

# HARIJAN

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(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

## "LORD OF HUMILITY"

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Lord of humility, dwelling in the little  
pariah hut,

help us to search for Thee throughout  
that fair land

watered by Ganges, Brahmaputra and  
Jamuna.

Give us receptiveness, give us open-  
heartedness,

give us Thy humility, give us the  
ability and willingness

to identify ourselves with the masses  
of India.

O God, who does help only when man feels  
utterly humble,

grant that we may not be isolated from  
the people

we would serve as servants and friends.

Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifice,  
embodiments of godliness,

humility personified, that we may know  
the land better

and love it more.

Wardha, 12-9-'34

## C. R.'S BOMBAY UTTERANCES

### III

#### University Education

The colleges in India are full to overflowing. At the beginning of every academic year there is a great scramble for admissions, matriculates putting forward claims and counter-claims on all possible grounds including caste and community. Judged from figures, our universities must be declared to be completely successful. Yet it must be confessed that almost everybody is certain that the universities as they are today are unsatisfactory. Professors, students, members of our Parliament, the general public, the various Public Service Commissions, all agree that the stuff manufactured in the universities is not by any means good enough. The demands of the State are not met although in numbers there is no question of insufficiency. There is deplorable inadequacy in quality.

Democracy's claims and all-embracing pretensions notwithstanding, sound leadership is the fundamental of national achievement and it must come from the products of our universities. We cannot seek for it elsewhere. A revolutionary leader or saint may appear by a miracle now and then in the history of a nation and reshape its affairs and its character. But the day-to-day work that is required for the steady

evolution of progress depends on the continuous supply of leaders to manage men and guide the affairs of our people throughout the country and this does not belong to the world of miracles. We want, not one, but thousands of men of character placed in position in the thousands of districts throughout the country. It would be no exaggeration if we admit that the gap between the needs of the times and the quality of supply from our universities is a yawning gulf. The men and women who come out as graduates have to learn everything and personality has still to be shaped only after employment somewhere. This is most unsatisfactory when the burden and responsibility of the public services have increased beyond the wildest imagination of the previous generation of our public men. The most important equipment that a young man must get before he leaves his university is personality, not learning but character. Unfortunately the atmosphere of our colleges is far too much vitiated by intellectual and moral confusion for anything like this to be attempted. There is not that guidance available which is essential for the building up of personality in the young men and women studying in the universities. Brain power is of a very high order and a tremendous quantity of learning is put in, but the essential stuff is wanting. The explanation offered is that there is confusion, both intellectual and moral, in the world around and this is reflected in the universities. But is it enough for universities to reflect outside confusion instead of making up for it? The function of the universities must be to reform, not proportionately to represent society, but to do something to restore moral values and intellectual orderliness where there is anarchy.

The universities, I once again emphasize, must give the nation the leaders, teachers and administrators who are required in this complicated age to fulfil the duties devolving on the State and to guide society in its cultural life. Folly must be replaced by reason, passion must be put aside in favour of reflection, ideals must be installed where caprices govern, principles must prevail, not opportunism. All this cannot be hoped to be accomplished for us through some mighty sudden miracle. It is the function of universities to produce young men and women who will be able to find joy and fulfilment of spirit by guiding the people up this glorious mountain path.



Young men today are the sport of random and confused thought that finds expression in ephemeral printed matter of whose unavailability even the victims are not unaware. In the great experiment which India has in the evolution of her destiny undertaken to make in our generation, there is nothing more unfortunate than the present state of our colleges and universities. They were planned and built in a past generation and it is no fault of theirs if they do not suit our times and have not gained but rather suffered by the revolutionary technique that was evolved for the speedy attainment of freedom.

Had our philosophy and our culture which formed a great bulwark that protected India through past ages been intact, the mischief arising out of the inadequacy of our universities might have been of relative unimportance. If our *Vedantic* culture had been kept alive, not in scholarship alone but in the hearts of men and in their deeper understanding, no deficiency in school or college education would have mattered or resulted in serious harm. Unfortunately this ancient inheritance became in later times a rapidly diminishing asset. Little of it, I fear, is left now. Otherwise we would not have witnessed the vast quantity of greed and selfishness that prevail and have made the aims of our National Government so difficult of achievement. The discipline and restraint and the sense of moral values which *Vedantic* culture implies, have been almost completely jettisoned by the steady and unrelenting educational plans pursued during the last fifty years, which, alas! did not furnish us with anything in place of the old inheritance that was thrown overboard.

All learning should develop personality. Otherwise it is worthless in every sense. On the other hand if this aspect of university aims be kept in mind, every variety of study would be rich in fruit. Be it science, technical training, economics, history, law, domestic science or whatever else it might be, it would — each one of these — be an ample field for making a boy or girl a leader of men provided that, along with intellectual equipment, the development of personality were attended to.

I am not unaware of the difficulty of moral training. We cannot get the right type of personalities to live and move among the youth gathered in the universities, whose very life and deportment would without direct instruction or compulsion of discipline be an inspiration. We get teachers vastly competent in every other respect. The greatest reluctance is generally felt in introducing anything in the scheme of school or college education which may be mistaken for denominational religious teaching. One must recognize the validity of the reasons and apprehensions that lead to this. But we may easily overdo all this. We cannot afford to exaggerate our fears and rest content doing nothing. The crisis is far too real and grave. We cannot take a simple negative attitude on account of our

hesitation. I feel there is a way to achieve the object. A comprehensive scheme creating opportunities for studying and understanding various religions and philosophies, including what goes by the name of classical humanism in the Western universities, namely the thoughts of Greece and Rome would, all taken together, furnish an atmosphere and an incentive which will enable our boys and girls to seize the truth and assimilate the culture and philosophy of our own land without exclusive direct effort organized for that purpose. The indirect approach may achieve what may not be directly undertaken. Let our boys be encouraged to interest themselves in the literature of Christianity, Judaism and Islam and the classics of Greece and Rome. Then, no one need ask them but they will recapture for themselves the *Vedanta*, for it is still available for recapture by anyone born in India and blessed with enlightened pride. When straying from the studies prescribed for me, when I was young, I read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and chapters in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, and later I acquainted myself with the thoughts of Socrates, Marcus Aurelius and Brother Lawrence, the joy and reverence within me swelled towards the *Upanishads*, the *Gita* and the *Mahabharata* though no one incited me to it. All spiritual search is one and God blesses it wherever it is done and by whomsoever. If I am today a devout though very imperfect Hindu *Vedantin* it is not less due to my contact with some of the sacred books of other people than to the contemplation of what our own great ancestors have left for us. Not by total exclusion of all religion and spiritual thought but by all-embracing acquaintance and appreciation of spiritual thought of all kinds shall we be safe and shape ourselves properly.

(Concluded)

S. K.

### WISE COUNSEL

"It has become the fashion of the day to run down the Congress Organization and the Congress Governments and blame them for every evil and misfortune from which the people suffer. The Congress leaders and you (the *Harijan*) too are as much responsible for this as the general public. Ordinarily it should be regarded as a healthy sign and evidence of honesty that leaders should be conscious of and frankly acknowledge their failings and shortcomings. But the habit also tends to encourage every one to throw the blame on these bodies, and to minimize or even forget their own failings and disregard of duties as responsible citizens.

"There is the other side of the picture as well; there are opportunists everywhere; they try to make capital out of dissatisfaction against the Congress. We hear so many imputations against every leader of Congress. Some nickname them as *Congress-ke-Razakar*, others as leaking bottom, and so on. False propaganda against the Congress is as bad as personal gains by Congressmen; both are corruption.

"Before creating adverse public opinion against the present Governments, and the great and veteran organization that has the credit of forming them, you must also see whether the evils whether of corruption, nepotism or policies are such as exist only because it is the Congress which is at the helm of affairs, and would be straightaway remedied if some



other party came into power. Are you sure that even your so-called "strict Gandhians" would behave properly if elected to offices, or be able to build for surer economic prosperity without at the same time throwing some other section into excessive hardships and changes of fortune? I doubt if the situation is remediable by merely handing over power to one particular party.

"The world is suffering from the after effects of a long totalitarian world war, and India, in addition, of excessive and ceaseless bleeding during the course of more than a century and a half. The prosperity has to be built up slowly and by the combined efforts of all thinking and patriotic men working together in a spirit of brotherhood and mutual understanding and equitable accommodation of all interests that have come into existence. A non-violent revolution will always have to be an orderly reform. Gandhiji laid stress on the idea of trusteeship by which we should understand that we must all work together trusting in and being trusted by others. There is none who has not to sacrifice something of what he has hitherto enjoyed; and also there is none who can immediately be granted all that he is theoretically entitled to on principles of equality, whether social or economic. Society is a complicated organism, and cannot be set right by simple rules of arithmetic or conclusions of deductive logic."

The above is made out in my own words from several letters, I have received from time to time. There is much wise counsel in this which all should accept.

Wardha, 21-9-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

#### SUGARCANE SNAGS

Figures given with regard to sugarcane cultivation are always misleading, because the acreage taken up by it is only half the problem. Sugarcane occupies the land on which it is grown for a period long enough for growing two to three grain crops. At the same time the farmer chooses his best land for sugarcane, and gives it all the manure he possesses and most of the water, if any is available to him. It is, therefore, obvious that growing of sugarcane interferes with the growing of grain crops to a much larger extent than the actual acreage of land occupied by the cane.

All this goes to show the tremendous advantage it would be to the country if we would develop systematically and extensively the sugar available in palm trees. As is well-known palm trees grow freely in rough land unsuited to cultivation. The Central Government has made a start on palm *gur* and sugar production, but it needs to be much more seriously taken up on a much larger scale. Another advantage pertaining to cultivation of palm sugar is that the product is better for human health, and more nourishing. My personal experience is that, though I can eat very little sugarcane *gur*, as it affects my throat and digestion, I can eat palm tree *gur* without any ill effects. Shri Gajanan Naik, Palm Gur Adviser of the Government of India estimates its potential yield at over 20 lakhs tons if all the five crores of palm trees are tapped for it. At present only a fifth of them are utilized, and some of them for toddy and not *gur*. According to the same authority, the present annual production of cane-*gur* and cane-sugar is 40 and 10 lakh tons respectively.

All these remarkable advantages should have, by now, led us to India-wide production of palm-tree *gur* and sugar on a large scale. Unfortunately vested interests are involved. Some day or other vested interests will have to be firmly dealt with. Until that day comes, the Motherland will not come into her own.

Wardha, 21-9-'49

MIRABEHN

#### THE WILD CATTLE PROBLEM

A short while ago I sent an article to the daily Press in which I referred to the very serious damage caused by wild cattle in India, and mentioned how the Government is considering a scheme for catching and taming these animals, so that, instead of devastating cultivated land, they will themselves become an asset to the nation.

The following letter of Shri B. K. Singh of Kanpur is an interesting response to the article, and only shows how important it is to tackle this problem without delay:

"I have read your article with considerable interest. This is to inform you that there is a herd of about sixty wild cows in Jaisermau which is a village in Kanpur district. The number of these wild cows is increasing every year. They are causing an untold havoc in that and more than half a dozen surrounding villages. All attempts on the part of the cultivators of the locality to catch them failed. Because of this menace several hundreds of acres of very fertile land have been abandoned by the cultivators and it is undergoing rapid erosion. In Jaisermau itself there are only about sixty able-bodied men left, although the land is first class Domet and is canal-irrigated. Even these remaining cultivators have remained quite as poor and miserable as an average agriculturist of small holding was in 1936 or thereabouts. And the only reason for all this is the existence of this herd of wild cows. If these are removed, I am definite that the yield in at least ten neighbouring villages of Jaisermau will go up by at least 50 per cent.

"Further I am told that this is one of the several herds which are present in Billhaur Tahsil of Kanpur district. These herds generally live in villages that lie between the Grand Trunk Road and the river Ganga.

"I shall be extremely grateful if you would launch your scheme of catching these wild cows on a province-wide scale at an early date, by avoiding the red tape. You shall earn the gratitude of thousands of *kisans* of this province besides very substantially helping the province to fight the food problem."

There is, no doubt, a much larger number of these wild cattle in the country than either the public or Government have any idea of. Any attempt to get a census of these animals through Government machinery, would be very lengthy and unsatisfactory. It is much better that the public should take up the matter by sending me accurate reports of all herds of wild cattle which have come to their notice. In order that this request for information should be widely spread, I appeal to all newspapers and journals in general, and particularly those published in Indian languages, to reproduce this article.

Communications should be sent to me at Ashram, Pashulok, P. O. Rishikesh, District, Dehradun (U. P.).

MIRABEHN



### THE WORLD PACIFIST MEETING

Readers of the *Harijan* are probably aware that, in December of this year, some fifty peace workers from all parts of the world are coming to India to meet with some of Gandhiji's closest associates in the hope of getting fresh light and fresh strength for the task of fighting against war.

When the plan for this meeting was first suggested, it was hoped that the meeting would be with Gandhiji himself, and he entered fully into the original plan, and himself approved the original letter of invitation. After his death we all felt that he would have wished us to proceed with the plan, and we have done so, though unfortunately an extra year's delay became necessary, to complete the plans.

Those who have accepted invitations are not, in most cases, men and women who are world famous. But all are proved workers, and, as far as possible, we have tried to invite those who are, in Gandhiji's own phrase, 100 per cent reliable: that is, men and women who will withstand the passions of hatred and the temptation to resort to violence even under extreme provocation. A few are old friends, such as Richard Gregg and Reginald Reynolds, but most are coming to India for the first time in their lives.

In some quarters, doubts have been expressed whether this is an appropriate time to invite peace stalwarts from overseas to visit India. Will they not be disappointed and disillusioned? I believe not. I do not think any thoughtful man in the West ever believed that all India had learnt the heroic virtues of non-violence. Indian human nature, after all, is not so very different from human nature in other lands. But India did give birth to Gandhiji, and he has left behind him many men and women who have been steeped in his non-violent teaching for a generation, and who are still determined to be faithful to it. Those are the men and women the western visitors hope to meet.

Just as I do not think the visitors from overseas will be coming with serious illusions about India, so I hope friends in India will not have illusions about their visitors, though, to be quite frank, I think this is more likely. I am really astonished at the misconceptions that I find in the minds of important men about western pacifism.

Perhaps it would be useful if I refer to a few of these, as this may help to prevent misunderstandings when the visitors arrive.

Probably the commonest misconception is that western Pacifism is purely negative, and that it begins and ends with a refusal to participate in war. This is quite untrue. The Fellowship of Reconciliation, for example, a body that incorporates the greater number of Christian pacifists, came into being during the first winter of the war of 1914. I attended the meeting at Cambridge that gave birth to it. The major emphasis in that meeting was on the

social implications of Pacifism. What right, said some of the speakers, have we to call ourselves pacifists, and to refuse to participate in war, if we accept without question a social system that leads to war? The eighteenth century American Quaker John Woolman, who did so much to arouse the consciences of his fellow-members with regard to slavery had spoken much earlier to the same effect. His whole life was singularly like Gandhiji's in many respects, especially the extraordinary courage that he showed in applying his convictions in his own life and in defying the conventions accepted by his good and pious neighbours.

In recent years a number of western pacifists have undertaken experiments, either on their own or in community with others, in an attempt to break away from the acquisitive and competitive society in which they find themselves.

It is sometimes thought that many western pacifists forsake their Pacifism when their countries are involved in war. Thus in the last war, some outstanding men including Bertrand Russell, Albert Einstein and Joad did in fact abandon the pacifist position. But it should not be forgotten that over fifty thousand in England and a similar number in America took the consequences, often very unpleasant, of refusing to be conscripted into the armed forces — yes, even at a time when England was in imminent danger of invasion. Much as they detested the thought of England being overrun by Hitler's troops, they were persuaded that even the most insolent and brutal might must not be met by armed violence, and that, whatever the immediate outcome of their refusal to defend the country that they loved, their first duty was to witness to the spirit that can overcome all wars and strife.

Even more impressive than these large numbers of pacifists in England and America, where conscientious objection is to some extent recognized by law, has been the heroic witness of isolated men in some continental countries where refusal to fight in war time is liable to be punished by death.

The record of the western pacifists ought to be better known in India. It is not an unworthy one. But they would be the first to admit their failure to convince the world of the rightness and practicability of the way of non-violence. They come to India eager to learn. But they will also have something to teach. I hope all those who take part in this winter's meetings will come as learners, for we have all to admit equally that at the moment the majority of our neighbours dismiss our non-violence or pacifism or whatever we call it as impractical idealism. It will be time for any of us to declare, "We have found the truth that you seek", when we have really convinced the world, or the part of it that we live in, to change its whole way of life.

HORACE ALEXANDER



## MANUAL WORK SHARPENS THE INTELLECT

[Gandhiji held that handicrafts should be the basis of all our education. He said that every art would be the richer for the artist spinning. These ideas of his were realized by the students at Wilmington College, Ohio. The following account of their experiment is taken from an editorial note in *Good Health* of August 1949. Will not our students take a leaf out of their book?

V. G. D.]

.....A new men's dormitory was sorely needed. The President, Dr. Sam Marble, instead of raising money, appealed to the students. He held up a sketch of the plan for a five unit dormitory. Each unit meant 5,400 man-hours of work to build. This worked out at one day's hard labour per student. He called for volunteers for one day's work. The whole student body of 600 rose in response.

'How many will give another day's work to build the second unit?' he asked.

Again the response was unanimous. Then some one volunteered for fifty hours' work. At this a great crowd—students as well as teachers—came forward to pledge fifty hours, many of them a hundred.

As soon as this became known, businessmen and individuals came forward with the offer of tools and machinery and direction. The building was to consist of concrete blocks with red brick facing.

'Quickly becoming expert at mixing and spreading mortar and pointing up the concrete blocks, the girls on the campus have run up a bigger total of working hours than the men.'

But what about the actual college work? Did all the physical activity lessen the students' zeal and capacity for study? Not a bit of it. On the contrary, 'with a few exceptions students with the longest building hours are doing the best job academically,' writes Stanley High in *The Kiwanis Magazine*.

And this is what interests us most. How many bemoan their lack of scholarship? 'If only I were free to study,' says a routine worker, 'I could improve my mind and fit myself for a better job.' And by a better job is usually meant a job where there is no hard physical work and no grimy hands. The Wilmington College venture gives the lie to the idea that brawn and brain belong to separate camps or classes. As a matter of fact the one is the complement of the other. Physical work may bring a tired body to the desk but it may also bring a clear brain. Those who do, can usually be relied upon to carry the same thoroughness and determination into their head work.

It is the everlasting teamwork of body and mind that solves problems and removes mountains. Brawn and brain are natural brothers. What God hath joined, let no man part asunder.

## NON-CONTROLLED FOODS

["Common Citizen"'s article on *Lift the Controls* printed elsewhere refers to the increasing tendency among cultivators to grow more and more non-controlled foods to escape the harassments of officers and law. The following is another letter from "a grain-broker of forty years' standing in Bombay" giving a few telling facts in support of this statement. — Ed.]

By foodgrains should be understood, I take, wheat, rice, *bajra*, *juar*, *jav* (Indian oat) and *chana* (gram). Owing to harassments of controls and compulsory procurement, the cultivators have been systematically growing less of these articles, and increasing the cultivation of what have been generally regarded inferior foods, such as, *kodra*, *sanva*, *banti*, *chinu*, *vari* and *gurji* (an article closely resembling *vari*). The prevailing prices of these articles in Bombay are as follows:

Kodra	Rs. 225 for 26 Bombay maunds
Sanva	Rs. 350 "
Banti	Rs. 175 "
Chinu	Rs. 125 "
Vari	Rs. 125 "

These are all grown on rice-lands. This means that in course of time rice will become a rare commodity in India, and we shall have ceased to be even rice-eaters and taken to still inferior foodstuffs.

In the same way, *mung*, *urad* and other secondary grams are being grown on *bajra*, *juwar* and *tur* fields.

Wheat, *jav* and gram are winter crops. Owing to controls, the cultivation of oil-seeds has been taking the place of these grains, (except groundnut, the rest of oil-seeds being all winter crops). So too, the cultivation of spices like *dhania*, *jira*, has increased recently.

Owing to Gandhiji's protest against controls, they were partly lifted for a time. But members of interested services and traders frustrated the decontrol policy by giving wrong advice to the ministers in implementing that policy. The wrong advice, in my opinion, consisted in (1) closing cheap-rate shops in villages, (2) maintaining controls in cities, and (3) lifting them from non-city areas only. The result was that as soon as controls were lifted, traders rushed into villages and purchased up village stocks and brought them to *taluka* and district towns. The villages became short of sufficient supplies, and so prices soared high in villages. This hit landless labourers and artisans hard and there was a demand for reimposition of controls. This need not have happened if cheap-rate shops had been maintained both in cities and villages for a time, along with the policy of decontrol. The cultivator need not have resorted to the cultivation of non-essential food crops. But the Government was misled by its officers.

A GRAIN BROKER

(Translated from Gujarati)



## LEST WE FORGET

### XIX

#### Khadi in Various Aspects

##### (u)

I see no art in weaving muslins that do not cover but only expose the body (*Economics of Khadi*, p. 36).

##### (v)

We shall then refine that imperialism into a commonwealth of nations which will combine ..... for the purpose of giving their best to the world and of protecting, not by brute force but by self-suffering, the weaker nations or races of the earth. Non-co-operation aims at nothing less than this revolution in the thought world. Such a transformation can come only after the complete success of the spinning-wheel. India can become fit for delivering such a message when she has become proof against temptation and therefore attacks from outside by becoming self-contained regarding her chief needs — food and clothing (*Ibid*, p. 37).

##### (w)

Agriculture and hand-spinning are the two lungs of the national body. They must be protected against consumption at any cost (*Ibid*, p. 39).

##### (x)

[The] destruction [of foreign cloth] was the most economical use you could have made of it, even as destruction of plague-infected articles is their most economical and best use (*Ibid* p. 40).

## LIFT THE CONTROLS

When popular governments came into existence for the first time in the provinces, if they could not tackle the various problems satisfactorily, we consoled ourselves by thinking that they were still new and, given some time, they would set matters right and there would be no ground for grievances against them. But there is no sign of improvement and there is the same inefficiency and maladministration as before. There is neither simplicity nor human touch in dealing with the day to day affairs of the people. On behalf of governments, old consolations are still offered, but far from being felt satisfactory, they shake the people's confidence in the governments. One of the principal causes for the defeat of the Congress in recent elections at some places is the increasing discontent of the masses with the present administration in the provinces. There is no end of controls, regulations, laws, ordinances, etc. and every second or third day amendments or additions are made thereto. It is next to impossible for the people to know exactly how the law stands on a particular day. Lawyers find it difficult to be up-to-date in their knowledge of these laws. Under these circumstances how can one expect from the ordinary man full and perfect obedience to law? The result is that simple people are harassed and penalized.

It is loudly proclaimed that the food situation of the country is grave and a subject of anxiety. In their attempts to lighten its gravity, the various governments have opened new and expensive departments and added to the load of the common man. But there is hardly any other department comparable to this in point of inefficiency and corruption.

Let us take the instance of Bombay. Hundreds of youngmen and women are employed in the rationing offices here. A considerable amount of public money is spent on them. But if we consider its usefulness, we would like to forthwith close the department. This department besides being instrumental in wasting a great deal of food supply, is grossly corrupt and cause of black marketing. On complaints being made to the ministers and officers, we receive a reply that the moral standard of the whole population having gone down, there is no remedy. The reply is absurd for a responsible officer to give. Controls were supposed to have been needed because the moral standard of the people was not high enough to work for the good of all, and to voluntarily put a self-control on profits and selfish consumption. It is, therefore, the first duty of these departments to put an end to these evils. But here, the evils are defended and thus facilities are provided for their thriving.

Last year the (Bombay) Government distributed *tur dal* from their ration shops. After some time, it found it difficult to procure it from the cultivators. The reason was that the rates which the Government had fixed for the purchase of *tur dal* from the cultivators were lower than even those fixed for *chhala-chuni*. The result was that cultivators thought it economical to give *tur dal* instead of *chhala-chuni* to their animals and they actually did so. The attention of the Government was drawn to it but with no results. The Government kept *tur dal* as a rationed article for several months, but it was unable to supply it to the public.

In Bombay for about last three years, *bajra* is a rationed article; but it has never been sold at ration shops. What is the sense in declaring a thing as rationed article, if the Government is not able to supply it for years together? What is the moral justification for continuing controls over such articles? And look at the effect of these controls in their practical aspect? Those who break the law can eat *bajra* regularly and black markets are in full swing. Those who are law-abiders are denied *bajra*. A patient advised by a doctor to eat *bajra* has no recourse but to go to the black market to procure it. He is unable to resist his natural desire to get well and breaks the law. Can one judge him too severely?

A huge amount of money is spent after the 'Grow More Food' Campaign; but no one probes into it as to why nothing comes out of it. The real reason behind it is that the cultivators today are inclined to grow non-controlled foods



to get good prices and at the same time to be saved from the harassment of officers and law. But with the lifting of the controls, the cultivators will turn to normal ways. In pre-control days, *nagli* was sold in Bombay at annas two or three a *payali* and its sale was also small; but now it is sold at Rs. 2 a *payali* and its sale is in terms of thousands of bags. This indicates which way the mind of the cultivators is working.

To be frank, it is only the controls and regulations, which are at the root of scarcity of food, etc. On account of controls, rationing, and daily alteration in the quantity of food, every citizen tries to hoard as much as possible, though the food grain available under the rationing becomes unfit for human consumption after a few days. But on account of unstable quantum of food, people consider it wise to hoard. Similar is the wastage done at the government godowns. There the qualification of officers is being measured in terms of university degrees only, resulting in enormous wastage of food on account of want of knowledge of food and its preservation. Auctions and sales of spoiled goods as well as their drowning into the sea are a sufficient testimony of these. This is not strange where the university education is the only criterion of a man's ability.

This state of affairs does not prevail in respect of food controls only. The same is the case with all controls. Let us take milk. How much is government spending over it as establishment charges? But the people have to stand in a queue for not less than half an hour in rain or sunshine for only a quarter of a seer of milk.

Similar is the case of kerosene. In Bombay now-a-days kerosene is distributed in larger quantities than necessary. At the same time, in the nearby villages, people have to resort to the black market to light a lamp during the night. From Bombay itself, under different names, either by rail or motor lorry, a good many tins and tanks are being sent out. For their own benefit, the officers connive at it and thus encourage illegal practices. The person occupying the ministerial *gadi* cannot go round personally and see for himself the details; but it passes beyond one's comprehension if such inequitable distribution regularly going on under his administration fails to draw his attention.

We hear the present ministers saying in and out of season that they are under a great pressure of work; but we generally see them in meetings, opening ceremonies, addresses, receptions, parties, luncheons, etc. They are generally found in one or another of such functions. People see this before their very eyes and so they are rather indifferent when they hear them complain that they are hard-worked.

Turning to controls, long years of their experience have taught us that the controls have not at all improved the conditions, and are a total failure. On the contrary, they have added to the hardships of the people and invited a great many evils.

These controls must be lifted. The load of taxation, the common-man carries requires to be lightened by cutting off the establishment charges of the various departments. When thus the situation has become control-free, the people will not resort to illegal ways and a truer life will return to man.

COMMON CITIZEN

(Translated from Gujarati)

### HIS MOTHER MADE HIM

Mahatma Gandhi's glorious life had many facets of surpassing beauty. One of these was his profound regard for womanhood which was rooted in his love and reverence for his mother. The high esteem in which he held that woman of blessed memory is illustrated by the following incident which occurred when Mahatmaji was surveying the field for his future work in India after his triumphant return from South Africa.

In the early part of 1916 Gandhiji visited Hyderabad in the course of his tour of Sind. During his stay in that town he graced my house with his presence in response to my invitation. My mother who was then about 57 and was not interested in public affairs, made *pranam* to Gandhiji from a short distance. His pensive countenance was suffused with pure joy at that gesture. He said: "Tell your mother when I saw her I was reminded of my own mother." At that moment Gandhiji's thin face looked like a full blown rose. Mother, though illiterate, understood the language of the heart quite well, and after his departure told me in Sindhi that she saw spiritual radiance in his face!

It was because of his mother, who exercised such a potent influence in moulding his character, that Bapu held woman to be "the noblest of God's creation" and looked upon every woman as his daughter, sister or mother according to her age. Next to his mother his dutiful wife contributed her share in ennobling womanhood in the eyes of Mahatmaji who was a gallant in the best sense of the word. His championship of woman's cause and his chivalrous attitude towards women in general was an eloquent tribute to his own mother and wife who led dedicated lives in their own way. Mahatmaji's affectionate and considerate way of dealing with the fair sex was fully reciprocated by them, for they felt the magic touch of his personality radiating from his eyes full of compassion for erring humanity.

The truth of the saying "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world" is borne out by the phenomenal career of Mahatmaji. By virtue of his unique sacrifices which culminated in his martyrdom, and rigorous self-discipline inspired by the lofty example of his pious mother Bapu has joined the galaxy of world teachers. We are much too near him in point of time to realize fully the grandeur of his sublime life, but future generations will see it in its proper perspective and marvel at the heights he had attained by his *tapasya* of a high order.

Verily, "a noble mother must have bred so brave a son."

K. G. MIRCHANDANI



# HARIJAN

October 2

1949

## THE KHADI SPIRIT

(By Gandhiji)

.....it would be wrong perhaps on my part, if I did not say a few words showing how we can illustrate the spirit of Nanda in our daily life. In my humble opinion, we cannot better illustrate that spirit than by clothing ourselves with the 'khadi spirit'. Please note the distinction I am making. I am not saying that we can illustrate the spirit of Nanda by wearing *khadi* merely, but I say that we must have the 'khadi spirit'. Even a blackguard, even a prostitute should be expected to wear *khadi*, since she or he, the blackguard, must wear something even as they eat the wheat and the rice in this country, in common with us; but the 'khadi spirit' means that we must know the meaning that the wearing of *khadi* carries with it. Every time that we take our *khadi* garment early in the morning to wear for going out, we should remember that we are doing so in the name of *Daivdranarayana* and for the sake of the starving millions of India. If we have the 'khadi spirit' in us, we would surround ourselves with simplicity in every walk of life. The 'khadi spirit' means illimitable patience. For those who know anything about the production of *khadi* know how patiently the spinners and the weavers have to toil at their trade, and even so must we have patience whilst we are spinning 'the thread of Swaraj'. The 'khadi spirit' means also an equally illimitable faith. Even as the spinner toiling away at the spinning wheel has illimitable faith that the yarn he spins by itself small enough, put in the aggregate, would be enough to clothe every human being in India, so must we have illimitable faith in truth and non-violence ultimately conquering every obstacle in our way.

The 'khadi spirit' means fellow-feeling with every human being on earth. It means a complete renunciation of everything that is likely to harm our fellow creatures, and if we but cultivate that spirit amongst the millions of our countrymen, what a land this India of ours would be! And the more I move about the country and the more I see the things for myself, the richer, the stronger is my faith growing in the capacity of the spinning wheel. If we try to reason out with our intellect the capacity of repeating of the mere name 'Rama', our intellect will fail to satisfy our heart, and yet I hope that there is not one single person in this audience who would consider that those *rishis* who gave us the heritage of repeating those names were either fools or idiots. Even so I suggest to you that the *khadi* spirit has all the capacity that I have just now described to you.

But there is one condition behind it, I admit, one condition alone that attaches to the expression of that spirit. It is this that even as *Rama-nama* became in our minds a living force, because it had behind it the unrivalled *tapashcharya* of those who gave it to us, so it is with the *khadi* movement. It ought to have the *tapashcharya* of those who are behind it. Every minute of my time I am fully conscious of the fact that, if those who have consecrated their lives to *khadi* will not incessantly insist on purity of life, *khadi* is bound to stink in the nostrils of our countrymen. I am well aware that *khadi* cannot compete with other articles of commerce on their own platform, on their own terms. Even as *satyagraha* is a weapon unique of its kind and not one of the ordinary weapons used by people, so is *khadi* a unique article of commerce which will not, cannot, succeed on terms common to other articles. But I know this also as certainly as I know that I am sitting here, that *khadi* is unique and it would out-distance every article in India today. You will, therefore, perhaps understand why I do not enthuse over all these *khadi* purses you have given me. I know that, if you had even a tenth of the faith that I have in *khadi*, you would not give your two hundreds and your two thousands out of your plenty, but you would satisfy me till there is no money required for *khadi*.

(Young India, 22-9-'27)

## REDUCTION OF CURRENCY

The reader will find elsewhere an unusually long article entitled "Currency and Finance", and the lay reader might feel embarrassed at its length. Those conversant with the subject will, I believe, regard it as good and even overdue. This note will help the general reader to understand the points discussed in the article.

Generally and in normal times the amount of paper currency which a sound government puts into circulation bears a reasonable proportion to the amount of silver and gold in its possession, as also to silver and gold money. In times of war, this proportion is not observed, and in order to find money to purchase from its own subjects materials needed for carrying on war and administration, it prints over much paper money. Since it would not be possible for government to purchase materials from foreign countries by paying paper money, all silver and gold is spent in purchasing foreign things. The British Government of India acted in this respect in even a more callous way than it did in its own country. The result was that it printed notes worth several hundred crores of rupees.

It had done this, though to a much smaller extent, even in the first World War. But after the end of the War, it withdrew all the paper rupees, and brought the proportion between the paper currency of higher denomination and silver rupee to the pre-war level. This it did by not reissuing one rupee notes which came into the Treasury in payment of taxes etc. from the



people, but by destroying them. Whatever amounts in small money it had to pay out were paid in form of silver rupees. The fundamental thing is not the silver, or the nickel rupee as such, but a systematic withdrawal of one rupee notes from circulation. This had the effect of lowering the prices to almost pre-war level in a short time. This was done without any ado, so that the people in general did not even know how cheapness was brought about.

Shri K. P. Verma, who is a retired officer with a long experience of Treasury methods, has been urging for a long time that the same remedy should be employed again. But instead of taking the right step, artificial and ineffectual methods have been employed to control high prices. His critic, who is a great financial expert, on the other hand, holds that while this could have been done some time ago, it cannot be done now. Shri Verma challenges this opinion and gives his reasons. The reader will now be able to read the article with interest.

Wardha, 21-9-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

### Too Many Irons at a Time

The August number of *The Journal of Education* of England referring to a statement of Mr. R. A. Butler comments as follows :

"Mr. R. A. Butler was voicing a considerable section of opinion when he said, 'The problem before the country and the Department now was that we should establish priorities within education itself. We could not do everything at once. The country was running into a storm, and it was reasonable not to go into it with all sails-up and some of them not properly attached. Education authorities were attempting to do too much at once, not through any grave fault of judgment, but because those who were responsible for the Act put so large a burden on them'.

"This does not mean that there is any weakening in the desire to provide the maximum of educational opportunity. It does mean that inadequate attention is being given to putting first things first. Many things are left being undone because too much attention is still being given to planning for a distant future without sufficient regard to present needs.....The frustration which exists among teachers is one of the visible results of this."

The desperate situation about things educational described above exists almost similarly in our country as well. To take an instance, Bombay has too many irons in the fire. This has meant much worry and no solid work in actual practice. Financially it means waste of good money at such a hard time like the present. The worst is the general sense of frustration which is visible all along among both the department and the teachers. This results into an apathy which dulls enthusiasm and stems initiative—the very two things which can really help us out of the desperate situation. The authorities may please take note of this!

11-9-'49

MAGANBHAI DESAI

### BAPU'S LETTERS TO MIRA [1924-1948]

"It is the most simple, direct and intimate teaching of a Spiritual Father to his stumbling child."

—Mirabehn

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### CURRENCY AND FINANCE

The reader might remember that in an article *Combating Inflation and High Prices*, (the *Harijan*, July 3, 1949), the writer, Shri K. P. Verma, suggested that, following the method adopted at the close of World War I, the remedy lay in withdrawing from circulation Re. 1 notes, the creation of that war. "The reform", he said "could be introduced as soon as the new silver rupee came into circulation. All that the Government of India have to do is to approximate to the ratio of the silver and paper currency (for the present leaving out of calculation the two-rupee-notes), as it obtained at the close of World War I." As Shri Verma (hereafter referred to as V.) also expected along with this measure "vast economies and retrenchment in expenditure within three to six months of the introduction of the reform", he did not foresee any serious difficulty arising on account of possible fall in revenue receipts.

As the subject was too complicated, before publishing the article, I placed it before my casual financial adviser and published it along with his remark, which I adopted as my own, namely,

"This is a bold suggestion. But its success rests upon the fulfilment of the condition that vast economies and retrenchment in expenditure are carried out by Government."

The article and my remark thereon brought a double attack upon me. On the one hand, V. protested that the success of his step did not depend upon retrenchment and economies, but that the effect of that step would be that

"within three to six months of the introduction of the reform the Government would find themselves in a position to effect vast economies and retrenchment in expenditure and would thereby be able to more than counterbalance the possible fall in their revenue receipts. To put the idea in a detailed form, the withdrawal of one-rupee-notes from circulation (and later on, if necessary, of two-rupee-notes as well) would have the effect of bringing down the prices of the necessities of life surprisingly low, of inducing the agriculturists to part with their surplus grain willingly, of causing the disappearance of the general distress, discontent and disaffection, of disarming the rival political parties who are apparently trading on them, of placing the Government as well as private employers in a position to effect proportionate reduction in salaries and wages and the former to even dispense with their formidable but mostly corrupt control staff and also peacefully and effectively to abolish the black market.

"(However) to ensure the complete success of the measures proposed by me, it is evidently necessary that simultaneously with their introduction the Government should refrain from printing more notes of any denomination; they should bring down the high percentages of profits allowed to the textile mills and wholesale and retail dealers to the level that obtained in 1938 and should arrange an abundant supply of iron, steel, manures, etc. to our agriculturists without charging any profits, if not at less than cost price.

"The above proposals will enable the Government to manage most easily and successfully the present dangerous situation—no mean achievement indeed; but for the real, permanent and satisfactory amelioration of the economic situation as well as for



the social, moral and intellectual uplift of the country as a whole, the Government should at once retrace their steps and address themselves to the task of working out revered Mahatma's Constructive Programme both in the letter and spirit....." (16-7-49).

The second attack was against the main suggestion of V. and it came from a very high financial authority of our country, whom I shall refer to as F. The criticism was sent to me through a friend. It ran as follows :

"Mr. Verma's remedy for inflation is of a very unusual kind. One wishes that he had explained this remedy a little more clearly. So far as I can make out, he wants Government to withdraw all one-rupee notes and to issue more silver rupees. If Government merely repudiates all one-rupee-notes, not even the strongest national Government will last a single day. Apparently, therefore, he wants every paper rupee to be exchanged for a silver rupee. Has Mr. Verma thought about the economic implications of this? Too heavy a burden may be imposed on the tax-payer on account of the large cost to the Treasury of the copious silver coinage, and add to this the needless burden of carrying silver rupees instead of the light paper rupees. One fails to see how this will cure inflation. *The fundamental cause of inflation is the large expansion of money incomes without any considerable increase in the quantity of goods. How will money incomes shrink by Government resorting to the proposed remedy? Does Mr. Verma believe that incomes have increased because of paper rupees?* If such a simple measure could have cured inflation, those who control the nation's currency policy must be unmitigated fools or knaves. Mr. Verma, with his 'practical experience', claims that his remedy will 'work miracles'! But less sanguine persons fear that the age of such miracles is long past. One would not have expected such knavishness in the columns of so sober a weekly as the *Harijan*." (11-7-49) (Italics editor's)

Naturally I had to forward it to V. It evoked a long reply. With his approval, I summarize his arguments below :

"The remedy suggested by me is plain, simple and very successfully tried as can be verified from the files of the Government of India Secretariat. F. misreads my article by confounding the *withdrawal* of one-rupee-notes with their *repudiation*, the suggestion to *approximate* the ratio of the silver and paper currency as it obtained at the close of the World War I with the *replacement* of the vast volume of one-rupee-notes by an equal amount of silver rupees, and after thus arguing my article into an absurdity, proceeds to ridicule it.

"Now I will answer the two questions that F. has posed for me, (vide italics in F.'s note). Inflation according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary means abnormal increase of currency, e.g. by the issue of inconvertible legal-tender notes. It is a matter of recent history that the British Government of India caused inflation for purposes of the last War by printing one-rupee and two-rupee-notes to an unprecedented and unconscionable extent ever resorted to in the history of any country in the world and caused thereby an unprecedented rise in the prices of all the necessities of life and, by sheer dint of the most acute economic distress promoted their war effort and, as if this was not enough, in order to complete the process of subjugation through impoverishment of the nation, they withdrew every available silver rupee and sold off all the silver in the American market. It is worthy of note that while the prices in the United Kingdom were not allowed to rise above 27 per cent, in this country they were allowed to rise up to 1000 per cent and even above. The most

partial, painful and heart-rending aspect of the episode apart, it is evident that inflation has a direct effect on prices and that the general economic distress resulting from high prices cannot be removed without tackling the demon of inflation which has given birth to them (high prices). With due respect, I submit, therefore, that F.'s statement that the fundamental cause of inflation is the large expansion of money incomes without any considerable increase in the quantity of goods is a mere quibble which, I may be excused to say, fails even to disguise the stern fact. For, as long as the prices of raw materials remain high, the prices of goods cannot be reduced beyond a partial curtailment of the manufacturers' and middleman's profits. And this is exactly what the Government efforts have, so far, amounted to. My answer to the first question is that the withdrawal of one-rupee-notes to start with and later on, if necessary, of two-rupee-notes as well, will by pricking, as it were, the bubble of inflation, bring down the prices of raw materials including grain and cereals and incidentally of all finished products.

"With regard to the second question, I have only to draw F.'s attention to the figures of the Government's Income Tax and other revenue receipts as well as to the increases in the salaries and allowances of Government as well as private employees which furnish the affirmative answer. But the pity of the matter is that neither the employer nor the employee is any the better for the increase. The reason for this unhappy state of affairs is not far to seek. Salaries and wages have never been increased, as evidently they could not be, in proportion to the rise in prices and yet, when after strikes or serious threats thereof allowances and wages are increased, a direct incentive is given to inflation and thus the vicious circle is kept going. Needless to say that people with fixed incomes and those whose incomes have not been increased in any proportion to the increase in prices—and the number of such people is legion—are and remain the worst off. In such a state of affairs no member of society except the industrial magnates, who need not count when we consider society or the country as a whole, can feel comfortable, the struggle for existence becoming more and more acute with the passage of time, generates antagonism, strife, demoralization and universal corruption until at last the masses becoming desperate embrace Communism with full consciousness of the horrors that it brings in its train.

"It remains for me to describe the manner in which the reform was introduced by the Government of India after the end of World War I. At that time I used to be a Treasury Officer in C.P. A simple and unpretentious Order issued by the Government of India to all provincial Accountant-Generals and passed on by them for compliance to all the Treasury and Sub-Treasury Officers under them directed that the one-rupee-notes received into the Treasuries should not be reissued on any account, but should be sent periodically to the Bombay Treasury for destruction. It further directed that the silver rupee should be issued in lieu of the one-rupee note as and when required. Within three months of the Order being in force, I noticed that the prices of shirt twill, which used to be 4 As. per yard before the War and which had gone up to 12 As., came down, by magic as it were, to 5 As. and so did the prices of all indigenous cloths, cereals, etc. Thus was the bubble or rather the balloon of inflation pricked, thus were the soaring prices brought down with it and thus was the economic equilibrium restored without the Government of the day hobnobbing with the industrialists or making frantic but vain appeals to the workers' and the people's sense of patriotism, or being required to face financial embarrassment of any sort. In fact, so smoothly and silently was the



detested balloon brought down to the immense satisfaction and relief of all and sundry with the exception of the sharks of our industrialists, who too, though they wailed for a time the disappearance of their gruesome war-profits, eventually reconciled themselves to their normal, wholesome lot, that hardly anybody realized how the 'miracle' had been brought about. I admit that the 'balloon' of inflation of World War I has developed into a 'Zeppelin' or a 'Floating Fortress' of World War II, but the remedy of 'prick' though it stands smiling at our acute embarrassment, pain and discomfiture, is still beckoning to us and is in fact begging for application. It also warns our Government that in case they do not use it at once and now, the 'burst' that will follow will involve them and the whole country in a most piteous destruction.

"It might be argued that the withdrawal of one-rupee notes representing several hundred crores of paper currency in circulation might lead to serious depression and unemployment. My answer is that the process of deflation being slow and steady—nothing serious need be apprehended as nothing serious happened when the remedy was tried previously. It may also be pointed out that the amount of silver rupee in circulation in the whole of undivided India before, during and long after World War I, and, if I recollect correctly, almost up to the year 1939 amounted only to twenty-four crores and though billions worth of one-rupee-notes were printed and used for purposes of World War I, no untoward results followed their withdrawal, because of the agricultural nature of the Indian economy.

"Four years have elapsed since the end of World War II, but the general economic situation, which has gone on deteriorating in our hands, has now become desperate. People in general may not know how the British Government of India restored normal economic condition within a few months of the end of World War I, but they know it for a fact that this was done. They are naturally wondering why our Government who are supposed to know and do better, have failed to remedy it yet."

The letter which is summarized above was forwarded to F., who gave the following brief reply:

"Mr. Verma is going much beyond his depths. What he considers to be a simple remedy may have more serious consequences than realized by him. This question should have been considered at a time when this remedy might have been more practicable; but today, with rapidly growing tightness in the money market and allied deflationary symptoms, inflation is a thing of the past, and one may soon be facing a serious recession. I cannot see any good in this correspondence appearing in the *Harijan*. Mr. Verma ought to place his views before the Governor, Reserve Bank of India, rather than bewilder the unwary readers of the *Harijan*. I suggest that you kindly make this proposal to him." (12-8-'49)

I must admit that having regard to the intricacy of the subject, I was inclined to accept F.'s advice, and drop the topic in the *Harijan*. But V. could not stand it and he pursued the matter with me in a series of letters. Some of the points referred to by him being important I realized that even in order to do him justice, it was necessary that his view should not be suppressed. He is by no means trying to speak on matters he does not understand. It has also an educative value. But it is not necessary to reprint the correspondence in full. It is enough to give a summary of the arguments. This has been done with his approval:

"From a perusal of F.'s letter dated 12-8-'49, it is clear that he does not challenge the correctness of my statement about the method employed by the British Government at the close of the World War I. In fact it may be taken that he admits the fact and states that this question should have been considered at a time when this remedy might have been more practicable.

"In face of the above facts and those stated in my letter dated 30-7-'49, F.'s statement—'but today with rapidly growing tightness in the money market and allied deflationary symptoms, inflation is a thing of the past, and we may soon be facing a serious recession'—amounts to begging the question.

"Evidently he does not now think that my suggestion is as naive as he characterized it in his first letter, and desires me to correspond with the Governor of the Reserve Bank, instead of discussing it in public. It means that there is something in it which does deserve to be thought over.

"As a matter of fact, the idea of the withdrawal of one-rupee and two-rupee-notes did occur to Shri Chintaman Deshmukh, the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (*vide* his opinion which was published in August, 1948), but as he failed to mark the fundamental difference between agricultural and industrial economies, i.e. difference which was for the first time brought to the fore with telling effect by revered Mahatmaji, he did not recommend adoption of the measures fearing that it might result in acute unemployment.

"If by 'tightness in the money market', F. means the shyness of capital for purposes of industrial enterprises of which we have heard so much in recent months, it does not require an economist or an expert to attribute it to the foolish recommendation of the Conference to limit the percentage of dividend to six—a recommendation which the Government of India have presumably, under the influence of their Advisers, accepted and enforced only to confound themselves. F. has not mentioned any of the 'allied deflationary symptoms' but, if at all they be of the nature of the 'tightness in the money market', then his inference that inflation is a thing of the past is, to say the least, a deliberate violence to the liberal as also the universally accepted meaning of the word 'inflation'. Again F.'s remark that V. is going much beyond his depths based as it apparently is on his observation, 'what he considers to be a simple remedy may have more serious consequences than realized by him', amounts only to mere verbiage as he must have seen from the files that the Government of India of 32 years ago did not have to face any serious consequences. Nor can his fears of a serious recession hold water for a moment in face of his own admission that the question should have been considered much earlier. Obviously then the Government Advisers should explain why it was not considered and who is responsible for all this mess, and how it has become unpracticable now?"

"I am constrained to say that the most unfortunate and dangerous circumstance is that the Government of India have been thoroughly overimpressed and misled by their Advisers. With all deference to F., I must say that the 'fundamental cause of inflation is the large expansion of money incomes, without any considerable increase in the quantity of goods' is absurd and a camouflage device to disguise the fact that proper advice was not given to reduce the amount of notes in circulation.

"As to F.'s advice not to discuss this subject through the *Harijan* you will realize the necessity of this step, when I state that so long ago as September, 1947, I brought the proposal to the notice of Acharya Kripalani, the then President of the Congress and subsequently to the notice of Panditji and Sardar Patel in my letters of March and September, 1948.



It is not that I have rushed to columns of the *Harijan* without doing all that was possible for me to do privately. But I feel that it is also necessary to bring the pressure of enlightened public opinion to bear on our unhappily misguided government.

"Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister, is reported to have declared very recently that 'the supreme problem that the present generation faces today is the economic recovery of the nation. I am not afraid of any external aggression but what worries me most is our internal weakness, particularly the economic one.' Now, after this unequivocal declaration by our Prime Minister, the truth of the statements made in my article of 3-7-49 must dawn on all and sundry and along with this substance of this correspondence between us and F. before them not only will the Government and the thinking public be disillusioned but our government will also be put on the right path indicated therein and stressed in my letter dated 16-7-49.

"In conclusion let me repeat with all the emphasis at my command that this is the most momentous question of the day and the solution should not be delayed by each one trying to shove off his own responsibility on the shoulders of another."

I do not think that I can add anything to Shri Verma's pleadings to the extent they refer to currency measures.

Money has been made in modern life a juggler's art so that people, including ministers — are debarred from applying common sense to understand its manifestations and are thrown to the mercy of the wizards who have studied its cunning. As Silvio Gessel has said,

"he who has the power to cause, by means of deflation, a falling market and, by means of inflation, a rising market, has also the power, just like a general on the parade grounds, to command the entire industrial activity with a *Halt* or a *Forward*; I am ready to take it upon myself, with the limited powers of the Central Bank of issue, to drive the merchants and employers to despair, to throw the workers into the streets, to bring all freight lines to a stop, to let the mines fill with water, and within a week, nay, 48 hours later to start the maddest boom the world has ever seen."

The real and ultimate remedy lies in adopting a truer certificate of wealth and measure of value, and not this fabricated one. One can understand that an owner of land possesses something which can produce for him new wealth in abundance with a handful of seeds without loss of land. But the owner of coins and notes possesses nothing which can both stay with the owner and produce for him a single note or coin like itself. The desire to possess land or grain exclusively is a natural one, even if selfish. The desire to hoard and possess money is an artificial one, and would not have been there but for the still more false characteristics given to it in the shape of legal tender, interest and non-depreciation by passage of time. Make a currency which wears even as rails made of hard steel do by the constant running of trains over them and weather, and no one will want to hoard it. It is its false and artificial characteristic that has made it capable of being inflated and deflated as its controllers might will.

But how the world may get out of its tangles is a great problem. Whatever the solu-

tion is, one thing is certain. It will be found only when we have dismissed all experts and also our own political and scholarly intelligence and employ instead our simple natural talents for the purpose. The remedy may be too simple so that when discovered, we shall wonder why we did not think of it before. F. says with reference to V.'s suggestion: "If such a simple measure could have cured inflation, those who control the nation's currency policy must be unmitigated fools or knaves. Mr. Verma with his 'practical experience' claims that his remedy will 'work miracles'!" Whether Mr. Verma's remedy can be effective or no, I shall not hazard an opinion upon. But I do apprehend that the middle part of the above quotation might be true. During the long period of war and after, immense wealth was destroyed, all silver and gold removed, people have been burdened by unprecedented taxation and still is it not a wonder of wonders that we believe that we have too much money! Does a note represent a certificate of wealth possessed or of that lost? Suppose a person produces a note saying 'Certified that the bearer's house worth Rs. 25,000 has been burnt and reduced to ashes', would he be able to get anything against it? And yet the greater part of what we regard as money represents nothing but certificates of wealth that was destroyed or exported and lost for ever, and we hug them and carry them from house to house, for getting food and cloth, as Kisa Gautami of Buddha's story carried her dead child for getting a pinch of mustard seeds. True, all the notes are not certificates of destroyed property. But the two have got mixed. So the sooner the false certificates are withdrawn the better for all of us, and Shri K. P. Verma certainly suggests a remedy that he affirms was tried. His affirmation can be verified from government records.

K. G. MASHRUWALA

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## NAI TALIM Course of Studies

*Nai Talim* has a meaning pervading all the spheres of our national activities. It is the hope of India. But the Talimi Sangh which works out *Nai Talim* has a limited meaning in the sense that it can give guidance only to the extent that it has itself gained experience. Therefore, one should not rely too much on the Talimi Sangh for guidance. Everyone should use his talents and make his own experiments in the field. Whatever suggestion or scheme the Talimi Sangh may put forward is recommendatory and you have to accept of it whatever appeals to you, leaving the rest, and go ahead without lagging behind the Talimi Sangh. For instance, if the syllabus of history as recommended by the Talimi Sangh does not seem to you to be proper, you can alter it as you think proper. You have to understand that all those who are preparing these schemes are inexperienced, because we ourselves received education in the old style but are now talking of *Nai Talim*. I have compared this position of ours to *Narasinha*, the man-beast *avatara* of God. The previous *avatara*, *Varaha*, was that of a beast, and the later one, *Vamana*, that of a man, but the intervening *avatara* was half-man and half-beast, and, therefore, more dangerous than both *Varaha* and *Vamana*. It is the same thing with us, who have been brought up in the old *Talim* and now think in terms of new *Talim*.

I am of opinion that not even a pie is required for the kind of education which we want to impart. The *Gita* says: त्यक्त सर्वं परिग्रहः शरीरं केवलं कर्मेकुर्वन् (Abandon all wealth and work with your body). That is, our body and mind are quite sufficient to achieve our ends. If I wanted to start *Nai Talim* in a village, I would go and work with other labourers in a village and live on whatever the landlord offered. Our best teachers like Kabir, Valluvan of Tamilnad, and Namdev did so. The former two were weavers and the latter was a tailor. There have been many such saints who taught us to have God's name on our lips and productive work in our hands. Therefore, I do not require anything except my hands to go and work in a village.

People are afraid of going to villages. But if the town-people compare the amount of love they get in villages with that which they have in their town-life, they would realize the emptiness of their life. Village-life is a community life while life in a city is individualistic. People crowd the cities for selfish purposes and that is why a poet has said that the villages were created by God while the cities by man. If a man with teaching capacity goes to a village and works among labourers, he can himself learn many things and teach others. *Nai Talim* does not stipulate that four or five hours per day should be devoted to teaching. All the day the process continues. You have to prove that this kind of education can be imparted in every village without any necessity for money. If you require money for the purchase of a *charkha* or a *tokli*, they return the value very quickly, the former in fifteen days and the latter in one day. That is the beauty of these small implements. You can yourselves make them and if you do so, you will understand its possibilities for *Nai Talim*. Therefore, you can start giving education to the villagers if only you possess industriousness, love for the villagers, ability and a scientific outlook.

### Vacations

I said earlier that I would start work in a village as an agricultural labourer. But we find that the schools have vacations during periods when there is no work in the fields. We have learnt to enjoy holidays during the summer from the English people. We are told that in summer, as we possess very little energy, we cannot turn out much work. But this is not correct. We see that in the hottest parts of the earth, big trees grow and, therefore, there is nothing in the summer which reduces our capacity for work. Of course, we cannot wear a full

suit and boots during summer. Therefore, the proper time for vacations in India is the rainy season. But that also I would not call a vacation because we all would go to work in the fields with the children. I am unable to understand the purpose of long holidays for schools, though I can see their necessity for workers. But we have turned our schools into jails and therefore, the children feel the necessity for holidays and do enjoy them when they get them. Where would be the necessity for holidays if there is joy in acquiring knowledge? I inspected the accounts of the Exhibition today, and I found that the total number of working days was shown as 200. God has given us 365 days but we have cut it down to 200. But the villagers cannot afford to have a single holiday.

I am reminded here of an incident which happened in Sargaon where I used to go daily from Paunar for scavenging. On one such occasion, when it was raining heavily, the villagers protested that I should not have gone there when it was raining, and I said that others could perhaps take a holiday but not a *bhangi*; my ideal was the Sun, who was the greatest *bhangi* because without a bright Sun in our country, the uncleanness we created would have consumed us. But my regret is that I could not follow the Sun's example and due to illness, I could not do the work for nine days. The result of my efforts was that the villagers began to look upon scavenging as a sacred duty and I found that on the Ganapati day, the village had been cleaned before my arrival and on my questioning the villagers, they replied that as it was the Ganapati festival day, they wanted to do some sacred work and therefore the village youth had cleaned the village. I call this a revolution. Can governmental power bring about such a revolution? No, it is not its work. Not even the Talimi Sangh can do it. It can be brought about only by the gift of intelligence which God has blessed us with. A Sangh, whether Talimi Sangh or another, is after all an inanimate object, while the individual or the *atma* is a Life-force. Therefore, I would give you complete freedom to go to the village and take up this work according to your own lights.

### School — The Centre of All Village Activities

Our school teacher there should serve the whole village and the school should be a centre of service. Distribution of medicine, village cleaning, settlement of disputes in the village, etc. could all be done through the school with the help of the children and the teacher. The school should arrange for the proper celebration of festivals in the village. Thus it should be the centre of all village activities. It should develop existing occupations like agriculture and start new ones like weaving in the village.

### Money - returns

The importance given to money incomes of agriculture, weaving, carpentry and similar occupations is a mistaken one, because money is a deceitful measure and its value is unstable. It is one thing today and another tomorrow and because we measure the value of everything in terms of money, dishonesty is growing in the world. We should understand that weaving, agriculture and carpentry do not give returns in money but in cloth, food, and buildings and these things cannot be compared with money. In terms of money, water is cheaper than milk, but milk does not quench thirst. That shows that God's creation is such that all important necessities should be easily available to all. No father wishes a hard life for his children. Similarly, God has made our lives easy. But we spend our lives in acquiring things which have no real value. The peasant thinks that he gets more money—as many as twenty times—in growing tobacco than food-grains. It happens so because people who possess money are stupid enough to smoke cigarettes. But wise people eat foodgrains and because they have no money, they cannot purchase foodgrains at high cost. Therefore we have to forget money and take an all-sided view of life.



### The Food Problem

As I said above, the centre of all village work should rest on the school teacher, who should possess a good knowledge of all that is going on in our country and the world, and find out solutions for all the problems before the country. Yesterday when there was a question whether India could produce all her foodgrains, someone said that it was possible that Shri Jairamdas could not reply but our teachers should have an answer to that question. The problem before Shri Jairamdas is a colossal one and he has to take into view the whole country. Anybody will be staggered to face such monstrous problems. But to our school teacher the village is his world and if he solves its problems, he will be able to suggest a solution for the problems of the world. He can show Shri Jairamdas how the food problem in the village has been solved by growing more food in various ways and how such work can be undertaken on a wide scale. Thus *Nai Talim* will provide solutions for the problems of our country.

### Study of Languages

We know that of late a great controversy has arisen over the question of language resulting in much mutual acrimony. Our schools should be capable of giving a solution to this problem also. If there is a school in Tamilnad in which students speak not only Tamil but also the language of the neighbouring province and Hindi, it would have solved the problem for the country. A lady asked me why the children should be burdened with the responsibility of learning a language other than the mother tongue. It is a correct question from the educational point of view. But it is our country's misfortune — misfortune because the language difference has created much mutual bitterness — as well as the glory of our great country. Great are the problems that face such great things and, therefore, our children have to learn more languages than one.

### Truthfulness

I now come to a matter more important than all that I have dealt with above, that is, truthfulness in which, I regret to say, the people of this country have gone far low. In every religious literature, Truth has been given importance but today untruth appears to have spread everywhere in the country. If we go to the bazaar, falsehood is the rule there—I do not mean in the black market, but in the open market also. If a small boy goes to a shop to purchase something, the shopkeeper deceives him; he does not think that he should give that innocent boy the best of things and in a correct measure but takes the opportunity to cheat him. Good business would be to give good things in a correct measure and thus earn the goodwill of the customers. It is a great pity that in this ancient land falsehood is rampant everywhere. Therefore, we should make the greatest efforts to install truthfulness in our schools. We should believe what the students say and act accordingly. That is the way to reform them and make them truthful. One who is himself truthful always believes others.

To give a personal experience, about thirty years ago, when I was in Banaras, I went to a shop to buy a lock. It was my habit to enquire of prices of even things which I did not want to buy and so I was aware of the price of the lock selected by me. When the shopkeeper said it was ten annas, I told him that I knew its price was three annas, but as he said ten annas I would pay him ten annas. As this shop was on my way, I used to pass by it daily during my walk. One day, after about two weeks, as I was passing that way and when there was none else in the shop, the shopkeeper called me and returned to me the excess of seven annas, saying that the price of the lock was only three annas. My eyes were filled with tears. I had not expected any such result. I regarded it as a lesson given to me by God to be always truthful. It is possible that He might not act always in a similar manner but would test his devotees further. Therefore, whether our truthfulness influences others or not, we have to remain always truthful.

### Examinations

The *Nai Talim* people have decided that there should be no examinations in the schools. I was glad to hear that, because when I used to appear for examinations, there were supervisors to watch us and I used to think that if they entertained such suspicions about us, where was the wisdom in examining us, since we had already failed in their eyes. Therefore, though the decision to abandon examinations was taken from the educational viewpoint, I am glad that now the students have been freed from suspicion of falsehood. What I mean to say is that the whole atmosphere in the school should be such that the children should get an indelible impression in their minds that to be truthful is the first duty of every man in the world.

VINOBA

(Adapted from the Hindustani address on the last day of the Fifth All India Basic Education Conference held at Perianayakempalayam from the 7th to 9th May, 1949).

### CONTROLS RE - EXAMINED

#### IV

#### Conclusion

Controls have failed in their objectives during their working of the last four years; on the contrary they have impeded production and free movement of goods and encouraged black marketing, profiteering, and hoarding, favouritism and provincialism. It has demoralized the services completely and also various strata of society. They are maintained because the power placed in the hands of officials is so wide that even big businessmen and multi-millionaires are at the beck and call of these officials. Controls have actually added to inflation as government expenditure both at the Centre and in the provinces has swelled by about three times the pre-war basis. Controls have also thrown out large number of traders who were established and brought in new elements altogether unconnected. Inflation, which is a headache to all our Ministers, is really here and not with the capitalistic hoarders or the public, or even due to short supply. Nobody has any idea of the total sums spent by the Centre and Provincial Governments on civil supplies and other controls. At present the public are in the dark as regards the actual state of affairs because the layman cannot understand why in spite of his paying such high prices for foodgrains and cloth, the Central and Provincial Governments should show heavy debits in their Civil Supplies Departments.

If controls are abolished today, there will be chaos for some time and even high prices, but ultimately consumer resistance will bring down prices to normal levels and will lead to the following advantages also:

Travelling will decrease as people will not have to run to Delhi, Calcutta and other places, nor will Government Ministers have to attend conferences at these and other places.

Shortage of paper will completely disappear as people will not have to correspond uselessly and there will not be any necessity to submit and return countless statistics in quadruplicate and quintuplicate to and by the Control authorities.

Heavy pressure of work on Telegraph lines will diminish.



Useless wastage of manpower will be eliminated, because control establishments are not adding anything to the productive activities of the nation.

Wagon space will be correctly utilized as goods will not be diverted to unwanted places or only for storage purposes, etc.

Thefts of controlled articles from Government depots and railways also will diminish as there will not be any buyers or any premium on stolen articles.

Corruption which is actually adding to the cost to the consumer will disappear and thus money will naturally go into productive channels. Government can divert their attention to check out inefficiency and corruption and thefts on their nationalized undertakings like railways and can concentrate on nation-building activities like education, removal of beggar nuisance, starting new industries and reorganizing existing industries, etc. If the cost of living comes down as a result of this, public exchequer will be relieved of unproductive expenditure, there will be saving all round and our articles can easily find an export market and our people need not worry about export markets and restriction on imports. The public exchequer and the various industries will be saved of the dearness and other allowances and the country's economy will gradually benefit by these measures.

Another benefit will be that the congestion in cities will disappear as blackmarketeers will have no scope to flourish, and surplus labour employed in transport movement by Rationing authorities will also have to go away, along with the bogus card-holders and the staff of the various control departments, who will vacate their official and residential quarters.

#### Partition

Much has been made of Partition difficulties and Refugee problems. Here also there is much loose talk, but less of action. Partition has created difficulties so far as the supply of two main raw material items are concerned, viz. raw cotton and jute. But instead of taking steps or drawing all our attention to these two problems, we have had any number of inter-dominion conferences with paper resolutions for inter-dominion trade, but actually both Governments have been trying to impede trade by loose regulations, customs barriers, etc. We need not have imitated Pakistan by counteracting their moves. Instead of that, we should have tried to secure supplies of raw cotton from other markets which were cheaper and where the markets were free and adopted measures to raise the area under cultivation of jute. If we had left our trade with Pakistan free from Government interference, we would have found that our trade balance would have been in our favour, instead of adverse. Sanity has recently dawned and a number of trade barriers are being removed but it will be better if the trade is left completely free.

#### Refugee Problem

Resettlement of refugees, about 60 to 70 lakhs, is not such colossal problem as has been

made out. Those who were agriculturists or at least some of them were immediately resettled in the East Punjab where Muslims had left. Other agriculturists should have been easily utilized in the 'Grow More Food' campaigns by handing over cultivable waste lands. Traders and businessmen should have been given loans and started on their feet without any hubbub. The question of artisans and educated middle-class then remains. Government could have surely billeted these people, if necessary, by an ordinance on the Industrial concerns in India or given employments in their own new ventures. Red tapism and bureaucratic methods which generally like to retain power and finance are really responsible for not solving this problem speedily.

I am sorry that I have written a very long article. But I was keen on pointing out that the present hardships of the people are mostly due to manipulation of control authorities. If you look at our present economic life, you will find that practically every activity is under Government control, whether business, trade or essential necessities like Food and Cloth. Monopolies are bad even in normal times by private individuals or private corporations. But when these monopolies are State monopolies, and where people can have no redress, they degenerate into licentiousness and such abuses as are intolerable. Public feeling against Congress Governments on this point is very strong and if people are anti-Congress today, the Congress Ministers have to thank themselves for this. The burden of taxation both Central and Provincial is crushing the middle and lower classes of people, leave aside the bigger capitalists, or people having larger incomes. The Bihar Provincial Government has not spared even foodgrains and other necessities of life from their Sales Tax Act. These very Congress Ministers, in days gone by, raised a hue and cry against the levy of Salt Tax; but today they can levy tax on foodgrains with impunity. People really believe that Congressmen are keen on cashing their past services by keeping these monopolies and power for as long a time as is possible.

My idea in writing this long article was also to point out that Government machinery has increased middlemen and divorced the producer from the consumer. In normal times a producer and consumer can come in direct contact and avoid middlemen, but today they cannot do that and hence prices have a tendency to rise rather than diminish according to laws of supply and demand.

I have been a Congressman all these years but today if I am asked to vote for the Congress, I would feel like being between the devil and the deep sea as I may not give my vote to Socialists or Communists also, because I do not believe in these 'isms'. As you have pointed out in your issue of June 5th, "none of them believes in simple, hard, laborious life; though one is called a Capitalist and the other a Communist, both



are rival claimants for the same *gadi* of ease and comfort." It is no wonder if people who are ignorant turn Socialists or Communists because ignorant people can easily be led away by promises.

(Concluded)

### "MOULDER OF THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD"

[The following is another selection from *Mahatma Gandhi* (1922) referred to in a previous article. — K. G. M.]

'What do you think of Mahatma Gandhi?'

'What do I think of Mahatma Gandhi?' said the poet-philosopher, emphatically; 'why I think very highly of Gandhi. He is a great man — a great soul.'

'He today wields tremendous power over the teeming millions of India. What is really the secret of his success?'

'The secret of Gandhi's success,' said the Hindu Nobel-prizeman enthusiastically, 'lies in his dynamic spiritual strength and incessant self-sacrifice. Many public men make sacrifices for selfish reasons. It is a sort of investment that yields handsome dividends. Gandhi is altogether different. He is unique in his nobility. His very life is another name for sacrifice. He is sacrifice itself.'

'He covets no power, no position, no wealth, no name and no fame. Offer him the throne of all India, he will refuse to sit on it, but will sell the jewels and distribute the money among the needy.'

'Give him all the money America possesses, and he will certainly refuse to accept it, unless to be given away for a worthy cause for the uplift of humanity.'

'His soul is perpetually anxious to give and he expects absolutely nothing in return — not even thanks. This is no exaggeration, for I know him well.'

'He came to our school at Bolpur and lived with us for some time. His power of sacrifice becomes all the more irresistible, because it is wedded with his paramount fearlessness.'

'Emperors and Maharajas, guns and bayonets, imprisonments and tortures, insults and injuries, even death itself, can never daunt the spirit of Gandhi.'

'His is a liberated soul. If anyone strangles me, I shall be crying for help; but if Gandhi were strangled, I am sure he would not cry. He may laugh at his strangler; and if he has to die, he will die smiling.'

'His simplicity of life is childlike; his adherence to truth is unflinching; his love for mankind is positive and aggressive. He has what is known as the Christ spirit. The longer I know him, the better I like him. It is needless for me to say that this great man is destined to play a prominent part in moulding the future of the world.'

'Such a great man deserves to be better known in the world. Why don't you make him known, you are a world figure,' I said.

'How can I make him known? I am nothing compared to his illumined soul. And no truly great man has to be made great. They are great in their own glory, and when the world is ready, they become famous by dint of their own greatness. When the time comes Gandhi will be known, for the world needs him and his message of love, liberty and brotherhood.'

'The soul of the East has found a worthy symbol in Gandhi; for he is most eloquently proving that man is essentially a spiritual being, that he flourishes the best in the realm of the moral and the spiritual, and most positively perishes both body and soul in the atmosphere of hatred and gunpowder smoke.'

'A few months ago he said that India would win Swaraj (national government) within a year. It may not come to pass within the time indicated but he is sincere and he believes in it. It goes without saying that he will spare no pains, no privations and sacrifice to attain the end in view.'

'His South African fight, the moral fight of passive resistance extending over eight years, was crowned with success. Truth may be crushed by brute forces for a while, but it is sure to triumph in the long run.'

'What do you really think of the non-cooperation movement in India?'

'It is a great movement indeed. It is a conflict of ideas with physical violence. I have more faith in force of ideas than in physical force. It is fortunate that this movement is headed by a man like Gandhi whose saintly life has made him adored all over India. As long as he is at the helm I am not afraid of the ship, or doubtful of its safe arrival at the port of destination.'

(Interview with Dr. Tagore by an American correspondent)

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