

# HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: K. G. MASHRUWALA

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TWO ANNAS

## CHARKHA — PIVOT OF CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

### The President's Message to the Nation

The whole country will shortly celebrate Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday, which Gandhiji himself used to designate as *Charkha Jayanti*. Spinning and *khadi* propaganda have always been the regular and particular programmes in its celebration. It is particularly necessary at present to help and encourage the *charkha* and *khadi* in every manner, because in the turmoil of politics *khadi* is rather pushed back and the *charkha* has been almost forgotten by many people. Gandhiji considered the *charkha* the pivot of all his constructive programme. And so it really is. Consequently, not only will all *khadi*-lovers be obliged if on the occasion of this *Jayanti* the *charkha* is encouraged, but those who take part in its encouragement will themselves have performed one of their duties. I hope the *Jayanti* will be celebrated with enthusiasm.

New Delhi, 21-8-'50

RAJENDRAPRASAD

(Translated freely from the original in Hindi)

## EXTRA PROFITS AND BONUSES

I have been thinking of the Bombay Textile Labourers' strike. I understand that it arises from a demand for a certain amount of bonus not paid to them.

Let us go a little deep, even if not to the root of the matter all at once. It will be seen that such disputes arise because of the assumption that ownership in an industry vests either in the share-holders, or the workers, or both in partnership.

I submit that none of these assumptions are correct, and the claim to ownership by either of the parties or jointly by both must be denied. Ownership in all industries, particularly in large-scale ones, as in all land and mines, belongs to the State as Trustee for its principals — the nation.

After an equitable return to the capital and an equitable payment of remuneration to workers of all grades, all extra profits must be re-

garded as public property. The State may be invested with discretionary powers to spend some amount of the extra profits in making gifts by way of bonus or in some other way in the interest of workers (including managers) and investors and for their encouragement. But this payment should be looked upon as a gift and not as the recognition of a right. No one may claim anything more than a fair remuneration for his services, whether physical or intellectual. What is fair might depend upon the prevailing ideas of the times and may change from time to time. But there can be no right to the surplus.

Unless this principle is boldly adopted and laid down as the cardinal doctrine of the State, these disputes will arise again and again and be exploited for purposes of party politics. The principle is in accordance with the *mantra* of the *Ishopanishad*. Pakistan has anticipated us by laying down as its very first doctrine in its Objectives-Resolution that —

"Sovereignty over the entire Universe belongs to God Almighty alone, and the authority which He has delegated to the State of Pakistan through its people, so that it should be exercised within the limits prescribed by Him, is a sacred trust."

No doubt, men will interpret "the limits prescribed by Him" according to their own limited understanding and capacity, and in practice make it a doctrine of exploitation. But there is scope in it for advancing in the right direction, if there is the will.

The same doctrine in the spirit of the *Ishopanishad* may be stated thus:

"Sovereignty over the entire Universe belongs to God alone, and man may take only what comes to his share after all living beings put to use by him as also those whom it is his duty to look after, are duly provided for. The authority to regulate this in India is delegated to the Government of the Union of India through its people, so that it should be exercised in the spirit of the above principle as a sacred trust."

Wardha, 3-9-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA



## YARN CONTRIBUTIONS

Shri Narandas Gandhi has made a very useful suggestion in the *Harijan* dated 29th July, 1950, about carrying on public institutions on contributions of yarn. We all know how difficult it has become these days to raise funds for public institutions and activities. Contributions in the shape of money may not be easy for many people to make but contributions of the fruits of one's own labour can be made easily by every one. While it may be possible to run even big institutions like the Sevagram Ashram on such contributions, there is no doubt that the activities of many small and local institutions can be easily conducted through such self-help on the part of members and well-wishers.

We have got a local spinning club, *Charkha Parishad*, established for the last two and a half years. We organize small programmes of mass-spinning competitions, tournaments etc. On occasions of national celebrations like the *Charkha Jayanti*, *Independence Day* etc., we have to incur some small expenses in this connection. All the members of our *Parishad* are themselves not in a position to make monetary contributions and we used to meet these expenses by asking for small contributions from friends and sympathizers. But this year one member proposed that we should collect contributions from members in kind, namely, in the shape of their self-spun yarn. The suggestion met with immediate and enthusiastic response and members of the club, who number only fifteen, contributed among themselves about 300 hanks. This gave us sufficient resources to carry on our normal activities during the year. I may mention that the members are almost all regular spinners, some of them doing the complete process from raw cotton to yarn. Hence there is not much difficulty in making yarn contributions. Our monthly subscription has of course always been in the shape of yarn — one hank per month.

We have thus got over the difficulty of approaching outsiders even for small contributions to meet the expenses of our normal activities. This experiment has given us new inspiration and has opened a new vista of self-help and co-operative effort. This experience may provide a useful example to other workers elsewhere.

Jaipur, 10-8-'50

SIDDHARAJ DHADDA

[This is good. Only let us understand that the idea of yarn contributions or any other contribution in kind is not a virtue of necessity — namely, difficulty of obtaining monetary contributions, but is based on principle. Even if there is a boom in the money-market and people are inclined to contribute money very liberally the suggestion of Shri Narandas Gandhi is not to accept money contributions.

K. G. M.]

## ASHRAM OBSERVANCES IN ACTION

(By M. K. Gandhi)

### Introduction (Concluded)

The Ashram was established in a hired house at Kochrab on May 22, 1915. Some citizens of Ahmedabad undertook to finance it. At the beginning there were about 20 inmates, most of them from South Africa. Of these again the large majority spoke Tamil or Telugu. The chief activity in the Ashram at this time was teaching Sanskrit, Hindi and Tamil to the old as well as the young. The young also received some general education. Hand-weaving was the principal industry with some carpentry as accessory to it. No servants were engaged, therefore cooking, sanitation, fetching water, — everything was attended to by the Ashramites. Truth and other observances were obligatory on them all. Distinctions of caste were not observed. Untouchability had not only no place in the Ashram, but its eradication from Hindu society was one of our principal objectives. Emancipation of women from some customary bonds was insisted upon from the first. Therefore women in the Ashram enjoy full freedom. Then again it was an Ashram rule that persons following a particular faith should have the same feeling for followers of other faiths as for their co-religionists.

But for one thing I was solely responsible, and I am indebted to the West for it. I refer to my dietetic experiments, which commenced in 1888 when I went to England for studies. I always invite members of my family and other co-workers to join in. The experiments were designed to achieve three objects, viz. (1) to acquire control over the palate as a part of self-control in general; (2) to find out which diet is the simplest and the cheapest so that by adopting it we might identify ourselves with the poor; and (3) to discover which diet is necessary for perfect health, as maintenance of health is largely dependent upon correct diet.

If in England I had not been under a vow to be a vegetarian, I might perhaps never have undertaken experiments in diet. But once I began to experiment, these three objectives took me into deeper waters, and I was led to make various kinds of experiments. And the Ashram too joined in though these experiments are not a part of Ashram discipline.

The reader has perhaps now seen that the Ashram set out to remedy what it thought were defects in our national life from the religious, economic and political standpoints. As we gathered new experiences, we undertook fresh activities. Even now I cannot say that the Ashram has embarked on all possible activities that I can think of. There have been two limitations. First, we were sure we must cut our coat according to our cloth, that is we must manage



with what funds were placed at our disposal by friends without any special effort at collection. Secondly we should not go in search of new spheres of activity, but if any activity naturally suggested itself to our minds, we should go in for it without counting the cost.

These two limitations spring from a religious attitude. Religious attitude is faith in God, that is doing everything in dependence upon and under the inspiration of God. The man of religion conducts such activities as are sent by God with such resources as God places at his disposal. He never lets us see that He Himself does anything; He achieves His aims through men inspired by Him. When help was received from unexpected quarters or from friends without our asking for it, my faith led me to believe that it was sent by God. Similarly when some activity came to us unsought so that not to take it up would be sheer cowardice, laziness or the like, I thought it was a Godsend.

The same principle applies to co-workers as to material resources and to activities. We might have the funds and know how they are to be used, but we can do nothing in the absence of co-workers. Co-workers also should come unsought. We did not merely imagine but we had a living faith that the Ashram was God's. If therefore He wished to make the Ashram His instrument as regards any activity, it was for Him to place the requisite men and munitions at the Ashram's disposal. Phoenix, Tolstoy Farm and Sabarmati Ashram have all been conducted more or less according to these principles consciously or unconsciously. Ashram rules were observed at first with some laxity, but the observance has become stricter from day to day.

The Ashram population doubled itself in a few months. Again the Kochrab bungalow was a hardly suitable building for an ashram. It would do for one well-to-do family, but not for sixty men, women and children engaged in various activities and observing *brahmacharya* and other vows. However we had to manage with what building was available. But very soon it became impossible to live in it for a number of reasons. As if God wanted to drive us out of it, we had suddenly to go out in search of a new site and to vacate the bungalow. The curious will look up the *Autobiography* for an account of these events. There was one defect in the ashram at Kochrab which was remedied after we had removed to Sabarmati. An ashram without orchard, farm or cattle would not be a complete unit. At Sabarmati we had cultivable land and therefore went in for agriculture at once.

Such is the prehistory and history of the Ashram. I now propose to deal with its observances and activities in so far as I remember them. My diary is not at hand. Even if it is, it takes no note of the personal history of the

Ashramites. I therefore depend upon the memory alone. This is nothing new for me, as *Satyagraha in South Africa* and the *Autobiography* were written in the same manner. The reader will please bear this limitation in mind, as he goes through these pages.

(Translated from Gujarati by V. G. D.)

## THE DISCIPLINE OF THE FAST

Shri Gopababu, Secretary, Sarva Seva Sangh, observed a seven days' fast from 21st to 28th August. He broke the fast on the morning of the 28th with coconut water. The breaking of the fast was preceded by the recitation of *mantras* from the *Upanishads*, singing of *bhajans* and *Ramadhun*. This was followed by spinning for about 20 minutes. Before breaking the fast Shri Gopababu addressed a few words in Uriya to the workers who were present there. Its translation is reproduced below:

"The urge for a fast had been coming to my mind for a long time. Many a time it had become strong. And yet it did not materialize. But after the Angul Conference threw on me the responsibility of the Secretaryship of the Sarva Seva Sangh, the idea of a fast gained further strength. I felt that I should develop within me such strength and capacity as would enable me to swallow and digest the poison of my colleagues. Whenever I met Vinobaji, I made clear to him that my sole purpose in undertaking this new responsibility was to bring together the constructive workers, who today work apart from one another, and to make them work in unison. I do not know how far I shall succeed in it, but nonetheless it is my aim. I have not planned any other constructive work. The last Wardha meeting made this urge stronger. We all criticize Congressmen, but weaknesses have crept into ourselves to such an extent that we are drawing ourselves away from one another. What I saw outside, I see also here. We are unable to work together with mutual goodwill. All these things strengthened me to make up my mind to undertake the fast, and I began it.

"A seven-day fast is not a great thing. In fact, a longer fast is necessary. Indeed I feel that an age of fasts is come! And we may have to continue this discipline. Bapu also used to say so. As it is, the reins of Government are in the hands of persons who have sympathy for us. But it is very likely that they may tomorrow pass into the hands of a party, completely opposed to our constructive programme. Hence, mere talk of *ahimsa* will not do; it is necessary to develop our strength.

"When I spoke about the idea of a fast to Ramadevi, she completely approved of it. You must not, therefore, think that this fast was directed against any particular event or person of this place. There is nothing of the kind.

"Three things should be borne in mind in a fast. The fast should never be undertaken through anger, ill-will, or contempt towards any one. Self-purification is possible only if the mind is cheerful and calm. Secondly, there should be no thinking about the fast itself while the fast lasts. It weakens one's mind. Thirdly, one should not think of one's health, sleep etc. In a fast one has to maintain the *yogic* state of mind. One should think only of God and maintain cheerfulness of mind. I observed silence yesterday. It proved very beneficial to me. I translated into Uriya the 18 verses of the *Upanishad* selected by Shri Vinoba. I awoke at 3 a.m. and disposed of a good deal of work. Taking plenty of water and such other things are but minor details. But the above are the essentials of a fast."

KANETKAR

(Translated from Hindi)



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## CHEAPNESS

For life, air is more important than water, water more important than food, and food more important than cloth. Nature has so provided that what is more important is also more easily available and less capable of being exclusively possessed. One has only to keep his nostrils open and allow his lungs to be exercised to supply oneself with air. Water requires greater effort to get and consume, and is capable of being exclusively possessed to a certain extent. Food is still more subject to these handicaps. It requires labour, and also a base, for production—not to speak of tools. And this gives rise to the complicated question of ownership of land and its produce.

Cheapness depends upon two factors: abundance of supply and difficulty of exclusive possession. To the extent water is capable of exclusive possession, it, too, loses its cheapness. This happens, for instance, in the case of water in private wells, tanks, cisterns, parts of currents running through one's lands etc. Even if it were abundant, and not needed by the possessor, he is able to charge some price for it. It loses its cheapness also, where it is not abundant.

Since land, the base on which food is produced, as also food itself, is limited and is capable of being exclusively possessed and has been so done, it is still less cheap than water.

It is not possible to increase the amount of cultivable land beyond a certain limit, and, though its productive capacity has not reached its maximum limit, the quantity of food will be, in any particular period, always limited. Food will, therefore, always cost something. It cannot be free or very cheap. But its costliness is further enhanced by the degree of exclusive possession exercised upon both land and its produce—the food—and by the employment of arable land to uses other than the production of the necessary amount of food. In order to reduce the costliness of food, it is necessary to increase the productive capacity of land, to employ as much arable land as is needed for production of abundant food in preference to other uses, and to reduce the possibility of exclusive possession of land and food, at present secured by the institution of private property. All land and its produce must belong to the State as Trustee for its people and such other beings as it can reach. Whether a holding is a large zamindari comprising hundreds of acres, or a small farm of a few *bighas*, the possession or legal ownership over it and its produce must be deemed to be on behalf of the State. (The word *State* should be understood here in a wide sense. It does not mean the Central Government or the

Government of a province, but the smallest local Government).

The institution of private property, the desire to possess one's lands and house, and to have as much of them as possible, and to consider all surplus profits of one's lands or industry as one's own wealth is very deeply rooted in people's minds. Many people think that it is an instinct inseparable from human nature. They believe that it is the only incentive, which can make man work energetically for creating wealth. I do not believe so. But it is true that it has established itself for a long time in human societies, and it might take some time to get over it. It might also need graded stages to convert man from a worker for selfish ends into one for the welfare of the State. But it is necessary that this should happen, and we must endeavour to discover methods for achieving it.

The abolition of the zamindari and *malguzari* systems has removed the absentee landlord to a certain extent. It was necessary. The next thing necessary is to bring about a right adjustment of relations between landed and lessee cultivators and agricultural labourers.

Our present economic and social order, based on individual and separate proprietorship, is very crude. It does not enable a cultivator to realize that it is not sufficient that his own piece of land should be well cultivated and yield good profits, but that his neighbouring fields should also be cultivated in the best manner possible and that he stands to lose if the neighbour's cultivation is bad. Rather, under the present system, a cultivator has often the devilish desire to adopt methods which might injure the neighbouring lands and their proprietors. For instance, it is not an uncommon experience in villages that, if there is a common well between two fields, their proprietors will vie with one another in causing damage to each other's fields, and in that evil rivalry both the fields will deteriorate in quality and they will bring their own bankruptcy through ruinous litigation. The system, which makes it possible to partition property not capable of being physically divided in a profitable manner, must be ended. In a factory owned by a limited company, a holder of even fifty per cent of shares cannot claim a physical partition of the factory and ask for specific possession of half the factory. He might seek to become its managing director on the strength of his fifty per cent shares, but that would mean possession of the whole factory. In the same way, the land of a village must not be physically partitioned, if it could be tilled together with greater advantage, or has a common source of irrigation. Each field must be assessed in accordance with its capacity to produce its staple crop of cereals in a normal year, and it should be assigned a capital value, not in terms of money, but in terms of produce. Assuming that absentee-landlordism has been totally abolished previously, and all the fields in the villages are so assessed, all of them should be regarded as one



unit, constituting one single village industry, of which each hitherto owner is a shareholder to the extent of the crop-value of his fields. A small plot should be assigned to each cultivating family, whether it hitherto owned any land or not, for what may be termed "personal hobby-cultivation". This is to satisfy its patriotic sentiments for land, to enable it to make experiments, to grow fruits, vegetables, flowers etc., particularly liked by it, to keep its goats, swine, poultry etc., and for other similar purposes.

The rest of the land must be cultivated as village land. An estimate should be made of the cereals, pulses, vegetables, etc. needed for (a) the full maintenance of the population for at least fifteen months, (b) payment of wages, in addition to food, to enable wage-earners to purchase their own necessities, (c) payment of revenue and other dues to Government, (d) payment of 'procurement levy' if any, (e) payment of interest on debts if any, and (f) expenses of and incidental to cultivation. Whether some of these items are paid in cash or kind, and whether its clothing and other needs are produced locally or purchased from outside, these are charges which have to be met by the village, before there can be any surplus for capitalization, innovations and improvements, or sharing of profits. The sum total of these items is, therefore, the minimum agricultural wealth, which the village must produce in order to live.

But the village must produce much more than this, in order that it might improve its agriculture, provide for public hygiene, sanitation, schools, roads, etc., raise the standard of living of its population, pay rewards or bonuses to regular workers; and, lastly, dividends to share-holders. The last two payments are possible only after making due reservations for the other items, but they are items, in which labourers and share-holders would be personally interested, and they would realize that these are possible only if they all worked together with all their energy. They would be all workers whether they directed, managed, supervised, or toiled as labourers according to their capacity.

The interest in the share could be transferred wholly or partly as the owner liked. On his death, his heirs would take such part of it as each might be entitled to. It would not entail physical division of the land, except that provision would have to be made to assign a plot to a new family entering into a community either from outside, or through division of the family.

This is roughly the kind of organization which I think should replace the present one. Whether it should be set up through co-operatives or *panchayats*, is a matter of convenience.

It should, I believe, result in a united effort to work on the field with zeal and hope, and in creating more food. One would be also interested in showing that the production is more than that estimated. There would be no exclusive possession of individuals either over land or its produce. So there would be no cause for concealing the produce as at present. All these are factors, which lead to cheapness.

Wardha, 5-9-'50

K. G. MASHRUWALA

## NEED TO REJUVENATE THE CONGRESS

Gandhiji ceased to be a member of the Congress in the year 1934. He continued to guide the Congress after that on all matters in which his guidance was sought. But he never again entered the Congress as one of its members. Shortly before his death he was advising for a change of the Constitution of the Congress by which every adult subject of the Republic could be a member of it without having to pay any fees. He also thought out the process of introducing the old Indian *panchayat* system as a part and parcel of its executive machinery. Later on he advised the Congress to retire from power and go back to villages to serve them, and to transform itself into a *Loka Sevak Sangha*.

Gandhiji always held that real power rested with the people and not with the few who ruled. To go to the source, to educate the public and help them in running their administration was the objective. The Congress, in his opinion, should be disbanded and then blossom out into a *Loka Sevak Sangh*.

The present Congress did not accept his views with all their implications. It has kept the Government machinery to itself, but in other matters it has proceeded to follow Gandhiji's ideals of a *Loka Sevak Sangh* from within itself.

The Congress membership rules and the adopted structure based on *panchayats* and effective members are all very well. It was hoped by the framers of the new Congress Constitution that if the qualification for being a member of the *panchayat* was really insisted upon, then it will lead to the creation of a body of servants of the nation. According to the Constitution, they must have some very exacting qualifications. They are:

- (1) to be habitual wearers of *khadi*,
- (2) to eschew untouchability in every form,
- (3) to be teetotallers,
- (4) to be believers in inter-communal unity and to have equal respect for faiths of other people,
- (5) to believe in equality of opportunity and status for all.

These are great qualifications. Such qualified men are to vote for office-bearership of the Congress organization. Persons who in addition to their possessing those primary qualifications should have the additional qualifications of putting in from day to day some active service to the nation in the shape of constructive activity are to be the effective members of the Congress. The office-bearers are to be elected from amongst these effective members.

The scrutiny about the effective membership, this year, has shown that persons have been classed as effective members, who have not those qualifications. In the meeting of the A.I.C.C. in February last, the effective-membership clause has been made null and void, up to the sitting of the coming September Session of the Congress.

The Congress has examined itself, and to its credit, it had the courage to disclose the rot that has gone to the core. It has applied the surgeon's knife to one spot. But it is only a partial work that has been done.

Do the persons registering themselves as qualified members of the Congress really possess those high qualifications? Probably a very small fraction will pass the test. If that is so, the Nasik Congress is meeting with the sanction of persons, whose basic qualification for voting is questionable. With this basic blot in the structure, can the Congress hope to be a really powerful democratic organization? Can the Congress Parliamentary Board go to send up candidates for membership of legislatures with this basic flaw and yet strive to do something revolutionary to ameliorate the condition of the masses? I doubt if it can be accomplished.

But the matter is not past remedying. The Nasik Congress can proceed to form a body for scrutinizing the membership qualification of the qualified members. Those who are not qualified shall have their names



removed. The genuinely qualified members only will remain to form *panchayats*. These *panchayats* may then fill up the posts of office-bearers of the Congress. The disqualified ones will automatically have to vacate, leaving the Congress offices for the persons who have genuinely passed the test.

The number of *khadi*-wearers in the country is very limited, particularly now. The number of those who have eschewed untouchability in every form is also limited. The implications have to be understood, analysed and tested in regard to the immediate past of the aspirant for the qualified membership. If this is done, there will be a great purge and a beginning for the ending of the fraud which in many cases marred the fairness of Congress elections. If the Nasik Congress will do this one thing, it will be laying the foundation for the making of the Congress really a rejuvenated and morally powerful organization, which it is not today.

The General Secretary of the Congress has complained that "we do not find a sense of gratitude and loyalty to Congress in the hearts of the people today for what they owe to it." This should lead to a searching of the hearts. Has the Congress the tradition of conducting elections with the same scrupulousness which is observed in Governmental elections? The Congress had already taken to corrupt practices sixteen years ago, in 1934, when Gandhiji left it. The Congress has not been able to purge itself of corruption all these years and therefore it has been losing its hold on the loyalty of the people. Let a beginning be made at Nasik for purging the Congress of its pseudo-voters or *panchayats* and it will be a step for bringing back Gandhiji in the Congress, which means taking one step for basing the organization on truth and the acquisition of the strength that it implies. The declaration of objectives, however high-sounding, will be of no use in securing loyalty of the people to the Congress. It is painfully apparent that the Congress is losing its hold on the masses.

If the Congress will strictly and justly observe its own membership rules and conduct elections in a way that commands respect of observers, then it is bound gradually to feel that power comes from the bottom. With an active realization of this sense, the Congress will, in its own way, proceed to shed itself of power, without bringing in chaos. The Congress then will be ashamed to be regulating a State, claiming the objective of attaining world peace and at the same time allowing sixty per cent of its central revenue to be spent on armaments. Either the Congress will be outside of Government, or the Government will be outside of the Congress. The latter will be in the Government, only if it is able to usher in a State which has eschewed violence and armaments even for self-defence. Defence and offence are meaningless terms when tactics are violent. Every offensive action may be interpreted as a defensive measure for stopping the aggression of the opponent.

At the present moment it is idle to expect the Government of India to reduce military expenditure. People depend upon the military for defence. Any increase in the number of Bombing Planes or additions to the Navy are hailed with a sense of greater security. Under the circumstances the Government may not find a way to minimize military expenditure. These expenses have to be met. The Central Revenue is largely obtained from income-taxes. There must be rich people and dividend-paying large industries to supply the necessary revenue. The large industries compete and kill the cottage industries. But these competing large industries are maintained for the earning of the Central revenue and therefore for contributing to its share of the military expenditure.

Under these circumstances the Congress defining membership qualification comes in and points out a method for the beginning of a better set-up for the future for the creation of a non-violent India. The qualifications laid down for *panchayatship*, if strictly adhered to, will make for a great evolution in the following way:

I. The *Khadi* clause, and its implications: Every

qualified member is to be a habitual *khadi*-wearer. After so many years we need not hunt for a better word than "habitual" indicating constant wearing of *khadi*. The word *habitual* signifies the fact that occasional use of *khadi* cannot be regarded as a qualification for membership. The implication of habitual wearing of *khadi* is great. It lays the foundation of the cottage industry of hand-spinning and weaving and further works as a symbol for the introduction and protection of all essential cottage industries for meeting the primary necessities of life.

Today the *khadi*-spirit is dying. Less and less *khadi* is being used and the Congress is having less and less prestige. *Khadi* connects the Congress directly with the poor people—the masses. If 14 lakh qualified members of the Congress clad themselves wholly in *khadi* every day of all the 365 days in the year then a demand for *khadi* is created which in money value will amount to 3 to 4 crores of rupees. Congressmen striving to be qualified members will have to catch the *khadi*-spirit and thereby lay the foundation for making *khadi* the national wear.

The cotton spinning and weaving mills will not be rendered idle thereby. Already our cotton mills are exporting seventy to eighty crores rupees worth of cotton goods. To the extent the national wear becomes *khadi*, to that extent the Government will be diverting the mills to exporting more and more of their products outside India and making mill cloth more and more expensive for home consumption. It is a recognized practice to make factory products more costly for home consumption to favour the export of those products. But when in this process a mill becomes unnecessary it may be closed down without regret. The *khadi* clause therefore makes a beginning for popularizing *khadi* and the spirit underlying the use of *khadi*. The cottage industries thrive all along the line and people become more and more cottage-industry-minded.

The mills feed the finances for armament and in return create the necessity of armed protection. This vicious ring can be broken only if the people become cottage-industry-minded and therefore peace-minded. The *khadi* clause makes a beginning for this. And when the people are peace-minded in the correct sense, the people's Government will have no inducement to maintain the army expenditure, and for its feeding will not be tied to the mills as the present Government is. When this comes to be, the brave people of India will be able to lay down their arms and declare to the world that India is an 'open continent' as occasionally belligerent countries declare some cities as open cities. India will then be able to inform the belligerent world that she believes in living in peace and in dying for peace and has laid down the arms. If a country then becomes an aggressor on India, India will stand against such aggression through her non-violence. Indians will have the strength of getting killed without killing and even in death will not submit to slavery. This unconquerable non-violent bravery will be the real peace message of India to the world.

Mere verbal affirmation of peaceful intention, as we have been making today, is of little use. The motif of the *charkha* woven on an army flag or the motif of the Ashoka Lions on the Cannon insignia of the artillerymen will then be anachronisms.

II. The *Untouchability* Clause: There is more in this clause than is apparent. The language is "He (a qualified member) does not observe or recognize untouchability in any shape or form." This is to be regarded as an abbreviated way of expression of what Gandhiji laid down as the qualifying clause for being a member of the *Loka Sevak Sangha* as under: "If a Hindu, he must have abjured untouchability in any shape or form in his own person or in his family."

The test of untouchability is on the reaction to it in socio-religious conduct. One may eat and drink from the hands of a so-called untouchable, but when it comes to



a *shraddha* or marriage ceremony, he may shirk the responsibility of standing for abjuring untouchability. In his daughter's or son's or friend's marriage ceremony or in the *shraddha* ceremony in his own house or where he is invited to participate, if the untouchables are treated separately, he cannot take part in it. And thousands of Congressmen today think nothing of participating in these socio-religious functions where there is a breach of the qualifying clause. If the untouchability clause is really respected with its full implications, then it will give the strength to the Hindu Society and therefore to the nation which it lacks today. The strength will be born of purity and non-violence which is breached by the observance of untouchability.

Despite the present law of the land and the new Constitution the socio-religious customs of the Hindus are not purged of the tinge of untouchability. A strict observance of this qualifying clause will usher a social reform which will make India to be true to her promise and her great culture as an exponent of the urge for creating a peaceful atmosphere for humanity all over the world.

Let the conductors of the Nasik Congress take note and create conditions for faithful observance of the qualifying clauses for *panchayatship*.

SATISHCHANDRA DASGUPTA

Sodepur, August 14, 1950

## SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN COTTON

### (I)

One of the problems created by the Partition is now to obtain supply of cotton needed by us. Against 48 *lakh* bales produced by all-India, the present production of Bharat is only 28 *lakh*s. Taking the present population of India to be 30 crores and the average per capita consumption of cloth 16 yards, we would need 40 *lakh* bales to meet our requirements. In order to make this deficit good, the Government has recently artificially enhanced the prices of cotton so that the farmer may be induced to increase its cultivation. Leaving aside the question, how far the enhancement of the rates would benefit the *kisan* and assuming that this would tempt him to enlarge the acreage of cotton cultivation, would it not adversely affect our food-production and make it more difficult? Then there is also the shortage of jute, and the acute shortage of sugar. The official of every department of agriculture exhorts the *kisan* to extend the cultivation of the crop to which he is attached, and the poor *kisan* is puzzled as to how he can find space for all these crops in his limited land. As for the land which lies fallow, there is not enough of it even at present for the cattle, with the result that the condition of the cow, whom we need for the agriculturally useful bullocks and the nutritionally important milk is deteriorating day by day. Madhya Bharat offers an instance in point. Until recently it enjoyed a good reputation for cattle-breeding, and provided about half of the cattle needed by us. But the tractor cultivation which has been introduced there has begun to destroy this age-long occupation. The conclusion is clear: the "grow more food" campaign of this nature will not succeed. And then, how long would the India Government be able to suffer the huge loss amounting to crores of rupees by thus artificially

fixing the rates? Besides, the control over the rates of these products lies mainly in the hands of U.S.A. She can raise or lower the prices at will and thus cause harm to the cultivation of that crop here. There is yet another question—the one pertaining to the transport of cotton to all parts of the country. In the absence of facilities for transport the villager does not get his cotton at the right price or in good condition; and the cotton grown in villages in the far-away interior does not fetch the right price. This problem will last so long as cotton is grown only in a few selected areas, for there is no likelihood that we will have enough and easy means of transport in the near future.

Again, since India does not produce fine and long-staple cotton, we have to import this variety from foreign lands, and spend crores of rupees on it so that our Dollar Reserve is running out. In order to stop this drain, emphasis is being laid on the cultivation of fine-fibre cotton. But it is, perhaps, not realized that this will affect the per-acre yield of cotton, as also the percentage of ginned cotton to *kapas*. Moreover, fibres of the cotton of foreign seed being less strong than those of the indigenous cotton, the cloth manufactured out of it is less durable; this may for practical purposes, reduce the average of 16 yards to as low as 12 yards only per head. Inevitably, therefore, we shall have to replace the present unco-ordinated and non-self-reliant, ill-organized centralized system of production by a decentralized, self-reliant production plan capable of being worked out in every place. It is indispensable for making up the shortage of cotton if for nothing else. It follows from this that we should—

(1) make use of land lying absolutely useless without encroaching on land usable either for growing food or cattle-pasture;

(2) instead of wasting our energy on the cultivation of crops virtually controlled by foreign countries, take to cultivating cotton in our courtyards, back-gardens and elsewhere within the compound of the house, and be self-reliant;

(3) if the cattle-power does not suffice, utilize man-power and pay adequately for it, instead of employing the machine;

(4) adopt a variety of cotton suitable for every soil and climate;

(5) give as much importance to the durability of cloth as to its fineness;

(6) looking to the present economic condition and backwardness of the peasants, select only such varieties of cotton as the cultivators can easily grow and profit by;

(7) and before setting about doing any of these things, shake ourselves free of the spell of money and adopt the ideal of self-sufficiency based on honest work.

Sevagram, 13-7-'50

DADABHAI NAIK

(Translated from Hindi)



### PRASEWORTHY

Led by Mahatma Gandhi, the Harijan movement for the removal of untouchability and service of Harijans has now entered a phase when it is necessary that it should receive active co-operation from all quarters including Harijans themselves. So far back as 1917, Gandhiji initiated the movement by deputing Shri Mamasahab Phadke to work among the sweepers of Godhra. Thereafter, the Antyaj Seva Mandal and the Harijan Sevak Sangha started *ashrams* and hostels in various parts of the country. They are rendering useful service to the Harijans. Harijans themselves have now begun to start education societies and similar bodies to give an impetus to the movement, and they have begun to self-help Harijan uplift work.

The following are some of the activities organized by Harijans themselves in Gujarat. They are all characterized by a special feature, namely, that these institutions are not restricted to any particular community or section among the Harijans or even the entire Harijan class only, but are open to both touchables and untouchables.

The Rohit Mandal of the Surat District has started a hostel, known as "Sardar Chhatralaya", in the Bardoli Ashram for Harijan and other backward-class students.

The Harijan Kelavani Mandal of Kadi Taluka (North Gujarat) has founded the Mahatma Gandhi Ashram and runs a hostel. In Vijapur Taluka, the local Harijan Kelavani Mandal has started a hostel, named "Thakkar Bapa Chhatralaya". The Harijan Yuvak Mandal of Visnagar-Kheralu Taluka has started its "Sayaji Hostel". Some educated Harijans of Dholka Taluka have formed a registered society and founded the "Siddhartha Chhatralaya" at Dholka. In Kosamba (near Surat) also a few enthusiastic Harijans have started a hostel open to all sections of the people.

The above activities on the part of Harijans are praiseworthy and deserve encouragement by the public.

PARIKSHITLAL MAJMUDAR

(Translated freely from Gujarati)

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