

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

HYDROGENIZED OIL OR VANASPATI

Recently the question of the nutritional value of hydrogenized oil known under the trade name of *vanaspati* has come into much prominence on account of the very vigorous but somewhat misleading propaganda carried on by the Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association. The question is purely a scientific one and should be viewed from that point without any passion or prejudice. No one has yet suggested that nutritionally *vanaspati* is superior to *ghee* or common vegetable oils or that it is even equal to *ghee*. So the problem resolves to this — (i) Whether *vanaspati* is nutritionally equal to the common edible vegetable oils and (ii) whether *vanaspati* has any deleterious effect.

Vanaspati is produced from vegetable oils by hydrogenation. By this process these oils can be hardened to any desired consistency. Hence its importance. But what does this mean? To understand this we must go a little into the chemistry of vegetable oils and hydrogenation. Vegetable oils are glycerides of fatty acids some of which are highly unsaturated. The process of hydrogenation converts the unsaturated fatty acid radicles into saturated ones. What effect has it on the nutritional value is the crux of the whole thing. Now I quote from Prof. Sherman, the famous bio-chemist: "This process (hydrogenation) has been enthusiastically developed commercially and large quantities of oil are now hydrogenated to the consistency of lard substitutes. It remains to be determined how far this is at the expense of the special nutritional value which food fats owe to the presence of some of the more highly unsaturated fatty acid radicles." (*Chemistry of Food and Nutrition*, 6th ed., by Henry C. Sherman, p. 20). He further writes: "It is now generally regarded as established that some unsaturated fatty acid or acids is or are nutritionally essential in the sense in which this term has long been applied to some of the amino acids in connection with protein metabolism, i.e., these acids either are not synthesized in the body, or not rapidly enough, to meet its needs so that they must be furnished in some form in the nutriment. Of course, these nutritionally essential substances need not exist free in the food; the nutritionally essential amino acids exist in the food as con-

stituents of food proteins; and the nutritionally essential fatty acid or acids chiefly as constituents of some of the food fats." (*ibid.*, p. 30). So this process of hydrogenation removes the unsaturated fatty acid radicle which is an essential food factor. So *vanaspati*, according to Sherman, does not contain an essential food factor which the common edible vegetable oils contain and is, therefore, nutritionally inferior to them.

The experiments carried on in the Izzatnagar Laboratory proved that *vanaspati* was deleterious to health. Later experiments carried on in India, however, proved that it had no deleterious effect. Assuming that Dr Gilder is right in saying that Izzatnagar experiments were not properly conducted, it proves nothing more than what the later experiments proved, that *vanaspati* had no deleterious effect. These experiments were not conducted, as far as I am aware, by eliminating other sources of unsaturated fatty acid radicles in the diet. So they do not meet the point specially stressed by Sherman. Taking all these things into consideration and making a most liberal interpretation, it can be said that *vanaspati* is not deleterious but is nutritionally inferior to common vegetable oils. Vegetable oils are much cheaper than *vanaspati*. To ask people to buy *vanaspati* is to ask them to buy nutritionally inferior stuff at a greater cost. I agree with Dr Gilder that everybody cannot afford to take *ghee* nor there is so much *ghee* in the country. But the alternative is not *vanaspati*. The alternative is cheaper and more nutritious than *vanaspati*, i.e. vegetable oils to which our countrymen have been accustomed for generations. I had been a student of chemistry and used to take a lot of interest in nutritional science. I may tell my countrymen that it is dangerous to tamper with natural food-stuffs. Humanity has learnt it at great cost and suffering though it has led to many discoveries. Those who have got enough in their stomach can afford to be a bit reckless, but the vast majority of Indians who suffer from many nutritional deficiencies can ill afford to try this experiment.

There is the problem of adulteration of *ghee* by *vanaspati* which has a far reaching consequence. I do not want to deal with that in this article. I leave it for others to do it. However, I cannot but take notice of the opinion of

Dr Bhatnagar in this connection. He condemns adulteration as all right-thinking men should do. The Congress Working Committee recommended colouring of *vanaspati* so that it might not be used as an adulterant of *ghee*. Dr Bhatnagar does not like that as it is not done anywhere else in the world. He should remember that nowhere *vanaspati* is so much used as an adulterant. If he does not like colouring, he must be able to find out some other scientific method of preventing this adulteration. Instead of doing that he has said that it is the least harmful of all adulterants of *ghee* and this is no satisfaction to the consumer who wants pure *ghee*. On the other hand the man who adulterates *ghee* with *vanaspati* can shield his guilty conscience with such remarks.

Now I must say a few words about the propaganda method of the Vanaspati Association. Some scientists in India have proved that *vanaspati* has no deleterious effect and is, therefore, a healthy source of fat. From that the Vanaspati Association is asking the people to believe that "it is necessary as a part of our daily diet." This reminds me of the saying that truth in passing from one truthful man to another truthful man gets deteriorated. Nutritionally speaking, a substance is considered necessary as a part of daily diet if its place cannot be taken by another and if its absence causes some deficiency symptom or the other. By no stretch of imagination can it be said that *vanaspati* is such a stuff. Rather nutritionally speaking, it is inferior to *ghee* and even to common vegetable oils. So to use a mild language, it is a misleading propaganda.

(DR) PRAFULLACHANDRA GHOSH

PLANNING THE ECONOMIC PLAN

Economic planning is once again very much in the air of India. About two years ago the Congress Working Committee appointed an Economic Programme Committee to place before the A.I.C.C. an outline of the Economic policy which the Congress should press for adoption by the Government of Free India. The outline of the Economic Programme prepared by the Committee was accepted by the All-India Congress Committee. It was, indeed, a very good programme in many respects; it had the co-operation of several prominent Socialists besides the collaboration of different shades of opinion within the Congress. But, unfortunately, the Congress did not pursue the work of the Economic Programme and the Government of India also did not take any concrete steps to formulate a comprehensive Economic Plan for the country. Only general policy statements were made by different Ministers of the Central Government from time to time without placing before the people any over-all picture of a planned economic development for India. The Constructive Workers' Conference held at Wardha last December prepared a *Sarvodaya* Plan publishing it on the 30th January, the second Death Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. This was followed by the appointment of a Congress Planning Sub-committee with

Pt. Pant as its Chairman. The Government of India hastened to appoint a Planning Commission on the 15th March with Pandit Nehru as its Chairman. Before this Planning Commission could start its work in a systematic manner, the Congress President decided to convene a Planning Conference of Chief Ministers and the Presidents of State Congress Committees at Delhi on the 26th and 27th of last month. It gave its general assent to the Memorandum prepared by the Congress Planning Committee and adopted a number of resolutions bearing on the immediate economic problems facing the country. The Congress Working Committee, in the course of a resolution passed on the 1st of May, endorsed the six-point programme for economic development recommended by the Planning Conference. All this speed and earnestness is very encouraging and hopeful. It is also extremely gratifying to note that the Congress Committee has finally accepted the goal of "a decentralized co-operative planned economy" for India's future development.

But what next? Will the recommendations of the Planning Conference be now placed before the A.I.C.C. and the plenary session of the Congress to be held in Nasik in July? This is obviously unnecessary because the Delhi Conference was representative not only of the State Congress Committees, but also of the State Governments. Moreover, the country need not wait for a formal ratification of the programme by the A.I.C.C. The economic condition of India needs quick handling and time is of the essence. The Working Committee, in the course of its resolution of May 1, stated that, "the Governments, Union and State, should immediately take steps with a view to giving effect to this programme to the maximum extent feasible." If the Economic Programme is not to remain a mere paper plan like the previous ones, it is certainly desirable that the Government of India and the various State Governments move in the matter immediately. Delay would be highly undesirable and even dangerous.

But what about the Planning Commission appointed by the Government of India? Curiously enough, it did not come into the picture at all at the recent Planning Conference. Perhaps, its members were invited to be present as "observers". The Planning Commission was appointed by the Government of India to "make an assessment of the material, capital and human resources of the country", to "formulate a Plan for the most effective and balanced utilization of the country's resources", "on a determination of priorities, define the stages in which the plan should be carried out" and "determine the nature of the machinery which will be necessary for securing the successful implementation of each stage of the Plan in all its aspects." The Planning Commission is not a Congress body; it is composed of members who have achieved prominence and national recognition outside the Congress ranks. Although it is supposed to "make recommendations to the Cabinet" and "the responsibility for taking and implementing decisions will rest with the Central and State Governments", the recommendations of the Planning Commission ought to be, more or less, final. It is a whole-time Commission with salaried members and it will require a big staff for its successful working. If its recommendations are treated with scant courtesy and are, once again, examined by the existing Cabinet Economic Committee, it would amount to huge waste of public funds besides the waste of precious time and energy of the Planning Commission. Where does this Commission stand now? Will it be only an advisory body to the Cabinet Economic Committee which, in turn, is only entitled to make recommendations to the Central Cabinet? What will happen to the resolutions of the Delhi Planning Conference? Will they be directly implemented by the Central and State Governments or will they be forwarded to the Planning Commission for its opinion and recommendations? These questions need immediate clarification and

elucidation if economic planning in this country is to proceed on sound and systematic lines.

The urgent problem before the country, therefore, is: How to plan the Economic Plan? If the Plan itself is not planned properly avoiding any unnecessary duplication of functions, there will inevitably be confusion worse confounded. I venture to make the following concrete suggestions:

(a) The main function of the Planning Commission is to "secure full and all-round co-ordination in the process of planning and in the execution of the plan." No steps, long-term or short-term, should therefore be taken by the Central or State Governments independently of the Planning Commission. Otherwise, the very aim of the Planning Commission will be defeated.

(b) The Planning Commission should bend all its energies in preparing short-term and long-term plans for the country as a whole and for the respective regions within one year. The short-term plans should, in fact, be ready within six months. If the Commission is not able to plan quickly, it will end quickly.

(c) In order to lend the necessary power and prestige to the Planning Commission, the Union and State Governments should develop the healthy convention of accepting the recommendations of the Commission as a matter of routine. Its recommendations should be rejected only in very exceptional circumstances and the country should be explained the reason for such refusal.

(d) The Planning Commission would naturally take into serious consideration the resolutions of the Planning Conference which are in the nature of a mandate by the party in power. The idea of a decentralized co-operative economy is eminently suitable for a predominantly agricultural country having a large population. But the Planning Commission should not be regarded as a kind of "blotting paper" for the blue-prints of the Congress. Otherwise it will soon forfeit the confidence of the public in general. The decisions of the Commission should be able to command the respect and agreement of different shades of opinion in the country as a matter of course.

(e) The Commission should immediately appoint Boards of Experts for different sectors of national economy. The functions of these Boards should be to guide and advise the Commission in preparing the detailed plans in the sectors of agriculture, cottage industries, large-scale industries, transport and communications, public utilities, education, health, etc.

(f) As suggested by the Delhi Planning Conference, suitable machinery should soon be developed by the Planning Commission to enlist the co-operation of the public at all stages of the Plan. Without non-official help and co-operation, National Planning would be an impossibility. Methods of arousing public enthusiasm for the Plan as practised in other countries should be carefully studied.

(g) Machinery for implementing the National Plan will have to be set up before long. This machinery should not be too centralized and cumbrous; all encouragement should be lent to local initiative and resources. The States should appoint Planning Committees for their respective regions. The membership of these committees should not be more than five.

(h) In order to secure reliable information regarding the resources of the country for preparing the long-term plan, there should be the closest co-ordination between the Planning Commission and the forthcoming Census operations.

(i) With a view to giving adequate importance to the Planning Commission which it should naturally deserve, the Congress, the Government of India and the State Governments should not convene any Committee or Conference in future for discussing Economic Planning without a definite reference to the work of the Planning Commission. Otherwise, there will be no end to futile talk and pious resolutions.

These are only a few humble suggestions. As one who has been keenly interested in the work of National Economic Planning for a number of years, I feel sure that these points would be taken into consideration while planning for the future Economic Plan of Free India

S. N. AGARWAL

A Wild-Goose Chase

Referring to your note on Shri P. C. Sen's article "Argemone Poisoning", you are right when you say, "I am afraid that the belief about the actual adulterant used may be mistaken." Being a villager, I know there are not enough *kataila* (argemone) plants for all the adulteration that is going on. It is being done even by the village *teli* (ghani owner); yet I have never seen any one in my village collecting *kataila* seed for this purpose.

The real fact is that the adulterant used is an oily substance produced in factories, available as easily as the 'vegetable product' and is for the adulteration of *ghee*. I am informed by one who has worked in a 'vegetable-product' factory that after the refined oil has been converted into the 'vegetable product', there is a residue left, which is a thick oil containing all the impurities and dust of the crude oil. It serves a double purpose to the manufacturers of the 'vegetable product'. By disposing it of in the market at a cheap price, they are able to get money for a by-product, which perhaps deserved to be thrown away, if it had no non-edible industrial use. And by making it easily and cheaply available for adulteration with the liquid oil, they create a market for their 'vegetable product' as being thus made preferable to edible oil. For, they take the wind out of our sails, when we advocate the use of fresh oil instead of its solidified hydrogenated form by making it impossible for any one to get pure edible oil easily.

The Uttar Pradesh Government by issuing an ordinance against argemone adulteration have set the public on a wild-goose chase. If the Government had made proper use of their C.I.D. machinery, it would not have been difficult for them to find what adulterant or adulterants were being really employed. It is my firm conviction that all the evil practices employed by the commercial classes are aided and abetted by Government officials who have a share of the immoral and illegal gains made by wily businessmen.

D. D. BHARADVAJA

Pashulok, Rishikesh, 29-5-'50

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MORE WORK OR MORE WAGES ?

Many of those who criticize *Sarvodaya* economy do so merely from a feeling of something akin to horror for a return to life which they think to be as unpolished as the unpolished rice and as coarse as coarse *khadi*. But even where there is no such prejudice, there are several practical difficulties and constructive workers are even more conscious of them than their critics. That they should be so is not to be wondered at, for the simple reason that they have no grounds for feeling complacent. They have not the happiness of witnessing a glaring measure of success attending their efforts, though several of them have passed twenty or more years of their life in that sphere. So every now and then, they examine themselves, their own life, their objectives, the villagers, the village life and the methods of work and means of achievement employed by them and the villagers. They are conscious of their own insufficient knowledge, want of technical training, inadequate physical strength and unsympathetic atmosphere both at home and in the village. Owing to allurements in Government and commercial careers, it is difficult to attract first-class talent to the cause of *Sarvodaya*; for talents are not always associated with the urge for a life of service and selflessness. *Sarvodaya* has, therefore, been worked out generally with men of great faith but not necessarily of first-rate ability. While the critics are mindful only of the economic aspect of *Sarvodaya*, the workers have to consider also the religious, social, educational, sanitary and administrative difficulties in the regeneration of villages. These are, indeed, so great that unless a worker is fully convinced of the soundness of the *Sarvodaya* doctrine, it is impossible for him to hold on to the *Sarvodaya* programme for a very long time.

When a programme becomes extremely difficult, people engaged in it begin to examine even such parts of it as were always assumed to be indisputable. Thus ten years ago, Shri Prabhudas Gandhi, who had been already working in a village for more than ten years, seriously questioned the correctness of the usual assumption that villagers are wholly or partly unemployed for nearly five months in a year. He produced arguments to show that the so-called unemployment was more imaginary than real; that in the so-called slack season also, the villager had to work to attend to several operations

and works of management which kept him fully occupied; and that the real solution was not to find more work for him, but to see that he received better returns for his work. This led Gandhiji and the Gandhi Seva Sangh to examine the question thoroughly. A few retired Revenue Officers also contributed studied papers. So far as I remember, the conclusion arrived at was that though conditions varied from place to place, on the whole wherever agriculture depended only on the monsoons, there was not only unemployment for about three to five months in a year, but also insufficient returns for the amount of labour expended. It was also found that the unemployment period had the additional inconvenience of being discontinuous and unascertainable beforehand. It might be for a few hours per day, or for a day or two per month, or for a week or ten days continuously. The above applied to the cultivators who had a plot of land of their own. For landless labourers, the periods of unemployment were longer and more continuous but not still continuous enough. I do not think that the conditions have changed for the better since then. The solution needs not only more work, but work in the village itself, and of a nature which would enable the worker to suspend it now and then without loss. Along with this it must be better remunerated. It is hard facts such as these that have led the *Sarvodaya* workers to conclude that *Sarvodaya* needed self-sufficient village units and freedom from the entanglement of money economics.

We hear a good deal about attaining economic prosperity through electricity, petrol, atomic energy and small machinery. We are told of the achievements of Denmark and Sweden, which are also rural rather than urban populations, by the intelligent application of technical science and the principles of co-operation. Even in the highly industrialized U.S.A., Ralph Borsodi presents a picture of a science-aided self-sufficient home. These accounts are attractive, instructive and inspiring. They have much to teach us and cannot be belittled. But we can proceed only in accordance with our immediate factual circumstances.

Last winter, a young collegian from Bombay asked me if it was not a waste of time and energy doing things by handicraft instruments, when we might have electricity and power-driven instruments to perform the same functions. It was easier, he said, to reach the goal of self-sufficiency with labour-saving instruments than by hand tools and human labour. I knew there was electricity in his house. I told him that his mother or domestic servant had to spend a good deal of time in igniting the *sigree* for cooking the food and heating water for bath, also for grinding flour on the stone *chakki* or getting it ground in the mill. Why did he not

install an electric heater in the bath-room, have a gas or electric stove for food, a small electric mill for grinding corn at home, an electric broom which would clean the house very perfectly, and several similar labour-saving appliances? He would be able to dispense with his unsatisfactory domestic servant, and his mother and other members would also be more comfortable and self-reliant. He shook his head and said *he could not afford it*. His father's earnings were not big enough for that. *This settled the question.*

It is the same with the villages. Even if it entails more work to village men, women and children, they must do something to earn more, and they have to employ such means as they can afford to go in for.

Whether the unit is a family, a village, or a country, the fundamental rule of prosperous economy is — work hard with whatever material is available, work in co-operation for the mutual benefit of the members of the unit, and not each individual himself; acquire skill while you work; save something from what you produce and utilize the saving for making improvements. It was thus how the forefathers of the great farmers and merchants laid the foundations of their fortunes. Later on, degeneration set in leading to speculative methods and reckless borrowing, corrupt practices, fraud, usury, adulteration, false measures, sweat-labour, slave-labour and the like, the motive being to amass large fortunes in a short time. But there are few families which have not come to grief by these methods. Generally in less than a hundred years (the average, I believe, is forty), they have brought ruin not only to themselves, but to scores of poor people who reposed their trust in them. The same is the case with the countries adopting similar methods. There is no evidence, so far as I am aware, that any country has attained great prosperity, or done so in a short time, by mere mechanized industrialization, unaided by corrupt methods of politics, exploitation and fraud, leading ultimately to disastrous wars.

The *Sarvodaya* philosophy is not merely a particular method of production, distribution and consumption of wealth. It is a whole view of life, correlated with philosophy, religion, ethics, education and amity both at home and abroad. Its economic programme cannot be criticized singly, even as any one of its items cannot be decided upon in isolation of others.

Wardha, 19-6-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

GANDHIAN ETHICS

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NOTES

"Bapuji's Beedies"

Several years ago, a merchant put on the market a brand of cigarettes called "Gandhi Cigarettes". Gandhiji wrote thereon:

"Of all the abuses to which my name has been put, I know nothing so humiliating to me as the deliberate association of my name with cigarettes. A friend has sent me a label purporting to bear my portrait. The cigarettes are called 'Mahatma Gandhi Cigarettes'. Now I have a horror of smoking as I have of wines. Smoking I consider to be a vice. It deadens one's conscience and is often worse than drink in that it acts imperceptibly. It is a habit which is difficult to get rid of when once it seizes hold of a person. It is an expensive vice. It fouls the breath, decolours the teeth, and sometimes even causes cancer. It is an unclean habit. No man has received my permission to associate my name with the cigarettes. I should feel thankful if the unknown firm were to withdraw the labels from the market, or if the public would refuse to buy packets bearing such labels."

(*Young India*, 12-1-1921)

Now, Shri T. R. Krishnamachari of Tirukoyilur (South India) writes:

"Now, that Gandhiji is no more, we must be all the more watchful about such abuses.

"In the market, there have appeared what are called 'Bapuji's Beedies'. This is an insult to the Father of the Nation. The worst feature of it is that it is very widely advertised. On the walls, rocks, towers, and in all public places in Southern districts, we find this advertisement. It no doubt causes much pain to the admirers of Mahatmaji."

I hope, the manufacturer will quickly withdraw these *beedies* and not desire authorities to take action against him.

Wardha, 19-6-'50

K. G. M.

"Key to Health"

While addressing the Silver Jubilee gathering of Sir Hurkisonadas Narottamdas Hospital, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel said that many more hospitals and doctors were needed to deal with the vast amount of illness which prevails among our people.

Would it not be a wise preventive measure if the Government compulsorily taught school boys the laws of health described in Mahatma Gandhi's excellent book *Key to Health*,* so that young people practising laws of health would never or seldom get ill and consequently would never or seldom require to go to a hospital or require the services of a doctor?

I suggest that a few copies of Gandhiji's *Key to Health* should be given free to every poor village in India in its own regional language. Village social workers should read and teach villagers laws of health from Gandhiji's book. Instead of more hospitals and more doctors,

* Published by the Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Price 10 As., postage etc. 2 As.

wealthy Indians should use their wealth for building clean and sanitary houses for the Indian poor and for supplying such good books. Filthy vaccinations and inoculations should not be introduced in villages. It would be a calamity for villagers. Thousands of copies of Gandhiji's *Key to Health* should be republished for distribution among Indians.

SORABJI R. MISTRI

ANGUL BASIC EDUCATION CONFERENCE

In April 1950 for the first time, the All-India Basic Education Conference sponsored by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh was held as an integral part of the Sarvodaya Sammelan at Angul. Now that it is over, and can be seen in some perspective, an attempt may be made to assess the value of this plan and to measure the gains and losses which may have resulted from it.

One of the most lasting memories of Angul will certainly be that of the wonderfully generous and gracious hospitality with which we were all received. Every visitor who had had any experience whatever of what is involved in the arrangements for a large conference must entertain a deep admiration for the wisdom and forethought, the leadership and power of co-operation, the goodwill, good humour and patient hard work which went to the personal comfort of the guests, the smooth and orderly fulfilment of every item of the daily programme and the spotless cleanliness of the whole enormous conference area. We owe a great debt of gratitude to our Orissa hosts, and therefore we ought to ask ourselves whether we did our part, whether the value of the conference for the development of our work is great enough to justify the enormous expenditure of time and labour which they put into it, or whether the same or better results could be achieved by any less costly method.

There are two distinct kinds of value to be obtained from a conference on such a subject as Basic Education. One may be called the propaganda or publicity value, and the other the consultative value. Basic Education is still in its infancy and there is still, as the chairman reminded the Conference, widespread ignorance and misunderstanding of what it stands for. Those who sincerely believe in its worth must do their utmost to explain to the general public what they are trying to do and why they are doing it. If the quality of the schools is to be maintained as the numbers grow, they must be backed by an intelligent and well-informed public opinion. A conference is a useful means of shaping public opinion. But for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of the schools themselves it is no less essential that the people who are actually engaged in the daily work of teaching should meet and compare notes. Basic schools are still few and scattered, and the results of work done in one place must be available to teachers in other places. There must be careful and detailed discussion among the

educationists concerned. This is the consultative function of conferences, and most of our difficulties arise from the fact that *effective* publicity and *effective* consultation demand different techniques and are difficult to combine in one programme.

On the side of publicity there was one great advantage in organizing the Basic Education Conference as part of the Sarvodaya Sammelan. It served to emphasize and publicize something that greatly needs emphasis and publicity—that is, the close and vital connection between a social and an educational programme. The presence in the Conference of representatives of many aspects of construction work, and the many cross-references in the discussions to the educational implications of this or that social or economic programme, all served to make this clear. Without *Nai Talim* the essence of *Sarvodaya*, its conception of what constitutes an honest, free, non-violent and truly human society, will be impossible of realization. Without *Sarvodaya*, without the will to transform society itself, *Nai Talim* may make superficial progress for a time, but will wither at the root.

On the other hand, the fact that the Sarvodaya Sammelan was held in early April, while the great majority of schools and colleges throughout India were still working, meant that one of the sections of the general public most directly interested in educational reform, namely the teaching profession itself, was under-represented. Educational administrators were there, delegates from Basic schools were there, but the rank and file of ordinary teachers, (who are in addition not unrepresentative of the attitude of the rank and file of ordinary parents), were not there. This was a loss to the conference, and it meant that too little attention was paid to the means and stages by which Basic Education, during the next few years, may be integrated into the State systems. Yet this is a question of great importance to the ordinary men with children to educate. Unless it is solved, the teacher may hesitate to send his own children to his own Basic school, and if he does not do so, how can he exhort the villagers to do so? They will naturally suspect that they are being put off with a "second best". This is happening already in some parts of the country.

The consultative side can be summarized by saying that in spite of difficulties, some good work was done in which the excellently organized exhibition played a very important part. The standard of discussion in the general sessions was higher than in the previous year and many useful questions were submitted and answered. Keen interest was shown not only in the methods of Basic and Pre-Basic education, but in the plans and experiments for advanced education on *Nai Talim* principles. Part of this was most valuable for publicity purposes, but one cannot help feeling that real consultation

would have been better achieved if all the sincere and knowledgeable men and women who took part could have organized their discussions as sectional study groups or round-table conferences on various types of problem, unhampered by the necessity of speaking through a microphone to a miscellaneous audience.

What is the solution? There is probably no ideal solution. One possibility which is worth consideration is that conferences should be on a regional rather than a national scale, using the regional language and addressing themselves on their publicity side to the ordinary people of the region concerned. The consultation and discussion side should be deliberately organized, by holding small parallel meetings of those with specialist knowledge, where oratory can be cut out and informal exchange of experience and opinion can take place. In order to ensure an all-India outlook and to derive the maximum benefit from the experience of other regions, a limited number of workers with first-hand knowledge of the work in the various States may also be invited to participate both in consultation and in publicity. The over-all effect of such a regional conference should be firstly to clarify the minds of the local public about the general principles of *Nai Talim* which are of universal application, and secondly to devise plans and discuss the problems involved for the development of *Nai Talim* in their own region. If Oriya could have been used at Angul the conference could have spoken directly to the village people who came in their thousands to see the exhibition. They could have been shown that Basic Education was something that matters to them. They and their like are 80 per cent. of our public; and in the end it is they who will judge our work.

Sevagram

MARJORIE SYKES

[Note: I think that regional conferences should have their distinct and separate programmes from the All-India Conference. The latter would have to meet in a particular region unavoidably. Whether the conference of that particular region can be held simultaneously with the all-India one is a matter for organizers to consider. I am afraid that an attempt to do it will make both the functions less successful. But my apprehension may be groundless.

Wardha, 13-6-'50

—K. G. M.]

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THE AMISH OF U.S.A.

The readers will be interested to know that in the present complex Atomic Age, there still exists in the highly industrialized U.S.A. itself a sect the members of which are devout and hard-working and flourish and prosper by adhering steadfastly to the fundamentals in life, denying themselves the use of modern scientific equipments. The agricultural abilities of this intensely religious sect of about 3,500 souls in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., rank with the best farmers in the world.

So far as the Amish are concerned, there was no industrial revolution. Their religion forbids them the use of electricity, the telephone, the automobiles, and the gasoline engines except in some functions. They still use the horse almost exclusively, not only for tilling the soil but also for pulling frail, boxlike wagons and spidery buggies, which are their only church-permitted conveyances. They oppose too much education for their children and converse among themselves in a Pennsylvania Dutch dialect.

The Amish have managed to remain singularly aloof from the main stream of life in their country.

Despite their aloofness, their curious customs and primitive farm methods, the Amish each year produce bumper crops of alfalfa, grain, fruits and vegetables and most important tobacco (which may be considered odd, since most of them don't smoke). Long before the Department of Agriculture (of U.S.A.) was established, they were practising soil enrichment, crop rotation and animal husbandry; today, Government farm experts still visit them to see what they can learn. The 175-square-mile triangular tract east of Lancaster in which most of the Amish live, has a going market price of \$1,000 per acre and more. An average farmer earns between \$4,000 and \$7,000 a year.

To make such incomes, an Amishman works in summer from 4-30 a.m. and until around 9-30 p.m. His boys work right along with him.

As a rule the Amish assist neighbours who are in difficulties. If a man's barn burns down, the community holds a "frolic": as many as two hundred people turn up on the farm in the morning, and by nightfall a new barn has been raised. Similarly, if an Amishman can't afford medical or hospital bills, he need not accept State or country charities; a church patriarch takes up a collection for him.

As a group, members of the sect have long had a reputation for high native intelligence.

During the war, most Amish boys were classified as conscientious objectors. Only three or four went into the armed forces over parental objections.

They face the future with the serene deep-rooted philosophy that always has characterized them. They trust in the Lord. They know that He will help them remain His good servants.

(Abridged from the *Collier's* of February 4, 1950).

THE SARVODAYA SHIBIR, HYDERABAD

On the bank of the Sangam (Hyderabad Dn.) under the mango groves 150 responsible workers, eager to know about the Gandhian ideology and anxious to hear the message of *Sarvodaya*, lived a community life, from 23rd to 30th April last.

At the request of Shri Vinoba who was unable to attend, Shri Dada Dharmadhikari kindly guided the Camp. This was a unique opportunity to know about Gandhian ideas from one whose whole life is devoted to the spreading of Gandhian thought.

No condition of external observances was laid down for those who desired to join the Camp. This enabled persons of various ranks, such as barristers, pleaders, doctors and other specially qualified people as well as ordinary workers to join the Camp. They represented 13 districts of Hyderabad. Out of the total strength of 150, 129 were men and 21 ladies. These comprised 75 Congress workers, 25 students, 12 constructive workers and 38 would-be workers. Communitywise, they included ten Harijans, and ten Muslims.

The day's routine consisted of prayers and flag salutation, sanitation work, manual labour, helping the kitchen, spinning and lectures. Prayers included recitations from the Quran and *Ramadhun* in the morning and recitation of Shri Vinoba's Marathi translation of *Gayatri* in the evening. The latter was recited in the style of *Vedic mantras* and it filled the atmosphere with its sonorous vibrations. All sat in straight rows, one behind the other, presenting a disciplined and devoted assembly.

The sanitation work left its mark on every one. Several took the lesson for the first time. They rejoiced and felt honoured in handling the broom and the basket. Shri Nagori who was in charge of this department, besides taking guidance from Shri Vallabhsawami's book on latrines, made his own contribution by presenting samples of two types of cheap latrines, one of which cost only one rupee each and another needed the use of only one bamboo each. Although every care was taken to see that no one missed the job, there was no compulsion and every one willingly did the work, and did it with a view to carry the message to his or her home, in the city or the village.

Thirty campers took first lessons in spinning. Others already knew the art, but four handled the *takli* for the first time. They acquired a working knowledge in three days, and promised to continue spinning after the camp had dispersed.

Lectures: In addition to Shri Dharmadhikari, who gave ten lectures dealing with all the aspects of *Sarvodaya* and a comparative study

of other 'isms', Shris Kumarappa, Bindu, Abid Ali, Dr V. N. Rao and others made up for the remaining 11 out of the total of 21 lectures. They covered a wide range of subjects.

On the eve of the termination of the camp, a broom and a basket were presented to every district, as a token of the social revolution and a *takli* to every camper as that of the economic revolution. Several workers gave in writing the programme they intended to follow thereafter. 65 workers expressed their desire to go to Wardha and Sevagram for further training.

The workers are eager to do their best in the constructive field, for which the atmosphere was never so favourable before. The trainees in a resolution have expressed their desire to hold such camps every year in Hyderabad as well as in the three linguistic divisions. Ward and village camps are now being organized on local basis by the trainees, who attended the camp. The Vice-Chancellor of the Usmania University having realized the potentialities of the camp has expressed a desire that similar camps should be held in the last week of December for the University students.

Immediately after the dispersal of the Camp, about twenty-five workers from Telangana toured under the leadership of Dr Chenna Reddy the communist-stricken area in a neighbouring *taluka*. They have been able to create confidence in the people. More such tours are being organized and a number of workers contemplate to go and stay in that area and to organize camps similar to this one. Many workers would thereby come forward to serve and identify themselves with the people and by their service present a way out from the depressing conditions, which drive them to lawless activities.

Such are the possibilities of the *Shibir* movement, if conducted and developed on proper lines. Hyderabad, having remained untouched till now for reasons political or otherwise, offers a vast and promising field for the speedy growth of many a constructive activity without which real democracy would remain an unfulfilled dream.

D. M.

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