

HARIJAN

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

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TWO ANNAS

VINOBA LEAVES PURNEA

(By "Dadu")

At the Sarvodaya Ashram

On 15th November we were at Ranipatra; we encamped at the Sarvodaya Ashram, founded two years ago by Shri Baidyanath Prasad Chaudhury. It was the annual day of the Ashram. Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, the silent servant of Bengal, had been specially invited to preside over the occasion. In his presidential address, Prafulla Babu remarked, "Shri Baidyanath Bhat has confined his work to 16 villages. I would like each resident of this area to enjoy the same food as Baidyanath Bhat does. This is his test. Should he do so much in five years, he gets a pass." Prafulla Babu also declared that from February next, he too would leave the city of Calcutta and settle down in a village to work on Sarvodaya lines among brother-farmers. He closed with the words, "May God vouchsafe us such wisdom as we may go near Him".

Then followed Vinoba's speech in which he remarked, "Shri Prafulla Babu has made public his resolve. Now he would sit in a village and try to found Sarvodaya Samaj. You must know that he was once the Chief Minister of Bengal. Those of you who read the papers might be knowing that recently the Prime Minister of Israel has resigned his post. He works on land in a village and spends his time in the service of the people. Such persons who go to the countryside to raise the moral life there as also their own do not get a smaller opportunity of public service than a Prime Minister. And many of us who talk of service really exploit. We are, therefore, required to raise up our own moral standard. So doing, we render as great a service as any Prime Minister." He expressed the hope that such Ashrams would put before the people the sample of *Gramraja* and *Ramaraja*.

Way to Sarvodaya

He continued, "Prafulla Babu, fresh from Europe and America, told you that people are better fed and clothed there than in India. Well, all those things are possible here. But plenty of food alone will not serve our purpose. There was enough food in Ravan's Lanka but it could not be called Ayodhya. Give first and then take. Feed first and then eat. Then only there would be Sarvodaya. What does the mother do? She cares earlier for the children than for her own self. She does not argue that she must have the first share for the children depend on her. We have to incorporate this thing in the whole society. An increase in mere food and clothing can produce a Lanka but not a Heaven. For that one must have God together with Lakshmi or wealth."

Wealth and Compassion

Vinoba concluded, "There is enough wealth in Europe today. And much more in America. But love or compassion is not there. Compassion-less wealth will generate devilish strength. Wealth together with compassion will yield *aman* or joy. Even if you are poor, share it with others. Suppose there is less food, enough only for four in a house consisting of six members. Then your feeding those four will be called 'rationalization'. Those other two would be bluntly told: 'We would give

you only when we have more.' But this is not our way. If we are six, all the six will eat though each may get less. Hence the primary thing is *daya* (compassion), while Lakshmi is secondary. Some people maintain that a talk of distribution in face of shortage is meaningless and that the problem is of production alone. I regard it as a wrong idea. Both production and distribution should go hand in hand. In case they do not, we must first concentrate on equal distribution. This is done in every home. We have to do in the village what we do in the home. And this is Sarvodaya."

Unemployment

We were at Vinodpur on the 16th. In his post-prayer speech, Vinoba lamented that manual work was looked down upon in India. "There was," said he, "a popular proverb here उत्तम खेती, मध्यम बज, निम्न चाकरी, बीख निदान, (agriculture is the best profession, commerce is lower, service is the lowest, while beggary is the worst). But today service (*chakari*) is regarded as the best. They do want to educate their children today, not in order that they may read the Ramayana, the Quran or the Gita, but in order that they may be spared from manual labour and do clerical jobs. But where are the jobs? So they wander from place to place and resemble the fabled dog of the washerman. Our youths neither get a job nor can they work at home. Consequently they cry aloud and abuse the Government. The Government is thereby frightened to realize that unemployment must be removed. The Government feels that there is no unemployment in the countryside, there being work enough in the fields, and that the unemployment is merely an urban disease. But the truth is otherwise. There is tremendous unemployment or under-employment in the villages. They, however, are not able to make a noise. The Government, therefore, worries about the city noise-makers. And to remove this unemployment it starts more schools (or new factories of unemployment?). Would unemployment decrease at all that way? He pointed out that unless three things were accomplished conditions could not improve or change. They are (i) land redistribution, (ii) revival of village industries and (iii) change in the system of education.

Next day we encamped at Kathar, the famous railway junction on the North East Railway. Sixty-six labourers there have signed the Sempattidan pledge and are utilizing their Sempattidan in purchase of Khadi.

Democracy and Sarvodaya

In his post-prayer address, Vinoba placed the essence of the Sarvodaya thought before the vast assemblage. "These days," said he, "we have taken to democracy wherein is reflected the rule of the majority. But this also seems to be insufficient now. Democracy must represent the will of one and all. Thus a new idea, called Sarvodaya, is there before the people. Sarvodaya goes far ahead the current notion of general democracy. It envisages a new social order in which minimum power resides at the centre and the village, at the lowest rung of the ladder, looks after its affairs itself. There would be no exploitation and everyone would feel it to be his or her own Government. These days absence of war is

regarded as peace. But peace really connotes absence of fear. There would be peace only when no part of the world is afraid of or exploited by any other part. Sarvodaya, therefore stresses upon the necessity of changing the present socio-economic structure. Not that there was no love or kindness in the people so far. These qualities have always been there. But the society is not built on them. It is built on hoarding and rivalry wherein each is anxious for himself or herself alone. The trader earns money by robbing. Occasionally he does offer some charity to the poor. But he is not prepared to wipe out poverty itself. The horse-owner may be willing to treat his horse affectionately, but the two would ever remain in different categories. Likewise, the rich are not prepared to live as one with the poor. Sarvodaya seeks to eliminate this difference altogether. It says that all have equal right. This is the foundation."

English Education

Kumaripur was the next halt. At 9 a.m. Vinoba met the Jivandan workers of Purnea district. They remained with us for three days from Kathar onwards. During his evening discourse, Vinoba lamented the fifteen years' lease of life given to the English language. "But this thing," he remarked, "cannot last long. The people will shortly recoil. They will find that those whom they took to be learned were devoid of any sense. The public will throw them off. Strange are those educated folk! In place of looking at the stars in the sky at night, they gaze at pictures on the screen and yet call them 'stars'! Again they decorate their houses with paper-flowers! Now what can these people who delight in paper-flowers do in the villages? What is then the use of their education? The irresistible conclusion is: utterly futile. I would, therefore, ask you not to be led away by these so-called learned people. Those of you who have faith in the Bhoodan Yajna mission should devote yourselves to it with single-minded sincerity and you will be able to change the face of the country."

19th November was our last day in the Purnea district. We stayed at Manihari. On reaching the place, Vinoba was given a warm welcome. In reception they sang Kabir's famous song:

"रहना नहीं, देस बिराना है।"

(I am not to stay here, this is not my home).

Vinoba was in good humour. He began, "True that I am not to stay here. For I have to leave this village tomorrow morning. But I do not feel that this is not my home. I feel that this is my home. I also know that I am not to stay long. This is but a *yatra* (journey). In between we encamp at certain places. Sometimes for 50 years, at others 60, or for 70 years or so. These days, however, I encamp for a day only. I do not feel attachment to any place. Nor do I feel any disgust for it. I meet every day new faces, new scenes, new experiences, new *darshan*. Whence there is neither any *asakti* (attachment) nor *virakti* (detachment). Then what is in between? That is *bhakti* (devotion). Those who feel this world as their own get attached to it. Those who are disgusted at it become detached from it. But such is my life these days that there is no scope either for attachment or detachment. I can only do *bhakti*."

Land Belongs to All

He went on to add, "This *bhajan* of Kabir teaches us that whatever is there in this world belongs to all. This house is not mine. It belongs to all. This land is not mine. It belongs to all. So leave this 'I—mine' and take to 'we—ours'." He asked them not to be led away by the fear of law. They need not transfer their lands in the name of their relatives. That would break up the joint-family system, the pride of Bihar. He called upon them to donate one-sixth of the family-land and also one Jivandan worker from every family. He closed with the significant remarks, "Two years ago, when representatives of zamindars saw me I assured them that if they made common cause with this movement, legal enactments

could be held up. Even today I am prepared to say that if you donate generously and part with your one-sixth of the poor, there would be no need of law. Lawmakers have no pleasure to make such laws. How long can they afford to pay compensation? Even then, it won't do. It countenances litigation. Troubles crop up from village to village. There is yet chance now. Should you offer 32 lakhs of acres of good cultivable land by the next Sarvodaya Sannam, March 1955, it would greatly affect the Government. The law can be stopped if every landholder donates one-sixth of his land. And Bihar's lead in this direction would enlighten the whole country, nay, the whole world."

Need of Vanaprastha Ashram

In the noon there was a meeting of the workers of the district. They had collected about 100 acres of land after their last meeting at Forbesganj (besides the daily collections at Vinoba's camping places). The post-prayer address was very touching. Vinoba observed, "At a certain period in life, both husband and wife must give up the responsibility of the house, entrust the same to the grown up children, live like brother and sister, and take to a life of public service. If they do not do it, the evolution of the soul is blocked up. This religious duty now rarely found, was taught by our ancestors. They called it *Vanaprastha*. The *shastras* enjoin upon all who attain the grand-fatherly status to abandon their homes and devote themselves to educating the society. There is plenty of work of education in our country today. But good and experienced teachers are not available. In case we had *Vanaprasthi* workers—who have had profound experiences in the domain of trade or industry, administration or public affairs, political parties or social organizations, who have glorious attainments to their credit, they would impart such a training to their children and youths as none else can. If it so happened tomorrow that capable and experienced hands relieved Pandit Nehru of his responsibilities, and he took to teaching children, then a first-hand knowledge of him—his bravery and achievements will turn heroes out of them. Suppose, for instance, Dr. Radhakrishnan were to become a free man tomorrow and take to public service—he is doing public service even today, but if he does it as an absolutely free man with no burdens—it would enthuse new life in the villages. A new *chaitanya* (glow) will shine out. Had Napoleon conducted a school during his last days what great warriors he would have produced! Society progresses onward when people after relinquishing their burden take to universal (*vyapak*) service.

"I have given instances of those who are busy in public work. If they were relieved of office responsibilities, they can do greater things. Be that as it may, if one elder from every household were to charge the children with the house work and come out for social service, we would get crores of public servants for work in our five lakhs of villages. All their intelligence and strength would be put to fair trial.

"After discharging his duties of various positions and posts, one should renounce them all at a certain stage and go to meet man as man and identify himself with others. Then will disappear the gulf which we find today between the leaders and the people as also the obstacles blocking our progress. It is an important thing deserving serious attention. I will give you the instance of one greater than any in modern India. I refer to Manu Maharaj, Tulasidas in his Ramayana says that Manu ably ruled his kingdom and conducted things very well. But he felt that a continued stay on the throne would retard his growth. So he gave up all and Tulasidas reminds us that he gave up against the will of everybody and all kith and kin. He sought spiritual wisdom and got it. Consequently, we had the incarnation of Ramachandra. This happens only when man cuts off all chains and merges himself into the Great Being. This largeness of heart, this party-lessness would have to be cultivated and developed by us. Our best men would have to cut off the shell of limited responsibilities. Only then will our country rise up."

Vinoba continued, "I am not talking of *sannyasa*. That is much higher thing and far more advanced. I only plead for limitless activity in place of the limited one."

He concluded, "Like the everflowing Ganga, we should ceaselessly strive to serve the society. That Ganga is there in every heart. We have only to clear off the external coverings. Where is "society" in our India? Society has certain traits. Merely living together does not make a society, even as those on the window of a booking office do not. They only clamour for their ticket, irrespective of all others. We would have a society only when there is one heart. A thousand bodies and one heart would make a village. A thousand bodies and a thousand hearts characterize a jungle, not human habitation. Crores of bodies and one heart would make the country. So let us wash off our malice and ill-will and be one at heart. Bhoodan Yajna is an endeavour in that direction."

Leaving Purnea

Shri Baldyanath Babu then rose up and in pathetic words apologized for the inconvenience caused to Vinoba and his party. He assured that the seed sown by Vinoba in Purnea district would grow into a mighty tree leading to the establishment of a new order.

On Saturday morning we left Manihar, went across a branch of the Kosi on foot and then reached the shore of the holy Ganga. Vinoba was crossing it for the eighth time in Bihar. The sun was about to rise. It was a majestic scene. A boat took us to the other shore in the Bhagalpur district. We walked down to Bakarpur. Vinoba was for one day again in this district after lapse of a year and two days.

Addressing the assemblage gathered to receive him, he laid bare his heart, "After the lapse of one year I come here again, and that too for one day only. Tomorrow I enter the district of Santhal Parganas where I spend a month. Then, I go around the Manbhum district for a few days. And then leave Bihar on the 1st January next. I cannot say when it will be possible for me to come to Bihar again. The whole of the country is to be covered. Should He so will, my walking tour shall continue. As long as He keeps strength in me this is to go on."

Next day we enter the Santhal Parganas.

17-12-54

"Ambar Charkha"

The resolution passed by the Sarva Seva Sangh meeting held at Sevagram on 26-27 November 1954, is given below:

"An experiment on a wheel has been going on for the last five years to improve and make it more speedy on the lines suggested by Shri Ekambarnath under the auspices formerly of All-India Spinners Association and now under the auspices of Sarva Seva Sangh. It has now reached a stage when it can be utilized from production point of view and for achieving self-sufficiency in life. Therefore the experiment should be carried on further and should be tested in actual fields. It should be experimented upon in some villages, particularly in villages donated in Bhoodan from the viewpoint of self-sufficiency on personal and village basis. Meanwhile the experiment should continue with a view to make the wheel more simple and cheap. This should be done through the Sarva Seva Sangh."

From the text of the resolution it is clear that the wheel is accepted on an experimental basis only. It is now necessary to make experiments on the wheel in more extensive field than experiment rooms. Such experiments therefore will be carried on under the auspices and supervision of the Sarva Seva Sangh in families, institutions and villages for making them self-sufficient in cloth needs.

A. V. Sahasrabudhe,
Secretary,

All-India Sarva Seva Sangh

LIFE AND LABOUR IN VILLAGES

(By Sangu Ganesan)

This is harvest season in the village. For an acre of paddy ordinarily four men and six women are employed in reaping and men are paid three half measures and women two half measures as wages, irrespective of the time taken. This is called *agreement arappu*. If labour is given *ragi* gruel at noon, they are to be at work till late in the evening, which will work out to about one and a half acres per day. But what happens is this:

Nearly four times the number get into the fields for mowing in which case the gruel is not supplied and the standard wage of three half measures for four men and two for six women per acre is divided among all the labour. Those who feel they will not get even quarter of a measure as wages stay away. Such is the competition solidarity and fellow-feeling among labour. What is true of this village is true of almost all villages round about Pichhivakkam. The lesson one can learn is that small people willingly share among themselves even any small quantity of wages in kind forgoing the gruel. That is the bright side of life.

It is these half-starved people that are expected to contribute labour free for work under the Five Year Plan. Circumstanced as they are, is it wrong if these people ask for wages for any work they might do? Is it not a sin to ask such people for free labour? Do they not work hard and produce? Do they get their due? What guarantee is there to save them from being exploited? What has the Five Year Plan to offer to these people in return for any free labour they might give to the State?

In Japan the employed go back to rural parts. In India it is the reverse. In 1951 the village had a population of over 2,000, today it is only 1,114. Over 800 had left the village for the towns from this village alone. Can the cities solve the problem of these migrants?

Now to the other side. The village is unorganized, has no resistance to famine and has not developed a mouthpiece to speak and safeguard its rights. A villager is willing to work, yet he is inherently unco-operative. The villages are the abode of ignorance, illiteracy, factions etc. which is the result of age-long neglect. The Government propaganda has not reached him at all.

I would like to end this letter with what Gandhiji wrote thirty years ago:

"The village work frightens us. We who are town-bred find it trying to take to village life. Our bodies in many cases do not respond to the hard life. But it is a difficulty which we have to face boldly even heroically, if our desire is to establish Swaraj for the people, not substitute one class rule by another which may be even worse."

Let the town-bred ponder over these lines.

HARIJAN

Jan. 1

1955

THE THIRD SECTOR OF OUR ECONOMY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

The Indian Parliament has decided that the ultimate pattern of our society will be socialist. What it will mean in the actual life of the common man or the villager in India is not described. Socialism in the West has been an urban or urbanizing doctrine. One does not know what sort is going to be brought to us.

Again Socialism has been a difficult term to define. It has been so in Europe, its birth-place. There its meaning has taken the shape and colour of the ideology of those that undertook to bring it in. It assumed various names like Marxism, Fabianism, Leninism, Stalinism, Nationalist Socialism etc. in course of its development. I hope we will not be running in for such variegated isms or interpretations when we decide to use the word Socialism as our objective. It would have been better if a simpler word from our own language had been adopted; that would have been easily understood by the common man.

The term Socialism polarizes our thought into two extremes — 'private' and 'public' sectors. On one side the Government declares itself as the "ultimate custodian, in a democratic set-up, of the public interest", and assumes the role of a public sector. Hence it aims to nationalize "certain basic industries vital to the economic life of the country and to a certain extent its security". The remaining is conventionally held to constitute the "private" sector.

The food and cloth industries which supply us our basic needs, according to the definitions obtaining at present, belong to the private sector. Thus, for example, the cloth-mill or the rice-mill or the oil-mill as also the poor man's handloom and the *Charkha* or the *Ghani* or the *Dhenki* are of the 'private' sector and hence equal in the eyes of the Government, even though the former are thriving at the cost and utter ruination of the latter. Which means that a large mass of our people is continuously being deprived of their life-sustaining labour.

How is this clash of capital and labour or of man and machine in the private sector to be mitigated? Does this not become a public question? Will not evasion of this big question by Government amount to tacitly siding with big private business as against the poor man's simple life and labour?

The Prime Minister in the course of the debate in the Parliament averred that the biggest private sector in the country was the private sector of the peasant and his small land-holdings.

What does this mean in a democratic set-up? Does it not mean that this biggest sector is the chief and truly national sector for the Government to attend to? Surely it is not a public sector in the sense that it may be state-owned or nationalized. Unlike this, the mills can be state-owned, and this can easily be done if only the Government wills to do it. As far as we know, it does not wish it. In which case, the question arises, what attitude should Government adopt regarding the mill industry and this great and decentralized small-scale industrial sector of our life?

The problem requires a distinct approach and special attention. Just as there are heavy industries which are considered fit to be included in the public sector, here is another distinct class of industries which must be considered as basic and of vital need for the life of the community. These chiefly pertain to food and cloth needs of the community. They are what we generally describe as our home- and village- industries. Science as it is understood today has not cared to touch and help them and they are allowed to be displaced, without any idea of responsibility of compensation, by the power-mills.

Really speaking, these industries form a third sector of our economy, the first two being the Government-owned public sector and the big-business-owned capitalistic private sector. The massive small-scale rural industries sector is a third one, entirely of a different order from the first two. The planning that forgets to take note of this most vital and important sector — the largest and the most consequential sector as affecting the life and employment of the vast majority of our people, — will invite its own doom, unless it is going to be imposed on the people by the might of an armed Government in alliance with capitalism.

Therefore, the Socialism that is sought to be the future pattern of our society will have to be a new thing suited to our peculiar needs. It should consider the following three spheres:

(i) Socialization of the basic needs industries of the community, i.e. decentralizing our food and cloth industries by making them home industries of our village population.

(ii) Nationalization, which is really speaking bureaucratization of heavy industries like iron and steel etc. and key services of the community like railway, transport, post, banking, mining etc. And,

(iii) Allowing certain private interests to function, under well-defined conditions and control in public interest, along with the public sector.

The first sphere is being invaded and engulfed by the third today. The first is made up of those who are the poorest, the weakest, and the most neglected, though the largest. The third sphere fears the second, and wishes

to thrive on the neglect of the first by the Government. Unless our new plan takes note of this big factor in our economic conditions, it is difficult to imagine how we can remove unemployment or raise the standard of our village life and have a really socialist society.

The villager needs to be an economically independent unit of our society. It will not do to reduce him to the status of a mere wage-earner in the scheme of western pattern of industrialism that seems to govern the ideology of the vocal sections of our intelligentsia. Therefore, the question of this chief sector of our economy, which is the peculiarity of our special conditions, deserves to be noted as the topmost question in our economic and social planning. We cannot neglect it without jeopardizing the growth of democracy and freedom in India.

25-12-'54

PASTEURIZED MILK

To

The Editor of *Harijan*

It is reported in Bombay newspapers today that the Government of Bombay will shortly bring a Bill in our Legislative Council for compulsory pasteurization of milk in Bombay. But the *London Health Review* editorially writes: "He who pasteurizes good milk is a fool and he who pasteurizes bad milk is a rogue." People in all parts of India should be told that Dr. M. Stopes who is a duly qualified registered British medical practitioner of England says in *London Daily Mirror* newspaper:

"A chain of circumstances has resulted in a recent push for pasteurization which is an acute menace not only to your boy but to everyone in the country. Big commercial interests are behind pasteurization. Only individual effort stands up against it; so naturally the public is being made ready to accept what I quite seriously describe as a pernicious poison. It may not injure you rapidly, but it will do so in due course.

"That pasteurized milk does not even go honestly bad is one of its dangers. When fresh milk goes bad you know at once that it is bad by its taste and smell. But pasteurized milk does not go honestly bad like that, and take it from me that anything which does not go honestly bad is never honestly good at any time. Commercial interests are of course pushing for pasteurization for, to them, it means the legalized right to sell stale milk. After pasteurization it is supposed to be 'safe'. It is not. I quite sincerely describe it as a pernicious poison. Your son needs really safe milk, healthy milk that is fresh, uncontaminated milk. You, his parents are the only people who can insist on his getting it by insisting that the nation's milk supply should be from really healthy, happily contented cows. You cannot get the right kind of milk from animals tortured as they are under stall-fed conditions at present. This will raise a fierce outcry, I expect. But I mean what I say."

After quoting from the Medical Officer of Dr. Barnardo's Homes and referring to the Montreal outbreak of typhoid due to pasteurized milk, Dr. Stopes continues:

"Officially, the medical profession has joined in the shout of the commercial crowd for pasteurized milk. But do not be persuaded into thinking that the medical profession as a whole approves of it. It does not, and some of the more important and experienced medical men of the day show that pasteurization is prejudicial. One of the leading tuberculosis specialists whom I have fought on other grounds is on the right side in this matter, I am glad to see. He asks a pertinent question: 'Why should there be no alternative between contaminated milk and the pasteurized product of the combines?'....."

There is a considerable volume of evidence against pasteurization of milk. Tuberculosis germs have repeatedly been found in pasteurized milk. Other bacilli alleged to be dangerous have been found in milk pasteurized in the most up-to-date plant.

Dr. Sir Arnold Wilson has pointed out in *London Times* newspaper that Toronto city, where almost all the milk is pasteurized, has a much higher infantile death-rate than Vancouver where almost all the milk drunk is raw. Pasteurized milk is dangerous to health. Robbed of valuable constituents pasteurized milk may breed incurable diseases.

In view of what is stated above regarding the dangers of pasteurized milk, it is to be hoped for good health of the people of Bombay that the Government of Bombay will abandon their plan for compulsory pasteurization of milk. Other Provinces of India will also benefit from information given above against pasteurization of milk. Raw milk is healthy and good to drink.

54, Wodehouse Road,
Colaba, Bombay

Sorabji R. Mistri

[I also draw the attention of the reader to the following articles that appeared in this journal before: 1. 'Pasteurizing vs. Boiling of Milk' By Om Prakash, 8-5-'54. 2. 'Limitations of Pasteurized Milk', By V. G. D., 10-7-'54 and 3. 'Pasteurization and Centralized Milk Trade', By S. C. Ray and K. K. Iya, 21-8-'54.

26-12-'54

M. P. J

A Note of Encouragement

To the Editor,

Harijan

I want to write you a note of encouragement.

I have been reading *Harijan* for two years and more. It is the most heartening publication I know. It constantly renews one's faith in his fellow men, and consistently builds on the spiritual forces in man and nature.

Increasingly here people are looking to India to pronounce the moral judgment on the perplexities of mankind in these days, and I like to think of *Harijan* as the genuine voice of India.

My best wishes to you and God bless you and your work.

23-10-'54,
Wayne, Pennsylvania

Sincerely yours,
JOHN A. LESTER

HAND-POUNDING INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT

(By *Economicus*)

(Continued from the last issue)

The Planning Commission recognized the economic and social significance of the hand-pounding industry and for its development recommended the stoppage of further expansion of capacity of the large-scale industry, and, in the interests of better nutrition and larger employment, suggested the gradual replacement of the huller type of mills by hand-pounding.

Review of Policy

Under the Defence of India Rules and later under the Essential Supplies (Temporary Powers) Act 1946 the Central Government have been issuing from time to time, directions to State Governments regarding the extent of polishing of rice and the need to license the establishment of rice mills. In 1940 and again in 1948, Central Government issued specific orders banning polishing of rice. On the basis of their investigation into the consequences of polishing of rice in 1949 the Centre revised their earlier orders in 1950 and recommended relaxation of the ban to permit polishing of rice upto 4 per cent. The complete decontrol of rice in July 1954 nullified all other previous orders and made unrestricted polishing by mills possible. The amendment of the Rice (Removal of Control) Order in August 1954 has not, however, clarified the basic issues, particularly as the Ministry of Food and Agriculture considers education rather than legislation as the appropriate method of popularizing the consumption of under-polished rice.

Licensing

Moreover, policies of State Governments regarding the licensing of mills in their respective jurisdiction to check their number and/or to prevent expansion in capacity, or control of the extent of polishing of rice and developing the hand-pounding industry, have been neither uniform nor always adequate. While some States introduced a licensing system for rice mills and regulated polishing of rice by mills, some others had no restrictions at all and some other permitted the establishment of a large number of small mills on the ground that they provided immediate relief to refugee population.

As a result of these regional differences in approach and policy, the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Board, in their resolution of May 29, 1953 suggested that the Central Government should assume adequate powers through suitable legislation to ensure uniformity in policy in all States regarding (1) Complete ban on huller type of mills and (2) prevention of the establishment of new sheller type mills and also of the expansion of their respective existing capacity. They further decided to request the State Governments (1) to establish co-operative of hand-pounders to enable them to benefit from the development programmes of the Board and (2) to have their processed paddy processed through these co-operatives.

The recent amendment of the Constitution to vest permanently in the Centre powers to control essential commodities such as food-stuffs, raw cotton and raw jute, provides the appropriate legislative background to implement the recommendations of the Planning Commission and the Board.

The Perspective

In an under-developed country wishful of economic development through socially significant methods, education and legislation have their respective roles to play. While education is designed to develop the right perspective over a period of time, legislation is to provide immediately appropriate conditions for the effective operation of development measures. The view of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture that education is necessary to encourage consumption of under-polished rice serves to emphasize that legislation alone will not achieve the desired end. To revive and develop hand-pounding of rice at a rate commensurate with social needs, legislative prohibi-

tion of machine-milling, consistent with the capacity of hand-pounding industry to replace it, on the one hand, and education and propaganda to familiarize the population with the true facts about the two methods of processing, on the other, are both necessary. Above all, where common good is the main objective, of policy, legislative prohibition of activities which involve waste of scarce national resources and also their destruction, should appear a matter of course rather than of argument.

(From *Khadi-Gramodyog*, November, 1954)

KHADDAR AND HANDLOOMS

(By *R. Santanam*)

Presently, the country is engrossed in finding a solution for the big economic problem of textile industry whose fortunes concern the living of millions in the land. The history of the development of cotton textile industry in England may throw some light on our problem.

After the advent of Alexander the Great, trade routes to the West were opened, by sea and land. Cotton piece goods from India steadily coursed their way as far off as England. Perhaps, no industry enjoyed such a long period of prosperity as Indian handloom weaving did for over twenty centuries.

In 1700 England prohibited the import of Indian cottons to protect the established woolen and silk weaving industries at home. The protected interests were cottage industries. But Indian skill was of a far superior type. The delicate muslin and the white cottons could not be produced in England. These were exempted from prohibition, but were denied a wide market by the imposition of high tariff rates. However, the enchanting beauty of the muslin prevailed. The tenacity of the English made up for lack of manual skill. Technical progress which was the keynote of the Industrial Revolution was first to be noticed in the sphere of cotton among textile fibres. The introduction of the mule by Samuel Crompton in 1776 made the production of muslin in England possible. Thus was the way paved for the growth of textile mills. Cotton spinning and weaving in cottages became as things of the past. If trade in cotton goods from India had been unhampered it is unlikely that the English industry would have developed so fully. Almost unlimited supplies of raw cotton came from the Southern States of the U.S.A. Subsequently, India and Egypt became important sources of raw material. The Continent and the expanding Empire provided ample market. By the end of the eighteenth century itself, the industry was well established. It was localized in the country of Lancashire which enjoyed all the natural advantages. By the beginning of the nineteenth century India also began to mechanize production of cotton goods, although her prosperity was greatly based on handloom weaving in which were concerned millions of craftsmen.

Mills in India grew in number and mechanical efficiency. In 1950 there were 517 reporting factories with a fixed capital of Rs 6,050 lakhs in the Indian Union. The growth of Lancashire and the political power of England almost ruined the handloom weaver in India. But introduction of mechanization at home was like adding insult to injury. Gradually Indian mills replaced Lancashire. Handlooms were starved of yarn while the mills tended to monopolize supplies. In undivided India (including Burma) the yield of cotton averaged 1,563,000 bales during the quinquennium ending 1882-83. The yield more than doubled, being an average of 3,734,000 bales, during the quinquennium ending 1906-07. During the same period the average annual exports of raw cotton increased from 1,302,000 bales to 1,928,000 bales; the annual consumption of cotton by Indian mills rose from 362,000 bales to 1,873,000 bales. Therefore, cotton grown in the country was either exported or used by mills. The two World Wars developed and stabilized the industry beyond doubt. In 1946-47 mills in the Indian Union were consuming 38.6 lakh

bales while production of raw cotton was less at 26.5 lakh bales. Government stepped in to save the handlooms from being completely starved out. Nor is that the textile industry provides large employment in the mills. There is now a tendency to 'rationalize' and by rationalization they seem to mean less labour and more mechanical efficiency.

In 1951, employment in factories (in all industries) was of the order of 2,513,000. This was not even one per cent (0.7) of the population of the country—361,239,000. In 1953, textile mills in the Union employed 732,000 only. England of the 17th and the 18th centuries might not have so much bothered about employing men as we do for the simple reason that she did not have such a large population relative to opportunities as we have now. As observed earlier England domesticated the industry to suit the absence of manual skill. A responsible body like the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry is of the opinion that, "In a country like India, where there is a heavy pressure of population on land and where population is growing at a rate of something like 1½ per cent per annum, the creation of alternative opportunities for employment is a pressing need. This is required in the first instance to ensure that additions to the working force do not impinge still further upon the limited land resources and secondly to reduce over a period of years the numbers engaged in agriculture." According to their tentative calculations they argue for the necessity of annually absorbing 2½ lakhs of workers directly in the manufacturing industries. 2½ lakhs is just ten per cent of the working population. Therefore, every year the question may arise, what about the rest? In passing a reference may be made to the fact that in the years between 1946 and 1951, employment in factories increased by less than ten lakhs. Compartmental action is unhealthy. Development must be planned for an integrated picture. The Government is to be congratulated on the great measures they are taking to solve unemployment. At the same time, increased mechanization, in established spheres of economic activity tends to increase unemployment. The problem of production in India refuses to be simplified into one of mechanization. While we require engineers, doctors and other technical men to build the nation we cannot deny the handloom weaver his ancient skill. His craft is an active encouragement to village artisans. Mahatma Gandhi symbolized the nation's freedom in the charkha. He went a step further than the handloom and tackled the question basically. His words may inspire us yet.

Bapuji wrote in the *Harijan* of May 5, 1946 in reply to a correspondent, "Imagine if all the spinners understood the inner meaning of the wheel and spun willingly and not under pressure, what an India there would be! The awakening of crores of women spinners would *ipso facto* produce lakhs of Khadi weavers. Imagine too the numbers of men and women workers needed to bring about this awakening! If such a time comes, textile mills even if any were working would have to rely on foreign countries for the sale of their produce. They would not, as they do today, hold imperialistic sway over the villages and cities. There would be Hindu-Muslim unity, all would be truthful, there would be no need to tell anyone to wear Khadi for no cloth other than home-spun would be available. That Swaraj is hidden in this revolutionary change should be self-evident to seeing eyes."

14-11-54

By Vinoba Bhave
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STUDENTS INTERVIEW VINOBA

(By Suresh Ramabhai)

When Vinoba was touring the Kosi area the other day the students of Nepal, studying at the colleges in Bihar came to see him. At the outset they inquired of Vinoba whether Bhoodan Yajna would succeed in wiping out mass poverty, Vinoba replied,

"I agree with you that Bhoodan alone would not be able to do it, but I also want to impress upon you that you cannot do it, even without Bhoodan. Bhoodan is like the base. On its foundation you can erect the whole structure."

"Can economic equality be permanently established by Bhoodan?" was their next question.

"Thereby you are expressing," observed Vinoba, "your opinion. Here too I agree. You cannot have economic equality through Bhoodan alone. Also you cannot have the same without it. The raw materials produced in the villages must be turned into finished goods there. Also they must be consumed there. Only those things should come from outside that cannot be made by the villagers. Every village must have its own arrangement for education, medicine and justice, etc. The scales of pay or wages must be almost the same. Otherwise, economic equality is impossible. There cannot be any economic equality in India as long as village raw materials are taken away outside, or mill-made and foreign goods are dumped in the market or the gulf in wages is as wide as today."

Perhaps they could not grasp the significance of Vinoba's utterance. They therefore, put in, "Do you believe in complete equality?"

Vinoba smiled and said, "What does this question imply? What is complete equality? If I do not believe in it, do you think I believe in inequality or disparity? Well, that is there already. Then why this tour at all? The equality that I want is called 'Samya Yoga'."

The discussion took a serious turn when they posed a new question. "What do you think to be the difference between 'darshan' (philosophy) and 'rajaniti' (politics)?"

"Darshan is," replied Vinoba, "exclusive and clear. On the other hand, *rajaniti* is a mixed thing. It is a compromise of the situation with the principles. There are two types of it; the bad *rajaniti* and the good one. The former simply exploits. Devoid of *darshan*, it is all *a-darshan*. The good *rajaniti* also does not consist of *darshan* alone and is mixed. You can call it applied *darshan*. *Darshan* is pure, clear and transparent. *Rajaniti* is its practical application. *Samya Yoga* urges complete equality. *Darshan* is like the other shore. *Rajaniti* acts as the connecting bridge. It will tell you how to get at that *darshan*. *Rajaniti* joins the present situation to the *darshan* ahead. We have designated the *rajaniti* of Bhoodan Yajna as *lokaniti*."

This elucidation pleased the students very much. One of them, a philosophy student of the Post-Graduate class, then seemed to think aloud; "Is *darshan* manifest or latent? What is the difference between *kalpana* (fancy) and *darshan*?"

"What is clear, visible to us," Vinoba answered, "is *darshan*. What is latent or, obscure is *anuman* (presumption). Seeing smoke we presume existence of fire. *Kalpana* is different from both *anuman* and *darshan*. It is beyond them. This morning, while on our way to this village, we saw the Dhaulagiri mountains. Somebody remarked that it looked like Shankar Bhagavan's seat or *asim*. Now Shankar lives at Kailas. But who knows that it might be a resort of his? *Kalpana* is what does not command full support of logic and *darshan*. But their slight basis coupled with immense faith gives rise to *kalpana* which is sky-faring."

The time for evening prayer was drawing near. Then our friends had their last, a single and straight question. "What can the students do in Bhoodan?"

Vinoba suggested four things: Firstly, they must study Sarvodaya literature with an open mind. Books like Gandhiji's *Autobiography or My Experiments with Truth* and *Mangal Prabhat*,¹ *Tulasidas' Ramayana*, and *Gita Pravachan* must be thoroughly read and digested. He also advised them to go through regularly journals like *Bhoodan Yajna* and *Harijan* weeklies and the *Sarvodaya* monthly. Secondly, they must do some productive physical labour every day. It must become a part of their daily life. Works like spinning, corn-grinding, timber-cutting, utensil-cleaning, soil-turning, etc., could be taken up. Thirdly, they must contact the neighbouring villages, study their conditions and make a survey. And fourthly, they must be courteous and gentle. "You must always be polite in tongue," concluded Vinoba. "No arrogance please. Compared to the villagers, you can call yourselves learned. But they are veterans indeed with an experience of several thousands of years. You have to be very human in your behaviour towards them."

It was 3-25. The prayer commenced at 3-30. They took their leave and rushed to the prayer-ground.

12-12-54

GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO SOUTH AFRICAN EUROPEANS

[This is another noteworthy find from Gandhiji's archives. It is a covering letter, enclosing with it a copy of "the open letter" which is not to be had in the archives. The reader will note that it is dated 19-12-1894. Gandhiji went to Africa in April 1893. He was to return to India by the end of the year after finishing Dada Abdulla's case for which he had gone there. But as Fate would have it, he stayed on and established the Natal Indian Congress in May 1894 to work among the Indian community. He was developing deep contacts among South African Europeans also. The letter reproduced below speaks of an open letter that seems to have been addressed to the conscience of the South Africa European community. It would be interesting to get at its copy if any one who reads this can procure it for us. In the meanwhile, the covering letter is given below, which speaks for itself.

25-12-54

M. P.]

Beach Grove,
Durban, 19-12-1894

Sir,

I venture to send you the enclosed for perusal, and solicit your opinion on the subject matter of the open letter.

Whether you be a clergyman, editor, public man, merchant, or lawyer, the subject cannot but demand your attention. If you are a clergyman, in as much as you represent the teaching of Jesus, it must be your duty to see that you are in no way directly or indirectly countenancing a treatment of your fellow-beings that would not be pleasing to Jesus. If you are an editor of a newspaper, the responsibility is equally great. Whether you are using your influence as a journalist to the evolution or degradation of humanity will depend upon whether you are encouraging division among class and class or striving after union. The same remarks will apply to you as a public man. If you are a merchant or lawyer, you have then, too, a duty to discharge towards your customers and clients from whom you derive a considerable pecuniary advantage. It is for you to treat them as dogs or fellow-beings demanding your sympathy in the cruel persecu-

¹ Price Rs 7-0-0. Postage etc. Re 1-0-0.

² Titled as 'From Yeravda Mandir' in English, Price As. 8. Postage etc. As. 3.

tion that they are put to owing to the prevalent ignorance about the Indians in the Colony. Coming as you do in comparatively close contact with them, you have, no doubt, the opportunity and incentive to study them. Looked at from a sympathetic standpoint, they would perhaps show themselves to you as they have been seen by scores and hundreds of Europeans who had the opportunity to study them, and who used it aught.

Your opinion is solicited with a view to ascertain if there are any Europeans in the Colony who would actively sympathise with and feel for the Indians in the Colony, assuming that their treatment is not all that could be desired.

I am Sir,
Yours faithful Servant,
M. K. Gandhi

"New Horizons" *

Readers of this journal know Wilfred Wellock as the author of *O. L. Papers* which were occasionally reproduced in these columns. He has now collected them in book-form under the above name, with an instructive introduction and an informative addendum (its summary will appear in next issue). The deeply thought-provoking analysis and unavoidable conclusions therefrom given in these *Papers* are a challenge not only to modern economics and industries, but also to social and educational thinkers and peace-lovers of the Western world and all those in the East also who believe in imitating the Western Industrialized Society. This change in the Western world has brought us an economy which Wellock describes as 'devouring', and not 'expanding' as its orthodox description goes. It also ushers in a civilization which makes for war and is described as materialistic or sensuous by some. It is surely not for human happiness, as it breeds hate and rivalry, and a relentless pursuit of selfish and exclusive ends—individual and national, of classes and groups. The world is thereby turned into a warring medley of peoples mad with devouring insatiety or unquenchable thirst for worldly goods. If man is not a mere brute and lives not by bread only, but has in him the urge for new horizons, they must be visualized and tried to be realized. The book is a plea for such an heroic endeavour on our part. Shall we make it?

28-10-54

M. P.

* Published by Housemans' Bookshop, 3, Blackstock Road, London, N.4. Price 2 sh. 6 d.

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