

HARIJAN

(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

"AN APPRECIATION"

[In January 1922, the National Literature Publishing Co. of Bombay had published a small book captioned *Mahatma Gandhi*. It was a collection of tributes to Gandhiji by about a score of eminent personalities of India, England and the U.S.A., and messages of some of the leaders on the eve of their arrests in the course of the Non-co-operation Movement just started. A friend has sent out of these a few selections, which could be appropriately reprinted even this day. The following entitled as above appears in it by way of "Foreword". I have omitted certain passages giving details of the programme and progress of the new movement of Non-co-operation, as not pertinent at present. — K. G. M.]

Gandhi's simplicity, openness, frankness and directness confound the modern politician, parliamentarian and publicist. They suspect him of some deep design. He fears no one and frightens no one. He recognizes no conventions except such as are absolutely necessary not to remove him from society of men and women. He recognizes no masters and no *gurus*. He claims no *chelas* though he has many. He has and pretends to no supernatural powers, though credulous people believe that he is endowed with them. He owns no property, keeps no bank accounts, makes no investments, yet makes no fuss about asking for anything he needs. Such of his countrymen as have drunk deep from the fountains of European history and European politics and who have developed

a deep love for European manners and European culture neither understand nor like him. In their eyes he is a barbarian, a visionary and a dreamer. He has probably something of all these qualities, because he is nearest to the verities of life and can look at things with plain eyes without the glasses of civilization and sophistry.

Some say he is a nihilist; others that he is an anarchist; others again that he is a Tolstoian. He is none of these things. He is a plain Indian patriot who believes in God, religion and the Scriptures. He believes even in caste, not the present-day sub-division and sub-sections of it, but the four original castes of the ancient Aryans. He does not believe in the superiority or domination of one caste over another, but he believes in their different occupations according to their inherited ability. He is so orthodox as to believe that caste is heritable. Far from being an anarchist, he believes in discipline, organization and authority. His cult is not one of negation as some say but of positive discipline made up of self-denial and self-assertion. He does not believe in the inherent superiority of the white race or in its God-given mission of ruling other people by making tools of them. He does not hate the European civilization, but he abhors the industrial system upon which civilization of Europe rests, and the double-mindedness which characterizes European politicians. The doctrine of non-co-operation which he preaches and practises is not a negation. It is the withdrawal of that help which the Indian people have voluntarily been giving the English which has made it possible for them to rule India and exploit her for their own ends.

.....Gandhi and his associates have been working on this programme for only twelve months and the success they have achieved is marvellous.....It may be safely said that the masses and the middle classes are with and the wealthy against him. There are a sufficiently good number of wealthy men also with him as was proved by the phenomenal success of the Tilak Swaraj Fund for which ten million rupees were collected in less than three months. In these three months, he perfected the Congress organization which now has the registered membership of about ten millions. He called upon the country to introduce two million new spinning wheels in the same period and the response was more than adequate.....

LAJPATRAI

ECONOMY SELF - SOUGHT

In order to curtail the cost of administration either for reducing the burden on the taxpayer or combating inflation, the Government has to resort to executive orders commonly unpalatable to the services. But a spontaneous effort on the part of the services for implementing thrift at every stage can create healthy conditions for strengthening independence under democratic rule.

Dr. Rajendraprasad being interested in the propagation of the village industry of Palm *gur* directed, when he was Minister for Agriculture, setting up a Palm-*gur* Development Section in 1947. The regular working was started from January 1948.

The Palm-*gur* Section is functioning on a voluntary economy basis. Besides the Adviser, four more officers were appointed, viz. a Deputy Adviser, two Assistant Advisers and a Principal for the Central Palm-*gur* Training School. All the officers decided to accept a very moderate scale of remuneration. The Adviser himself does not draw any salary. According to the Government rules these officers are entitled to Class I rail journey; still they voluntarily insisted on lower class travel for saving public expenditure.

The table given below will show that a saving of Rs. 87,447 has been made during the one and half years from January 1948 to June 1949 by resorting to voluntary thrift, which works to 82 per cent reduction.

Period : January 1948 to June 1949

Particulars	Amount due	Amount drawn	Saving	Percentage
Salary	Rs. 76,450	Rs. 11,985	Rs. 64,465	84
T. A.	Rs. 30,589	Rs. 7,607	Rs. 22,982	75
Total	Rs. 1,07,039	Rs. 19,592	Rs. 87,447	82

This means that the five Gazetted officers together voluntarily reduced their salaries and T. A. to the extent of 84 to 75 per cent respectively. The scales of pay and the salary due, drawn and saved by each are shown in the table below :

Period : January 1948 to June 1949

Post	Scale	Salary due	Salary drawn	Saving to Govt.
Adviser	1,600-100-1,800	Rs. 29,450	Rs. Nil	Rs. 29,450
Dy. Adviser	1,000-50-1,400 plus spl. pay Rs. 150 p.m.	Rs. 18,600	Rs. 3,870	Rs. 14,730
Asst. Adviser (Bombay)	600-50-1,000-1,150	Rs. 9,800	Rs. 3,550	Rs. 6,250
Asst. Adviser (Delhi)	do.	Rs. 5,400	Rs. 2,040	Rs. 3,360
Principal	1,200-50-1,400	Rs. 13,200	Rs. 2,525	Rs. 10,675
Total		Rs. 76,450	Rs. 11,985	Rs. 64,465

G.

[Note : The Government of India must be congratulated for possessing and allowing at least one department to run with such commendable thrift.

Wardha, 10-9-'49

— K. G. M.]

DESABHAKTA KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA

III

(1930 - 1949)

He led the Andhra Desh in the Salt Satyagraha in 1930 and in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932. In 1933 Mahatmaji had his Harijan tour in Andhra and Venkatappayyaji helped in the collections. Besides help to Saradaniketan, he gave Rs. 2,000 to Vinayasram and Rs. 500 to the Yagnavalkya Educational Fund. He was fond of the ancient Hindu literature and made presents of food and money to *pandits*, liberally during his practice and sparingly afterwards. In 1940 Bapu exempted him from going to jail on account of his health. In the 1942 Quit India Movement, he was again jailed and was unconditionally released on medical grounds in 1943. He spent about four years in jail in all.

I had the good fortune of seeing his jail-life. It was an exemplary one and he was revered as a *rishi* by one and all. He was ready to share the sufferings inflicted on his comrades by the jail authorities in times of strikes, etc. within the jail compound; though some of the aggressive workers had lagged behind, he stood firm till the end. He translated the Dutch Republic into Telugu and compiled a dictionary of technical and scientific terms in Telugu. Outside jail he wrote the *Atmavichar*, the *Srishti Vichar*, his autobiography and other works in Telugu prose and poetry. Except a devotional work addressed to the *Andhrabrahmana Deva Venkateswara* of Tirupati, the rest were not printed during his life-time. The Andhra Hindustani Prachar Sabha of which he was the President for thirteen years since its inception has now undertaken to publish all of them.

He rested for a while after release from jail on medical grounds in 1943; then he took up the organization of famine relief in Rayalseema. He went to Bombay and collected over a lakh of rupees for the same. Prior to it, he organized famine relief in Ongole Taluq (Guntur Dist.) for which a *khadi* centre was opened. It was continued and is now working under the A. I. S. A. Andhra Branch. Out of the profits earned in the first stage, arrangements have been made to celebrate Bapu's birthday every year at that place and prizes are awarded to the spinners.

He was for a second time elected member of the Madras Legislature in 1937 and was doing useful work till the Congress Ministries resigned after the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1946 he did not seek election. But to set right the mischief in nominations made by the then Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, he made a pilgrimage to Bombay, where Sardar Patel made many changes on the basis of the representations made by the Desabhakta.

His letter to Bapu about the corruption rampant in the Congress circles and the Congress Governments is well known. Bapu

accepted it as a correct estimate and it was appreciated by officials and non-officials. His last farewell message on the eve of his eternal pilgrimage though unfortunately incomplete is in the same strain and exhorted his countrymen to deserve the freedom won by Mahatmaji. It reveals the nature of his mature deliberation.

He was in dead earnest about the formation of the Andhra province; but for his preoccupation in Congress politics and the attachment of Andhras to the Congress and Mahatmaji, he would have achieved it at the time of the separation of the Orissa province. He expected the Andhra province immediately after the establishment of *Swarajya*. He along with the other Andhras was sorely disappointed at the delays, appointment of committees and the efforts made even in high quarters to water down the principles accepted and acted upon by the Congress during a quarter of a century. Consistency requires that if linguistic provinces are not feasible or desirable for administrative purposes, they should be scrapped for Congress purposes also. He gave evidence before the Dhar Committee and was upset by the conditions laid down in the Three-men Committee. He pleaded for convening an All-Andhra Convention. It was held. Though elected its President, he could not preside over it due to ill health. His address was read and published.

He had not a happy family life. His wife suffered from paralysis for seven years before her death in 1936. His eldest daughter has no children and his second daughter is a child widow. He educated her and she graduated from the Hindu University. Only one of his brothers has survived him.

His eighty-first birthday was celebrated by his friends and admirers in 1946, and on 19th February this year we celebrated the 1000 months *utsavam*. We feared for his health and satisfied ourselves with calculations based on our *panchanga* (Hindu almanac).

In 1947 he went to Delhi to plead with the Congress High Command about the intrigues against the Prakasam Ministry. After returning from Delhi to Madras he wanted to go to Tiruvannamalai to see the Maharshi. Early in the morning on the date fixed for the journey he had an accidental fall which fractured his hip joint. He was treated in the General Hospital for some time but finding no relief he was brought to Guntur and under indigenous treatment, he recovered to some extent.

He was generally a regular spinner on the *charkha* but after the bodily injury he could not sit up for spinning. He therefore took to *takli* which he was plying almost till the last. He was interested in village industries and was the President of the Guntur *Jilla Grama Sowbhagya Sangham*. For years together he was using cow-milk and butter-milk.

He took interest in education of his community and was a member of the trust created by his co-religionist, Shri A. Ramarao.

He was the President of the Andhra Branch of the *Adimjati Sevak Sangh* recently formed.

We were co-members of the Bar at Guntur and our political association began about 37 years ago. We grew in happy intimate relations. He treated me as his son, while I revered him as my father and *guru*. At the time of his demise, he was anxious to see me but unfortunately I was away at a distant place and could not be present near his bedside to receive further instruction and inspiration.

He met Pandit Jawaharlalji in July last year and the reverence shown by the Pandit to Desabhaktaji was most worthy of both of them and was indelibly impressed on the minds of the fortunate spectators.

He attended the first Sarvodaya Conference at Sevagram in 1948 and gave his mature advice.

He was a powerful speaker, specially at his best when encountering opposition. He was neither avaricious nor ambitious. His last prayer to God was that his next birth should be in accordance with his present deserts. That shows the nature of the man. Till the end he was conscious and was serving his God and the country. It may truly be said of him that he lived upto the *mantra* in *Isavasyam 'Kurvanneveha . . .'*. He made the best use of his long life vouchsafed to him.

At the time of his death he was the oldest *swaraj* hero of his country. Bapuji loved him. Malviyaji revered him and Acharya Ray had great affection for him. In his life he was innocent as a child and meek as a lamb, but he was terrible as a tiger against corruption and *adharma*. He was always busy throughout the day giving letters of introduction to all in distress who sought his helping hand. His zeal never flagged and his active life shamed many a younger worker. He wrote a most beautiful hand both in English and Telugu and his mind was as clear as his handwriting. His mental and moral powers grew as his frail body declined.

He had only two regrets. One, he did not see the fulfilment of his dream of the Andhra Province, and two, he could not remove the root of corruption in Congress and government circles.

It was a strange coincidence, rather a great good fortune for him and for the Andhras, that he went back into the bosom of God on the second anniversary celebrations of Independence. Whenever and wherever these celebrations take place in future, his name will be coupled with them as one of the doughty warriors who strenuously fought and won the good cause of India's Freedom. His death will thus be in future not an occasion for sorrow but for rejoicing.

May God bless our good old beloved Desabhaktaji!

Vinayashram, 25-8-'49 G. SITARAMSASTRY
(Concluded)

HARIJAN

September 25

1949

THE FUTURE OF KHADI

(By Gandhiji)

.....In spite.....of the most skilful arguments to the contrary, and of imposing statistics with regard to the output of mills, I remain confirmed in my opinion that *khadi* in India has a very big future. What we may not do voluntarily and out of conviction, we shall be obliged to do through force of circumstances. India has to live, that is, her millions have to live. There is no difference of opinion as to the fact that they are not living today. They are merely existing. There is no other country in the world where so many millions of people have only partial employment and where, in spite of the civilization being predominantly rural, the holdings are barely two acres per head. To manufacture the whole of her cloth requirements through steam or electricity, or any other than the human power behind the wheel, is still further to deepen the unemployment of the population. An industrialized India must, therefore, mean utter extinction of many millions, including, naturally, the Harijans, who occupy, to our utter shame, the lowest strata of society.

It is said that through highly industrialized processes every American owns what is equivalent to 36 slaves. If we use America as our model, and if we allowed only 30 slaves to every Indian instead of 36, out of our 31 crores of human beings 30 crores must perform *harakiri* or be killed off. I know that some enthusiastic patriots will not only not mind such a process, but they will welcome it. They will say that it is better to have one crore of happy, contented, prosperous Indians, armed to the teeth, than to have 30 crores of unarmed creatures who can hardly walk. I have no answer to that philosophy, because, being saturated with the Harijan mentality, I can only think in terms of the millions of villagers and can only make my happiness dependent upon that of the poorest amongst them, and want to live only if they can live. My very simple mind cannot go beyond the little spindle of the little wheel which I can carry about with me from place to place and which I can manufacture without difficulty. In this connection a friend sends me the following paragraph which is going round the press:

"To relieve unemployment in certain industries the Nazis have ordered the stoppage of the use of machines which were displacing human labour. Commenting on this interdiction *The Manchester Guardian* remarks: 'There has been a great deal of discussion about the effects of machinery in aggravating the unemployment crisis, but it has been left to the Nazis to do the logical thing and stop using it.

It is only a little while since the world was asked to admire the miraculous triumph of labour-saving rationalization in Germany. Now the Government is bent on fighting the machine, either by prohibiting its use or by compelling employers to work shorter hours and employ more men. Mr. Gandhi's efforts to replace the spinning frame by the hand-wheel and the mechanical loom by the hand-loom are being paralleled closely in the German cigar and glass industries."

The Guardian concludes its remarks by observing that, if Germany's 'ethics become mediaeval, there is no reason why her economics should not become mediaeval also.' Replying to these comments, a correspondent writes in *The Guardian*:

"Hitler, Gandhi and others who in different ways are endeavouring to slow production to a point at which all goods are consumed may be reverting to mediaeval methods, but handicrafts are neither retrograde nor barbaric. They are taught in every progressive elementary and secondary school..... Unless unemployment is abolished within a reasonable time, even by means that appear novel and unorthodox, then the machinery age will disappear in revolutions and wars that will destroy us all. So long as machinery promotes the happiness and the prosperity of the masses as well as the classes, it is a beneficent agent. But when it leads to the unemployment and starvation of millions, as is happening in the highly industrialized countries of the West, it becomes a curse. Machinery exists for man, and not vice versa, and must be made subservient to the well-being of the people and should not be allowed to become their master."

That the village industries in Germany are being revived at the point of the sword is not relevant here. What is relevant is that a country, which has shown the highest technical skill and is amongst the most advanced in the matter of industrialization, is trying to go back to village industries for solving the problem of her terrible unemployment.

(*Harijan*, 27-10-'33)

SETTLEMENT OF THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

The Language issue has for the time being seen its end and it is happy news to read that the final form in which it emerged was accepted by the members of the Constituent Assembly almost unanimously and with satisfaction. It is a broad-based resolution and recognizes realities which face the country. It tries to meet almost every linguistic claimant in some way, guarding at the same time that the day-to-day administration of the Union and the States is not inconvenienced in any way.

The main provisions of the article may be summarized as follows:

1. Theoretically the official language of the Union shall be Hindi, with the Devanagari Script for alphabet and international figures for numerals.

2. In practice, however, English shall be retained in the Union Government and the Supreme Court as at present for a period of 15 years, subject to the following modifications;

(a) Parliament may extend in such form as may be necessary, the period for the use of the English Language, or of the Devanagari numerals;

(b) The President may within 15 years authorize the use of the Hindi Language in addition to English, or of Devanagari numerals in addition to international ones for any of the official purposes of the Union.

3. (a) The President shall appoint a Commission at the end of five years and again at the end of ten years to recommend the manner in which the use of Hindi language and Devanagari numerals should be extended in the official business of the Union. The Commission shall consist of representatives of the following languages: Assamese, Bengali, Kannada, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Sanskrit. It shall take into consideration in making their recommendations the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India, and the just claims and the interests of the non-Hindi speaking areas in regard to the public services;

(b) These recommendations will be examined and reported upon by an elected Parliamentary Committee of 30 members;

(c) The President shall consider the report and pass such final orders as he may deem proper.

4. In States and High Courts, English will continue in the same way as in the Union, subject to the following;

(a) Any State shall be at liberty to adopt Hindi or any other language or languages for its own official purposes, and by mutual consent for communication with any other State or States;

(b) In case any such step is taken, the President may direct the State to recognize some other language spoken in it also, if it has not done it and if he is satisfied about its necessity;

(c) In case of adoption of Hindi or any other language or languages by any State, an official English translation of laws etc., certified by the State Governor would have also to be published;

(d) In the State High Courts, the language of judgments, decrees and orders must be in English, even if the State language is allowed for other proceedings.

5. It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of Hindi and to develop the language so as to serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment for assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India, and drawing wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

We must not hereafter waste our breath in criticizing the terms of the article. It is sufficient to know that it allows plenty of scope for both official and non-official effort to build up our provincial as well as national languages in such manner as each might choose. Even Sanskrit and Urdu may be developed. Devanagari script has been declared the script of the Union language. It must also be perfected and developed to its best. Numerals must be standardized. Good dictionaries should be compiled. There is plenty of constructive work to do, if we do not fall out among ourselves.

Wardha, 16-9-'49

K. G. MASHRUWALA

FREEDOM DAY OF BOMBAY'S PENALIZED TRIBES

[Broadcasting from All India Radio, Bombay, on August 12, Shri G. D. Tapase, Minister for Rehabilitation, Backward Classes and Fisheries, announced that the Government of Bombay had decided to make the Criminal Tribes Act unoperative in the Bombay Province from August 13. The following are extracts from the speech of Shri G. D. Tapase. — Ed.]

The two Acts — the Social Disabilities Removal Act and the Harijan Temple Entry Act — seek to remove the stigma of untouchability of the Harijans root and branch. Now, the repeal of the Criminal Tribes Act on the 13th of August, 1949, will completely free the Criminal Tribes people of this Province from the legal stigma of criminality. Over seven lacs of people belonging to different castes and tribes will now be freed completely. Nearly 28 tribes with a population of about 12 lacs came under the Criminal Tribes Act according to the census of 1931, but the gradual relaxation of the provisions of the Act after the passing of the Habitual Offenders Act, has lately brought down this number to only ten different tribes, viz., the Berads, the Rajput Bhamtas, the Takari Bhamtas, the Kaikadis, the Mang Garudis, the Pardhis, the Chharas, the Bhils, the Lamanis and the Tadavis.

Nearly 7 lacs of these people were subject to the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act but now, by the repeal of the Act, all these people will be liberated and will be treated as free citizens. The evil system of recognizing these human souls as "criminals" will be wiped out from this Province, and none will ever be treated as a "criminal" by birth but will be judged by his deeds. Equal opportunities will be afforded to these people with those allowed to the Backward Classes, viz. free education, medical aid, and financial help for industrial and housing purposes. Not only this but the Government has appointed a Committee to go into all their problems and suggest ways and means to solve them. These people are not being freed merely to be left to fend for themselves.

Political freedom was restored to all citizens of India on the 15th of August, 1947, except these miserable souls branded with the curse of criminality from birth. Members of these tribes will win their freedom — the birthright of every human being — on the 13th of August, 1949.

This date really opens up a new era to these people. This Province is taking bold steps in this respect; for, it is inhuman to treat these people as criminals by birth, even after the attainment of political freedom by this country.

I now appeal to the public in general to forgive and forget the past and march with the times, recognizing the principles of equality, fraternity and brotherhood. They should extend their helping hand to these people and try to take them into their fold.

Similarly, I earnestly appeal to these freedom-loving people to become worthy citizens of this great country.

You and I are on trial. Let us make a firm resolve to succeed and then succeed we will. I am hopeful that these strong and sturdy hands will assist in shaping a new India and will be a valuable asset to our Province.

NOTES

'Communal Unity'*

Under this head Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa has collected together all the writing and utterances of Gandhiji on Hindu-Muslim Unity. It is a formidable volume of more than a thousand pages and yet, he says, "It was not possible to find a place for everything he said on the Hindu-Muslim Question, for that would make the volume too bulky." At the same time he assures us, "nothing of importance has been omitted."

The problem of Communal Unity is by no means yet solved for our unhappy country. The communal forces both at home and in Pakistan are still fully busy and have contaminated even those from whom a more discerning and generous outlook should be expected. Gandhiji might not be the final victim of fanaticism. And yet, if India or, for the matter of that, humanity is to be saved nothing will do it but whole-hearted conversion to his views. As Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa writes :

"Gandhiji's life and teachings are now no more merely for India and Pakistan, but for all the world. Stripped of their local colouring, they challenge man of whatever clime, race or religion, to be done with narrowness, pride and arrogance and to love his fellow beings irrespective of all distinctions, for this is Religion, pure and undefiled. In his life and teachings there is great wisdom such as alone can make for the healing of the nations. Is humanity prepared to learn of him ?

"The remarkable feature of Gandhiji's writings is that they spring out of action. They are not the speculations of an academician in his library or the dreams of an arm-chair philosopher. They throb with life just because they are the outpourings of a heart plunged in the midst of a crusade against human weakness, selfishness, greed and violence. His words are full of life, for they are forged in the fire of experience. They reach the innermost recesses of one's being, for they come from the depth of his own soul. They appeal to the highest in us, for it is the highest in him that speaks through them."

Hydrogenated Oils

Government policy regarding hydrogenated oils remains still unsettled for reasons not known to the public. And when people are not taken into confidence they naturally suspect pressure of vested interests, which prosper by the trade.

The investigation into the nutritive value of this substance would be relevant if the immediate issue was whether hydrogenation should at all be allowed. The present demand is for its colourization only for preventing its adulteration with pure ghee. The necessity for this rests on moral grounds, and not on grounds of health.

* Published by the Navajivan Press with a Foreword by Dr. Rajendraprasad. Price Rs. 9.

It is said that the Government experts are still unable to find out a good colour, and the *haldi* colour suggested by some does not meet with their approval for reasons not made known to the public. A colour suggested by another expert is not known to the expert in charge of the department, and his absence in the U.S.A. prevents further progress. Thus months have rolled on. In the meanwhile a fraudulent trade is allowed to prosper.

One is unable to understand why the Government should feel that the responsibility of finding a suitable colour lies on its shoulders and not on those of the manufacturers. Is it that some of the factories are guaranteed by Government, or run by it? Why are the manufacturers not asked to produce a satisfactory colour within a few months, failing which they would have to stop the hydrogenation?

Let hydrogenated oils be even nutritively superior to pure ghee or unfrozen oils, if the experts so ordain. But they should not be used to adulterate pure ghee. This is a simple moral proposition, outside the scope of experts.

Wardha, 14-9-'49

K. G. M.

C. R.'S BOMBAY UTTERANCES

II

[From the authenticated report of Shri C. Rajagopalachari's speech at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, on 8-8-'49. — Ed.]

Primary Education

Dealing with primary education, whether it be reading, writing or arithmetic, or learning through work, or education through joy, whether the child should be soaked in symbols and inured to bewilderment and pain from the earliest period of its life or should be allowed to deal with things and play and work making little difference between the two and finding joy in both — whether we call our method Project, Montessori, or Basic, or any other dear name, the education of our children must be planned so as to suit our present conditions, for obviously we cannot change these conditions in order to suit our pet ideas. If you sit down and apply common arithmetic to your plans and to the national income on which you must ultimately draw for executing any or all of your plans, you will find most plans going to pieces in the process of calculation, and in sheer desperation you have to put your head into the sand ostrichlike and refuse to see what is before you.

Elementary education is perhaps not very relevant to our function today. But it, is not altogether unconnected. What *samskriti* or culture can we hope to conserve if our children are not brought up wisely and well? In spite of all the processes of unsettlement, reform and reorganization of society in India through acts of Parliament and Welfare movements and associations, the threads of essential labour on which the nation's life hangs have been fortunately kept unbroken by family tradition. Most children still assist in the work of their fathers and mothers and they learn the family trade without

school or institute and learn it well. Farmer, carpenter, cobbler, sweeper, smith, weaver, shopkeeper, cartdriver, all these millions of humble folk, unconscious of the ambitions and the ideologies of bigger people, carry on as if nothing were happening and so we live on. We may build our castles in the air with impunity because the real house we live in down below has been maintained by the humble and the unlettered, unmindful of our endeavours at higher level. The food is grown, the cloth is woven, the sheep are shorn, the cows are grazed, the shoes are stitched, the scavenging is done, the cart-wheels and the ploughs are built and repaired, because, thank God, the respective castes are still there and the homes are homes as well as trade schools and the parents are parents as well as masters to whom the unaspiring children are automatically apprenticed.

Under these conditions which no one but a mad man would disturb, what is the plan we ought to follow in the elementary schools we have established and are adding to? Shall we force all children, that is those we can lay hands on, away from family apprenticeship to the trades of their parents, and compel them to spend all their time in the schools we set up such as they are — and we know just how efficient they will be with our best efforts — and make it impossible for them to learn the trades of their parents, for they cannot later in life learn these satisfactorily, nor can we hope to teach these in the schools which we set up through the hurriedly trained teachers there installed in authority? The thought alarms me for I see too clearly the mischief that must result from such a step. But I am needlessly afraid. For I am certain that in spite of our best efforts quite a number of children will fortunately escape our tyranny and the old system of family apprenticeship and traditional occupation will continue despite our efforts. How shall we reconcile our laudable object of spreading education with the need for continuing traditional occupations and family apprenticeship? I am a moderate man, a man out for healthy appeasement of all kinds and so I venture to suggest to the crusaders of compulsory primary education whether we cannot be content with three days in the week for schooling. During those three days you may do with the children just as you like. But give the children a chance during the other four days to work with their parents. Let us see what happens. There would be thus an insurance against error. We shall so to say advance, keeping the communications in the rear intact. Those who do not have to follow the trade of their parents or who have none of that kind, whose parents plan for parasitism or for government service or competition and gambling of various kinds may use the free four days in any way they like. The humble folk however will use these four days in the week for following the occupation of the parents

and take schooling during the other three days which I think should be quite enough.

This would double the capacity of our schools and our teachers for it would mean they could take two sets of children in the week leaving one day off for rest from labour.

The financial problem would be greatly eased by this arrangement and the pressure of symbols and word-building on the tender brains of the pupils will be less. The four days off will give time to recuperate and furnish opportunity for the boys and girls to assimilate and to apply and to benefit from the schooling. Indeed I think this would improve the quality of the instruction and the assimilation all round.

I do not like the alternative of cutting up the day into two halves. The school as well as the family occupation should have the benefit of mornings as well as afternoons. The farmer boy and girl ought to go to school on three full days and get the benefit of it, and be with parents and cattle in the field or in the family workshop during four full days. We should not take away the morning or the afternoon conditions altogether from either school or family.

* * *

[This was further elucidated by His Excellency at the Press meeting of 10-8-'49.]

Q. Your Excellency, about your statement on primary education, do you desire that Provincial Governments should take up the question before they frame their budgets for the next year?

A. I am not a Minister for Education. I just gave an idea. Also it will take some time for people to see my point. The immediate reaction that I have seen in the local press makes it clear to me that they have not heard me fully or read an unexpurgated report of my speech, or people read things in a hurry. I will illustrate what I mean. It was stated in one or two comments I have read that the motive of my suggestion was financial or something like that. Not at all. The main thing is not finance but how we shall maintain the essential occupations which today support society. This comments are urban, middle-class comments, made on the basis that children are a nuisance and must be handed over to schoolmasters. That is rather a superficial view of the problem. I was thinking of the numerous workmen throughout the countryside, carpenters, weavers, and so on, whose occupations have to be maintained. I want an enlightened countryside as much as anybody else. But look at our schools. The weaver-boy's father knows much more than the master who pretends to teach him weaving in the school. Yet our people have a superstitious faith in organized institutions and send their children to them. If you examine society with a scientific eye, you will see that there are certain essential occupations which support society and for maintaining which you must have either schools or family training. In countries with

small populations it is possible to have industrial centres and give the necessary training to all the children and enable them to pursue different vocations. But what is the total number of technical institutes we have in India at present? A few boys in the cities can go to some technical institute and get training, and afterwards try for some kind of teacher's job in that line, not a producer's job. Is that enough for society?

The farmer's children must be trained in all that they require in life. They must continue to learn their farming business and they can learn it only in childhood. That illustrates my point. You can give very sound education and at the same time allow the boy to have his own craft training also. You have not felt, as I have felt, the absurdity of the kind of schooling that children get now, even your own and mine. It is all unreal and ineffective. You may point to those who have emerged successful in life after orthodox schooling. In spite of many difficulties, the human mechanism is so good that it triumphs. But what is the best way to do things is very different from how things somehow get on. I think that the schooling that children get could be improved by more contact with nature, which includes both work and play. The quality of elementary education that you give in schools will be bettered if the boys do work of some kind at the same time. And what kind of work could be more suited for a pupil than the work that is available for him to participate in his own home or field?

"You hope by vocation training in the countryside to stop the drift of children from the rural districts to the urban?" asked someone.

A. It is somewhat difficult for me to answer this because you are attributing to my proposal a motive. Motive is different from a result, possible or probable. Those who want to proceed to higher education will do so but those remaining over will be at their family trade, in addition to which they will have the benefit of school education. I think that what you say about the population flow from the rural to the urban areas being reduced may be one of the results. But that is not my motive. It is difficult correctly to report a conversation or a talk. For instance I said some time ago that all the refuse of the towns should be conserved properly, scientifically converted into manure and returned to the rural areas. That is the only way to maintain the soil and food production properly. We are continually drawing into the urban areas, not only population but all the nitrogen from the rural areas. Now it was reported in one of the papers that I had said that the farmer should be taught how to manure his field properly!

A result is not the same thing as the object.

S. K.

'Satyagraha Gita'

It is by no means surprising that Gandhiji's long life, activities and teachings should inspire poets and philosophers to dress him in various forms and languages. Naturally, scholars of Sanskrit cannot afford to drop him. Like Rama, Krishna and the Pandavas, Gandhiji will also be a source of perennial inspiration to Sanskritists. In that sense, Sanskrit is certainly not a dead language of India.

More than one Sanskrit scholar has written works of long size on Gandhiji. Several years ago I saw one entitled *Bharataparijatam* (भारतपारिजातम्) a book running in several cantos, depicting Gandhiji's life in verses of different meters. There was also a scholarly book *Gandhisutrami* (गंधीसूत्राणि) in which Gandhiji's teachings were sought to be reduced in the form of *sutras*. The latest issue of the *Aryan Path* takes notice of a few recent publications. I have in my hand just now a book entitled *Uttara Satyagraha Gita* (उत्तरसत्याग्रह गीता) by Shrimati Kshama Row of Bombay. Evidently, this is a middle volume. The first volume, *Satyagraha Gita* (सत्याग्रह गीता) I understand was published some years ago. It covered the period of Gandhiji's life upto 1930. The present one begins with the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and closes with the presentation of the Kasturba Fund Purse on 2nd October 1944—Gandhiji's 75th birthday. I understand that Shrimati Row is working on the final volume now. The whole poem is written in the Sanskrit epic verse (अनुष्टुप्). This middle volume which consists of 47 chapters was written in the space of five months. This shows the perfect command of the writer over the language, which is easy, free from ostentation and, what struck me particularly, also free from the usual fondness of Sanskritists for metaphors and hyperbole. Deer, elephants, the full or the new moon, lotuses of various colours, and gods, *apsaras* and *asuras* hardly intervene to bewilder the reader. And yet the verse is not without its grace and flashes. The first part, I understand, is priced at Rs. 2-8-0 and this second one at Rs. 6-12-0. At the end there is an English summary of the verses to guide a reader whose knowledge of Sanskrit is not perfect. Shrimati Kshama Row deserves to be congratulated for her composition. The book can be read with profit by students of Sanskrit.

Wardha, 13-9-'49

K. G. M.

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