

## HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

## GOVERNMENT AND KHADI

A correspondent writes the following after reading the article 'Khadi Stocks' published in the *Harijan* of 30-8-'52. It is worthy of note :

"Unemployment at present is increasing in such great strides that the unemployed are trying in vain to maintain themselves by taking to any good or bad and (unproductive) occupations. This hampers whatever few nation-building activities some men from the upper strata are contemplating to do. Illicit distillation is one such growing occupation born of unemployment. The problem is getting more complicated day by day. People are dying a slow death, and some are committing even suicide. I would, therefore, like to request men like you who carry weight with the present Government. You ought to urge upon them that all the Government offices and institutions should compulsorily use the village industries products in all the works done on behalf of every one of them. Whatever cloth, stationery, paper, small iron tools and such other things are used in the hospitals, dispensaries, municipalities, revenue and police departments and all such other places, must be village products. I should suggest that rather than sanctioning the amount for the above items in the budget, arrangement should be made to supply the necessary things themselves directly from their talukas, districts or provinces. If this much is done at the outset, it would be an example for the people to emulate and they also would start more or less using the products of the village industries. In these circumstances moneyed people might be tempted to invest in rural industries and with such a start the problem of unemployment would abate."

The suggestion made by the correspondent is not new and has been discussed many times before in one form or another in these columns. As early as 1935-36, when Gandhiji inaugurated All India Village Industries Association, he went so far as to assert that the village industries work was not political but humanitarian—for the benefit of India's poor people and that the Government (foreign though it was then) could also help. He had added further that he would work out a miracle in the country through the new Rural Movement provided the Government was helpful to him. (This is the substance in my own words of what he wrote then). This miracle contemplated by Gandhiji awaits completion. The Governments of today are people's and can help village industries. Not only that, but the Constitution has ordained (in Section 43) that 'the State shall endeavour to promote cottage industries on

an individual or co-operative basis in rural areas.' And according to Section 41, 'the State shall within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work.' Nobody today demands of the Government to offer work to the unemployed nor to give doles in case work cannot be given. Nor do we complain that the Government are bound to provide work (i.e. food) to all, which obviously they could not do. But Khadi does provide work to many people. It gives relief in famine. Both the people and the Government are bound, therefore to purchase Khadi. If crores of rupees can be invested for supplying milk to the cities, why tarry to make a like investment for providing bread to the poor?

It should, however, be remembered that there is no question here of investing any money in Khadi. What is suggested to the Government is only this: "Your annual purchase of cloth already is worth lakhs of rupees. Please substitute Khadi for other cloth." This suggestion is very simple and we wonder why the Government hesitate to accept it. We can, however, imagine the reasons for their hesitation. One of them seems to be that the Government servants might not be approving of Khadi. They might argue that it being connected with a certain political party, the Government ought not to sponsor it. It is likely that some of the people also argue in the same fashion. If my surmise is right, it deserves consideration. The above argument is not right; but in the days of fight for Swaraj, whatever political odour was attached to Khadi then must disappear now. The Government should abide by the Constitution, which is the creation of not any one party or politics. Khadi and handloom cloth occupy a place of importance in our village industries. It must be noted that this is no question of investment by Government but only of encouraging rural industries, which is their duty, by buying Khadi to supply their cloth need. Would the Government do their duty by the poor?

8-9-'52

MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

(From the original in Gujarati)

## NOTES

## Sir Maurice Gwyer

In the sad death of Sir Maurice Gwyer, we have lost a great jurist and able educationalist. India will always remember him as one of the rare Englishmen who could take a balanced view of things and affairs in the most stirring and difficult times in India during the Quit India movement. His work as the Vice-Chancellor of the Delhi University is well known. As is aptly described, by his work as its executive head, he put the university on the map of higher education in India. May he lie in peace.

16-10-52

## Decentralize or Perish

P. T. I.—Reuter reports from Adelaide, October 5 :

"Prof. E. W. Titterton, an official Australian observer at the test (of the Atom bomb explosion) yesterday contributed a special article in the *Herald* headed 'Spread out for Survival'.

"He said the only immediate practical way to survive an atomic attack was to stop the growth of big cities at once.

"It was generally agreed, he said, that an enemy could not be prevented from delivering an atomic attack against a given city.

"The only answer to such a prospect was dispersal—or defence through decentralization—by cities and their industries."

(From *The Hindustan Times*, Oct. 6).

So, in God's good earth, even a devil can give us a lesson if only we can heed to it. Even an atom bomb can do some good turn to the erring man : it would be really to man's advantage if he learns from the atom bomb that cities must be split up into small townships or nice little villages and centralized industries of today reorganized and necessary technique for it found out so as to render them capable of being small village and cottage industries. It will also render atomic weapons useless and save us from gigantic and wastefully centralized municipal services like water, electricity, transport, housing etc. which become very nice targets for the enemy during war-time. We in India are having at present 'Greater City' plans and schemes that are almost a fashion of the day in so-called progressive planning. Should we not revise our ideas about them? Shri Jawaharlalji has assured the nation that 'India was interested not in the manufacture of atom bombs, but in the development of atomic energy for social purposes'. We should go further and not merely split up the atom but our big centralized schemes and cities also in the cause of peace and common weal.

8-10-52

## The Atomic Death-Dance

Papers are full of the accounts of what is described as 'Britain's first atomic explosion' that took place at "Devil's Island" 50 miles off the Australian mainland. Prime Minister Churchill immediately on hearing the news wired congratulations to the Prime Minister of Australia for the successful performance of the deadly explosion.

A few days back it was reported in papers that from the point of view of military finance an atom bomb was a cheaper weapon as it cost less and killed more ; hence it was an economic measure in armaments ! If I remember aright, it was said that the average cost per man killed by an atom bomb will be a mere rupee or a little more.

Amidst this prostitution of the human intellect and the deadly din of death and massacre deliberately being planned and prosecuted by Western States, whether democratic or totalitarian, it is some solace to hear the following still small voice of the National Committee of Science for Peace saying in a statement—

"As an organization of practising scientists we feel that it serves rather to provide yet another instance of wasteful and dangerous misdirection of scientific effort."

Nearer home Dr. C. V. Raman is reported to have said, "As an humble follower of the Buddha it is hardly possible for me to rejoice when one more atom bomb is exploded. .... I do not think atom bombs can do any good to humanity."

Prof. Meghnad Saha of Calcutta said, "Scientists of repute should refuse to oblige the devilish behest of the ruling authorities."

Can we hope that free India will organize her peace so strongly and well that it can call hush to this devilish game of killing through cheap remedies? The West is on a competitive game of mass suicide through atomic science. India should in no way be a partisan in this death dance.

7-10-52

## Gorakhpur Famine

Prof. Shibbanlal Saksena, has sent me a note on Gorakhpur famine with a request that I should publish it in the *Harijan*. I am reluctant to accede to this request, and that for the simple reason that I feel it will help in no way to ameliorate the terrible conditions that Prof. Saksena depicts in his note. The subject-matter of the Professor's note has raised a bitter controversy in the Press, with the U. P. Government. I may say that I have painfully followed it and my opinion has been that it was a wholly unseemly performance on the part of both sides. The matter of terrible food scarcity, miserable starvation and slow death of our unfortunate country-men cannot—should in no way be a matter of any controversy between the leaders of the people and the Government. It is rather a call on both of them to do their very best to our starving brothers and sisters, in full co-operation and joint collaboration. Again it cannot be a matter of mere report to the people ; it should be a call to us all to rally round the situation and put our shoulders to the wheel. I do not feel that the publication of the note will help this in any way.

One word at the end regarding Prof. Saksena's charge of corruption against the officials. I do not know how far it is true. My humblest submission to them is, please to remember that



Caesar's wife has to be above suspicion. Prof. Saksena uses very strong language and says, "human vultures continue their merry feast on the carcasses of the starving people. . . . (There is) black-market in Government food-grains and corruption amongst Government servants thrives unchecked." I hope Government will see that this is removed, if it is found to be true.

7-10-52

### Regarding the Medium of Instruction

Dr. Amarnath Jha, former Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University, in his convocation address at the Baroda University the other day touched the important question of the medium of instruction and said that the regional language should be the medium of instruction at the secondary and the university stages. He argued that every child had a right to be taught through its mother-tongue. But there should be provision for teaching of the national language. He further said that "English should be studied in our universities and a very high standard in its use should be aimed at, but it offended all educational principles to make a foreign language the medium of instruction."

While he did not advocate the use of the national language as the universal medium of instruction, he did hope that a uniform technical terminology would be evolved in the national language.

And he added that, "the regional languages must continue to develop and flourish. There need not be any clash between the regional languages and the national language."

(From the report in *The Hindu*, Madras, Oct. 5, 1952).

Such a candid pronouncement on the question of the medium of instruction from an educationalist of Dr. Amarnath Jha's eminence is very welcome, specially when issues are unnecessarily being confused by people who ought to know better about these matters.

8-10-52

M. P.

### Bhoodan Yajna

Details of Land and Cash collected in Hyderabad State.

	Land (in acres)	Cash (in Rupees)
<b>Vinoba Bhawe:</b>		
16-4-51 to 14-6-51 ..	60 days	
Stay at Mancherial ..	3 days	
Hence actual days toured ..	57 days	
<b>E. 37 Villages</b>		
Total number of mileage ..	664 miles	
Land donation received ..	12,178-30	
<b>After Vinoba:</b>		
15-6-51 to 24-8-52 ..	436 days	
Land/Cash Donation received ..	6,722-15	6,000-0-0

### During Shri Shankarrao Deo's Tour:

26-8-52 to 22-9-52 ..	28 days	
No. of places halted ..	27 places	
No. of mileage covered ..	225 miles	
Land/Cash Donation received ..	11,313-28	2,593-0-0
Total land/cash received to date ..	30,214-33	8,593-0-0
Total land distributed ..	7,991-2	
Yet to be distributed ..	22,223-31	

### "GO-RAKSHA SAMITY"

Shri Satish Chandra Dasgupta, well-known Khadi and Go-Seva worker of Bengal, is the President of "Go-Raksha Samity." He says in a statement:

"The Samity proposes to serve the cause of cow protection by constructive work for its improvement and for caring for it when old and infirm. The aim of the Samity therefore is directed towards achievement of several objectives.

#### Prevention of Illegal Slaughter

The Samity proposes to see that useful cows are not slaughtered in contravention of the law passed in West Bengal on 6th April, 1950. The law is there but enforcement is lacking. The Samity proposes to remove the lacuna with the help of the authorities and the public.

#### Improvement of the Breed of the Cow in West Bengal

In West Bengal, the cows are non-descript. The Samity proposes to carry on the work of improvement of the stock by

(a) grading up by the use of pure Hariyana bulls,

(b) for that purpose maintain and propagate a pure Hariyana herd, and

(c) by developing a local West Bengal herd by selection and careful breeding from the best of West Bengal cows of unmixed blood.

#### Propagation of Knowledge about Better Management of the Cow

The Samity proposes to establish a school for giving training for the management of the cow as to how best to feed her, how to take care of the calves, how to deal with her in health and disease, and how to prevent cattle epidemics and save them when they get diseased. By the dissemination of knowledge by creating a body of workers as stock-men by establishment of training school, the Samity proposes to make some headway in this direction.

#### Go-Sadans

The derelict animals are thrown on the streets or sold away for slaughter or are allowed to die of starvation. It is possible to make arrangements so that the old animals are allowed to live their normal span of life and yet may cease to be a burden.

Even when old, the manure and urine are valuable yields from the cow. And after death the bones and flesh also go to provide valuable products and priceless manure. The hides go to the tannery. By skilful management even the old animals may pay their way. The Samity proposes to maintain Go-Sadans for the immediate objective of taking care of the old animals and also for providing an object lesson for the peasants.

#### An Appeal

The Indians developed this sentiment of respecting the life of all animals by respecting the life of the cow—the closest associate of men in the animal kingdom. Cow stands at the centre of Indian Civilization. By caring for the cow, India can retain her cultural wealth. The Samity (115A Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta) proposes to strive for this objective.

# HARIJAN

Oct. 25

1952

## GANDHIJI'S DOCTRINE OF TRUSTEESHIP

### A Prophetic Talk and the Sequel

On the 13th of December, 1942, during our detention in the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp, a discussion developed with Bapu on his doctrine of trusteeship. These discussions, covering a wide variety of subjects, had become a regular part of our daily prison life and converted our morning and evening walks with him into a veritable feast of reason and spiritual communion. On the previous day he had advanced the thesis that when power would come into the peoples' hands, trusteeship would be embodied in the law of the land. "The only democratic way of achieving it today is by cultivating opinion in its favour," he added.

"You do not mean to suggest that the change would depend upon the sufferance of the owning class, or that we should have to wait till their conversion is complete? If power comes to us by instalments and the social transformation proceeds by a slow, gradual process to suit the pleasure of the capitalists, it will kill the revolutionary fervour which a complete and abrupt break with the past releases. That is why our Marxist friends insist that a true social revolution can come only through a proletarian dictatorship."

Bapu made a sign to me to develop my argument further. I proceeded: "If under non-violence we can ask for and expect to induce the opponent even to immolate himself for the sake of a higher principle, as you said the other day, why can we not make the owning class to renounce their vast possessions which you concede are today largely the result of exploitation? Why bring in trusteeship? Many believe it will prove to be no more than a make-believe. Is there a limit to the power of non-violence? You have taught us that in politics reformism kills revolution. Does it not equally apply to social revolution?"

Bapu: "Perhaps you have the example of Russia in mind. I admit that wholesale expropriation of the owning class and the distribution of its assets among the people there did create a tremendous amount of revolutionary enthusiasm. But under my plan of trusteeship, people get not only the use of the capitalists' wealth but their talent, ability and know-how also. It is an even bigger revolution. We must not underrate the business talent and know-how which the owning class have acquired through generations of experience and specialization. So long as we have not got the power, conversion is our weapon by necessity. But after we get power, I maintain that conversion would have to be our weapon of choice. Conversion must precede legislation.

Legislation without conversion remains a dead letter. As an illustration, we have today the power to enforce rules of sanitation but we can do nothing with it because the public is not ready."

"You say conversion must precede reform. Whose conversion? If you mean the conversion of the people, they are ready even today. If, on the other hand, you mean that of the owning class, you may as well wait till Greek Kalends."

"I mean the conversion of both," replied Bapu.

Noting the look of surprise on my face, he proceeded: "You see, if the owning class do not accept the trusteeship basis voluntarily, their conversion must come under the pressure of public opinion. For that, public opinion is not yet sufficiently organized."

Coming back to the point from where we had started, I asked Bapu: "What do you mean by power?"

"By power I mean voting power for the people — so broad-based that the will of the majority can be given effect to."

"Can parliamentary activity at all put the masses into power?"

"Not parliamentary activity alone," replied Bapu. "My reliance is on the power of non-violent non-co-operation which I have been trying to develop and inculcate on the people for the last twenty years."

That did not resolve my difficulty. "Is the capture of power possible through non-violence? Our Socialist friends say that they are now convinced of the matchless potency of non-violence up to a point but they say they do not see how it can enable people to seize power. You also have said the same thing. Therein, they say, lies the inadequacy of non-violence."

Bapu: "Yes, in a way they are right. By its very nature, non-violence cannot result in the seizure of power, nor can that be its goal. There is an exception of course. If the non-violent non-co-operation of the people is so complete that the administration ceases to function or if the administration crumbles down under the impact of a foreign invasion and a vacuum results, the people's representatives will then step in and fill it — theoretically that is possible. But non-violence can do more; it can effectively control and guide power without capturing the machinery of Government. That is its beauty. Moreover, I do not agree that Government can be carried on only by the use of violence."

"Does not the very concept of the State imply the use of power — the power to coerce?"

Bapu: "But the use of power need not necessarily be violent. A father wields power over his children, he may even punish but not by inflicting violence. Most effective exercise of power is that which irks least. Power rightly exercised must sit light as a flower; no one should feel the weight of it."



"People accepted the authority of the Congress willingly. I was on more than one occasion invested with absolute power of dictatorship. But every body knew that my power rested on their willing acceptance. They could set me aside at any time and I would step out without a murmur. In the Khilafat days my authority or the authority of the Congress did not irk any body. The Ali Brothers used to call me 'Sarkar'. Yet, they knew they had me in their pocket. What was true about me or the Congress then can also be true about the Government."

I conceded that a non-violent State or even a non-violent dictatorship was possible in theory. But that called for a terrible self-discipline, self-denial and penance. In the eleventh Skandha of the Bhagavat, there is a description of a non-violent law-giver or head of a State. He is a person who has severed all domestic ties; is unaffected by fear or favour, anger or attachment; craves nothing for himself — neither power nor glory nor fame; he is the personification of humility and self-effacement. Through constant discipline he has injured his body to all conceivable rigours of the weather, fatigue and destitution. But, suppose, the author poses the question, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak, if through old age or illness, his constitution is undermined so that he can no longer withstand the rigours of his penance, what then? To that hypothetical question the unrelenting answer given is: In that event he should mount a self-made pyre and immolate himself rather than coddle himself by soft dalliance.

"Personally I agree," I concluded, "that such a person alone is fit to be a dictator under non-violence. If somebody is frightened by such description, let him look at the Russians fighting in a temperature 40 degrees below frost. Why should we expect a softer solution under non-violence. Rather, we should be prepared for more."

Bapu confirmed that under non-violence people have to be prepared for heavier sacrifices if only because the goal aimed at is higher. "There is no easy shortcut to salvation," he said.

"That would mean," interpolated my sister, "that only a Jesus, a Mohammad or a Buddha can be the head of a non-violent State."

Bapu demurred. "That is not correct. Prophets and supermen are born only once in an age. But if a single individual realizes the ideal of *ahimsa* in its fullness, he covers and redeems the whole society. Once Jesus had blazoned the path, his twelve disciples could carry on his mission without his presence. It needed the perseverance and genius of so many generations of scientists to discover the laws of electricity but today laymen, even children use electric power in their daily life.

"Similarly it will not always need a perfect being to administer an ideal State once the ideal State has come into being and set going. What is

needed is a thorough social awakening to begin with. The rest will then follow. To take an instance nearer home, I have presented to the working class the truth that true capital is not silver or gold but the labour of their hands and feet and their intelligence. Once labour awakens to that idea, it would not need my presence to enable it to make use of the power that it will release."

He ended up by saying that if only we could make people conscious of their power — the power of their non-violent non-co-operation — the realization of the ideal of trusteeship would follow as a matter of course.

## II

On our release from prison, we took up the question where we had left it in the Aga Khan Palace Detention Camp. Kishorlalabhai and Narharibhai joined in drawing up a simple, practical trusteeship formula. It was placed before Bapu who made a few changes in it. The final draft read as follows:

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.

2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except in as much as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.

3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.

4. Thus under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interest of society.

5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.

6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed.

It was decided to release the formula to the Press — Indian as well as English. But on second thoughts Bapu felt that before publication, it might be shown to a capitalist friend who was very favourably inclined to the doctrine of trusteeship. A copy was accordingly sent to him. He welcomed it but he did not want the effort to begin and end with the publication of the formula. He suggested that to enable the idea to make rapid headway, he should try first to canvass some fellow-capitalists so that their acceptance should be published along with the draft.

I have not a clear recollection as to what happened afterwards. Perhaps the friend in question, to whom the draft had been sent, got

discouraging response from those whom he tried to canvass. No further reply came from him and we were swept into the giddy whirl of events.

But a great idea rooted in the genius and hoary tradition of a people does not die so easily. Gandhiji's idea is today reborn and is being pursued with spectacular success by Vinobaji. People in their thousands are making willing gifts of land for the use of the land-hungry toiling poor. What we are witnessing today is the beginning of that "thorough social awakening" of which Bapu prophetically talked on that 13th of December. It is the spearhead of a non-violent revolution whose implications reach far and wide. I shall examine these implications and some of the doubts that have been expressed in this behalf in another article.

Valmiki Mandir,  
New Delhi, 6-10-'52

PYARELAL

### "WHY PROHIBITION"

This is a brochure by Shri Bharatan Kuma-rappa on the burning question of prohibition in India. It is not a question in the sense that we do not know the good of that measure or that we as a people have still to decide whether there shall be prohibition in India or no. That it is good and necessary and should be State policy is decided by the collective wisdom of our people as expressed by them in the Constitution of India which they framed and gave to themselves. It lays down,

"The State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medical purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health."

However, one may safely say that there are two classes of people who drink and cannot shed their habit if left to themselves, and hence Prohibition. These classes are—1. The westernized urban few soaked in drink which became fashionable under the aegis of the British rule in India. 2. The depressed classes who were as if neglected, if not excluded, by our ancestors from the great cultural and humane movement against drink, thousands of years before. These two classes together though a small minority of our body politic, have to be weaned back to the great heritage of anti-drink which all religions in India have given to our people. The upper few in their pride of learning and modernity are vocal and scheming. Because of them and to their aid chiefly arises the modern crime of bootlegging and all that goes with it. The other group is a victim of crushing poverty, degrading squalor, and insulting social neglect. For them we may safely say that they hold drink as bad and shameful, and they are willing to shed it off. In this sense we might say that prohibition in India is a great movement for the uplift of the poor and the downtrodden, the neglected of our history. The upper few who are doubters and debaters must also be answered. This book, while it notes both these classes, is mainly an answer to the questions

and queries of these learned upper few. The dedication of the book takes note of the history of prohibition in India and poignantly brings out a drawback in our cultural progress I refer to above, viz. the evil of caste-ridden pride almost entrenched in the Hindu culture. The dedication is worth reproducing here—

"Dedicated in homage to our ancient nation-builders who centuries ago, through faith, determination, incessant teaching, legislation and social ostracism, achieved the miracle of wiping out drink from this vast land, except among the few who were regarded as being outside the pale of Indian social life."

I invite the reader to ponder over the italicized portion. I hold that India under Gandhiji's inspiration is now determined to undo the blot described in those words. That according to me is the meaning and significance of the great clause (47) of the Constitution quoted at the beginning. It is a great land-mark in our history. I am pained to say that the upper few seem as if willing to see the failure of this great venture. It is in this relation I think, that Shri Bharatan pointedly refers to the drifting away from prohibition in his Introduction to the book, which I may well quote here :

"Between 1919 and 1922 I was a student in the U.S. during the early days of National Prohibition there. When I returned to the U.S. in 1949, I was shocked at the contrast. There were taverns round every street corner and one came across drunken people in buses and trains. It seemed to me a definite turn for the worse. India had launched on Prohibition and I, therefore, became much interested in knowing why America went back to drink. During my travels in the U.S. between 1949 and 1951, I collected some information on this question. When I returned to India in 1951, to my great disappointment I found that newspaper opinion in India seemed to be drifting away from Prohibition. It appeared most important especially after my American experience that this drift should be stopped by all means and that the public should look upon this great social legislation with favour. I read with anxious interest whatever our papers had to say against Prohibition and then during May and June 1952, I published a series of six articles in favour of Prohibition trying to meet the various objections which I had found raised against it in our press.

"Friends suggested that the articles should be published in the form of a booklet. As I knew that newspapers grudged space, I had to confine myself in the articles to a few major points. But as they are now being published in booklet form, I have taken the opportunity of adding some fresh matter to them and have increased their number."

With these words I commend the book to all who seriously think for the good of our land. It is published by the Navajivan, Ahmedabad-9 and is priced twelve annas.

3-9-'52

MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

### WHY PROHIBITION

By Bharatan Kuma-rappa

Pages vii + 43 Price As. 12 Postage etc. As. 4  
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By Mahatma Gandhi

Pages xi+175 Price Rs. 2-8 Postage etc. As.10  
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### FAMINE AND FOOD SCARCITY

Failure of monsoon or of timely rains is a common occurrence in our country. It is a trick played upon us by nature. It affects very adversely our predominantly agricultural economy.

We have been facing famines and food scarcity more acutely during the last, say, ten years. If these have hit hard our national economy in general, their telling effects on our psychology are worse still.

Somewhere I read : " Crises are bad enough in themselves, but they develop into tragedies if those who bear them lose hope and resign themselves either to panic or discouragement. There are solutions for most troubles that beset us, and *we must steel ourselves to find them.*" (Italics mine).

The crises resulting from the recurring famines and continuous food scarcity have almost made us lose hope and courage for all *practical* purposes. Instead of steeling ourselves to find solutions for these and such other troubles, we are, *collectively as a nation*, either doing almost nothing or are thinking and dreaming, talking and agitating, about food loans or aids from abroad and about palliatives in the form of subsidies from the Government.

Some political parties have, surprisingly enough, made this a capital issue from a party point of view, i.e. for the struggle for power by winning cheap popularity. Hurling of innuendoes without restraint at those who are at the helm of affairs of the country and insinuations of inefficiency in the administrative machinery have become the order of the day. It is, however, regrettably forgotten that these are having an unhealthy psychological effect on the minds of the millions in our country. They are wrongly "educated". These have discouraged us considerably and have almost brought us on the verge of panic — sometimes, if not always, imaginary panic. Worst of them all, we, *as a nation*, have not as yet learnt to think in terms of *co-operating with our own Government* to solve these and such other basically human problems.

Dependence for food grains on outside help through loans or aid, however welcome, is no solution of the problem at all. It is a costly barter even though no political strings are attached thereto.

As Shri Maganbhai Desai has timely pointed out in the *Harijan* (20-9-52), the need of the hour is to develop the spirit of robust self-reliance and to "have faith in ourselves — in our great destiny". The secret of a nation's strength lies only therein. Self-reliance is the living force of freedom, the very life-blood of democracy. Without it, both are lifeless and meaningless.

Let us not be discouraged by the oft recurrence of famines or by the continuous scarcity of food. Let us take the former as the warning of nature, urging us at the same time "to put our shoulders to the wheel."

Let us not exploit this, however remotely, for petty party gains, by creating *panic* in the country on these grounds.

Let us not devolve our *collective* responsibility on the Government alone or on the shoulders of any single political party alone.

Only then we will develop the spirit of self-reliance and the spirit of co-operative effort. Only then the co-operation between the people and *their* Government will be genuine and constructive, without which we cannot solve the problems arising out of famines in particular or any other problem in general. Far from it, we cannot even face them.

25-9-52

VITHALDAS BODANI

### THE EVIL OF RICKSHAWS

(A prayer-speech by Vinoba at Kashi Vidyapith on 28-7-52).

There is a great deal of talk and agitation at present in our country and in others about the need of equality in social life. But in practice, we find that some of the innovations that have been introduced in our society, are leading to an extension of the slave-classes and giving rise to most unseemly inequalities. The rickshaw which has become now a feature of city life is an example. It is a new development which has grown to its present proportions during the past fifty years. When I was in Kashi 36 years ago, there were no rickshaws then. They were then confined to a few places like Simla etc. But now it has become a common conveyance in Kashi and many other cities. And a distinct class of rickshaw-pullers has sprung up as a result. Once a thing gets started without the people giving any thought to its propriety or utility, it tends to continue even after its ugliness is perceived, because in course of time people get used to it and the ugliness is not felt. Just as they have taken for granted a class of *bhangis* in the cities, so are they now doing with regard to the class of rickshaw-pullers. In older times, *bhangis* did not exist as a class. We do not know what arrangement they had then for this type of work, but from what I have seen of history, the *bhangis*-class does not seem to have been in existence. The class came into being in medieval times. Just consider what an inconceivably dirty job they have to do. But even they have got used to it and do not feel any repulsion against it, even though that is the reason for classing them as untouchables. I had an occasion to speak to them about it at a meeting in Delhi. Shri Jagjivanram was also present at that meeting. He said in his speech that this type of work was below a man's dignity and therefore unworthy of him. There was competition in every other work, he said ; but this one was significantly free from it. It should be totally abolished. He asked my opinion about it and I expressed ready approval because I have always wanted their uplift and the amelioration of their conditions.

In western cities nowadays they use flush-latrines, and they do not need the service of *bhangis* to clean their latrines. But in India not only are the latrines indescribably dirty, but this dirty work has been forced on a separate class of the society and, what is utterly inhuman, this class

is stigmatized as untouchable and looked down upon. Need I say that our people are guilty of a great sin in continuing to perpetrate this inhuman practice? And now in introducing and tolerating rickshaw we are adding another great sin to our heavy load. And our sensitiveness is so dense that both these items have been included in the community projects which the Government will soon be undertaking with the professed object of reconstructing our village life. A few days ago when Shri Shrimannarayan Agarwal placed the scheme of these projects before me and asked my opinion about them, I expressed dissent among other things against these two things.

These things, once they get a start, are difficult to get rid off. The very victims whom they degrade into slaves then protest if they are stopped. They feel that they are deprived of their livelihood. When slavery was first abolished, amazing as it may appear, the reform was opposed even by some slaves and a good many thinkers too, on the ground that their freedom would deprive them of their occupation.

I cannot help feeling sad whenever I see a rickshaw. When I go for a walk in the morning, I see the rickshaw-pullers running up and down the road notwithstanding the rain. If we make rickshaw a part of our social life, surely we shall have to put up with this vulgar sight of a man carrying a man. They will continue to ply their rickshaws and surely earn something out of it. But all the same it is disgrace to our humanity, to our sense of respect for human personality. And we should not let defeatism and helplessness keep us from fighting these evils. It will be a sign of mental lethargy and moral insensitiveness to say that the evil has come to stay and it cannot be eradicated. On that plea, we may have to give up all efforts at the reconstruction of society.

I am sure that if our students and teachers and thinking men and women oppose this custom, it can be abolished. It is not ordained by God, it is a man-made thing and man can abolish it. We have been trying to abolish what is called the fifth (*pancham*) *varna*, i.e. the class of the untouchables, though some of the *sanatanists* may still uphold the wrong it involves. They do not bother to see that the Gita does not mention it. So when we are trying to abolish the *pancham varna*, it will be very undesirable to create another depressed class, the class of rickshaw-pullers. We should take care to see that we are not reduced to the level of animals. But so indolent have we become that even though we realize the evil in a custom we continue to practise it. Then it becomes firmly rooted, and the change becomes really very difficult.

I quite agree that occasionally it may be necessary for a man to carry another on his shoulders or on the palanquin or even on the rickshaw. For rendering service to the needy, this will be quite correct and necessary. But if it becomes a normal form of conveyance for any who can pay for it, it should be banned as creating invidious inequality.

(From Hindi)

D. M.

## THE LONGER VIEW

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari, Union Minister for Industries, while addressing the Central Advisory Council of Industries on October 3, 1952, at Delhi, made a point that —

"The emphasis is to be placed today not only on greater production, but equally on better production, cheaper production, and above all, on producing what the consumer wants."

And he told them by way of a warning that,

"During the transition one is apt to take the short view. But I wish to emphasize that industry should take a longer view...."

(From the report of *The Hindustan Times*, Delhi, Oct. 5).

This warning of our Industries Minister to take a larger or longer view is applicable not only to the Industry but also to the Government as well. The industry, in its self-interest, may perhaps commit such a mistake; but Government wedded to common weal cannot. It is all right that we as a nation have to produce more; and only through that way of toil, perspiration and perseverance can we help ourselves out of the deadly grip of scarcity that we are in, regarding almost all of our needs. Therefore greater production, better production and cheaper too may undoubtedly be the order of the day. But the Government is apt to take a shorter view of this matter and perhaps during the transition and on account of the urgency of the problem, forgetting the longer view which tells us that our objective is not to produce more and better and cheaper anyhow, but so do it that there is maximum employment and the widest distribution of the purchasing power. The problem for us is not merely to have large capital to buy more labour-saving devices from the West and to employ the least number of people to work those devices on one's own favourable terms, from the vast mass of our poor unemployed population. That is too mechanical a view to be true for us, as ours is a question of colossal human power lying idle and unemployed. Therefore, that way lies no solution but utter confusion of our national problem. The real slogan should be, employ more people and so produce our essential goods that the purchasing power is distributed the widest. This longer view should ever be before us in shaping our industrial policy.

8-10-52

MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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