

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

## B. C. G. VACCINATION

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The reader is referred to the article 'B. C. G. Vaccination' of Shri S. R. Mistri, that appeared in the *Harijan* of November 15, 1952, and to the small note appended to it at the end by me. On reading this Dr. B. Patel, the Honorary Secretary, B. C. G. Vaccination Committee of the Government of Bombay, wrote to me, to say as follows :

"Leaving aside the efficacy of B. C. G. Vaccination, about which there is no second opinion now, I have to state that the questions of morality and ethics do not arise at all in case of B. C. G. Vaccination.

"B. C. G. which means Bacilli Calmette Guerin named after two French physicians Calmette and Guerin, is manufactured from Bovine Tuberculous Bacillus which are attenuated after 263 cultures during the period extending to 13 years.

"The Bovine Tuberculous Bacillus belong to the Sub-phyllum Thallophyta of the Plant Kingdom. The bacilli are not got by killing any animal. Thus it would be seen that there is no cruelty to animals at all. Unfortunately it has been mixed up with other known vaccinations where the origin may be after some alleged cruelty towards animals.

"Even the media in which the culture is grown do not contain any substance which might lead anybody to suggest that there is cruelty towards animals.

"Your reference to the *Harijan* dated 27.2.49 and 27.3.49 as regards the diversity of opinion amongst doctors, is outdated, because that question arose at the time when B. C. G. Vaccination was introduced newly to India. You will further agree with me that controversy about a problem only shows the problem is new, vital, and complex, and hence it should not be looked upon with a bias as exhibited in your correspondent's letter."

I thank Dr. Patel for correcting me on a point of information about cruelty. I referred his letter to Shri S. R. Mistri, Bombay, who obliged me by getting what information was necessary in connection with the two points raised by Dr. Patel. Among the many things that I got it will be enough to quote a letter addressed to me by the Secretary, British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, London. The letter runs as follows :

"I have been sent a copy of Dr. B. Patel's letter to you on the subject of vaccination against tuberculosis, and should like to comment on it.

"Dr. Patel makes two points. The first is that 'there is no second opinion now' as to the efficacy of the B. C. G. Vaccination. Authoritative opinion is, in fact, still divided. Dr. Nils Wangenstein, the Norwegian expert, expressed very strong opinions against this vaccine, and these were reported in the *Medical Officer* (the official journal of Medical Officers of Health in Britain) of August 30, 1952. Dr. Wangenstein's views may be summarized as follows :

1. Some people are naturally resistant, and others naturally susceptible, to tuberculosis.

2. B. C. G. Vaccination does not increase resistance to the disease. The most it can do is to reveal an already existing natural resistance.

3. The vaccination is dangerous and weakening to the human organism.

"Dr. Wangenstein actually described the vaccine as a poison. Commenting on his views in an editorial article, the *Medical Officer* said, with reference to the 17,000,000 persons who had been given B. C. G. vaccination under the auspices of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund :

'This stupendous undertaking is all the more remarkable when it is realized that there is no actual proof—no evidence, which according to many authorities, is strictly scientific—that immunity can be acquired in this way.'

"Dr. Patel's other point is that no suffering to animals is involved in the production of the B. C. G. vaccine. This is quite true. The suffering occurs, not in the making, but in the testing of the vaccine. Every batch is tested on animals, usually guinea-pigs. There are tests for toxicity and tests for standardization. In addition to these routine tests, there have over the years been countless thousands of experiments on many species of animals respecting B. C. G. All these were fallacious and useless, because no animal reacts in the same way as man to tubercular infection.

"It is not for me to advise parents on the question of having their children vaccinated against tuberculosis. All I ask is that both points of view be presented to them. The real answer to that scourge is improved standards of living, not the addition of another burden to an ill-nourished body."

Regarding Dr. Patel's contention that there is no second opinion now regarding B. C. G., I will also draw the attention of the reader to two notes that appeared in the issues of *Harijan* of 22-11-'52 by V. G. D. and of 29-11-'52 from S. R. Mistri. It will show that doctors are divided on the efficacy of B. C. G. and therefore it is proper that parents must have the choice in this matter.

However, the more important question in this matter is what Shri V. G. D. in his 'Witch Doctoring' (November 22, 1952) says at the end of his note: "Can underfed, underclothed, underhoused India afford to rush in where Britain fears to tread?" This is of prime national importance. The same thing has been drawn attention to by the Secretary, British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, at the end of the letter reproduced above, where he says that 'the real answer to that scourge (tuberculosis) is improved standards of living, not the addition of another burden to an ill-nourished body.' Therefore, the question which the Health Ministries in India should give their mind to first is how the *health* of the nation positively improves by securing to the people better standards of food, clothing, housing, sanitation and hygiene and not by drugging them at national cost in various ways of doubtful efficacy.

9-2-'53

### VACCINATION AND CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

To

The Editor, Harijan.

It was recently reported in our Bombay newspapers that Mr A. Bevan, former British Health Minister, will start from London on February 8, 1953 to come to India on the invitation of the Government of India to advise Indian leaders and Health Ministers of all Indian Provinces regarding India's health problems. I, therefore, through your valued columns of the *Harijan* respectfully and humbly request Mr Bevan to advise authorities in India to abolish compulsory vaccination in India just as Mr Bevan himself completely abolished compulsory vaccination in England in 1946. Forty six years ago in 1907 Mr John Burns who happily for the English people, was not a doctor, as Minister for public health in the British Government inserted a 'conscience' clause in the English Vaccination Act enabling British parents who regarded vaccination to be useless and dangerous to refuse to have their children vaccinated, that is, diseased with filthy pus from a disease of tortured calves. There are now in England millions of British children who have never been vaccinated at all. There is no smallpox in England for the last fifty years. Smallpox has been abolished in England by cleanliness and sanitation alone. And this abolition of compulsory vaccination in England has greatly benefitted the health of British

children. Professor Alfred R. Wallace, O.M., LL.D., D.C.L., F.R.S. "our greatest modern man of science" says that

"The abolition of all laws enforcing or encouraging vaccination is of more immediate and vital importance than any party dogma or any political programme... The successive Vaccination Acts were passed by means of allegations which were wholly untrue, and promises which have all been unfulfilled... The practice of vaccination is utterly opposed to the whole teaching of sanitary science and is one of those terrible blunders which in their far-reaching evil consequences, are worse than the greatest crimes...."

I, therefore, through *Harijan* appeal to Mr Bevan to ask Indian leaders and Health Ministers to abolish compulsory vaccination in India just as compulsory vaccination has been abolished in England.

54, Wodehouse Road,  
Colaba, Bombay-5

SORABJI R. MISTRI

[Government should respect conscientious objection against vaccination by suitably amending the Act. That some might misuse it can or should be no ground against it. This is more so, if science, as it seems clear, is divided on the question. —Ed.]

### Abolition of Profit Economy

Even if there were no profits, the prices of raw materials as well as technical staff and office requirement will be added to the cost of goods which enhances the prices beyond the reach of labour, reducing purchasing. Profit will have to be taken in group, individual and State investment economy. *Every exchange will lead to profit taking.* It is not motive but necessity which will lead to profit taking owing to separate and money accounting. Otherwise there will be deficit and loss upon which production cannot be carried on even by a State, even if all things belong to the State. The State expenses and administration will have to be charged upon the goods which provide the authorities and administrators with their living, making them a separate parasitic class who are kept by all others at their own expenses, e.g. out of their earnings; which means by consuming less, for the goods are charged more than labour gets.

One cannot abolish profit economy by any exchange economic technique. The only way it can be done is by putting all goods to common account and using it for the good of all who produce or serve without any charge (money or exchange): Production for social purposes alone *directly*.

M. P. T. ACHARYA

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## THE CASE FOR VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

[This is the second instalment of "Full Employment Plan of a Village". The first appeared in the issue of 14-2-53. —Ed.]

### The Old Organization

This leads us to the examination of the case for village industries. What are the factors responsible for the apathy even of the village masses towards the programme of village industries? The main reason is the breakdown of the village community organizations which functioned like self-sufficient units. These organizations were based on mutual exchange of goods and services and made for internal circulation of purchasing power. In a sense, therefore, the interests of the producers and the consumers were identical and fixation of prices at a higher or a lower level did not matter much because of this mutuality or identity of interests. Thus, if a potter sells his pots to the Chamar at a higher price and buys shoes from him also at a higher price, neither of them stands to gain or lose. That was the relationship between different sets of people within the group and so long as this relationship continued, the price of village industries products was not much of a problem. The problem has been created since this relationship was disturbed by centralized methods of production and distribution. Centralized factories have taken away the shoe-making industry of the village shoe-maker, it does not profit him to buy costly pots from the potter from whom he expects no return by way of purchase of shoes from him. Centralized factories have thus one by one destroyed the mutual links existing between different sections of the village and have thrived at the cost of them all. By taking away the processing industries from the villages factories have reduced their purchasing power to such a low level that even their so-called cheap articles hardly find sufficient market in the rural areas. That is why centralized production often provides the spectacle of poverty in the midst of plenty.

### The New Organization

It follows, therefore, that village industries can prosper only on the basis of mutual exchange within a group. The establishment of this mutual exchange thus becomes the central problem. Because of the disturbing factor in the form of centralized production, this problem may not be easy of solution, but being basically sound, it should not present insuperable difficulties. The village organization can be remodelled to suit the changed conditions of the time. It can hardly function now in the form of a loose organization allowing individuals to work on the basis of *laissez faire*. To be able to survive the onslaughts of centralized production and distribution, it has to function as one compact unit. But how is the unit to enjoy the loyalty of its members? This is the real crux of the whole problem upon the solution of which depends the future of village industries and indeed of village prosperity.

To the extent to which processing industries add to the net earnings of a village by retaining the processing cost locally, the village organization as a whole stands to gain. The organization will be able to command loyalty of its members to the degree to which it is able to reconcile individual interests with group interests in one form or the other. A formula may have to be evolved by which certain services to be rendered by the organization can be availed of by individuals on fulfilment of certain obligations to it. It may be envisaged that the village organization will have to create social services from the point of view of increasing amenities in the village and of bringing about divisions of functions so as to relieve certain sections of the community, particularly women of their present drudgery. Such services may be conceived as maintaining flour grinding, bullock *chakkis* or power *chakkis*, carding machines, bullock carts for home delivery of water or for removal of cow-dung and other refuse from individual houses to common manure pits and so on. Coupons for getting services in these respects at nominal cost can be issued to those who confine their purchases and sales to the village-co-operative store which acts as a clearing house both for the raw materials as well as the finished goods of the village. Through the Labour Bank to which reference is made later, the village organization can also arrange for exchange of goods and services on barter. Two classes of people in the village are, however, likely to prove indifferent to the organization, namely, the merchant and the other well-to-do persons. The merchant may be interested in becoming a commission agent of the centralized factories both for raw materials and finished goods, irrespective of the interests of the village as a whole. It may become necessary in such cases to socialize the commerce of the village and entrust it to the village co-operative society. The well-to-do few of the village who may be fattening themselves at the expense of the poorer sections of the community may have to be cornered through regulating the supply of labour to them through the mechanism of the Labour Bank. If confronted with a situation in which they can hire labour on certain conditions, they may find it of advantage to adopt the procedure evolved by the village organization. If the village community adopts the objective of full employment and full standard of life for its members, the recalcitrants can be made to see that they cannot prosper by following anti-social policies.

(Continued)

By J. C. Kumarappa

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# HARIJAN

Feb. 21

1953

## A NEW FERMENT — A NEW HOPE

(By Pyarelal)

Manilal Gandhi has had his reward. He is a seasoned Satyagrahi. Jail-going had no terror for him. Ever since Gandhiji's demise he had been strenuously preparing for the test which he felt was in store for him. But it was with no light heart that he took the plunge.

Mr Tom Wardle, who till recently was working with him as a member of the staff of *Indian Opinion*, has in a recent issue of the *Peace News* given a vivid account of the inner struggle and what finally led Manilal to burn his boats.

The African National Congress and the Indian National Congress in South Africa have for considerable time been dominated by the Communists. Their whole conception of the Defiance Campaign originally was to foster hatred against the Whites and to use passive resistance as a cloak for preparation for violence. When anti-White solidarity was sufficiently established and the resentment against the Whites had accumulated sufficiently "the Communist back-room boys" would organize a general stoppage of work. It was presumed that once non-Europeans could be got to down tools for a week the entire South African economy would be paralysed.

The danger was obvious. Without weekly pay many Blacks would starve and terrible reprisals would follow if there was an outbreak of violence on the part of the passive resisters. Manilal insisted that it was not enough merely to exhibit non-violence; it had to be truly felt. "It is not enough to have no hatred in your hands, we must have no hatred in our heart also," he would say. At this stage the first agreeable surprise came from Port Elizabeth:

"There Christian African ministers were directing the campaign. It was the practice of groups there to kneel and pray in the streets before going to their act of defiance and then to depart singing hymns.

"The very anthem, 'N' Kosi Sikelele Afrika' which the resisters sang was a spiritual song — 'Come Great Spirit over our land — God bless Africa'.

"From out of their own history and traditions and experience of life it seems, they drew the courage and the inspiration for their task. And it seemed also that the Christians among them were giving life to an understanding of the Christian message which put their White brethren to shame."

The Communists had intended non-violence to be used only as an expedient in the early stage of the Defiance Campaign till the people had developed the capacity for violence. The mask of non-violence would then be dropped. But now people were beginning to believe in non-violence.

Manilal Gandhi, writes Mr Wardle, was astonished at the way the campaign was going. "It exceeded all his expectations — the discipline, the tenderness of the African resisters was beyond praise. In a short while, he said, he would throw in himself too. But there was still the nagging question — are there no White men to prove our point? We say: 'Do not hate the White men because they are our brothers; do not harm them because they are not aware of their wrong-doing; by our example we shall win them to our cause. But it rings a bit hollow if there is not one White man to come out with us.'"

The lacuna was filled up when Whites began to come into the struggle. The entry of the Europeans into the campaign is an event of great significance in the South African Defiance Campaign. It has considerably minimized the danger of its losing its non-violent character or developing into an anti-White crusade based on hatred. It has transfigured its whole character. In the last letter that I had from Manilalbhai, he mentioned how they were trying to organize centres to give training in constructive non-violence by going among the natives to stabilize the movement and deepen its foundations.

This new spiritual awakening among the Blacks is a portent that needs to be carefully watched. If the heaven spreads, it will be a big landmark in the history of the African races and light may shine forth into the darkness of the world from a continent miscalled 'Dark'.

Valmiki Mandir,  
New Delhi, 9-2-'53

## LABOUR IS CAPITAL

(By Gandhiji)

Gandhiji said he had paid a hurried visit to the labour huts which seemed to him too small, too ill-lighted, and too low-roofed to be fit for human habitation. If the workers only knew what they could do for themselves by training and intelligent combination, they would realize that they were no less proprietors of the mines than the managers and shareholders. Their labour was better gold than the metal they extracted with their labour from the bowels of the earth. He reminded the mine-owners that unless they voluntarily recognized the due status of labour and treated it as they treated themselves, time was not far distant when labour would dictate its own terms. He told the workers that whilst it was right and proper to assert their rights, they ought to do their tasks as if the mines were their personal property. He also asked them to shun drink, gambling and other vices.

*Harijan*, 13-6-'36

Let us see the difference between the mill-owners and the labourers. Their strength is their money; your strength is your capacity to work. Capital would be helpless without labour. All mills would be at a standstill if you were not

there to work them. It may be that they may coerce you into working for them, but there is no doubt that they are helpless without labour. Labour thus possesses the key.

*Harijan, 7-11-53*

If conflict between capital and labour is to be avoided, as I believe it can and must be, labour should have the same status and dignity as capital. Why should a million rupees put together be more than a million men or women put together? Are they not infinitely more than metal, white or yellow?

*Harijan, 13-2-57*

What he had been saying for years was that labour was far superior to capital. Without labour gold, silver and copper were a useless burden. He could quite conceive labour existing without metal. Labour was priceless, not gold. He wanted marriage between capital and labour. They could work wonders in co-operation. But that could happen only when labour was intelligent enough to co-operate with itself and then offer co-operation with capital on terms of honourable equality. Capital controlled labour because it knew the art of combination. Drops in separation could only fade away; drops in co-operation made the ocean which carried on its broad bosom ocean greyhounds. Similarly, if all the labourers in any part of the world combined together, they could not be tempted by higher wages or helplessly allow themselves to be attracted for, say, a pittance. A true and non-violent combination of labour would act like a magnet attracting to it all the needed capital. Capitalists would then exist only as trustees. When that happy day dawned, there would be no difference between capital and labour. Then labour will have ample food, good and sanitary dwellings, all the necessary education for their children, ample leisure for self-education and proper medical assistance.

*Harijan, 7-9-47*

#### **Pandit Nehru Teaches a Salutory Lesson**

The newspapers report that at a certain Congress Camp in Hyderabad Pandit Nehru was offered a cake of foreign soap to wash his hands with, but refused to use it and asked, 'Is there not plenty of Swadeshi soap available?'

This incident has a lesson to teach the Commerce Ministry as well as the people. Plenty of Swadeshi soap being available in the country, it is a criminal waste of precious foreign exchange to permit the import of soap from foreign countries. The principle also applies to French georgettes and other foreign textiles, the import of which is responsible for distress among our spinners and weavers. The people should refuse to buy or use foreign goods and thus follow the noble example set by our beloved leader.

V. G. D.

#### **TOWARDS NON-VIOLENT SOCIALISM**

*By Mahatma Gandhi*

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#### **NATIONAL PLANNING AND KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES**

The Prime Minister inaugurated the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board, at Delhi on 2-2-53. The Board, the first to be appointed by the Government of India, has been charged with the task of preparing and organizing programmes for the production and development of Khadi and village industries.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari, Minister for Commerce and Industry, welcoming members of the Board first read the following message that had been received from the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad :

#### **The President's Message**

"Hand-spinning and handloom industry were for centuries the miraculous fountain from which flowed the river of gold and silver into our land and enriched the life of our teeming millions in the countryside. It was an evil day for our vast millions when this industry as also other subsidiary village industries were ruined under the political pressure of foreigners. Since that day the progressive impoverishment of our people began and darkness and despair descended into their lives. Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, had clearly perceived this historic truth, and so had made the spinning wheel the main instrument of the revivification of the Indian spirit and the awakening of our people. By doing so he restored the broken link of our history and infused our people with new courage and confidence in their future. Indeed our freedom struggle revolved round it, and we were able to win in the end because the home-spun thread of Khadi had joined the hearts of our village and city people to produce irresistible mass energy. Besides, Khadi was a symbol of true democracy in the eyes of Mahatmaj, for he was convinced that democracy could exist in human life only when economic and political power were both decentralized.

"I am, therefore, glad to learn that an All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board has been constituted to continue this great work of mass regeneration through the spinning wheel and other village industries. May I send the Board my good wishes for its success in this noble mission."

#### **Commerce Minister's Remarks**

Then the Commerce Minister said, "You probably know that during the last five years the Government of India were so preoccupied with the number of difficulties that we have had that we did not have the time to settle down to do what we were charged to do as a Government. The first step has been the report of the Planning Commission in which Khadi, village industries, cottage industries and handicrafts have been given an appropriate place, and I am sure that most of you will agree with me that the guidance that they have given and the directions that they



have indicated will be useful to us for building up our economy." He further remarked, "This work, though it has got a sentimental background to us—for many of you are Congressmen who had worked with the Father of the Nation—to us as a nation, it has a social significance. Poverty and unemployment in this country are so rife that we cannot afford to ignore any possible lines on which we can even lighten the burden of those people who suffer, to some extent. While we have our original background of self-sufficiency all the time, we consider that the work in regard to Khadi and village industries is a means of social regeneration, and therefore you will not be confined merely to the villages but also to urban areas where we have to create a self-respecting individual who has now by adverse circumstances been put lower down in the scale of economic wellbeing, so that he can become a little more self-reliant and probably to some extent self-supporting. Speaking personally—I am not voicing any conventional idea or wish—I think Khadi and work in regard to Khadi will have to be there for a long time to come in this country both in the villages and in the urban areas."

#### Prime Minister's Address

Prime Minister, Shri Nehru, who spoke in Hindi, said that such a Board should have been set up four years ago. Although the delay had caused him surprise he was glad that a beginning had been made at least now.

Gandhiji, said Shri Nehru, had laid particular emphasis on charkha, Khadi and village industries. Charkha was made by him as an economic and revolutionary symbol for the people. It became a weapon in the hands of the struggling Indians to secure economic uplift and stage a political revolution. The nation profited by it enormously politically. While the political aspect of charkha and Khadi had been fully realized, its economic significance had now been ignored or it had disappeared. With the gaining of freedom, Shri Nehru said, the political aspect had disappeared and with one of its two pillars thus knocked off, it had to stand only on the bulwark of economic benefits to the people. Every effort must, therefore, be made to strengthen this economic significance of Khadi and village industries.

#### Economic Utility of Khadi

In the final analysis, said Shri Nehru, those who were now concerned with the work had to prove—they should work sincerely to prove it—that the economic utility of Khadi and village industries still remained an important factor in the country's wellbeing. The Government would of course render necessary assistance, but the need for encouraging and developing its own inherent strength was there. All these matters, Shri Nehru said, were of course interconnected with the larger issue of the economic policy of the country.

#### Welfare State

In my own mind, said Shri Nehru, an idea is growing daily that the yard-stick by which one can measure the economic progress of a country is the extent of employment. We have been talking of having a Welfare State. A Welfare State is one where every citizen is a partner, sharing its benefits and responsibilities equally. The citizen must realize that he is actually a partner in the State. People must have full employment. How could there be a Welfare State if people could not get employment? For the unemployed, the Welfare State had no meaning.

The biggest problem before the country is, therefore, unemployment of youngmen. This question has got to be solved. It is a social disease and it has to be checked and removed. Some people think that this problem would be solved if the country maintains the present rate of progress, but I feel we have to place a greater emphasis on the question of solving the unemployment problem. Khadi and village industries have a great role to play in this sphere of solving unemployment.

#### Large v. Small Industries

I do not foresee any conflict between big industries and village industries. If a country wants to maintain its independence, it has to develop industries on a large scale. The need for big industries is there and those industries must be State-owned and State-controlled. This need must be co-ordinated with the development of small industries. I think, for a country like India, there is a considerable scope for the expansion of big industries. These industries cannot, however, solve the problem of employment. There still remains a big field for the setting up of small-scale industries. The small-scale and village industries will help in solving the unemployment problem.

The issue, therefore, is not merely the advancement of the cause of Khadi and village industries. In it is involved the advancement of the cause of the nation and the wellbeing of the people. This should, therefore, be dovetailed into the general planning for the people as a whole.

#### The Chairman's Remarks

Shri V. L. Mehta, Chairman of the Board, in the course of his speech said:

"It is hardly necessary for me to trace back the Prime Minister's interest in Khadi as our principal village industry, because quite a number of my colleagues and others present today were associated with him in active work, when he used to be connected with the Charkha Sangh in the old United Provinces. In the course of his Presidential Address at the 49th Session of the Indian National Congress held at Lucknow in April 1936 he observed: 'I believe that Khadi and village industries have a definite place in our present economy. They have a social, a political, and an economic value which is difficult to measure, but which is apparent enough to those who

have studied their effects.' Addressing the 50th Session of the Congress held at Faizpur at the close of the same year, Shri Jawaharlalji laid special emphasis on the immense value of cottage industries in providing 'work to our scores of millions of unemployed and raising the pitiful standards of our people'. Much has happened in India and in the world since then, but the Prime Minister's presence here indicates that Khadi and other village industries still represent to him economic activities which deserve definitely to be aided and even sponsored by the State.

"The constructive programme of Gandhiji, to which, I think, I may appropriately draw attention today, unfolded itself over a period of nearly a quarter of a century and was ever a dynamic one. Political considerations were, as I read it, of the least importance in affecting the transformations that the programme underwent, the paramount factors being economic, sociological and ethical. 'Divorce between intelligence and labour,' Gandhiji once observed, 'has resulted in criminal negligence of the villages. If we harness labour and intellect together', he added, 'we can find all the necessities of life in India.' Decentralization of production would, he further averred, place us in possession of a power which has not only to provide gainful employment to many but also to take advantage of the services of those who were willing to offer their voluntary labour for the benefit of the community in general.

"The Rural and Cottage Industries Sub-Committee of the National Planning Committee, constituted over a decade and a half back under Shri Jawaharlalji's chairmanship, had adopted an approach which was not very different from that implicit in Gandhiji's views as cited above. Reporting in 1940, the Sub-Committee desired that 'industries connected with the satisfaction of the primary needs of the rural population, e.g. manufacture of clothing, processing of food articles for the pursuit of which the people are equipped by long tradition, which engage large numbers at present and which are capable of affording employment to much larger numbers should be organized and developed by the State as cottage or rural industries'. This view was, later, echoed in the Report of the Economic Programme Sub-Committee appointed by the All-India Congress Committee which was subsequently adopted by the Congress itself at its Jaipur Session.

"It is interesting to recall here that the approach of those who drew up the industrialist's plan, known as the Tata Birla Plan, was somewhat different but the conclusion was the same. The process of making India self-sufficient in the matter of certain basic industries involved an outlay of capital which would impose a great strain on our economy. It would moreover make large calls on our technically qualified personnel

the strength of which was strictly limited. The result would be that neither adequate capital nor a sufficient supply of skilled workers would be available for the expansion of the industries manufacturing different types of consumers' goods in common use. Besides, it would be highly uneconomic to import machinery from foreign countries to facilitate the extension of these industries. That plan, therefore, favoured the encouragement of the production through cottage industries of as large a quantity as possible of consumers' goods.

"All these points of view are reflected, so far as I can see, in the policy enunciated in the First Five Year Plan. The main objective that governs the Commission's attitude on this subject is, I believe, the discharging of the State's obligation to provide employment to the growing number of the unemployed and under-employed in villages. It is, however, pointed out that village industries will have the best chance of developing on the basis of local demand. But, as the Commission notes, a programme of village employment has to be part of a larger employment programme. A common production programme for every industry is what is aimed at which necessarily involves the idea of the exercise by Government of control over the organized side of an industry. What forms such control can assume is set forth in general terms by the Commission, but I presume it will be part of the duty of a body like this Board to place before Government from time to time, suggestions about the restrictions that may have to be imposed. It is not the interest of a section, those engaged in a particular village industry, that should weigh in the determination of policy in this respect, but the broader interest of the national economy as a whole. We, the members of this Board, propose to approach our task in this broad spirit, but distinctly inspired by a belief in Khadi industries and village industries being accepted necessarily as an integral and essential part of any national planning.

"I shall now take the liberty of referring to a few details. In their orders relating to the setting up of this Board, it has been laid down that the Board will work in collaboration with the All-India Spinners' Association and will establish contacts with State Governments. It will be the duty of the Board, as early as possible, to place itself in communication with State Governments and unofficial bodies operating in their areas. It is with their support and, wherever possible, through their agency that the plans that are approved for the development of Khadi and other village industries can be worked out. It would be a travesty of the conception of a decentralized economy if the Board were to attempt to run the production units itself. It may, however, have to shoulder direct responsibility in the field of research and, to a certain extent, for the extension of facilities for training in the industries sought to be developed."



# "REBUILDING OUR VILLAGES"\*

(By Bharatan Kumarappa)

With the launching in various parts of the country of projects for village development and community welfare, it has seemed well to gather together in a concise form Gandhiji's ideas in regard to village reconstruction.

As is well known, Gandhiji regarded himself as a villager, settled in a village, founded several institutions to serve the needs of the village, and tried to do all he could to improve the physical, economic, social and moral condition of the village folk. He had a very clear picture of what required to be done in the villages and what should not be done. In spite of his Western education he was able to bridge the gulf that generally separates the educated in our country from the people of the villages, and had the genius to identify himself with villagers and see their problems with their eyes.

Besides, in accordance with our spiritual traditions he placed very high value on character and spiritual development. Today under the stress of other influences we incline to attach value almost entirely to the production of material wealth. Gandhiji saw that if the world was heading towards self-destruction it was precisely because of pursuit of material ends divorced from moral and spiritual considerations.

Consequently, while his plans for village reconstruction are motivated by a passionate desire to ameliorate hunger and want in the villages, they are also prompted by an equally earnest zeal for realizing spiritual ends such as non-violence, peace, social justice and freedom in the sense of self-dependence and self-reliance even for the lowliest and the lost. The world is talking of these ideals, but appears to be moving further and further away from them, and drifting towards their opposites, viz. violence, war, social injustice, exploitation and suppression of the weak, regimentation, denial of freedom for a large section of the population, and all-powerful State, and totalitarianism. Gandhiji saw with unerring clarity that if we are to achieve the ideals we profess, we must set about to lay the foundations for them in the everyday life of the people. The great merit of Gandhiji's views in regard to village reconstruction, therefore, lies just in the fact that while planning for our villages he was not concerned merely with raising their economic standard of living but also with laying the basis for peace, justice and freedom for all. We shall completely fail to understand him or see the significance of his suggestions if we do not keep this fact in mind. Much of the criticism levelled against his advocacy of Khadi, for instance, would be avoided if the critic did not use merely his own yard-stick of mere material gain but measured it against Gandhiji's yard-stick of both material and spiritual value.

\* Editor's Note to the book by M. K. Gandhi, Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-9, Price Re. 1-8-0. Postage etc. As. 4.

This booklet should be regarded as giving in barest outline what Gandhiji wanted done in the villages. Some items of great importance such as Education, Social Reform, Women's Welfare, Diet and Animal Husbandry are either given very briefly or not included here at all. The reason is that separate volumes have been published by the Navajivan Trust, giving in detail Gandhiji's views on most of these topics. All that is attempted in this book is to touch on the main items falling under village reconstruction, leaving the interested reader to look up those other volumes for details. On the other hand, items such as village sanitation and advice to village workers are given in greater detail here because they are not dealt with elsewhere.

## "Vanyajati"

There was a time when our ex-rulers had built high hopes of having a strong rear-guard of their loyalist army of soldiers and citizens to be recruited from amongst the primitive tribes of our country, whom we could not befriend in those days. Under the social and political conditions obtaining under their rule, the Britishers saw in these tribes a good handle for their imperial policy of 'Divide and Rule'. Like many other such hopes based on their hold over us, this one vanished with the basis of their rule being knocked out from below; and thus the alien barrier keeping us apart being gone, we are now on our way to befriend these our brothers and sisters living far away from modernity and civilization in their jungle or mountain homes and villages. Provided the innate spring of natural sympathy born of common nationhood and brotherliness is not allowed to run dry, we shall surely see that these tribes are helped to live better and more happily in their own God-given way and as fellow-Indians. It is hoped the *Vanyajati*, an illustrated quarterly magazine in English and Hindi published by Shri D. Rangaiya, for the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Kingsway, Delhi, (of which the first number is out in the new year — price 0-12-0) will help this work of creating mutual understanding and fellowship between all of us, whether living on the plains or in woods or mountains, and show our young men and women the way to serve our brethren in these tribes.

3-2-'53	M. P.
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