

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

SHRI VINOBA AT JAMSHEDPUR

Speaking at a largely attended prayer-meeting at Jamshedpur, Shri Vinoba said :

"I am glad to have come to your city, the City of the Working People. I call it the City of the Working People with some deliberation. I know it is named after a great man, Shri Jamshedji Tata, who conceived and built up this big organization in order to add to the wealth of the country. We cannot forget the obligation we owe to him on this account and yet I prefer to name the city as I have done. For I believe that there are two factors to production: First, the conscious agent, who contributes to it with his intelligence and hands; next, the material stuff and the implements which are used by the agent. Among the conscious agents who brought this city into existence, just as we include the name of Shri Jamshedji Tata, so should we do those of the numerous workers who toiled for it. We may not mention those names; that does not matter. It is the support of the staff which makes it possible for the flag to fly high up in the sky, though none speaks of it. It is like the stones in the foundation which lie hidden beneath the surface. These are not even seen, much less recognized as an important part of the building, but the building cannot be raised without their support. In the same way, whatever is produced here, and, for the matter of that, the world over, originates from the hard labour of the workers, though the name and credit go to others.

"I have spent 32 years of my life doing labour. I therefore know the sufferings of this class and few indeed will give them the high honour they are entitled to as I do. Lord Krishna spent the best part of his life with the cow-boys, in hard work, and this enabled him to discover the truth of Karma-yoga. I have not seen a more luminous exposition of the philosophy of Karma-yoga than the one which Shri Krishna has given us in the Gita. This is because he was steeped in the ennobling influence of work.

"I once told my companions in the jail that it was not right to take food without doing work. I said whether it was laid down in the Jail Manual or no, it certainly was the law of man's life on earth and the law of his inner being. They agreed and though many of them were not required to do so under the rules, all of us voluntarily took the grinding of all the flour for the jail.

If we refrain from Karma i.e. productive labour, we make of ourselves a burden to humanity. Those who live by exploiting the labour of others cannot be happy, because the money they make breeds greed and consequent rivalry and wrangling among the members of the house, and they who earn cannot get inner satisfaction. The tragedy, however, is this that even the workers do not realize the inherent value and importance of work. They work under compulsion and feel pleased if somehow they are able to avoid it. They do not experience the delight of Karma, because they are denied the fruit of it. The physical labour is held in disrespect and it is not paid adequate wages. This is very wrong. Labour must be restored to its just position of honour.

What I am doing is part of the movement for the welfare of Labour. I am voicing the demand of the most neglected section of the working class, the dumb millions who are landless and who have nobody to turn to. I believe that it will also benefit the workers in the city. The building cannot endure long if the ground-floor is weak. Even so the country cannot prosper by keeping those who form the mainstay of its huge structure poor and unhappy. The plans which are being drawn up today do not pay any attention to the problem of rendering help to these millions. But the problem is immediate and brooks no delay."

(In Sinhbhlaun District, during eleven days of tour Shri Vinoba has received 13,500 acres of land, of which 12,500 acres have come from the Thakur Sahib of Kera).

Chandil, 15-12-'52

(From Hindi)

N. D.

CIVILIZATION v. MULTIPLICATION OF WANTS

(By Gandhiji)

Civilization, in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment, and increases the capacity for service.

(From *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 24; 1930)

A certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary, but above that level, it becomes a hindrance instead of help. Therefore, the ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion and a snare. The satisfaction of one's physical needs, even the intellectual needs of one's narrow self, must meet at a point a dead stop, before it degenerates into physical and intellectual voluptuousness. A man must arrange his physical and cultural circumstances so that they may not hinder him in his service of humanity, on which all his energies should be concentrated. (*Harijan*, 29-8-'36)

As long as you desire inner help and comfort from anything, you should keep it. If you were to give it up in a mood of self-sacrifice or out of a stern sense of duty, you would continue to want it back, and that unsatisfied want would make trouble for you. Only give up a thing when you want some other condition so much that the thing no longer has any attraction for you, or when it seems to interfere with that which is more greatly desired.

(*Vishva-Bharati Quarterly*, New Series II, part II, p. 46)

KHADI AND HANDLOOM CLOTH

(By Shrikrishnadas Jaju)

Four different types of cloth, like so many contestants in the arena, stand pitted against one another in the Indian market: (1) The mill-spun and the mill-woven mill-cloth, which is of course, the most wide-spread type; (2) the mill-spun but the power-loom-woven power-loom cloth; (3) the mill-spun but the handloom-woven handloom cloth; and (4) the hand-spun and handloom-woven Khadi. There is a fifth variety too which had passed into disuse but which promises to stage a come-back, thanks to Shri Rajaji's efforts. This is a mixed type using the mill-yarn for the warp and the hand-spun yarn for the woof. It used to be available in considerable quantities some years ago, but then it disappeared; and we had almost forgotten it. Now at the instance of the Madras Government, and with Rajaji's powerful support behind it, it is being produced again.

2. The relation between these different varieties is one of competition and so they are in serious conflict with one another in the market. Those which suffer from the weakness of higher prices cannot hope to stand in the competition, while all need help in one form or another. There is none which can stand on its own legs. There is an erroneous belief that the mill-cloth can stand on its own legs because of its cheapness. It is forgotten that for years together, it has received State protection worth crores of rupees per annum. Nor can it be affirmed that it would not need such aid in future. The foreign cloth is likely to become cheap and then the mill-cloth will have to be saved from its competition by some kind of protection. The need of help in case of the other varieties is clear enough, because all of them are costlier than the mill-cloth in varying degrees. The power-loom cloth seems to approach the mill-cloth in price, but it also needs protection. During the period when the textile industry was under rigorous control the power-loom cloth enjoyed some exemptions. There were then cases of the fraudulent traders passing off the mill-cloth as the power-loom cloth. The handloom cloth has always had a precarious existence passing through crisis after crisis. The question of its safety from the fatal rivalry of the mill-cloth has been always present. The Government has granted some protection to it, though it has not so far proved efficacious. Now Rajaji has come to its rescue, and we may hope that his endeavours will bear fruit and lead to some permanent solution of this intriguing question. He has put the demand that the *dhotis* and *saris* should be reserved for handloom weaving. The India Government has accepted the demand, quite insufficiently though, in regard to *dhotis*. In the face of the organized demand of the handloom worker and the backing up of the same by Rajaji, the Government may be compelled to do something more. But I feel the mere reservation of *saris* and *dhotis* for the handloom is hardly calculated to solve the wea-

ver's problem on a permanent basis. The fashion may change and along with it the liking of the people. Other varieties of cloth may be found to serve for *dhotis* and *saris*. The printed border may replace a woven border. The only effective measure to ensure the manufacture of *saris* and *dhotis* for the handloom would seem to be to stop the mills from weaving cloth of 40 to 54 inches width. And eventually it may be found that for safeguarding the handloom weavers it is necessary that the mills should stop weaving altogether. As to Khadi, it goes without saying that it needs strong protection. In case of the proposed mixed sort, inasmuch as the woof will be made up of the hand-spun yarn, — which will be dearer than the mill-yarn — its price is bound to be higher than that of the mill-cloth. Therefore, if it is to sell in the market, it will also need protection, although it may be less than what may be required for Khadi.

3. Our Governments and those who are in authority want to promote all the five varieties though they are at cross-purposes with one another and cannot exist together in open competition. The Governments are spending a good deal in this effort, and it seems the expenditure will go up. Each of these varieties demands support and each has its arguments to justify such demand. The mill-cloth has to be saved from foreign cloth, because the latter is cheap. Crores of rupees of indigenous capital have been invested in mills and they provide gainful employment to some five to six lakh labourers. The power-loom is a step towards the decentralization of the industry and gives work to a fairly good number of weavers. (It is conveniently forgotten that it throws out of work many more). Then its cloth is also cheap. As to the handloom, it supports about a crore of our people. Next to agriculture, it is the only home-industry which provides means of livelihood to such vast numbers. How can we snatch it from them unless we are prepared to give them alternative work? And so, for the time being, all have accepted the position that the handloom has to be kept alive. Khadi has the further advantage of a very glorious tradition behind it which has accrued to it from its place in the fight for freedom. No other industry can rival it in its use as a means for eradicating unemployment. The handloom can only help the weavers, but hand-spinning is the only great home industry on which we can rely for fighting the widespread unemployment, either partial or total, among other sections of our population. This is recognized by many people but because hand-spinning is slow and causes Khadi to be costlier than other forms of cloth, they reject it as being impractical and consider it useless to persist in it: The Sarvodayists, however, regard it as the symbol of the ideal economic and social order and adopt it as the basis of their plans and programmes. Therefore they hold on to it with all their faith

and strength and are striving hard to advance its cause. It is claimed for the mixed variety that it will solve the problem of hand-spinning. The hand-spun yarn warp handicaps weaving and this enhances the weaving charges. The use of the mill-yarn in the warp and that of the hand-spun yarn in the woof will facilitate weaving, and the mixed variety cloth will be cheaper than Khadi. However, it will even then remain dearer than the handloom cloth. When the handloom cloth itself, under competition from the mill-cloth is finding it difficult to sell and hence necessary to raise the demand for protection, how is this mixed cloth expected to push itself up in the market? It will not even have the advantage of the sentiment which people have for Khadi, and it will also lack the cheapness of the mill-cloth. Thus every variety is equipped with a well-argued case and our Governments as also some people seem ready to support all of them notwithstanding their incompatibility with one another. They have even demanded patronage for them both from the State and the people. Under the circumstances the question arises whether those who are wedded to Khadi can join in this demand for patronage for other varieties of cloth. The readers must here distinguish between help and patronage. It is one thing to extend help to a good human cause, but quite another thing to demand patronage from the people to an industry which is opposed to the one we stand for. And in formulating the answer to this question we should be careful to keep an eye on human nature and take into account the objective repercussions of the course we give our assent to. A merely philosophical answer will not do here.

4. When popular leaders and those in power ask for patronage for mutually conflicting things, the general mass of people accept what they find the least difficult and content themselves with having done their duty. In the 1930-31 movement, there was a vigorous campaign for the boycott of foreign cloth. There were then several mills, which, though they were located in India, were foreign in every respect: in ownership, capital, management etc. . . . A list was prepared distinguishing the indigenous from such foreign mills and people were asked to buy the indigenous mill-cloth only. It was said that preference should be given to Khadi but in case the customer decides to go in for the mill-cloth, then he should buy the Swadeshi mill-cloth. This gave to many Khadi-weavers an opportunity and an excuse to change over from Khadi to the Swadeshi mill-cloth. The net result was that the sentiment for Khadi weakened and its sale went down.

Rajaji has appealed to the people to extend their patronage to the handloom cloth. He adds that it is not his intention to do any harm to Khadi. But what is happening? The Madras Government had passed an order that the administrative offices of the State should use Khadi. Though the order still stands, the Madras

Government is now reported to have recommended the use of the handloom cloth by its offices. It has also approached the Centre to introduce the same in its offices. What place can Khadi have in the Government offices in this situation? It also seems quite likely that the mixed variety cloth which Rajaji has suggested may replace Khadi in the Government of the Madras State. Let us suppose, for instance, that a cloth-dealer stocks both Khadi and the handloom cloth at his shop. If he is a lover of Khadi, he will advise his customer to the effect that it was his duty to buy Khadi. But if he did not want Khadi, he might buy the handloom cloth as the next best. Morally he will be considered to have done his duty. If the customer is strongly attached to Khadi, he would not need this advice from the shop-keeper. But if he is not then it is clear that he will surely go in for the handloom cloth because it is cheap. Thus in trying to encourage both, Khadi is bound to be the sufferer. This kind of divided loyalty is not calculated to please our chosen deity. Those who are wedded to Khadi cannot join in the demand for patronizing other varieties. One may say that there is no place for Khadi at all. This we can understand. But to say that one wants Khadi and demand protection for other varieties of cloth in the same breath does not make sense, for the other varieties are destroyers of Khadi.

5. The question is asked: Should we not then help handloom, an industry, which supports a crore of people? So far as this help takes the form of putting restrictions on the mill-cloth, it is in the interest of Khadi also. But as stated above, helping an industry is one thing, but asking for patronage, whether of the State or the people, is a different proposition. It is the duty of the Government to create conditions that the handloom cloth may stand in the market on its own strength, without any patronage. The Government may even help it financially; that would be quite proper. Or just as it has to stop the import of foreign cloth in order to save the indigenous cloth, so it may control the mills in favour of the handlooms. Or it may raise the price of the mill-cloth high enough to enable the handloom cloth to sell without any patronage. This will be right. But it is patently wrong to declare one's love for Khadi and yet demand patronage of the people for the handloom cloth. One cannot demand patronage for a variety of cloth which hampers the growth of Khadi. We should offer worship at the altar of one single deity, worship of multiple gods cannot take us to our goal, much less of such gods as are opposed against one another.

Sevagram, 22-12-'52

(From Hindi)

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HARIJAN

Jan. 10

1953

PLANNING FOR BASIC EDUCATION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

At the invitation of the Government of India, the UNESCO Regional Conference on Free and Compulsory Education in South Asia and the Pacific met at Bombay from December 12 to December 22. This Conference was the first of a series planned to be held by the 1951 UNESCO Conference of Geneva; similar conferences will meet in the Middle East in 1954, in Latin America in 1956, in Africa in 1958, and in Far East in 1960. The aim of these conferences is described to be to discover what each State is doing for itself and what it can do for its neighbour and in what way UNESCO can help in this task.

India was one of the countries attending the Conference. Free primary education is one of the chief social services to be undertaken by a modern State and we are at this moment actually in the process of forging a Five Year Plan for our people. It was therefore natural to expect that the Indian delegation would give some helpful suggestions to approach the question in a bold and realistic manner, specially because it is the country that has adopted such a way by accepting Basic Education as its pattern for free and compulsory primary education. But unfortunately, from reports available in the daily Press, one can easily see that the great idea of Basic Education that Gandhiji gave us as his last and best gift was not presented to the Conference, and if at all, it was not done in the manner it deserved. This is written in no mood to blame anybody but only to show to ourselves where we really are *vis-a-vis* this important constructive activity, viz. Basic Education. The great Five Year Plan is further evidence of this unfortunate situation. The Constitution lays down that "the State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution (i.e. 1950), for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years." (The Constitution of India, Art. 45). It was upto our Planners to follow up this directive of the Constitution and work up what they can and should do about it in the next five years in collaboration with the States of the Union. To say the least, it was their Constitutional responsibility.

As Dr. Lionel Elwin, Director of the Department of Education of UNESCO, said at the opening session of the Conference, finance is the crucial point. And Shri G. S. Bajpai, the Governor of Bombay, in his inaugural address to the Conference, put the Indian case squarely before it in the following words :

"Some time ago we had a Committee presided over by the former Chief Minister of this State who calculated that the expenditure on having every child under compulsion would be Rs 366 * crores a year. That is, more than 45 per cent of the entire revenue of the Central Government and the State Governments in India today. Thus you get some measure of the financial magnitude of the burden of the task that confronts us."

How to solve this is the problem. Can we find money for that in the near future, say during the next ten or fifteen years? We must be clear in our minds that the burden is an annually recurring one and hence must be met with from our normal national economy. Outside help must be out of the question. The F. Y. P. is silent over this problem.

The other side of the problem is qualitative, viz. instituting the right type of primary education. This is more important, as mere quantity will be no good; it will be wasteful and useless. It is here that the principle of Basic Education comes in as a sound and helpful idea. And it is good that the substance of the idea was hinted at by a few foreign friends to the Conference. For example, Dr. Elwin pointed out in a very pertinent manner that "there had been a revolt in the Western countries against the traditional curricula. But the Western curricula during the last two centuries had been transplanted in Asia, Africa and Latin America and prestige had been attached to it partly because it was identified with the civilization of the Great Powers and also because it secured Government jobs", thus hinting us that we should improve upon such exotic curricula. We know to our great cost that this is still true in our country. Basic Education primarily aims to lift us out of that traditional groove and go in for a type that aims to improve the situation and promises to be economically self-sufficient as we go further with it. One of the chief causes that worked for lowering the percentage of literacy in our country during British Rule was that, to the common man in the street, education came to mean nothing more than preparation for Government service and no manual labour. And increasing unemployment that beset us in the wake of systematic exploitation by our foreign rulers drove our people to make little children give their helping hand, in howsoever small a manner, in some useful and productive work. We now wish to compel these people to send their children to school. Before we can do that it is upto us to see that we call them to something that is useful to them, that they are assured something that works for the betterment of the life as they have it today. Our efforts to ameliorate the conditions of the people — to raise their standard of living by increasing production and income and improving

* Later on he corrected himself and said that the estimate will be Rs 600 crores a year.

their health and sanitation, agriculture and industries, should be correlated with our national system of basic or elementary education. This is the topmost priority in education. Unless we mind this we will not be in a position to bring children to school. It is good to see that the Conference has accepted the principle of such an integrated and correlated approach to the problem, through its various conclusions, some of which may well be quoted here :

"The contents of the curriculum should be reviewed from the view point of its significance for modern life and its relevance to the needs and psychology of children. Comparatively fewer subjects should be taught, but they should be taught well and thoroughly, keeping alive the curiosity and mental alertness of children instead of attempting to teach an over-loaded curriculum in a mechanical manner."

"The guiding principles of simplicity, co-ordination of subject matter among the different fields of study and elasticity which would enable the teachers to organize instruction in terms of local, group or individual needs are also recommended."

"Local freedom of initiative to encourage teachers, inspectors etc. to adapt curricula to particular needs should be permitted. In the earlier stages of education, the curriculum should be largely visualized in the form of units of activity based on projects, life situations and practical constructive work. The curriculum should be linked with social and economic conditions and problems of environment."

"Particular attention should be paid to health education, to the provision of work, experience of a pre-vocational character as well as other co-operative recreational activities. While the curriculum should be based on the child's environment and involves locally useful skills, it should also lead to critical thinking and exercise of imaginative powers of the children."

"The curriculum should be oriented towards making students good citizens conscious of the best national heritage but willing and able to assess it critically to eliminate intolerance towards racial or religious groups and disrespect for manual work. It should also lead to the concept of the nation as an integral part of the world community of people."

"Whether the child is taught by projects or through regular lessons and whether the aptitudes to be developed are verbal or manual, methods of teaching should be so devised as to secure the active and intelligent participation of the child at all stages of his education."

1-1-'53

BIRTH-CONTROL AND LAXITY OF STANDARDS

The Editor,
Harijan

I have very carefully read your article: 'The Bombay Birth-Control Conference' in the *Harijan* of 20-12-1952. I reciprocate your views, generally speaking.

I deem it proper to quote here from Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's book: *Kalki or The Future of Civilization*, (Hind Kitabs Ltd., Publication). Writing on the 'Negative Results—*Family Life*' the writer says:

"A number of factors, such as..... the knowledge of the methods of birth-control which saves us from the fear of natural consequences have brought about a laxity of standards."

".....Sexual licence is an old habit, as old as the human race, but we justify it by giving it a new name, self-expression. Looseness is commended in good fiction and accepted in high society."....."Economic independence with freedom from the ties of marriage and the responsibilities of motherhood is the ambition of many a young woman of the growing 'smart set'." (pp. 12, 13) (Italics mine)

Speaking candidly on the 'Reconstruction—*Family Life*', he has very aptly expressed himself thus:

"The modern emphasis is wrong in its exaltation of the ecstasy of the flesh. Action which proceeds directly from the springs of emotion without passing through the discipline of reason is a return to the beginning, the animal and the brute. Passion should not usurp the seat of control which belongs to reason. Self-expression is not synonymous with sensuality. While it is theoretically quite correct to hold that we must be free and accept no restraints which do not spring from within, it is disastrous to allow young immature minds to practise it. Inner sanctions spring from outer ones and freedom to disobey belongs only to those who have risen above the need for external sanctions. Before the individual acquires freedom, he must be assisted to discipline himself. The young and the immature cannot become a law unto themselves, contracting relationships according to the dictates of their immediate desires."

".....Sexual satisfaction and not spiritual realization is regarded as the sole aim of marriage. In their first flush of enthusiasm and rebellion against restraints, men and women might take to them heartily, but when they grow mature, they will realize that it is not to their advantage either sexually or socially or spiritually." (p. 55).

I do not think any comments, at least from me, are necessary on the foregone which is self-eloquent.

25-12-'52
Bombay

VITHALDAS BODANI

By Mahatma Gandhi

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MONEY IS RATIONING

(By M. P. T. Acharya)

People who complain against rationing don't think that distribution of money as wages, salaries, dividend, interest, rent etc. is also rationing although in unequal measures. These men are allowed to purchase things, after limiting their purchasing power, according to the prices in the market. So that a man who receives wages can scarcely buy his necessities.

It is generally supposed that the market prices are regulated by supply and demand. The demand may be greater than the supply, but in the market only those who have money count as demand. A man without money is not worth anything in the market. He does not count as buyer. I have found in foreign countries that the prices fell when people had no money, but they were still above those of an ordinary purchaser, so that he could not purchase. But as soon as people had money, the prices went up so high that even then the ordinary people could not buy them.

In Cuba once when the market was full of coffee and sugar, they could not buy, because the people had no money, but when some Americans bought and took away coffee and sugar cheap, there was money but no more coffee and sugar.

It is supposed that money is a medium of exchange only. But *goods are money to make more money for the seller*; for him commodities are not use values but meant for increasing his own money. Unless he increases his money, he cannot feed himself, for he has to buy other things from others. Money increase is the object of business — not necessarily goods increase. Goods are only increased in order to increase less money into more money. Whether it is done by State or private owners, the buyer and consumer will be at a disadvantage. That comes from ownership itself.

Just as a banker increases his money by lending for interest, the businessman increases it by manufacturing or selling goods. Interest is called profit in this case. Those who earn i.e. *make less money into more money* by letting out lands, houses as instruments call their earnings rent, which is another form of interest. All that comes from ownership whether by State or private owners. In the private ownership order, the portion taken by the State from owners is called taxes. Since more businessmen pay rent, interest and taxes, they have to add these to the profits before they sell the goods, so that not only they but those who receive interest, rent, and taxes must be maintained *by the consumers*. These are the four kinds of extortions and exactions on the consumers to maintain those who produce nothing.

The value of money consists only in its power to take these exactions — its four elements. For production no money is needed since only labour and materials enter into production. As materials belong to some, one has to pay these

exactions in order to acquire the materials. It is all devilish — called economics.

If production is made free of these shackles, the goods can be distributed without prices i.e. free. There is no other solution. As it is, more production will not help in distribution, since goods cannot be consumed unless rent, interest, profit and taxes are paid off in advance and taken from sales, in addition to profits. Money is the most centralized rationing more than goods rationing.

REVIVE THE SPIRIT OF SWADESHI

(By Pandit Sundarlal)

Recently Shri C. Rajagopalachari, the Chief Minister of Madras, drew the country's attention to the fact that the once flourishing handloom industry of his province was passing through a terrible crisis and that about fifty lakhs of persons concerned with that industry were facing unemployment and starvation.

In the first week of December, 1952, I presided over the U. P. Provincial Weavers' Conference at Banaras. In that province, there are about three hundred thousand weavers supporting a population of not less than four million men, women and children. A large majority of these looms is now lying idle and the population depending upon them for their livelihood are facing starvation. We are getting similar news from other parts of the country.

While at Banaras, I had the opportunity of studying the condition of the local handloom silk industry. For two thousand years, i.e. since the days of Pliny, Banaras has been famous for its silk industry. India has always been proud of the fine gold-embroidered *saris* of Banaras. The weaving community of the place has been so well organized for centuries that even today if any weaver there is found using false or artificial gold thread he is at once outcasted by the entire community and has to undergo a social boycott difficult to face. As a result, Banaras gold work is a synonym for honesty and no customer ever need worry about the genuineness of the article he is buying. Even during the 150 years of British Rule this industry of Banaras remained a flourishing industry all through. But, now out of the 5,000 handlooms employed in this work very nearly 4,000 are lying idle. Some of the skilled artisans who were working at these looms only a few years back are now drawing rickshaws to support themselves and their families. Some have left for distant cities like Bombay in search of work. Thousands that are still in Banaras are living under pitiable conditions. In most of their houses food is cooked only once in two or even three days. The sight of their famished children is extremely distressing. At places, the walls and roofs of their houses have fallen and they have not the means for getting them repaired. I spent a whole day in visiting their *muhallas* and entering their houses to see at close quarters

conditions of life which words can hardly describe.

Many of our other home industries are also passing through a similar crisis. I have personal knowledge of several in my own province of U.P., the toy industry of Banaras, the carpet industry of Bhadohi, the lock industry of Aligarh and so on. Industries which successfully stood the shock of foreign rule for over a century are now in danger of becoming extinct. As a result, large numbers are everywhere without work. The number of such unemployed, I believe, has already reached crores and is daily increasing. Yet for the present, I am mainly concerned with the handloom industry, as it supports very nearly five crores of our country's population.

The Government of India, if it be so minded, can save the situation even now. In fact, if the Government had acted rightly the situation could never have deteriorated so far. But it is difficult to understand or appreciate the working of the Government of India's mind in this matter. Shri Rajagopalachari, in fullness of concern for the weavers of his own province, had suggested that our textile mills should be asked not to weave *dhotis* and *saris* of yarn upto a particular count and that this work should be reserved for handlooms. It was a reasonable and practical suggestion. Rajaji is a follower of Mahatma Gandhi. In support of his position, let me quote Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji says:

"What I object to, is the *craze* for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation... Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. Machinery is good when hands are too few to the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil where there are more hands than required for the work as in the case of India. I am aiming not at the eradication of machinery but at its limitation."

But acceptance of Rajaji's suggestion may have meant some fall in the, already by no means low, profits of some of our textile mills. The Government of India did not agree to the suggestion.

Again, the silk yarn which the weavers of Banaras used in their trade was mainly imported from outside countries like China and Japan. Our Government has levied heavy import duty on such yarn over and above a cess and actually banned it during the latter half of 1952, so the cost of production of Banaras silk *saris* has greatly gone up. On the other hand formerly, hardly any silk cloth comparable with Banaras *saris* was coming from outside. During recent years silk *saris* or silk or silk-like cloth manufactured in U.S.A. which can be easily

converted into *saris*, quite resembling Banaras *saris*, has been allowed free entry into this country. The American manufacturer can easily undersell the indigenous handloom weaver in the open market. The result is the utter collapse of our ancient Banaras silk industry.

Our country is passing through no less a crisis than it did in the latter days of the East India Company. In some ways the crisis today is even greater, for now we are much weaker after a century of foreign rule. Yet the Government of India can even now remedy the situation and save millions from starvation only if it took a more objective and a more realistic view of things. The least that Government can and should do is to give full protection to the country's handloom and other cottage industries as against mill industries both Indian and foreign, to remove all obstacles on the path of their development like duties or restrictions on the entry of silk yarn, and to ban the entry into this country of all competing consumer goods from foreign countries.

But the more important question is what the people can do and should do. The movement for Swadeshi was launched in our country more than half a century back. Gandhiji made Swadeshi a part of his political creed. It is one of his eleven vows to be repeated every day in prayer. If we have to save our time-honoured industries and save millions from unemployment and starvation we must revive that same spirit of Swadeshi.

In the matter of our handloom industry, firstly, it is the duty of all handloom weavers and of all those connected with that industry, not to purchase or use for themselves or their dependents any cloth other than cloth produced by handlooms in India. Even in the matter of other articles of daily necessity they should, as far as possible, avoid all foreign or mill made articles and use only articles produced by India's home industries. Unless all those concerned with our numerous home industries thus support each other we cannot save these industries.

Handloom weavers all over the country should also devote as much attention as they can to hand-spinning and to the use of hand-spun yarn at their looms, so that in the matter of yarn or at least cotton yarn, they should be as independent of the mills as possible.

Secondly, in the country's present crisis it should be the sacred duty of the public in general to satisfy all their requirements of cloth as far as possible from handmade cloth as against Indian millmade cloth or foreign cloth, *even at a sacrifice*. In the matter of all other articles of daily necessity also, we should all as far as possible use articles produced by our various cottage or home industries as against those produced by our mills or by the foreign manufacturer.

Thirdly, it is the duty of all those engaged in our handloom industry to strengthen their

organization. In U.P. we have got Handloom Weavers' Unions in several districts. We have also a U.P. Provincial Weavers' Federation. There are similar organizations in other provinces. Such organizations may be developed and strengthened. Steps may also be taken to hold an All India Handloom Weavers' Conference at some suitable place and to have some sort of an All-India Organization to look after the needs of handloom industry all over the country. We may, even have Handloom Weeks in various provinces during which efforts should be made to push the sale of handloom cloth by door to door hawking, holding exhibitions and other similar means.

Let us all do our duty towards millions of our fellow countrymen now in serious distress and towards the country as a whole.

NOTES

Will You Think It Over ?

A few weeks back papers were full of the news of the American Presidential election. They probably did not know, or if they did, did not care to note about the election project of a small band of Americans styling themselves as *Peacemakers*. They proposed to organize a walking tour from town to town on the way from Philadelphia to Washington with some sort of a symbol: white clothes for walkers, broken arrow, broken gun. Their theme was "Vote for Peace". A leaflet on this theme was issued by the organization. It is worth while to reproduce some of it here, as it is good to know that in the midst of the American election propaganda there was a band of quiet workers like the *Peacemakers* who, not losing their head over the matter, silently went round telling people of the way to peace on earth. They say in their leaflet:

"Eisenhower and Nixon, Stevenson and Sparkman and practically all the candidates say: To get peace you have to prepare for war. To vote for peace—as they tell it to us—means to vote a *Sixty Billion Dollar War Budget*, vote for the *draft*, vote for *war taxes*, vote for *inflation* and even *higher prices* for civilian goods, since that is what come from sinking more and more billions into unproductive war materials. (You can't pay the bills for groceries, clothes, school equipment, good roads, or medicine with guns and battleships).

"We do not believe that this is the way to peace. We do not believe that democracy will or can be saved in the way Eisenhower and Stevenson propose. Instead, democracy, freedom, security will perish. We are fast becoming people who are committing suicide in our frantic efforts to prevent the Russians from destroying us. To us this does not make sense. We doubt if it does to you.

"*Peacemakers* believe, the way to vote for peace is to act and live peace. Democracy can exist only where each person takes personal responsibility. We leave it to you to decide whether and how to mark your ballot on election day. Truly to vote, to take part in the democratic process, means more than putting a mark on a ballot once a year. We suggest some ways in which day by day we can all VOTE FOR PEACE.

"You vote for Peace every time you stand up for the right of anybody to have his say in this country, no matter how you detest what is said. Thus you fight dictatorship and the cowardly fear that democracy will not work.

"You vote for Peace every time you oppose racial or religious discrimination in your neighbourhood and insist on equality for all. You help to make this country an example of democracy, decency, and brotherhood which will make other people believe in democracy and decency too.

"The youth who refuses to be drafted for suicidal atomic and biological war VOTES FOR PEACE. He helps to save his country from the self-destruction which has overtaken every nation in the past when it got big, insisted upon power and devoted its energies and sacrificed its youth to war.

"Workers who refuse to get their living by making diabolical weapons to bomb babies and children—or fellow workers—in some other land, VOTE FOR PEACE. So do those who refuse to pay taxes with which governments can make atomic bombs, flame throwers and bacteriological weapons.

"Churches and synagogues which in the name of Jesus, St. Francis, George Fox, or Isaiah, Hillel and Akiba, would refuse to bless any war would VOTE FOR PEACE, act to keep true religion alive in the Earth.

"Wherever people go quietly to work to organize their economic life on a basis of co-operation and mutual aid, rather than on the "dog eat dog" principle, they build democracy, build brotherhood.

"Any individual, any little group, anywhere in this country or in the world, can begin to do these things NOW.

"WILL YOU THINK IT OVER ?"

(From the *Peacemaker*, Sept. 27, '52)

15-11-52

M. P.

A Right Lead

The problem of unemployment is a serious one. Indeed the success of the Five Year Plan would be measured by what it can do about it. The orthodox economists obsessed with the economy of machine and mass-production in industrialism are found wanting to give a correct lead in this matter. It needs a radically new approach. The following words of the Chief Minister of Bombay in his inaugural address to the Bombay State Industrial and Technical Education Conference, are very welcome from that point of view and let us hope they will be duly heeded to by our Planners:

".....If industries in India are completely mechanized it would not be possible to give employment to all the people. The problem of unemployment would not be solved so long as handicrafts are not properly developed. But there can be no competition between handicrafts and machine-made articles as the former are more beautiful and artistic than the latter.I would appeal to the people to devote their leisure to the promotion of handicrafts, which would not only occupy their spare time usefully but also be a source of gain to them." (*The Times of India*, 28-12-52).

R. S.

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