

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

VOL. XIV. No. 17

AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 1950

TWO ANNAS

VANA-MAHOTSAVA (FESTIVAL OF FORESTS)

The new Food Minister of India, Shri K. M. Munshi, has made an appeal to celebrate throughout the country the first week of July as the *Vana Mahotsava* Week by planting trees. I hope, the people will wholeheartedly give their co-operation to this important programme.

There was a time once in our country when the wealth of a man was measured in terms of trees such as of mango, cocoanut, *kajju*, *kokam*, etc. possessed by him. In fixing up a marriage, this was one of the factors which the parties took into account.

Trees are more real wealth than currency notes, which pretend to earn interest. The interest which money begets is illusory as being a mere transfer of a thing in existence from one pocket to another. Even if hoarded for fifty years, a note or a coin cannot double itself, but if a tree is properly looked after for even ten years only, it will give immense wealth in the form of fruits, leaves, wood, etc. and will continue to give profit for several years without any trouble to the owner. Moreover, they will attract clouds, and increase rainfall, and will prevent erosion of the soil. Shri Munshi's ever fresh imagination has made an opportune suggestion of launching a countrywide drive for planting one crore trees during the 'Festival of Forests' Week.

A few days ago, Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani in the course of a speech described how the Jews of Palestine take immense pains after planting trees. Concentrated efforts are made there to turn a desert land into a land of forests.

This reminds me of an ingenious hotel-keeper in a health resort in U.S.A., which is a popular place for young couples to go to for their honeymoon. He makes each couple plant a tree and puts a board there with their names and date of marriage. This makes them attached to the tree, and prompts them to visit the place often. Thus by a single act, the hotel-keeper achieves the two-fold purpose of increasing his clientele and adding to the national wealth.

If the planting of a tree were made a part of the rites of the marriage ceremony imposing the obligation on the couple to rear it as their first child, it would be a suitable *yajna* of the present age. It would present some difficulty in

cities which municipal bodies would be required to solve. But so far as small towns and villages are concerned, it would be a constructive reform. Let us remember, as our great Poet has said, that our civilization was born in *aranyas* (forests).

A point which deserves to be remembered is that planting a tree is not sufficient by itself. People and the Government should see that every tree planted is carefully looked after.

Wardha, 17-6-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

VANASPATI PROHIBITION BILL

Pandit Thakurdas Bhargav has introduced a Bill in the Indian Parliament for the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of hydrogenated oils. If the Bill is passed into law, *vanaspati* factories will be closed and its import from foreign countries will also be stopped. The Government has published the Bill for eliciting public opinion, and fixed 31st August next as the final date for communicating the opinion to the Government.

During the last few years, *vanaspati* has become an important article in our country. The industry has proved so profitable to its manufacturers and sellers that strenuous efforts are being made to rapidly multiply its factories and it has become easy for them to spend *lakhs* of rupees on advertisements and other propaganda for it. If we look at any important paper, our eyes will not miss to notice prominent advertisements in bold prints in fulsome eulogy of *vanaspati*. Besides, many attractively got up and illustrated tracts printed on costly paper purporting to give information about it are widely distributed. Intense propaganda is being made to enlist public opinion in its support by August 31st.

On the other hand, while the article has proved very profitable to the business community, it has spelt great harm to the people in a variety of ways. It has seriously disturbed the economy of agriculture and cow-keeping, and almost killed the *ghani* industry. From the point of view of health, it has not been proved to possess any superior value whatever. And yet with its deceptive disguise, it successfully lures men into incurring superfluous expenditure and practise self-deception. It has made it difficult for the people to obtain pure oil and pure *ghee*. And what is most important of all, it has contributed in a very large measure to

the loss of all sense of business morality from industry and commerce.

This deceptive oil puts on the garb of *ghee* to entice the public and compels the householder, though he very well knows that it is oil and not *ghee*, either to go in for it or to submit to consuming adulterated oil or adulterated *ghee*. And the consequences are that the morals, money, means of livelihood and health of the people are imperilled.

It is difficult to predict the final outcome of Pandit Bhargav's Bill in the Parliament. There does not appear to be any unanimity of opinion on this subject in the several Cabinets of the Central and State Governments. Some are in favour of *vanaspati*, some wholly against it and the rest indifferent. This became evident from the facts disclosed by Shri Jairamdas Daulatram in the course of a statement made before the Parliament. It was found that some of the State Governments had expressed opinions which ran counter to those pronounced by the ministers of those very States when earlier they met in a conference in this connection. Some ministers and experts have, consciously or unconsciously, gone beyond their sphere and made statements which have been avidly seized upon by *vanaspati* industrialists and used by them as an effective instrument of propaganda. For example, Dr Gilder was within his sphere when he narrated the results of the experiments of the experts, but he transgressed his limits when he went on to relate what had happened in the Agakhan Palace or obliged the industrialists by giving the irrelevant certificate that he himself had used *vanaspati* and did not experience any harmful effect. In the same way, if Dr S. S. Bhatnagar had confined himself to saying that a suitable colour was not available, he would have been within his jurisdiction as a chemical expert. But he exceeded it when he aired his views about how colourization would affect commerce and industry. When they knew that there were others—some of them even in the Cabinets and the class of experts—who seriously held a different opinion, they ought not to have indulged in these irrelevant statements from their responsible positions. Thereby they have rendered dubious not only their own dependability but also that of other experts and officials. Recent advertisements which form part of the propaganda drive for *vanaspati*, are making the fullest use of these irrelevant opinions, supplemented with distorted paraphrases of their own. For example, one of the advertisements says that "results proved conclusively that *vanaspati* is nutritious and wholesome." Another quotes Dr Bhatnagar's *obiter dictum*. Another declares, "*vanaspati* is wholly good. It is a wholesome fat necessary to our daily needs." Still another, "One of the doctors said that those who opposed the manufacture of *vanaspati* were in fact the friends of the rich and enemies of the poor." All these are untrue statements. The

experts have said at the most that, "From the point of view of health, the results indicate that *vanaspati* of melting point 37°C has no harmful effect as compared with raw ground-nut oil." This means that its health value is neither more nor less than *raw* ground-nut oil. There is no comparison with *ghee* or any other raw or refined oil. We do not even know how it affects human health in comparison with *refined* ground-nut oil. The experiments were made on rats. Even there, the utmost that they say is that "in comparative feeding experiments carried out on rats for three generations with raw ground-nut oil, refined ground-nut oil and *vanaspati* oil of melting points 37°C and 41°C, the results indicate that there is no deleterious effect produced by *vanaspati* as compared with the raw or refined oil." We do not know if experiments to find out the comparative value of *vanaspati* and pure *ghee* and adulterated *ghee* were made or not. We also do not know how *vanaspati* stands in comparison with raw or refined *til*-seed, rape-seed and coconut oils. Be that as it may, it can be safely asserted that *vanaspati* has not been shown to possess any special advantage over liquid oils, so far as health is concerned. Its only speciality is its capacity to lure the eyes and the minds of the people with its garb of *ghee* and to induce them to pay for it a greater price than what it should justifiably fetch.

This is not the only harm it inflicts. It has made the oil factories indispensable. The refuse that is left as residue in the process of refining the oil is purchased by oil-sellers at a cheap price and is used as one of the adulterants of oil, while it itself serves as an adulterant of *ghee*. In spite of all the expense incurred for refining and solidifying the oils, people get neither pure *ghee* nor pure oil. This makes the people think that to avoid all this worry they had better use *vanaspati* itself wholly. Thus *vanaspati* captures the market for itself by debasing other edible oils.

Since the progressive decline of the *ghani* industry oil-cakes too have become locally unavailable. The mill oil-cake is poorer in its oil content than the *ghani* cake and has more impurities. Besides, it is exported and used also as manure. It means that an essential ingredient of cattle-food is sent away across the seas or mixed with the soil. It is doubtful to what extent uncomposted oil-cake is a good manure to the soil. Thus both agriculture and cow-keeping suffer considerable harm. Of the corruption and demoralization which it leads to, the less is said the better. Adulteration and black-marketing are resorted to without any shame. False propaganda has been made an art.

In view of all these things, the people—specially the constructive *sanghs* and other public-service institutions and municipalities and *panchayats*—should deliberate upon this matter and forward their considered opinion

before the 31st August to the Food Minister of the Central Government and the Speaker of the Indian Parliament. If they agree with the opinion expressed here, it may be stated in the following form :

"In the opinion of....., the hydrogenation of edible oils and trading in hydrogenated oils should be prohibited at an early date; and so long as this is not done, all these hydrogenated oils should be coloured, so that it may become impossible to deceive the public by mixing it with pure ghee."

A copy of this resolution may also be forwarded to the Secretary, Go-seva Sangh, Gopuri, Wardha.

Wardha, 10-6-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

I fully endorse the above.

VINOBA

NOTES

Sane Guruji

The sudden demise of Sane Guruji on the 11th instant at an early age of 45 has naturally plunged the people of Maharashtra as also his personal friends elsewhere into deep sorrow. He was a great devotee, almost in the line of saints like Namdev and Tukaram, though his spirit of devotion expressed itself in the field of the service of the masses. After taking his M.A. degree he worked as a school teacher for some years and inspired his students in an inimitable manner. Soon the struggle for Swaraj threw him into the political movements of the country, and he became a popular labour leader. His writings, which consist of stories, poems, articles, addresses, etc., run into several thousand pages. They are read by men, women and children alike. Perhaps he was the greatest popular writer of modern times in Maharashtra. His books have begun to be translated in other Indian languages, and if he had lived long enough very probably he might have earned an all-India fame as a great and inspiring author. And, yet, authorship was not the object of his writings. He had a stimulating and ennobling message to give, and he wrote and spoke because he must.

Shri Ramakrishna, Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhiji were the three idols of his life, and he assimilated some characteristics of each of them. He brought to memory the unsophisticated gentleheartedness of Ramakrishna and looked towards God as a fond child looks towards its mother. He had become so thoroughly identified with the mother aspect of God, that his own sentiments and deportment towards those whom he served took the shape of those of a poor, gentle-looking mother, heavily worried for the well-being of her children. He would literally weep like a mother, when he could not bear to see the materially indigent or morally degrading condition of the people. His manner of speech and his soft tones reminded one of his second

idol — Rabindranath Tagore. And he owed his spirit of Satyagraha and concern for the have-nots to Gandhiji. He often took to fasting both as a weapon against and a penance for wrongs. The famous temple of Pandharpur was opened to Harijans as a consequence of his fast. He observed a fast of 21 days to atone for the murder of Gandhiji at the hands of a man, who happened to belong to the same social group as he.

For some time past he was identified with the Socialist Party. But he was not a man of labels. His sole concern was the well-being of the masses and the moral and material regeneration of the nation.

May his spirit inspire all servants of the people.

Wardha, 14-6-'50

K. G. M.

Short-hand Classes

Short-hand classes in Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati will be conducted under the auspices of Govindram Seksaria College of Commerce, Wardha, from 18th July, 1950. The Correspondence course will be finished within 6 months and the Reporting Course within 10 months. Besides, students will be trained in Nagari type-writing. All the students completing their courses will be examined and the Diploma will be awarded to the successful candidates. All those who are interested in the Courses should apply to the Principal, stating their age and qualifications before 30th June. Printed application forms can be had from the College Office on sending stamps worth 9 pies.

The fees for the Correspondence Course will be Rs. 60/-, for 'Shighralipi Pravin' Rs. 80/- and for Reporting Rs. 130/-.

Accommodation for a few students is available in the College hostels which will have to be reserved by paying Rs. 25/- in advance.

The system taught in the College is recognized by a Committee appointed by the Constituent Assembly of the Government of India. During the academic sessions 1948-49 and 1949-50, students from various parts of India like Assam, Bihar, U.P., Vindhya Pradesh, Bombay, Madras, Cutch, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat were admitted to these classes and have received the diploma, "Shighralipi Pravin".

ORGANIZER,
Short-hand Classes,
G. S. College of Commerce, Wardha

Scavengers' Problems Committee

The last date for submitting replies to the questionnaire, issued by the Committee is extended up to 30-6-1950.

Local bodies and social workers are requested to co-operate and send in replies at an early date.

P. H. NANAVATI
Secretary,
Scavengers' Living Conditions
Enquiry Committee,
Ahmedabad

HARIJAN

June 24

1950

VILLAGE WOMAN'S CAUSE

The case of the village woman from the point of view of the amount of toil that would fall to her share by the Village Industries Programme had also been placed before Gandhiji by advocates of her own sex. A letter by one of such advocates was replied to by Gandhiji in *Harijan* of 30th November, 1934. As it can be usefully read even today, it is reproduced in another column under the title "Why Not Labour-saving Devices".

I have an impression that another lady (Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay ?) had represented the same cause with even greater force than the one just mentioned. She said that there might be an element of truth in the argument that villages required to be industrialized to make them more prosperous and advanced ; also in the statement usually made that the villagers had little or no work for about five months in a year and they badly required some supplementary employment.

But the statement of insufficient employment was not true so far as the village women were concerned. Village women of even well-to-do classes did plenty of domestic work even if they did not go into the fields or work for wages ; and women of the poorer classes were definitely overworked in their double capacity of wage-earners and house-wives. Their work knew no Sundays, holidays or vacations. During the working season peasant women had to help the men in the fields in addition to the performance of their domestic duties. And in the off season, there was perhaps, even more work for them, when the men stayed at home whiling away their time idly in company of equally idle guests. With smoking and card-playing if not also drinking and gambling, carried on for hours at a stretch spreading filth, infectious diseases and various other vices rampantly among village men, the lot of village women was an extremely pitiable one. She wanted a programme which would give her some leisure and relief instead of additional work. And, the argument ran, examined from the woman's point of view, Gandhiji's Village Industries Programme was not in her interest. Excepting *ghani*, items of that programme were what were usually regarded as woman's occupations as opposed to man's. It was the woman who plied the *charkha*, performed at least some of the ancillary operations of weaving, if not the whole of it, ground the corn, husked the paddy, beat the pulp, tended the cow and prepared the dairy products. All this was in addition to her duties at home as a house-wife and mother of children. The

spinning-mill, flour-mill, rice-mill, paper-mill, etc., had given her a much needed relief, and Gandhiji now wanted to deprive her of it. This was cruel. She wanted Gandhiji to recommend village industries which would engage men rather than women.

The article of the 30th November, 1934 answers the economic aspect of the problem. The industries sought to be revived by Gandhiji were living village industries till recent times. Whether worked by men or women, the villagers then did find time and energy to run them, and they enjoyed better prosperity and joy of life than now on account of them. Their revival was an absolute economic necessity even if it entailed more time and labour to the village population. Improvement in the methods and implements of these industries was not ruled out, and the question of time and fatigue must be solved by research work in that direction.

But the woman's grievance, at its root, is not an economic but a social and educational problem. The cart-driver's wife, referred to by Dr Lokanathan, was rather a poor representative of her class, inasmuch as she had the good fortune of having a henpecked husband whom she could easily bend to her wishes. Unfortunately for the success of the revolution, (if fortunately for man), all women are not so termagant and for them the apprehension was true that these village industries would have to be worked by them, whether willingly or otherwise. Her complaints could not, therefore, be dismissed as puerile and peevish. Its weakness lay in being lodged against one, who was himself one of the greatest friends of women, and one of the most jealous guardians of their rights to equal honour, dignity and respect. He had long before laid down his plan to help them out of their difficult position. It was no less than a social and educational revolution, as great, if not as much noticed, as the removal of untouchability.

He had thought about it and started a revolution against it, from South Africa and continued it in India. Just as in several languages nouns have all sorts of conventional genders, irrespective of the sex or sexlessness of the objects, actions and ideas denoted by them, so also our occupations are divided conventionally into occupations for men, women and both. And the further convention is that women may assist men in the latter's occupation, but men will rarely assist women in theirs. Thus spinning, grinding, husking, cooking, brooming the house, looking after children's cleanliness, washing women's clothes or soiled clothes, fetching water etc. would not be done by men (except in the capacity of a servant), even if the housewife was indisposed. A kind householder might allow all this work to accumulate until the woman recovered, but it would not easily occur to him to do all these things himself as a matter of course. Whether it is on account of man's sense of

lordship over woman, or the effect of having been spoilt by woman, this division is a social fact. Gandhiji, however, did not reconcile himself with this sexual division of occupations and abolished it in his Ashram even as he had abolished caste and untouchability. And unnoticed he prepared the people also for the change. He made the whole Congress do as a matter of duty what was regarded as solely woman's work. I mean spinning. When it was first preached, men in villages did protest that it was woman's work, which men would be ashamed to do. But when they saw veteran Congress leaders plying the *charkha* in public and spinning being made a condition of membership in the Congress, and the presentation of self-spun hanks of yarn growing into a country-wide fashion, it became an honourable occupation for both the sexes. Similarly, too, grinding, husking, washing, scavenging and the like.

I think that if the cartman and his wife had stood before Gandhiji for a reconciliation of their domestic quarrel, Gandhiji might have enquired into their daily routine work, perhaps, might have even supported the wife's side and asked the husband to do the husking himself. And if he had said that it was not a man's job, he might have asked them to go to an Ashram for a short stay and see for themselves that it was no longer merely a woman's work.

One of the items of the *Sarvodaya* Revolution is the recognition of all work as equal in status and the removal of the false notion that particular types of work must be done only by women.

Often improvements are made by the people, who have to do jobs to which they are not traditionally accustomed. When men begin to participate in women's jobs, they would know by self-experience the labour, time and care demanded in them, and being not habituated to them would try a hundred tricks to make the jobs easy. That is how so many improvements have been introduced in the traditional methods of village industries, since the A.I.S.A. and the A.I.V.I.A. were founded. Just see how many types of *charkhas* and other tools of ancillary processes have been invented or re-arranged in new ways in the course of a generation. New types of latrines, *ghanis*, paper-making implements, husking *chakkis*, hay-choppers, the *chulas* and the Magan lamp are all innovations of less than 15 years' standing. Some of them have more than doubled the productive capacity, some have made the work lighter, some have made it easier by removing such disturbing factors as smoke and fatigue-producing postures. The cartman's wife would not threaten to leave her husband, if he offered her his co-operation and was assisted by a good technician and a practical teacher of thrift in their present humdrum life.

Wardha, 12-6-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

WHY NOT LABOUR-SAVING DEVICES

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A fair friend who was enthused over the contemplated formation of the All-India Village Industries Association, on reading my press message on the preliminary programme, writes :

"The very idea of the revival or encouragement of the hand-husking of rice and *chakki*-grinding even for villages has scared me from, and abated my enthusiasm for, village work. It seems to me an enormous waste of one's time and energy not to take advantage of the labour-saving devices in the uplift scheme. If the villagers, and along with them the uplift workers, have to husk and grind, there will hardly be leisure left for them to attend to anything else for their improvement. Besides, if the primitive methods were revived, the men will take up the work in the first flush of enthusiasm ; but ultimately the brunt of the whole work, I mean husking and grinding, will fall on us, women, and there will be a set-back to the little progress we have already made."

Underlying this argument is a fallacy. There is no question of refusing to take advantage of the labour-saving devices. If the villagers had enough to eat and to clothe themselves with, there would be no cause for home-grinding or home-husking, assuming that the question of health was not of any importance or, if it was, there was no difference between home-ground flour and mill-ground, or home-husked rice and mill-husked. But the problem is that the villages became idle when they left off husking and grinding even for their own use, and made no good use of their idle hours, whether for uplift or otherwise. A starving man or woman who has time for his or her hand will surely be glad to earn an honest anna during that time, for, he or she will resent being advised to save his or her labour when either can turn it into a few pice to alleviate starvation. My correspondent is wrong in thinking that the uplift worker has either to grind or husk. He has certainly to learn the art and know the tools, so that he can suggest improvements and understand the limitations of the tools. She is wrong, again, in thinking that in the first flush of enthusiasm men will be called upon to grind or husk or will perform these tasks of their own accord and ultimately let the brunt fall on the shoulders of women. The fact is that husking and grinding was the prerogative of women, and tens of thousands made a living out of this task, which was both dignified and invigorative. Now they are perforce idle, because the vast majority of them have not been able to find another employment in the place of these two, which we have snatched away from them.

When the fair friend writes about the "little progress" that the women have already

made, she has undoubtedly the city-dwellers in mind, for the village life is entirely untouched by uplift workers. The majority of them do not even know how the women or men live in the 7,00,000 villages of this vast land. We little know how they have deteriorated for want of nourishing food and protective clothing. And we little know how, being fed on innutritious rice or flour, which are their staple, they and their children lose stamina and what little vitality they have.

I have no partiality for return to the primitive method of grinding and husking for the sake of them. I suggest the return, because there is no other way of giving employment to the millions of villagers who are living in idleness. In my opinion, village uplift is impossible, unless we solve the pressing economic distress. Therefore, to induce the villagers to utilize their idle hours is in itself solid uplift work. I invite the fair correspondent and those who feel like her to go to some villages, live there for some time in the midst of the villagers and try to live like them, and they will soon perceive the soundness of my argument.

Harijan, 30-11-1934

The Expensiveness of Allopathy

The thoughts of the Government and the people are today directed on extension of medical facilities to the villages of India in the fight against disease. If medical relief is to receive its due place in schemes of national planning, it is necessary that a doctor should keep the interest of his patients above all other considerations. Every one is not in a position to pay for costly injections, patent medicines or expensive surgical operations. A poor man cannot go into debt for the sake of building bank balances for doctors and chemists or providing dividends for manufacturers of medicines and vaccines. A poor man cannot be deprived of the right to relief from disease. It is for the Indian doctors to end the craze for expensive treatment. At least eight out of ten persons in India live in villages. How can millions of poor villagers afford expensive treatment of the European system of medicines? Ayurvedic, Unani and especially nature-cure treatment of diseases (drugless healing) recommended by Gandhiji and Shaw, are considerably cheaper and efficacious. Besides, vaccinations and inoculations are useless and dangerous as Gandhiji wrote.

Since prevention is better than cure, every one should observe the laws of health, described in Mahatma Gandhi's excellent book, *Key to Health*.*

SORABJI R. MISTRI

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

QUESTION-BOX

Congress Elections

Q. Looking at the rowdy scenes at Congress election booths, — free fights, hurling of shoes, abusive language, rudeness towards women and many more ugly features —, and the foul and ultra-constitutional means which candidates and even polling and returning officers resort to, one wonders what the Congress is coming to. What lesson may the people take from an organization, in which there is no discipline, no consideration of complaints, and the elections are reduced to a farce giving rise to rampant hooliganism? We are either constructive workers or common people. We keep away from party politics and have no ambition for posts of responsibility. But we do desire that the Congress should be an honest and efficient political organization. We have a very deep-rooted attachment to this oldest political institution of our country and we do not feel disposed to either destroy it or see it dilapidating in this ignominious way. What shall we do under these circumstances?

A. As I have said more than once before, I am definitely of opinion that if good men do not feel themselves able enough to set right a decaying organization by entering into it, they must abandon it and dissociate from it completely. Congress is like the ancestral house, in which we were born and hence are naturally proud of it. However, if the house is dilapidating and no repairs are possible, then it is our duty to quit it and either to destroy it ourselves or let it destroy itself. It may happen that unworthy people will take possession of it and control it for a time. But when it becomes patent that no decent man joins it or helps it, the Congress will come to a crash automatically, burying in its debris, also those who stubbornly cling to it, in the same way as those who do not abandon a crumbling structure.

If those who insist on purity are anxious to take part in politics, let them form a separate organization and build it up slowly and steadily with their exemplary character and unselfish service.

Those who do not want to participate in politics actively but are all the same interested in the political policies and problems of the country will do well to stay away from any political party. At elections let them exercise their vote in favour of the candidate whom they deem to be a man of high character and public spirit, irrespective of the party to which he belongs.

Believers in Gandhiji's constructive programme should understand that at the present juncture, there can be no political party which can either totally adopt and implement it, or totally reject it. Therefore they should consider the following two qualifications in deciding how they should cast their vote:

1. The candidate should not be a communalist.

2. He or she must be a person of irreproachable character and honesty.

If a candidate of this type is not set up by any political party or does not stand independently, they had better not use their vote at all. If they can organize themselves, they may declare by appropriate means their want of confidence in the declared candidates.

Wardha, 5-6-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

(From Hindi)

GOVERNMENT POLICY ABOUT VILLAGE OCCUPATIONS

Shri Sistla Venkatakrishnaiah is an old *khadi* worker of Guntur (Andhra). Though old and ill, his main interest in life is the message of the *charkha*. He watches the *khadi* activities of the Madras Province very keenly, and if he finds that the Government policy in any industrial sphere is hostile to the spirit and success of the *charkha*, he feels uneasy and writes long and detailed letters to the Chief Minister and the Ministers concerned explaining how that policy would work prejudicially to the success of *khadi*. He seems to do so under the belief that though the Government approach to *khadi* is the same as his, owing to insufficient understanding of the *khadi* economics the Ministers initiate wrong policies and injure the very cause to which, he believes, the Government is committed.

I receive letters from several other workers also drawing my attention to the omission or commission of various acts necessary for the encouragement of village industries and occupations, e.g., regarding the encouragement given to flour-mills, rice-mills, oil-mills, *vanaspati* factories, motor transport, tractors, money crops, etc., or the negligence shown towards village products in regard to railway transport, municipal tolls etc. Some of the correspondents wonder that Government do not only not still ban these industries through decrees or not only not disallow installation of new factories, but their Ministers themselves go to perform opening ceremonies of such industrial establishments. If village industry is to be the goal of India's economic order, they cannot understand the impetus given to such large industries as compete with village industries; and, being of simple mind, they think that the Ministers are misled by designing people and should be forewarned.

I can understand the worry, which we '*khadi* faddists' feel in this respect. But I am afraid that we make a mistake in understanding the mind of the present Government. I do not think that it is doing all sorts of things haphazardly and without any policy. Its long-term policy is clear. It is that of full-fledged industrialization in every sphere possible. If it can be done in five years, it would not allow six years to work it out. Its progress in that direction is checked not for want of will on its part, but for want of capital goods, and means for their purchase or manufacture.

Village occupations can stay as artistic handicrafts and relief measures and will be even encouraged in the same way as they are in England or U.S.A., i.e., as things of beauty and art and work-houses. The *pashmina shawls* of Kashmir, and the fine muslin of Bengal and Andhra and some hand-loom weaving would have always a place in the same way as fine paintings, artistic vessels, jewellery, embroidery, artistic designs carved in stone, wood, ivory etc., particular kinds of hand-made paper and similar things of art and beauty. Such parts of even these things as can be made by mechanized industrial processes would be taken out of the handicraft sphere, leaving only such things to be done by artisans as cannot be done by machines.

But complete industrialization will necessarily take some time. Moreover, the transition to industrialization will involve sudden unemployment of large masses of people. Just as migrations have created the problem of rehabilitating persons displaced from their homes, so industrialization will create a standing problem of rehabilitating people displaced from their vocations. Both are displaced people, and they will have to be fed in some way. Western nations had to do so through their work-houses and alms-houses. A work-house is really charity feeding (*annasatra*) in the guise of temporary employment. It is like a sentence of hard work on political prisoners. The jail authorities are not very particular about the amount of work done by political prisoners. It is assigned only as a symbol of discipline and as a stimulus for getting 'remissions'. Similarly the work in a work-house is just a stimulus for getting a meal.

The Government will look upon the *charkha* organization more or less as permanent work-houses. Since India is so large and its problems of unemployment, famines etc. very great and scattered, for years to come *khadi* work may have to be carried on with varying intensity in the different parts of India. But this should not be taken to mean that the Government desires the people to be clothed by *khadi* as a normal way of life. Since even the small amount of *khadi* so produced will have to be sold, people like us who voluntarily become its propagandists will be treated with respect, and public bodies, who patronize it, will be kindly looked upon.

If we understand the Government mind this way, their acts and utterances need not cause us surprise. Our way of thinking might be different but we must realize that if we want our way to be effective through Government machinery, it would require a Government of our way of thinking. This is not possible unless the people are also persuaded to our way of thinking. The conclusion is that we must work upon the minds of the people and not of the Government.

Wardha, 1-6-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

CLEAN INDIA

Food and sanitation are two primary needs which require to be immediately attended to, if free India is to prosper properly. One single thing done scientifically will help solve this double problem. Mahatma Gandhi once calculated in the *Harijan*, that India was losing sixty crores of rupees every year, by not utilizing human excreta by way of manure, as was done in the neighbouring countries of Japan and China. In the context of present high prices, this annual loss of manure will amount to the amazing figure of at least 120 crores of rupees annually.

2. Just imagine the dry, arid, exhausted Indian soil hungering for organic manure and side by side the whole Indian countryside reeking with filthy and foul smells emanating from putrefying and putrid human excreta lying about by the roadsides and lanesides, almost anywhere and everywhere a disgusting sight, and an ideal breeding ground for flies and germs of all kinds.

3. Is there no way of reconciling this contrast? Yes, there is if we all follow the example of our Chinese brothers and bury the "dirt" in pits of suitable depth and size and turn it into 'gold' manure. Because dirt is nothing but matter in a wrong place. Suppose we resolve to do this simple thing on a nation-wide scale, the result will be simply glorious. Just imagine the fields along the whole Indian countryside enriched and fattened with organic manure, with flourishing golden crops waving their grateful, smiling heads (nourished or enriched by mother earth), as if in joy and satisfaction at being fully fed. The annual crop yield of India will increase in value to the tune of 120 crores of rupees every year. Is this the dream of an idle dreamer? Or can it be actually realized?

4. Yes, it can be done provided there is the will to do it. Let us then turn this so-called dirt into wealth throughout the length and breadth of Bharat, from the Himalayas to Cape Camorin, from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal.

5. The question that next arises is, can this be done on a voluntary basis? Senapati Bapat, Appasaheb Patwardhan and Vinoba Bhave tried to bring this about in Maharashtra. But they could not make people reform their ways in this respect and have met with indifferent success. The success is really infinitesimal. At this rate, it may take decades if not the best part of a century to accomplish the task to an appreciable extent. Can we afford to wait that long? Or shall we have to give up the attempt as hopeless? I do not think that a poor nation like India can afford to lose national wealth to the extent of 120 crores of rupees annually and continue to remain filthy and insanitary into the bargain. But, if voluntary effort is too slow to achieve the desired result, can it be done just with the help of legislation

supported by propaganda through Press and Platform? I think that too would fail, without harnessing the active co-operation of the people. Legislation and efforts of constructive workers must work together to bring about a speedy reform. Legislation should without delay be introduced either in the Central or States Legislatures for providing the following things:

(i) It should be made a penal offence to defecate or urinate in any place outside a specially provided place, pit or receptacle.

(ii) The Municipalities in urban and suburban areas and *Panchayats* in rural areas should be made responsible for providing sufficient and suitable places for all those who have no private pits, privies or urinals, as the case may be.

(iii) The residents of rural and urban areas should be made responsible to the respective local *Panchayats* or Municipalities and they in their turn should be made responsible to the Government for providing raw or prepared manure from human excreta in a fixed proportion to the resident population.

(iv) Loans should where necessary be locally raised for constructing the most economic type of pits, privies and urinals suitable for the locality.

(v) Failure to furnish manure both in cases of individuals and local authorities (the *Panchayats* and Municipalities) should be punished with a fine not exceeding 5/4 of the price of the deficit.

6. The public should be taught through Press and Platform the nature of this legislation, the date from which it comes into operation, the latest methods of constructing pits, privies and urinals of types suitable to the respective areas and of preparing the valuable manure. Special emphasis should be laid on the splendid result that can be achieved both from the agricultural and economic and sanitary points of view.

7. An expert and capable organizer with true missionary zeal should be put in charge of doing the work.

8. If this programme or a similar one is followed with zeal and enthusiasm, it should be perfectly possible to make India a healthy, wealthy and clean nation within a short time. God grant the people and the Government the will to achieve this splendid result.

A. V. BARVE

CONTENTS	PAGE
VANA-MAHOTSAVA ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	145
VANASPATI PROHIBITION BILL ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	145
VILLAGE WOMAN'S CAUSE...K. G. MASHRUWALA	148
WHY NOT LABOUR-SAVING DEVICES ... GANDHIJI	149
QUESTION BOX: CONGRESS ELECTIONS ... K. G. MASHRUWALA	150
GOVERNMENT POLICY ABOUT VILLAGE OCCUPATIONS...K. G. MASHRUWALA	151
CLEAN INDIA ... A. V. BARVE	152
NOTES:	
SANE GURUJI ... K. G. M.	147
SHORT-HAND CLASSES	147
SCAVENGERS' PROBLEMS COMMITTEE ... P. H. NANAVATI	147
THE EXPENSIVENESS OF ALLOPATHY ... SORABJI R. MISTRI	150