The scientist working on the selection of wheats in India can draw on native varieties two thousand years old; the same is true of the sugar-cane, and is proved by ancient Sanskrit names." (*Ibid*, page 159, para 2).

I shall send hereafter a few quotations from letters received. I have put the matter before the Central Government Ministers and am sending notes also to some Provincial Ministers. But the public have got to make up and take a living interest in what gives them life. The tragedy today is that the educated and moneyed classes are altogether out of touch with the vital fundamentals of existence—our Mother Earth, and the animal and vegetable population which she sustains. This world of Nature's planning is ruthlessly plundered, despoiled and disorganized by man whenever he gets the chance. By his science and machinery he may get huge returns for a time, but ultimately will come desolation. We have got to study Nature's balance, and develop our lives within her laws, if we are to survive as physically healthy and morally decent species.

MIRABEHN

FROM VINOBA'S SPEECHES AT THE SARVODAYA CONFERENCE-IV

11-3-'49, Prayer meeting

CHARACTER OR POWER ?

We all know that while all India rejoiced at the attainment of Independence at the end of a long struggle, Gandhiji who had led her to that goal, had no feeling of happiness and comfort in him on the day of Independence. His heart was afflicted with sorrow and the day was to him rather the commencement of a new era of grief and trials.

Another great man had passed through a similar state of mind in the past. I speak of Joseph Mazzini. It was through his efforts that Italy had attained a kind of Swaraj. But that Swaraj brought no comfort to his mind. Because in both the cases Swaraj meant only attainment of power. Gandhiji's sorrow was all the more intense, because all through his life he had laid greatest stress on purity of means. But he discovered that in spite of his efforts, people had not accepted the spirit of his message, with the result that the new independence soon expressed itself in the form of unimaginable deeds of violence, mutual hatred, pursuit of comfortable standards of living and places of power. The conclusion is that mere attainment of political power is not the same as Swaraj and does not bring to the nation the feeling of having achieved the desired goal.

There could be no doubt that if every one became a person of good moral character, the whole society could have happiness and peace. It is urged, however, that it is a long term programme. The pace would be quicker if, in order to achieve it, the administration energetically exercised the authority vested in it and its effort was supplemented by the effort for the reform of individuals. For this it was necessary that power should come into the hands of the people.

Now, I ask, with leaders like Jawaharlalji, Sardar Vallabhbhai, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and others at the helm of affairs, can it be said that administration had not fully come into the hands of the people, or, even, right type of people? The answer probably is that though we have our own people at the top, the subordinate service is not manned by good people and deserves to be changed.

But this means that the subordinate service must also be filled with right type of men, i. e. men of good moral character. If those who actually administer are not good, the authority they possess will, instead of protecting the people, tyrannize over them.

Ultimately, therefore, the principal factor is the personal character of the officers and not merely the possession of power. If character is regarded a subordinate factor and power the principal one, you might have an illusion of efficient government, but not good government. When we say that this *charkha* spins well, it is only a figurative way of saying that one can spin well on this *charkha*. Actually the *charkha* spins nothing, and if the spinner is efficient but the *charkha* is defective, he can improve the latter; but a good *charkha* cannot improve a bad spinner. So too, if the

administering officer is good, the authority vested in him will do good, but if he is bad his chair cannot improve him. Swami Vivekananda rightly said once that an ant was greater than a powerful railway engine. For, the ant could save itself by just getting away from the rails but the engine cannot leave the rail even by an inch so that it might crush the ant. Even the load which it appears to carry is not by its own power but by the power of its driver. We would, therefore, be going after a mirage if we allowed ourselves to think that power was greater than character. The pursuit for power was bound to lead us to paths of violence.

यत्नेनहि स्वराज्ये—“Let us make effort for Swaraj”—is a Vedic mantra ascribed to the sage Atri. There is nothing to show that he was living under a foreign rule. What could he have meant then by “effort for Swaraj”? What was it that made him feel that he had no Swaraj? The truth is that as long as man attached more value to material things than to those who really matter—the living beings—true Swaraj cannot be established.—Sarvodaya still less. Such Swaraj does not exist in India or for the matter of that, anywhere in the world, including the much praised Russia. There is as much subservience there as might be in a slave country. For investing a person with power, it was an illusion to choose between A and B, on the ground that A was one's own man and B a stranger. The real conflict was between goodness and evil. If the ‘one's own man’ was good, vesting of power in him was good; if he was bad, it was otherwise. The Swaraj will be as the *swa* (one's own) is.

(Translated from the original in Hindustani)

JAWAHARLALJI JUSTIFIED

[From Vinobaji's speech at Bombay on 9-4-'49]

Pt. Jawaharlalji is reported to have declined the invitation to perform the opening ceremony of a memorial of the late Khudiram Bose erected at Muzaffarpur, on the ground that he did not approve of the means which Khudiram Bose had made use of. Some papers commenting upon this have argued that Khudiram's use of violence was in the interest of the country in the same way as Pandit Jawaharlalji's (in his capacity as a Prime Minister) against Hyderabad and Kashmir, and therefore there was inconsistency in Jawaharlalji's reasoning.

The criticism betrays confusion between *danda-shakti* (power over violence vested in the State) and *himsa* (force of violence). *Danda-shakti* is of course not non-violence, yet as long as human society has not evolved to the stage, when it will entirely free itself of violence, the authority to use violence has to be delegated by the society to its chosen representative namely the State.

The *danda-shakti* being power over violence and not simply power of violence, can be used both for the furtherance and development of violence as well as for restricting it and progressing towards non-violence. The tests to know the purpose for which it is used are two: (1) whether in international politics it seeks quarrels and conflicts with other countries and prepares itself for aggression and war, or makes its best efforts

to establish world peace? and (2) whether in the maintenance of peace inside the country it makes use of its power of violence in a strictly controlled manner and as little as possible, or the contrary?

Considered cumulatively Pandit Nehru's Government appears to me to be entitled to claim that it stands with its face turned towards non-violence and pledged to implement Gandhiji's ideals to the largest extent. It cannot make that claim in regard to Gandhiji's economic and social ideals. But in the former sphere, in my opinion it has so far done nothing inconsistent with that claim. It has thrown all its weight on the side of peace in international politics. It acted with utmost restraint at a time when unprecedented violence prevailed all over the country. So much so that it was accused of weakness in regard to Kashmir and Hyderabad. The use of the power of violence (*danda-shakti*) delegated by the society for its own good in a strictly controlled manner cannot be regarded as violence, and it cannot be compared with an act of terrorism done with a motive however high.

True democracy can stay only with insistence upon pure means. Otherwise there will be only a showy form of it. This is the conclusion to which almost all of us have arrived by our forty years' experience. In the face of this clear experience, if Panditji had accepted the invitation to the Khudiram Bose function, he would have created confused thinking among the people. I entirely justify his refusal to take part in it. It shows his clarity of thought. A frank and truthful mind intuitively comes to a correct decision.

I am aware that the communist ideology also accepts the dissolution of the power of violence as the ultimate end. But it believes that though non-violence is its ultimate goal, at the present time it needed violence even of the most severe form. Non-violence will spring out of it. The proper approach is that non-violence is not only the ultimate goal, but even the State's power of violence must be used in a progressively diminishing manner so that we may advance towards non-violence. That is how Pandit Jawaharlalji also looks at it. False comparisons lead to confused thinking and Panditji has provided a good lesson to stimulate clear thinking by his attitude towards this memorial.

(Translated from the original in Hindustani)

CONTENTS	PAGE
VIGILANCE ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	58
THE MILITARY AND FOOD SHORTAGE ... J. C. KUMARAPPA	59
SLOW AND STEADY PROSPERITY ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	60
FIGHTING CORRUPTION ... S. N.	61
SATYAGRAHA IN U. S. A. ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	62
STARTLING FACTS—II ... MIRABEHN	62
FROM VINOBA'S SPEECHES AT THE SARVODAYA CONFERENCE—IV ... VINOBA	63
JAWAHARLALJI JUSTIFIED ... VINOBA	64
NOTES:	
THE NEW WAR TAX ... J. C. K.	57
SAVINGS ON POST-CARDS AND LETTERS ... K. G. M.	57
COST OF POST-CARDS ... K. G. M.	57
ILLEGAL DINNERS ... K. G. M.	57
"Nai ROSHNI" ... K. G. M.	58
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ... K. G. M.	58
FIFTH BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE ... E. W. ARYANAYAKAM	58
POHRI FOOD CONFERENCE POSTPONED ...	58

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