

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

Change Over to Saturday

Sunday having been made a closed day for postal deliveries the *Harijan* weeklies will hereafter be published on Saturdays instead of on Sundays. The next issue will, therefore, appear on 6th May, 1950.

Ahmedabad, 20-4-'50

J. D. DESAI,
Managing Editor

GANDHI & MARX

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Gandhiji's emphasis on manual productive labour, small self-sufficient units, decentralized political and economic order and a simple way of life follows from the principles hitherto discussed.

Modern life has become so complicated and interwoven, that with all one's love and respect for life, and desire for peace, non-violence and amity, it has become almost impossible to avoid destruction and exploitation of life, enormous waste of nature's materials and human labour, and ever-preparedness for war, with all its technical, scientific and political implications. Besides, one does not even know how and where the things one consumes are produced, how they are transported and distributed, and how they affect world economy. Much of this waste could be easily avoided if life were arranged on a simpler pattern. Even some of the modernized wants of life like, say, dental powder, are such as could be easily produced in every village; others like, say, writing paper or ordinary ink in a *taluka* towns; others still like, say, standardized parts of *charkhas*, looms, household furniture, fixtures etc. a district can produce for its own area. No village need ordinarily depend upon others for food, clothing and simple house-building materials. In decentralized production the producers and the consumers know one another and their living and working conditions. With a decentralized government, which is fully representative and enjoys as much autonomy as possible, an awakened democracy would have greater opportunities for drawing plans and programmes which they could be sure of implementing. They would also be able to remove drawbacks and evils as soon as they appear. If violence is unavoidable in a particular occupation, say, in the preparation of soft-leather

slippers, or of a medicine like liver extract, the people would know that it would have to be done and so could decide whether they should do it or go without it. In centralized industries, very few consumers know how things are done. A votary of non-violence thinks that digitalis is a herbal drug and may be taken without the infringement of his principles, little suspecting that before the stock from which his small phial of tablets was packed was put into the market, it had been tested upon dozens of guinea-pigs or other creatures to determine its fatal and safe doses for human life. He is innocent about it, because he has never seen the herb itself or the factory in which it is converted into various medicinal forms. Similarly, in the centralized scheme monkeys are exported to America by people who will not shoot them even though they destroyed all their crops. They never stop to think that the creatures are purchased for subjecting them to vivisectional tortures. If the people saw these experiments with their own eyes, they would know that if monkeys were a nuisance, there was less violence in killing them straightaway than in exporting them alive to a foreign country. Similarly, wanton and heartless violence upon milch cattle and also misplanning on a gigantic scale is perpetrated for the supply of milk to cities.

Thus, simplicity of life and of economic and political order provides a more suitable environment for the establishment of a non-violent society than an order based on excessive centralization, mechanization and production on gigantic scales. The latter renders indispensable expensive political and administrative machinery, such heavy militarization as to exhaust the greater part of the national revenue and such inextricably complicated financial entanglements as to make even the best of experts mere gropers in the dark. Besides, it is not only steam, gas and electricity that are harnessed, and wheels and levers regimented to ensure definite movements, but man himself is mechanized and regimented, and every catastrophe becomes a reason for further depriving him of his freedom of action and choice of occupation, food, clothes, house etc. He has to accept what the powers that be determine for him.

Not that a simpler civilization could guarantee total absence of violence, injustice and

hardship, and ensure perfect freedom, goodwill and peace. After all, violence and non-violence are results of culture and spiritual and moral growth and not of an external mode of life as such. Non-violence cannot develop without the simultaneous development of other spiritual and moral qualities and by simply observing certain external rules of life and conduct and maintaining one's comforts and wants within particular limits. The violence of a village headman or a trader might qualitatively be as intense and high as that of a gas-chamber executioner, or of modern business syndicates, adulterators and black-marketeers. But the extent and quantity of violence will always be less and easier to spot and control in the simple way of life than in the complicated one.

An equal standard of life for all may be the best ideal, but, it will be contended, it is impossible to ever see it put into practice. Even in a village, there are bound to be people with varying standards of life. It will be particularly so when one lays stress upon greater individual freedom and minimum regimentation and State control.

There is some truth in this. But here too the degree of difference between the highest and the lowest will be far too small than what prevails at present. Even if capitalism prevails in practice a village millionaire's mansion cannot be of the same dimensions and furnished with the same comforts as that of his cousin in Bombay, and he and the members of his family would not be quite ignorant of or unknown to the people of the village. In Bombay even the neighbours never know or care to know one another. The village millionaire might use brass utensils while the ordinary peasant has only earthen ones. But the difference is much smaller than that between the city millionaire's dining-hall furnished with glass-top tables, expensive crockery, silver spoons and forks, and beautiful pictures, flowers, scents and other adornments, and his servants' low-roofed one-or two-room tenements in another part of the same compound. And the difference, again between the latter and the living conditions of a city hawker, not to speak of the *bhangi*, is also much greater than that in a simpler way of life.

The difference between the daily life of the village millionaire's family and that of his village people will also be both qualitatively and quantitatively much less than that between the city millionaire's and his poor neighbours'. The village millionaire's wife and children might have polished *charkhas* and cleaner clothes, also more ornaments and better dress for use on an occasion of festivity than his neighbours. But still the wife would spin and take part in domestic duties and be familiar with domestic economy

and problems in the same way as the poor of the village. They would have their songs and sports with the ordinary people, and when people mix for sports and songs, consciousness of a difference in the status diminishes. In cities, the millionaires form a caste of their own and the middle classes and the ordinary folk have also their own respective societies. They never know and understand the problems of the people living in strata below their own.

When people in various stations of life and engaged in various occupations come into constant contact with one another, and their life is under the daily observation of their neighbours, a sense of self-restraint is unconsciously generated. In a small community one cannot be too lavish, selfish and regardless of the comforts and lives of others. This itself is helpful for the development of the idea of trusteeship.

Thus, even if the principle of trusteeship remains only a counsel of perfection and the institution of private property continues to exist, a simple life and a decentralized order is by itself a more favourable condition for the reduction of violence, inequalities and economic conflicts.

Wardha, 19-4-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

EVER NEW EDUCATION

Education is a meritorious activity. It has gone on in Sevagram for many years. It has been called *Nai Talim* (New Education), but I prefer to call it *Nitya-Nai Talim*, (Ever-new Education), one which never gets stale and stereotyped or is alike for every place. It will change and adapt itself to every situation. It will not be today what it was yesterday and it will not be tomorrow what it is today, but will take new and varied forms with our ever changing and ever growing experience and circumstances, even as the current of a river, which goes on flowing so that its water is fresh at every moment.

Systems try to cast education into a fixed mould. But to stereotype education is to debase it. I have always resisted acceptance of a fixed form. We get new experiences every day; we must have the vitality to direct our life intelligently in the light of these experiences. Then only will our life be integrated.

We began with Basic Education; now we have entered on the pre-basic period. Here too we must keep our eye on the village; so the orthodox ideas of education will not help us. Conditions vary from village to village, and so should the training of the child living there.

For instance, there would be one type of education for children living in a village on the banks of a river, another type where there are hills, and a third type for a village surrounded by forests. A fixed stereotyped programme or set books would not be suitable for every village. At present we use the same set of books throughout a province. They do not take into account the peculiar features of every village. They are mechanical productions. Therefore pupils do not feel interested in them, and the village is not profited thereby in any way.

We also need books for our schools. But we should prepare a different book for every village in accordance with its peculiar environment. The atmosphere of that village will lend its own colour to its books. The text-book of history at Sevagram will give the history of all the institutions there. It will relate how Sevagram came into being, it will give the reminiscences of the old men of that village. This will be live history. Our geography book too will start from Sevagram. The village we live in is for us the centre of the earth for the obvious reason that we live in the middle with the earth lying around us.

Then, we shall gain fresh experience every day and make new experiments. With every new experience we shall unmake what was made on an older experience and remake it in the light of the new one. This process of destruction of the old and construction of the new will go on for ever.

If you ask me, "What is the basic principle in the education of children?" I shall answer it briefly thus, "The teachers have to grow young, and the young have to grow mature. If the teacher cannot convert himself into a child, he cannot teach, and if the child does not mature into wisdom every day, there has been no training."

The teacher and the children will work together. Our tools will also be made locally. Both the teacher and the children should feel that they are at *work* as joint labourers doing something important for life. Where the teacher feels that he gives lessons and the boys, that they take them, there can be neither teaching nor learning. The very mention of the word 'lesson' makes an end of it.

The work that we choose to do with the pupils must be closely related to our every day life. So the prayer must be in the pupils' own language. One should not think that the *Koran* could be recited only in Arabic, — in Marathi its merit would be lost. The same principle applies to *Vedic mantras*. These too should be taught in the mother tongue of the boys. Only then

would they get at their meaning. Where there is no understanding of the meaning, prayer loses its object. Prayer, therefore, should be in the language of the boys. Even so it must be about other activities.

Teachers from different provinces come here for training, and a syllabus is prescribed for them. They listen to lectures on different aspects of *Nai Talim*. If I were here, I would speak only once to them in the course of the year and only as much as I have done today, and say, "Now get to work." I would like to discuss with them every evening the difficulties which they might come across during the day. They have listened to lectures already in their B.A. and M.A. classes. If they do the same here, they would be as far away from true education as they were before. I would say to them: It is well that you receive scholarships and stipends; you may send these home. Here at least for a month show if you can earn your bread by your labour. I would ask them, can you weave ten or twelve yards of cloth per day? They would reply: We do not know actual weaving, but we know its principles. To that I would say: If it is sufficient to know the principles, why should you eat actually? If you know the principles and science of eating, it should be sufficient. Well, what I mean to say is that learning does not consist in words; it must be vital.

The pity, however, is that our minds are still obsessed with old ideas. The teacher here teaches cooking and spinning and weaving to the boys, but he still tends to ask himself if his boys have attained the standard of knowledge of the boys of other schools. How can there be any comparison between our boys and those others? Our boys can swim, they can even rescue others. Could the other ones swim as well? No; they can only drown themselves. I do not suggest that learning interpreted as the ability to read and write has no value at all. But there must be some sense of proportion, it is only one of the many gifts and in no way more precious than others. Why give it more importance than what is due to it?

To test whether education has borne any fruit, let us see if the boys have developed honesty and the spirit of service and fearlessness and how far they have acquired the qualities necessary for efficient living and the service of society. That is what we should look for and that is the touch-stone to test a successful system of education.

This in short is my idea of the Ever-New Education — *Nitya-Nai Talim*.

VINOBA

(Translated from the *Sarvodaya* for March, 1950)

HARIJAN

April 30

1950

CHEAPNESS OF FACTORY GOODS

Gist of a letter :

"I am a railway employee belonging to a poor family. I have been spinning yarn and wearing *khadi* for the last 15 years in spite of all its attendant difficulties believing that it was necessary to do so in the interest of the country. But now our leaders are planning to convert India into an industrial country. Moreover, after the attainment of freedom, *khadi*-wearers are considered to be black-marketeers and corrupt, and creators of divisions and factions among labouring classes. Having regard to all these factors I feel that I am unnecessarily wasting money in wearing *khadi*. I can make a better use of my hard-earned pay in educating a poor boy than spending it on *khadi* in these days of economic crisis and inflation.

"Please advise me how it is still necessary for a poor soldier like me to wear *khadi*."

I may confess that if the State policy in regard to textiles remains adverse to the universalization of *khadi*, the prospects of seeing *khadi* as the normal article of clothing are not very bright. Although even then those who remain loyal to it will be rendering the country valuable economic service, it will be difficult for ordinary men to understand how it is so. Men are apt to believe that what is profitable to their household economy is profitable also to the economy of the country. Buying from the cheapest market is regarded as soundest economy in the management of domestic affairs and proprietary business. Therefore, it is argued, if every one acts on that principle, all combined save a good deal of money and so add to the nation's wealth.

But personal economics and the nation's welfare do not always run parallel. There is often a conflict between the two, so that what seems to be unprofitable for the private purse is profitable to the nation and vice versa. This can be shown by an example. A and B are two brothers. A manages the family agriculture in a village and B is a flourishing advocate in a city nearby. A produces food, oil-seeds, cotton, fodder, vegetables, ghee, cows, oxen, etc. He and the members of the family staying with him have to work hard. Yet agriculture is not paying and cattle-keeping unbearably expensive. On the other hand B's practice is so large that even the income-tax on his profits is in excess of the net agricultural income. The standard of living in the city house is much higher than their village establishment. Not only so, B's calculations show that it is cheaper to buy imported rice and wheat, mill-pressed oil, hydrogenated oil, mill-made fabrics, foreign condensed milk, etc. than to consume the yield of his own lands and cows, and to have *khadi*, oil etc., made at home or in his own village. Alternatively, he thinks that if the land is to be kept, it would be more pro-

fitable to grow tobacco or cotton or sugar-cane than food and fodder. A's village establishment is thus a burden upon B and though A is not absolutely needed for the advocate's business, it would be cheaper to maintain A and his family without work than maintain the village occupations.

It would be difficult to meet B's arguments on mere account-book calculations of the family. To understand the true situation, we must go deeper than mere personal, domestic and short-time economy and examine the economy on a national scale. We must enquire how it is possible for B to build up a very lucrative practice on the mere occupation of writing documents and making arguments, which, however ingenious they might be, do not produce anything which men might eat, drink or wear for their physical well-being, or read or hear for their moral elevation. Law or medicine or diamond and gold business may have a place in life, but it is clear that these professions flourish because under a social order mainly built upon narrow self-interest, they are able to demand a price far in excess of their intrinsic worth. And whom do they take their heavy charges from? Why does B find that it would be cheaper to maintain A and his establishment as drones than work like bees to produce no more than a few pounds of honey at the end of the year? It is so, because there are hundreds of other A's whose maintenance is not regarded by him as his concern, but who are looked upon as his legitimate objects of exploitation. Like his brother A, they are simple village cultivators or petty traders in consumable articles. They have no flourishing brother like B, and whether their occupations pay well or little, they are the only ones they can follow. If these too go away from their hands, they would be mere labourers without regular employment. So there is a keen competition among them to preserve what property they have and, if possible, to grab more on the same selfish considerations as those which move B to demand excessive fees for his legal services. This creates conflicts and gives rise to civil and criminal litigations, which B is able to take advantage of.

This explains B's handsome income. The same argument would apply if, instead of a flourishing advocate, B were a doctor or other expert, or a diamond or gold merchant, or a speculator, a broker or insurance agent, or a dealer in any luxury article.

Let us now examine how B is able to obtain his necessities of life more cheaply, if he buys foreign or factory-made articles instead of home-made or hand-made ones. Factory-made goods are cheap not solely because they are produced by mechanical and swifter processes, but because a factory is a very great *unemployer* of workers. Even if all the processes were done by the same methods, a large-scale industry merely on account of its greater resources and resisting power, can beat down in competition similar

small-scale industries. Besides, by mechanized processes a mill-spinner *unemploys* about two hundred or more *charkhas*, a mill-weaver about 20 or more hand-loom, an oil-mill employing a handful of workers several hundred *ghani-men*, a sugar factory scores of small-scale *khandsari* and *gud* makers. A tractor *unemploys* several pairs of bullocks and their attendants, as also a large number of plough-makers. The factory-spinner, -weaver, -oil-presser and -oil-solidifier, the tractor-cultivator and the like no doubt get a better wage than his manual co-professional. But it is only a small fraction of the total wage of the men who wholly or partially go out of employment because of the factory. Thus, the factory saves a very great amount in wages, enabling it to sell its wares more cheaply than those produced by hand process. On whom does the burden of maintaining the great mass of those *unemployed* or underemployed men and their dependents fall? Not on the organizers and workers of the factory. It is possible that a handful of them have, like B in the example given above, brothers, who are able and willing to maintain them as drones. A few might be able to obtain an alternative employment. But the majority of them become occupationless and have to beg, borrow, steal, gamble, fill jails, hospitals and asylums and, in spite of all these efforts, ultimately to die of slow starvation and disease. Government maintains a few while they are in jails, public hospitals and Government asylums. It is the earning relatives, even if they be as poor as themselves, or public alms that have to keep the majority and their families going anyhow. The apparent cheapness of machine-made goods is thus quite illusory. It would disappear if a factory-producer was asked to maintain even half of the people it *unemploys*, (assuming that the other half would be able to find other suitable employments).

This is not imagination. The Sirohi State did not permit the introduction of motor transport on some of its roads during its existence. It was a deliberate act in the interest of the people and in response to their demand. But with the establishment of the popular government, the new ministers did not wish to go slow in 'civilizing' it. So motor service was introduced on some of its principal roads. The result was the sudden unemployment of cart-drivers and tonga-drivers whose number along with their dependents ran to 500. Fortunately the service, I understand, is now again withdrawn in response to public agitation. The people have to travel and send their articles a little slowly, perhaps also at a little higher cost, but it provides honest work to feed 500 mouths. The runner, of factories and motor service—even if they are State-owned—leave millions to their fate. Thus what appears cheap to the private purse on a short-sighted view is really heavily expensive to the nation.

A people's government will have one day to consider this point seriously. Mechanization and large-scale production will have to be adjusted to the problem of providing employment to every one. Large-scale (that is, moderately large-scale as distinguished from giant-scale) production can be beneficial only in a non-competitive co-operative economy, mechanization only on the condition that avenues are opened for the immediate absorption of those who would be disemployed thereby.

Assuming *khadi* has fallen in public esteem as a symbol of upright character, still it is not a sound reason for giving it up. *Khadi* as a cloth cannot certify character or even non-violence any more than any other cloth. If *khadi* is universalized, it will be worn by every one including murderers, dacoits, thieves, drunkards and profligate people. It will also be worn by Congressmen, socialists, communists, communalists. Even the army and the navy would be dressed in *khadi*. We must not associate the Gandhi cap or the *khadi* dress with character, even as we do not associate a sola hat or a dress in the European style with it. They are just India's standard cloth and style of covering the body.

The correspondent thinks that he can make a better use of his hard-earned money in educating a poor boy than in spending it on *khadi*. Helping another to receive education is a good charitable act, but let us also think of what we propose to equip the poor boy with in the name of education. Shall we make him a more efficient labourer, a skilled artisan and producer of wealth or just one of our own type, a matriculate or a graduate who has lost the ability of making use of his limbs and can only seek a clerk's post in some office? Let us also think whether we are not making our savings only at the expense of those whose wages are even more hard-earned than our own. When we spin on the *charkha*, we voluntarily identify ourselves with the poor spinners and weavers, and give expression to our sentiment of charity—a more personal character than what we do through a small donation in money.

8-4-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

Navajivan Sangh, Bombay

This institution, which has figured more than once recently in the Bombay Press, is altogether independent of the Navajivan Trust and Press, though the Bombay Office of the Navajivan Branch is situate just opposite to the above institution. The two institutions are not connected in any way. It has become necessary for us to publish this, as enquiries have been made of us about the reported affairs of the above institution presumably on the supposition that both are interconnected.

Ahmedabad, 20-4-'50

J. D. DESAI,
Managing Trustee,
Navajivan Trust

RATIONAL UTILIZATION OF LAND THROUGH PALMS

The need of utilizing palms for getting the proper requirement of sucrose in our diet has not been fully realized. The reason seems to be that the cost of manufacture of *gur* or sugar from the juice of the palms does not compare well with that from cane in our country. Why is it then that the Government is trying to propagate the palm *gur* industry?

Individuals are prone to be short-sighted in their estimate of things but a government has got to take the long-range view. The increasing profits of the sugar-industrialists, the seeming prosperity of sugarcane growers, the apparent cheapness of sugarcane products, cannot blind the Government to the long-range effect, the increase of sugarcane production is going to have on the country.

The predatory aspect of industrial short-sightedness is well manifest on all fronts of human endeavour and existence. In the field of food and agriculture, it is all the more a painful sight. Mr. Hugh H. Bennet, Chief of U. S. Conservation Service, pointed out that the productive capacity of good land, which was limited to 400 crore acres, was being reduced by the reckless use made of it in many countries. Sir Herbert Broadley, Deputy Director General, F.A.C., emphasizes the importance of the layer of top soil enveloping our planet, which he likens to a tissue paper, "on which depends the fertility of the land and which took from 30 to 1,000 years to form", being carefully preserved and husbanded.

With this picture of the exhausting resources of our soil on the one side and the threatening increase of population on the other we have to be very careful in planning to get the food from the soil at our disposal. If, for a cheap constituent of food like the 'sweet' carbohydrates, a people utilize the very best of their land, while others starve because they cannot get enough cereals, there is some short-range thinking somewhere. Polysaccharides obtained from cereals are a more important constituent of human diet than di- or mono-saccharides of the sugar, *gur* or honey variety. The modern man in pandering to his palate has much increased the consumption of these sweet carbohydrates. So much so that the quantity of sugar consumed per capita by a country is sometimes taken to gauge its progress in civilization! This is a perverted notion of civilization and though the essential nature of sucrose foods in our diet cannot be denied, the cereals are by far more essential.

Sugar by itself, being composed in a state of purity of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, does not take away anything from the soil, for, the chlorophyll of the plant manufactures these from the sun, air and water. But the plant, for its own growth, has to depend upon the nutrients from the soil. The less a plant takes from the

soil the lesser is the strain of its culture on the soil. The plants now mainly cultivated for extracting sugar, viz. sugarcane, require for their development a great amount of substance from the soil and thus their culture exhausts the soil in which they grow. To obtain simple carbohydrates we allow our lands to produce full-grown plants which are destroyed to obtain only their juice. It is sad to note that these plants cannot be used even as a cattle feed and so are a practical waste as far as food production is concerned. The minerals and other nutrients of the soil that go to make the whole sugarcane plant are made no use of and thus are such a tremendous waste of the resources of the top soil that it cannot be overlooked. This six-inch layer of top-soil has been put to much abusive use by our generation as has been made clear at the recent U. N. Scientists Conference at Lake Success.

The only use the sugarcane plant is put to in most places is to burn it in the furnace. Therefore, for all practical purposes we are cultivating fuel stuff in rich irrigated soil when we use such lands for cane production for white-sugar mills. Is this not madness in a land short of food materials?

Here it is that a long-range view of Agricultural planning brings palms into the picture. (a) The palms are trees which live for many years; (b) in getting sugar from the palms we do not destroy the palms but only collect the sap and thus waste nothing in nature. The collection of sap does not harm the tree to any extent and whatever is taken from the soil is fully utilized in being converted into food; (c) while sugarcane requires soil fit for cereals, the palms prosper on soil entirely unfit for cereals. The soil now under sugarcane can very well be used for the production of the best cereal crops of rice and wheat, whereas the soil under the palms is so unfit for the culture of these cereals that one might try in vain to grow on them rice or other cereal crops.

These are facts which cannot be hidden by the jugglery of financial figures and false money economy. If man wants to utilize soil in his best interest and that of the coming generations, some country will have to take the lead in putting to practice the long-range plans of sugar production from palms. This may look uneconomical to those who do not take the whole picture in view. Considering the increase in population and other exigent factors stated above it will ultimately become absolutely necessary for man to release all lands that can produce cereals for their production alone. Our Government has taken the right step to work in this long-range plan from now on and thus has given a lead in scientific planning in agriculture to the rest of the world in the production of sucrose products. Palm *gur* production is of the least burden on nature and fits in with the natural cycle of resources. Decades ago Dr. J. E. D. Vry, a scientist who had studied palm *gur*

industry in Java, in a report placed before the World Science Congress at Giedsen (Germany), had rightly warned, "Considering the increase in population the time is not distant when it will be absolutely necessary to devote to the culture of wheat and rice the lands now employed for beetroot or cane."

D. K. GUPTA

A WISE AGREEMENT

I take it as the grace of God that India and Pakistan could arrive at a wise agreement on the minorities problem. It required uncommon patience and dispassionateness, and in the present disturbed atmosphere, it is difficult to have these virtues, but by the grace of God.

It is a happy beginning and if the people of both the countries accept it in the proper spirit, it will do good to all in every way. It is important to understand that when a pact is made, none should harp on things of the past, and be suspicious about the sincerity of the other party about its observance. A self-confident and alert person always hopes for the best while he is always prepared to meet any emergency. To be always alert is one thing, to be always suspicious another. One way of being alert is to discharge our own obligations faithfully.

But the sceptic asks: "We might fulfil our obligations, but what shall we do if the other party does not?" My answer is that the consequence of that will be that we shall add to our strength and the cause of the other party will weaken.

We often assume that we shall never lack on our part in the fulfilment of our obligations; the doubt is entertained about the other party's intentions and motives. This is a gratuitous assumption, and tends to create a show of having fulfilled our obligations without actually doing so. It is very dangerous, whether it is an individual or a nation that does it. It can only weaken the pretender. The mirage of fulfilment of duties does not create any impression upon the mind of the other party, while the first assumes that he has only discharged his obligations; and so he argues that unilateral fulfilment of obligations is futile. He does not stop to ask, what next even if it were as he says. Shall he, then, begin to give an object-lesson of breaking the agreement from his side? Will his doing so, inspire in the other party a sense of duty, when its fulfilment does not?

We all know that the military strength of India far exceeds that of Pakistan. In this context, if we but fulfil our obligations, it will multiply our strength a hundred-fold. We should understand this simple thing. At present, we have neither the strength of non-violence, nor the want of worldly wisdom to abandon the military strength. Hence, we maintain our military expenditure. If moral strength is added to it, surely it is not an injury we do to ourselves! If the Pandavas with less military strength could

gain a victory over the Kauravas because of their superior moral strength, we take no risks in strengthening both. The supreme strength consists in developing the moral strength to its highest summit, so that we may dispense with the military strength in the interest of the poor. But as yet, we have not this supreme moral strength, we have only superior military strength. Hence if we add the moral strength to the military one, it will be to our advantage.

So even on the assumption that Pakistan may not discharge her obligations arising out of the Agreement, we may not fail in our duty. And, let us develop the love of the five Pandavas and thus experience the strength of the soul within us. It will help Pakistan also to take the right path for the good of all.

Sevagram, 11-4-'50

VINOBA

(Translated from the *Sarvodaya*, April, 1950)

NOTES

Viraji Bhagat

The Harijans of Ahmedabad were plunged in sorrow on Rama Navami last (27th March) by the death of their venerable leader Shri Viraji Bhagat at the age of 75 from heart-failure.

Viraji Bhagat was a mill-jobber for the greater part of his life. He and his wife were a devout couple, altogether free from vices common among factory workers. He was held in high esteem by both the employers and the employees, by the former for his honesty, punctuality and hard work, by the latter for never taking any illegal gratification or harassing the workers under him as a headman.

He worked honestly until he became too old to be able to do factory work. But he shunned to live an idle life and set up a small shop near his house to earn his livelihood.

He took keen interest in the cause of Harijan uplift, and was always in the forefront of activities conducted for their benefit. He was severely belaboured by *savarna* Hindus once for having participated in the *satyagraha* for asserting the rights of Harijans to travel by the public bus. He had sustained heavy injuries; but lest his followers should get either dispirited or uncontrollably angry, he did not allow any one to know what injuries he had sustained. The fact came to be known several years later when a doctor uncovered his back for medical examination and saw marks of severe beating.

On the night previous to his death after giving a few words of advice to his son and getting a couple of chapters of the *Bhagwadgita* read to him, he slept, saying that God willing, he would hear the whole of the *Gita* next morning as it was Rama Navami. But he expired at 4 a.m. His wife had predeceased him last year on the Gokul Ashtami day. Surely, he has rested in Peace.

Wardha, 20-4-'50

"Tribes of India" *

The Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh has just brought out this small handbook, "being a collection of 48 articles contributed by experienced social workers with a foreword" by Shri Thakkarbapa.

"The number of tribes described in this book is 86, while the total number of selected tribes as per the Census of 1941 is 172." In that sense the book is not exhaustive and complete, but there is as yet no other which is handy, cheap and easily procurable. Different anthropologists have published interesting accounts of some of these tribes, but they are generally very costly.

The following paragraph from Shri Thakkarbapa's foreword describes the aim of the book concisely :

"The problem of the welfare of these tribes, some of whom live in the plains and are assimilated with the rest of the people of the country has come to the public eye very recently. But the problem of some of the tribes that live on the hills and in forests is even now known to a very few. For instance, the Marias of Abujmahad in Bastar State and Paniyans and Arandans in the Wynaad plateau of the Malabar District are approached by very few of our social workers or by Government Welfare Departments. It is the aim of this book to draw public attention to the welfare of all these tribes whose total population is not less than 25 millions or a little over 7 per cent of total population of the Union of India, which can be said to be 35 crores at the present time. This section of the Indian people is the most backward group not only socially and educationally but also economically, some tribes living upon roots and forest produce for several months in the year and on game in some cases. It should be the aim of the various Governments constituting the Union to assimilate these backward groups with the population in general in as short a time as possible but with as little disturbance as possible to their culture and present modes and ways of living. It is satisfactory to note here that the new Constitution of India gives reserved seats in State and Union Legislatures to these groups on population basis for the next 10 years. It has also made provision for the State doing welfare work so as to lift them up to the general level. How much of this work can be substantially accomplished in 10 years, i.e. up to 1960 is to be seen."

At the end of the book detailed statistical information about the various tribes is given both province-wise as well as tribe-wise. This will enable the general reader to gauge the magnitude of the tribal problem.

A few of the articles are in Hindi; others are in English. It is desirable that the whole book should be available in Indian languages, beginning with Hindi. The book will be felt equally interesting by the worker as well as the general reader.

Wardha, 19-4-'50

K. G. M.

* Published by the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh Kingsway, Delhi, price Rs. 2-8-0.

A Good Beginning

In refreshing contrast to the ruling by the Vice-Chancellor of the Bombay University on the use of Hindi in the Senate, or reintroduction of English in Standard VII by the Government of Bombay, the approach of the S.S.C.E. Board, Poona, to the question of the place of English and Hindi in our national life and education is more praiseworthy and deserves wider notice.

The Board has just published its calender describing courses of study, subjects and papers etc., which it has prescribed for the S.S.C.E. for 1951. There are to be two compulsory subjects, viz.

1. General English (without texts),
or
Hindi (without texts)
2. One of the following languages :
Marathi Gujarati
Kannada Bengali
Telugu Urdu
Sindhi Tamil
or
Additional English (with texts)
or
Additional Hindi (with texts)

Thus, in the first paper English is no more a compulsory subject and a student can very well have Hindi instead. It is a helpful preliminary step for reconstructing secondary education.

While this is a good beginning for which the S.S.C.E. Board deserves congratulations, the grouping of the second paper is not commendable as it stands. I suggest that it should be amended as follows :

2. One of the following 10 languages :
Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Sindhi, Bengali, English (with texts), Hindi (with texts), provided that a student may not take the same language for both the papers.

It must be remembered that the knowledge of Hindi will be indispensable for those who know English. Hence this suggestion.

30-3-'50

M. P. DESAI

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