

THE ALL-INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

OUR FOOD PROBLEM

BY

J. C. Kumarappa



MAGANYADI
WARDHA C. P.
1949

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First Edition 1949

Printed on Handmade Paper

Price Rs. 1-8-0

MAGANVADI
WARDHA C. P.
1949

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Maganvadi, Wardha, C. P.

Printed by—G. B. Joshi

, Bhasker Press, Wardha. C. P.

1000-9-49

PREFACE

There has been a demand, especially from students, for guidance as to the way we can apply Gandhian principles to public questions as they arise from day to day. To meet this need a few of my articles on topical questions have been collected together in this pamphlet.

I am grateful to the various journals for allowing us to reproduce my articles here.

3rd April, 1949
Maganvadi,
Wardha, C. P.

J. C. Kumarappa

OUR FOOD PROBLEM

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PART I

CHAPTER I

OUR FOOD PROBLEM

Food has always been a problem in our country. There never was a time within living memory when everybody had enough to eat and there have always been devastating famines periodically. In such a land of ours we are now facing a phenomenon which is new. The shortage of food in former years was largely due to circumstances over which we had no control, but the present phenomenon is one which we have brought on ourselves and we are unable to get rid of because of our incapacity to think without being influenced by vested interests. The problem is not one which is impossible of solution nor is it inevitable. Therefore, it is all the more curious that it should persist over a period of years when various other countries are fast making up the damage done by the last war. It would appear that the will to face the situation is lacking at a high level and the desire to meet the situation is not to be found on the departmental level. If these were there, at the most the problem would have troubled us for a period of months and not baffled us over years.

The situation should be tackled on three fronts—the land, the human element, and the Government. In dealing with these we have to take a short term course because food is needed here and now, but such short term treatment

should be consistent with our long term plans and it should not be improvident, so that when the immediate needs have been fulfilled, we are not left with a whole lot of backwash to clear up. While we are tackling the immediate problem we should also be working towards the solution of our long term needs.

Land

The management of land has many phases to it. Our country has been under cultivation for centuries. Hence we are at a stage where we cannot unduly stimulate the land to produce much above its recuperative power. In new countries like America in an emergency they can use artificial fertilizers to get bigger yields. Though the products may not be wholesome yet it would keep the wolf from the door and as the land gets exhausted they can move on to pastures new. But as we are not in this position, we have to take into consideration the proper maintenance of the fertility of the soil on farmyard manures and compost, taking good care that needed humus is there. The difficulty in providing this is the problem of fuel which again is linked up with our old imperialistic forest policy. The forest policy was dictated by the needs of revenue of a top-heavy administration. We have not yet changed the old policies. We are merely carrying on. Of course, change of forest policy to enable the villagers to obtain fuel and manure from these reserves would take time, but what is sad is that no attempt is yet being made to change this state of affairs. Even the land under cultivation is not being properly protected from erosion and no help is being given to the villagers to attend to minor protective works, with the result that a good many fields are getting out of satisfactory cultivation.

Irrigation is being planned with gigantic schemes of multi-purpose river controls. It is a question whether the finances of our country would ever allow these to be realized. What is needed at the moment is not the promise of a land flowing with milk and honey in some distant dim future, but a certainty of a quantity of water needed to ensure the harvesting of our crops. This can be done by small dams across streams and rivulets, by deepening wells, and dredging tanks.

Instead of this immediate programme, in many places where electricity is available, pumps have been installed with the result that the few rich people who have these pumps have been given the monopoly of all the sub-soil water available. The poor cultivators, whose resources will not let them go in for these electric motors and who are dependent purely on the capacity of their wells and tanks, have been left high and dry. As the water table sank with the pumping up of the water, their wells and tanks have dried up. Their trees had withered away as the roots could not reach the depth to which the water had been pumped out, with the result the dry land, without trees and shrubs gets eroded every time there is a shower. Instead of these our effort must be not to fall back on sub-soil water that gets exhausted, but to increase the store of water that comes down during the rains by small dams and other earthwork.

Even the area under cultivation has been mismanaged. The vested interests have prevailed upon the authorities to increase the land under commercial crops which have been often palmed off under the guise of food crops, for instance sugarcane and groundnut for mills. Of course, Virginia — tobacco cannot by any means be called a food crop but

it assumes the proportion of a necessity with the plea for foreign exchange. Foreign exchange is not a matter in which villagers need be interested but the cultivation of the land which affects them vitally is diverted to other purposes.

The sugar needs of our country can be, to some extent, met from date, palmyra and other palms which grow on lands on which nothing else will grow. If we can get part of our sugar needs from these palms, hundreds of thousands of acres will be released for the much needed food crops.

Similar is the case with groundnuts. In the last financial year 1947-48, for which figures are available, over 21 lakhs acres of land have been used for growing groundnuts for 'Vanaspati' mills. This extent of land could well feed over 10½ lakhs of families. Now these families will have to get their food imported. The service that 'Vanaspati' mills render is of extreme doubtful value. As a matter of fact all the oil that is necessary can also be crushed by bullock-driven 'kolhus'. Any government that has the interests of the people at heart would have immediately banned the use of land for purposes which would deprive the people of food.

Apart from the restriction of land due to raw materials for mills, even the food that is produced is not being utilized to the best advantage by proper processing. It is nearly 10 years since the Government of Travancore realized the evil effect of rice mills which provided polished rice and lowered the nutritive value of food considerably. Yet our present Government has not seen its way to follow suit. The food shortage is said to be only about 10 per cent. This can be met largely by the Government controlling

food-processing in such a way as to retain the full nutritive values and banning any methods which destroy food values, Combined with this should be a programme of storage which is also a problem and which leads to a high percentage of destruction of food by rats and other pests. These two methods of proper processing and storage in themselves should more than make up our deficiency.

Apart from the utilization of land encouragement of cattle-breeding and dairying will provide sufficient nutrition of a type much needed in a vegetarian country like ours. Here also there is much scope for a long term policy combined with a short term treatment. The amount of destruction of good cattle that is being carried on in all big cities is a reflection on our food policy. The short term programme of cross-breeding Indian cows with foreign bulls has damaged our milk supply as well as our draft animals. The country needs a definite programme on this line also; not only to produce cattle, but also to protect and preserve them.

The Human Factor.

The man who cultivates is truly a wealth producer and yet the majority of them hardly possess any definite interest in the production of the land on which they work. Absentee landlords of various types have been parasites on the productivity of farmers. Similarly the growing needs of our military have made a great inroad on our food supply. Our cities and towns are teeming with middlemen who eat up the provision of the farmers. A well organized system of distribution of the production is needed to curtail the number of middlemen all along the line.

We mentioned the military. A great many of the recruits come from rural areas. In so far as they abandon

their villages where probably they would have been employed in some productive occupation, we have drawn man-power from production into pure consumption or even destruction. In this regard it may be pointed out that the military can also help in the food problem by attempting to render some service on the productive side. The military could be camped in the outskirts of districts in areas which have not been brought under the plough. The engineering corps can practice on the bull-dozers and tractors to bring cultivable waste under the plough. A certain amount of the time of the military, especially during agricultural seasons, may be well utilized in raising such of their food needs as they can, with their own effort. This will have many advantages. The young men who have left the farms would be introduced to up-to-date agricultural practices and trained in making manures and attending to production of selected seeds.

Incidentally camping the military on the outskirts will also relieve to a certain extent the housing problem, as the present Cantonment houses will become available for the civilian population.

The method of fixing of agricultural prices is not calculated to place before the agricultural community sufficient incentive to take the occupation of land as a vocation. Price fixing should be based on a proper study of costs to the producer. These costs must be directly determined and not indirectly estimated through the medium of industrial prices. Natural fixing of prices in this manner will tend to increase the return that the farmer gets and this in its turn will provide the attraction to those who seek employment in towns and cities at the present time.

Government or the State

We have so far discussed our approach to land and the farmers. The third party is no less important and that is the State. It would appear that we have inherited the legacy of the outlook of an imperialistic government which cared more for the revenue they got than the welfare of the people.

The importance of agriculture demands that the Prime Minister himself should be a cultivator and take up the portfolio of agriculture. It is an occupation in which the largest percentage of our population is engaged and which is of vital importance to every citizen. Besides the requirements of agricultural prosperity depend on many factors which are dealt with by the multifarious departments of Government. To co-ordinate these it will be necessary that the person carrying this portfolio should have a voice that will prevail in the cabinet. As things are today, it is difficult to notice any definite policy of the Government in regard to agriculture. We appear to be drifting from one exigency to another. It is a series of patchworks without any underlying unity.

There is a great need to separate the different types of interests that claim the use of land. At any rate the use of land for food should be separated from the utility of soil for purposes of raising raw materials for mills. At the present time all available resources are being practically concentrated for researches by the Agricultural Department relating to mill raw materials. It would appear that it will help matters if we separated the departments of Agriculture and Exploitation of Land, making the Land Exploitation Department depend purely on the use of such

lands as would be in surplus after the needs of the people have been met.

In this connection we may suggest that the plan for agricultural utilization of the land may be based on an effort to produce all that the local people require for a balanced diet. This will necessitate the control of the use of land for various crops and a very close supervision and management in regard to crop-planning. Unless this is undertaken it will be almost impossible to guarantee the production of all the food we need. Of course crop-planning can also be regulated through finances by giving subsidies or levying heavy taxes. The Government can consciously regulate the activity of the farmers.

Maintenance of the land in a high degree of fertility is a matter in which the Government has a definite function to perform. We have already referred to the place of artificial fertilizers and the need for an intelligent forest policy. The tendency at present prevailing of looking to Western countries for improvement of our agricultural practices may lead us into grave danger. If we must look outside our land for suggestions, the most logical direction in which we may turn would be towards our neighbour, China. Chinese productivity is more than double ours and therefore if we can even learn a little of their agricultural practices we ought to more than meet our food shortage.

Conclusion

Our rapid survey, therefore, leads us to believe that the problem before us is not as baffling as our neglect would make it appear. If we have the will to look at the problem straight and tackle it firmly it ought not to be a problem for longer than one season. What makes the situation into a problem

that endures is the fact that we wish to have the cake and eat it too. If the alternative is to banish 'Vanaspati' mills, rice mills and sugar mills, have we the courage necessary to take up such a programme? If the alternative is to give up Foreign Exchange and cultivate food for ourselves, are we prepared to face that situation? If we have to concentrate our efforts on works that may not attract world attention, that would not need the biggest dam in the world, that would not be a wonder of the world, are we prepared to work away on great many details that will ultimately produce the required results? If we are not prepared for these measures, any number of conferences and statements and speeches will lead us nowhere. The way is clear and open. All that seems to be lacking is the will to take it. If the needed will and the strength is forthcoming, India need not import hundreds of crores worth food year after year. We may almost say this is the first hurdle that the country has to cross after obtaining independence. Shall we prove worthy or shall we be found wanting?

CHAPTER II

* A VILLAGE CENTRED PLAN

The advent of Popular Ministries at a time when the country is facing famine and shortage in primary consumption goods may prove a blessing provided advantage is taken of the situation to launch a countrywide programme to increase the productivity of the people in selected channels so as to meet and make good the deficiencies. To be effective such programme has to be uniform throughout the land and well co-ordinated between the provinces. Patch work schemes and isolated, desultory attempts will not carry us far. In order to facilitate consultation and discussion between the cabinets of the various provinces a conference of Ministers was held at Poona on the 31st July and 1st August.

Gandhiji's Address

This Conference was opened with an address by Gandhiji who, in the course of his speech, pointed out that as the world is organized today "the mighty alone can survive to the exclusion and at the cost of the weak. True independence demands that there should be room even for the weakest. The base and foundation of economic activity was agriculture. Years ago I read a poem in which the peasant is described as the father of the world. If God is the Provider, the cultivator is His hand. What are we going to do to discharge the debt we owe to him? So long we have only lived on the sweat of his brow.

"There are people who say that no basic reform in agriculture is possible without political power. They dream

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—September 1946

in terms of industrialization of agriculture by large scale application of steam or electricity. I warn them that trading in soil fertility for the sake of quick returns will prove to be a disastrous, short-sighted policy. It will result in virtual depletion of the soil. Good earth called for the sweat of one's brow to yield the bread of life.

"People may criticize this approach as being slow and unprogressive. It does not hold out promise of dramatic results. Nevertheless it holds the key to prosperity of both the soil and the inhabitants living on it. Healthy, nourishing food is the alpha and omega of rural economy. The bulk of a peasant's family budget goes to feed him and his family.

All other things come afterwards. Let the tiller of the soil be well fed. Let him have a sufficiency of fresh, pure milk and ghee and oil, fish, eggs and meat if he is a non-vegetarian. What would fine clothes, for instance, avail him, if he is ill nourished and underfed? The question of drinking water supply and other things would come next. A consideration of these questions would naturally involve such issues, as the place of plough cattle in the economy of agriculture as against the tractor plough and power irrigation etc. and thus, bit by bit, the whole picture of rural economy would emerge before them. In this picture cities would take their natural place and not appear as unnatural, congested spots or boils on the body politic as they are today. We stand today in danger of forgetting the use of hands. To forget how to dig the earth and tend the soil is to forget ourselves. To think that your occupation of the Ministerial chair will be vindicated if we serve the cities only, would be to forget that India really resides in

her 700,000 village units. What would it profit a man if he gained the world but lost his soul into the bargain?

"If you have felt in your hearts that you have taken office as custodians and representatives of the interests of the masses, everything that you do, your legislation, your executive orders, the instructions that you issue, will breathe concern for the villager. To protect his interests, you do not need the Viceroy's sanction. Supposing you want to protect the hand-spinner and the hand-weaver against the competition of mills and solve the problem of cloth shortage for the masses, you will put aside red tape and send for the millowners and tell them that, unless they want you to go out of office, they must make their production policy conform to the requirement of the masses, whose custodian and representative you are. You will tell them not to send mill cloth to certain areas, which are put under hand production or produce a certain range of yarns and textiles which comes within the hand loom weaver's domain. If you are in earnest, your word will go home and they will willingly give their co-operation as they did recently, when they provided the required textiles for export to Indonesia in return for Indonesian surplus rice for the relief of the Indian famine. But there must be that inner conviction first, everything else will then be all right."

The Resolution

After this, the Memorandum on Governmental Functions, submitted by the All India Village Industries Association was discussed and the following resolution was passed.

"Having considered the policy that should govern the economic development to be initiated by Popular Ministries, this Conference of Ministers, assembled from various provinces at Poona, hereby resolves :

(1). That, in view of the acute scarcity prevailing in the country, with respect to primary requirements of the people, especially food and clothing, plans for economic development should centre round the farmer and agriculture and should be motivated with the object of providing a balanced diet, adequate clothing and other articles of primary human need, for every citizen in the land; and that for this purpose, steps have to be taken to ensure that the land available for cultivation is distributed by proper regulation, as licensing, between various crops needed by the community and in the required proportion:

(2) That, in order to achieve real democracy, it is necessary to organize contiguous areas—villages or a group of villages—on a self-sufficient and self-governing basis, through multiple-purpose co-operative societies and grain banks which will plan their economic life on a decentralized basis, reducing the need for money economy to a minimum, and restricting external trade to proved surpluses."

Now that the Central Government also will function under the direction of our National leaders, may we hope that this resolve to plan for the economic development starting with an attempt to strengthen the body with a balanced diet and to provide all primary needs of the people will materialise in no distant future.

This approach to planning is both simple and inexpensive. Being broad based it is calculated to bring relief to the masses in the shortest possible time. This can be the surest method of combating black marketeering, inflation and the ration muddle. The conditions in the country will brook no delay. We trust the Popular Ministries will take immediate steps to implement their resolution and thus fulfil the promises held out to their electorates.

CHAPTER III

* COST OF PLANNING

There have been ideas and blue prints as to how to organize the life of the people but there were two obstacles that kept the flood in check. The funds calculated to be essential to execute these nebulous schemes were so enormous that people were dubious as to whether such investments will make them richer or poorer, even granting that the fabulous capital could be found. The second difficulty was the lack of political power which would be needed to put through schemes of such magnitude.

With the dim light of the dawn of a National Government we may be pardoned for hoping that the second of these difficulties will vanish as the morning mist. Further more, if the schemes are such as to be within the capacity of the average citizen to execute them and if the wisdom of the plans is made so plain that the man in the street can comprehend it, they would not call for much Governmental backing to put them into practice. Therefore one essential factor is that the plans should be simple and also inexpensive.

As regards the cost, plans that call for the investment of thousands of crores in a country, where getting one square meal a day is an achievement with the majority, are destined to be largely left on paper. If we wish to be

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—June 1946

practical, the cost must be capable of being distributed amongst the people in such small amounts as to fall within their meagre means. The conception itself should be such as to catch their imagination. If this can be done then the people's co-operation can be obtained without any coercion.

To adjust our schemes accordingly it is of the first importance to remember that ours is an agricultural country where over 70% are occupied on the exploitation of the earth and an additional 18% on industries connected with it. Hence it would be foolish to ignore this section of the public in our plans. Indeed, any plan worth the name, should start by planning the life of this section first. That means we have to initiate a systematic and an efficient production through a careful reorganization of village industries.

In the nature of things, these will not call for much capital, and if the people concerned are convinced they would take to working the schemes on their own. Of course certain functions of Government, ancillary to these occupations, such as irrigation, land and forest conservations etc., will need funds but these would be modest in comparison with the demands of the schemes put forward to "Industrialize" the country.

In tackling this end first we would have arranged for the gainful occupation of nearly 90% of the population without much difficulty. Having done that the Government may turn its attention to public utilities, key industries and communications. It ought not to be a herculean task to find the capital needed for this part of the work if the first step taken to arrange for the 90% of the population had resulted in their increased productivity.

We trust that the Government that will now assume power will put first things first and go about their work in such a systematic manner as to reduce both the money cost and human cost of ushering in a planned economy.

CHAPTER IV

* CHILDREN'S BREAD TO THE DOGS

The secretary of a Co-operative Marketing Society was boasting about the wonderful work they were doing in organizing the production and the marketing of honey. He was proudly showing to visitors the house of a farmer who had thirty colonies round about the farm house. Just then a little child, the daughter of the farmer, came running up to the hives. One of the visitors asked the child what the bees were doing. She replied. "They are collecting honey". To the next question "Do you like honey?" she could offer no reply. On enquiry it was found that that child had not tasted honey. When the father was asked how was it that he did not let his child have any honey he gave what he thought to be a logical answer. He said, "How can I afford to use honey in my house when I get Re. 1/- per pound at the Co-operative Society"? This state of affairs damned the whole work of the Society. In effect the Society was instrumental in snatching the honey from the mouth of the child and giving it to the rich with their overladen tables. Similar was the case with the marketing of eggs by this Society. The children of the actual producers were deprived of wholesome nutritive food articles so that those with money may have these. Such societies are doing a grave disservice to the masses.

With the growth of mills and moneyed interests this state of affairs is fast spreading in our country. About a

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—January 1946

month ago in Kaira district the milk producers were banned from making what use they like of their products. The District Magistrate issued license to buy and sell milk only to the representatives of one particular firm in Bombay and this under the Defence of India Rules! Such firmans were unheard of even during the days of the Great Moghuls.

Now comes the news that the Governments of Madras, Bengal, Bihar and the United Provinces have banned the use of sugarcane for making gur in the sugar mill areas. Raw materials whether they be minerals, agricultural or industrial product, represent the birthright of the owners or producers to process them into finished products. To deprive them of this is to deny them the privilege of wholesome employment and usher in poverty. The Government by passing such orders is taking the bread of the children and casting it to the dogs.

Last November we lodged our protest against the closing down of the Handmade Paper Centre at Poona by the Bombay Government. Are these the shadows of the Government plans for Post-War Reconstruction? If so they promise nothing but ruin to the people. This alien government is unable to view things in proper perspective. The mills whether they be British or Indian are fast becoming a menace to the welfare of the masses.

CHAPTER V

* FAMINE PREVENTIVE MEASURES

A great deal has been said and written on the immediate programme to grapple with the spectre of starvation facing us. This is as it should be. At the same time it is incumbent on us to take such long range steps as will make a repetition of these conditions difficult. With this end in view it would be useful to consider the causes of this famine and devise ways and means of preventing a recurrence.

General

There are some general causes which hold good at all times and special causes which have come into play in this famine. The most potent factor amongst the former has been the great emphasis that has been placed in recent years on money and the price mechanism as a directive force.

Money : As a medium of exchange money has a great part to play in our economic life but for this purpose too it is by no means perfect. When compared with consumable commodities money is not perishable. A fruit seller is at the mercy of the owner of money because fruits are perishable and he cannot refuse indefinitely to part with them as they will go bad while the buyer can hold out. This quality of money leads to the possibilities of using money as a lever of exploitation which in turn makes it more attractive. Short sighted farmers part with their life giving grains for unsustaining money. Therefore, in an agricultural country like ours we have to restrict the use of money and encourage exchange in commodities.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—March 1946

Money as a Trap : The situation becomes worse when we come to fiduciary money which has no intrinsic value. The greed for money is the bait used by financiers to make village folks carry out their mandates. If the sugar mill owner wants farmers to cultivate sugarcane for him rather than cereals for themselves he offers good prices for cane. Attracted by the money returns the farmers cultivate this crop in competition amongst themselves, and so in the end produce more than the mill owner needs. Then the latter promptly lowers his prices. This way the money owner dictates and the commodity producers play into his hands and dance to his orders. Money economy has been used as a trap for the unsuspecting, unwary farmers.

The Government, by resorting to inflation has drained the country of valuable food grains intensifying the deficit in food. Even after the excuse of war was over the Government has continued its policy of inflation and has increased circulation by over 200 crores in the last year. Blackmarketeering is also a product of inflation. This expansion of money without a corresponding increase in commodities is a direct cause of the famine. As Sir A. Ramaswamy Mudaliar in his speech at the U. N. O. Assembly, brazenly claims the Government was exporting food grains to Russia and other countries while people were dying by starvation on the pavements of Calcutta. This result was achieved by the instrument of inflation. We have to contract our currency by methods which will not harm the producers.

Exports of Raw Materials : Money economy has made it possible for industries situated at long distances to draw materials from all parts of the world. This system is

greatly responsible for increasing the poverty of the people who produce raw materials. For instance instead of selling fully tanned leather or even finished leather goods when we export raw hides we hardly realise a small fraction of our fully possible dues. This reduced purchasing power makes the masses, who live below the subsistence level, lead a precarious life normally and succumb to the first onslaught of food shortage.

To remedy this we must insist on placing a ban on all exports of raw materials which should be processed into finished consumable articles in our own land by our village people.

Cultivation: We have noted that mill-owners seek to replace food crops by alluring farmers with high prices for industrial crops like long staple cotton, cultured sugarcane and tobacco. This takes away fertile land available for growing more important food grains. We have to place a ban on such commercial crops as long as there is a food deficiency in the land.

Industries: Even if all exports in raw materials are stopped, it is necessary to see that no food products are converted into non-food articles, like milk into casein, wheat and rice into starch and so on. The use of starch in aundries should be banned.

Special

During war a large number who would otherwise be producers, are maintained in the military—a destructive organization. This makes a heavy draught on the country's reserves. Apart from the mere maintenance of those men their standards are also enhanced because they lead a very active physical life for which their diet has to be adequate.

Hence these military men make a double drain on the food stocks of the country. In addition to these there are lakhs of foreign troops brought into our country.

The remedy for this is simple. The foreigners should be supported purely on food stocks imported for them. Our men must be made to work on the land and produce for themselves. Exports of all food materials must be stopped. In fact foreign trade must be banned in all primary requirements and should be limited strictly to proved surpluses only.

Water Supply : Reckless cutting down of timber for military purposes has denuded the forests which cannot be set right for decades. This will mean not only failure of monsoons and rains now but for years to come. We have to undertake a rigorous campaign of tree planting if we are to remedy this evil. Wherever possible, in villages, on road sides etc. people should plant trees—neem, tamarind, mango, and other useful trees.

We have also to launch on a programme of sinking wells, building tanks and canals. Denuding of forests will affect the fertility of the land by erosion. This must be countered by constructing contour bunds etc. to conserve the soil.

Conclusion

Unless we immediately take steps to do all these we shall be faced with such famines every year. We know dependence on the Government is not going to help us. If they had possessed that much solicitude for the masses this famine condition would never have arisen. The situation calls for popular action and that right now.

CHAPTER VI

* MILK SUPPLY

The supply of milk in our country has suffered greatly because of the war. Great many animals of good extraction have been slaughtered to supply the military needs and others still are being destroyed by one or other requirements of the military. We have, therefore, to increase the milk supply of the country. For this it is necessary to increase both the number of milk yielding animals as well as improve the breed of our cattle. Up to now, in many places, the Government has been developing the breed with a view to supplying the needs of the military. For this they have been breeding bulls which would give large-sized bullocks for draught purposes. These large bullocks, however useful they may be to the military who count no cost, they are beyond the means of the millions of small farmers who cannot afford to feed these huge animals. The farmer needs compact and strong bullocks for his work. Now to increase the milk supply the Government has been providing bulls from cattle farms, which have been working for a different purpose, with the result that the milk yielding quality of the progeny in the country-side has been much increased in favour of producing large bullocks. This gain discloses an ill-conceived plan of action. The Government should immediately take necessary steps to put their cattle breeding farms in charge of breeding animals which will meet the requirements of the people.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—January 1947

Again the Milk Sub-Committee of the Policy Committee on Agriculture are recommending the establishment of milk collecting and processing centres and special cold storage and railway transport facilities. This may imply scouring the countryside for the benefit of the town. Many of the cities today depend on such milk, taken away from the mouths of children of the milk producers. Any collection of milk must take care that the milk obtained is a definite surplus over and above the dietary needs of the producers and their families. Otherwise this programme will affect adversely the health of the people in the country.

Plans and schemes got up haphazardly are likely to do more harm than good and our second state of affairs may be worse than the first.

CHAPTER VII

* NAKALI GHEE

Our articles on *Vanaspati Ghee* brought in a sheaf of letters—of approbation from the public and of approbrium from the manufacturers—naturally. A valued friend has coined "Nakali" (imitation) Ghee as the name for this product and we hope this will receive legal sanction as "margarine" has in Europe. An alternative name can be "Devitalized Vegetable Oil".

The burden of the battle cry of the manufacturers is stated below with our reactions :

One of the "Scientific" minions of the manufacturers writes :

"If one compares *Vanaspati* with cows ghee, then it is definitely inferior in its *food value*. However when *Vanaspati* is compared with the oil from which it is made, then it is definitely a *better food article* because (1) it has a more palatable taste, (2) it has better keeping qualities".

This statement is typical of half truths and suppression of facts on which the manufacturers' case is built up. In dealing with Ghee they admit the inferiority of *vanaspati* in "food value" meaning thereby nutritive value.

While dealing with the oil the comparison is not on the nutritive value but is shifted to its keeping qualities and taste only, while to the reader "better food article" will convey the idea of nutrition.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—July—August 1947

Again the comparison is with cotton seed oil or groundnut oil and not with cocoanut, til or mustard oils which are the commonly used edible oils,

Further the comparison is between the mill pressed oil and not with the cold pressed ghani oil. These statements are evidently calculated to mislead the unwary reader.

The manufacturers have launched out on a widespread, expensive advertising programme, by which they hope to confuse the public. They compare *Vanaspati* to margarine. This comparison is not valid. While *Vanaspati* is prepared from mill-pressed cotton seed or groundnut oil, margarine is not necessarily prepared from such inferior hydrogenated vegetable oils. Its history of manufacture dates back before hydrogenated oils came to be known. Generally it is made from softer animal fats or from a mixture of animal fats and vegetable oils churned with milk and chilled with ice to give it an appearance of a milk product. Because this animal-fat-based margarine is used widely in Europe and America and "eminent research workers agree unanimously that such are both wholesome and nutritious", it does not follow, by any stretch of imagination, that *Vanaspati* manufactured from hot processed, inferior vegetable oils is also equally nutritious. Why not push the same illogical argument one step further and say "because Ghee is nutritious therefore *Vanaspati Ghee* is also nutritious"?

They proceed to compare the price of *vanaspati* with the price of dairy ghee, and claim it is one third. A true comparison will be with the price of mill pressed ground-nut oil. It would then be seen to be about fifty per cent more expensive. We are entitled to ask what additional or proportionate benefit have the manufacturers

conferred to impose this heavy tax on the unsuspecting public?

One would think that these manufacturers are liable to be prosecuted for such misleading advertisements under the Defence (sale of goods) Regulations and by the consumers for damages.

In Great Britain cold pressed olive oil is held in high esteem. In any case cold pressed oils are better than mill oils. We should have expected the *Vanaspati* manufacturers to prove their claims of superiority over cold pressed coconut, til or mustard oils. Then alone they will have a leg to stand on. If at any time cold pressed oil goes rancid it is not the process that is at fault but the carelessness of the oilman.

The manufacturers claim that they are meeting the "tremendous shortage in fats in the country". Have they increased the fat contents in any way? All they have done is to transform good existing material into a bad and expensive product which will "taste better and keep better"

There are two ways of meeting this shortage, one is by increasing milk production and the other is to increase the production of cold pressed oils both by stopping export of edible oil seeds and increasing the cultivation of oil seeds.

The Chairman of the *Vanaspati* Manufacturers Association of India in his letter refers to the apprehension that traces of nickel found in *Vanaspati* may prove poisonous in the long run" and assures us that "they would do no harm, as it has been found that human beings can absorb and excrete relatively large quantities of nickel without any ill effects resulting therefrom" and that vegetables such as carrots, onions, tomatoes lettuce etc, which people

consume, contain much larger quantities of nickel than is ever likely to be found in *Vanaspati*. He seems to be innocent of the fact that the nickel in the vegetables is in combination while that in *Vanaspati* is definitely a foreign matter. This will make a world of difference in the capacity of the human body to deal with such matter. The one may be excreted while the other may act as a poison.

Again, the Chairman makes light of "Col. Sokhey's "speculations" based on 'two month old experiments on rats". We are not here to put up a defence on behalf of Sir S. S. Sokhey. He is quite capable of taking care of himself. But when the Chairman goes on to state "To condemn *Vanaspati* on inconclusive evidence, while the case is officially 'Sub judice' is to do a disservice to the country in general and to an important food industry in particular" and calls upon us to withhold criticism until the Expert Committee publishes its findings. We feel he is applying the safety valve in the wrong place. If I am walking through the jungle with a child and the child is picking wild berries to eat and two villagers passing by express differing opinions on the poisonousness of the berries, would I suggest that the child go on eating the berries while the question of their poisonous nature is 'Sub judice'? The prudent course will be to stop the child eating the berries pending satisfactory proof that the berries are wholesome. Similarly if the Chairman feels the matter is "Sub judice," we submit that the proper course for manufacturers, on whom the onus of proof would lie, is to immediately stop producing *Vanaspati* until conclusive evidence, that it is not harmful, is forth coming. We trust this reasonable course will now be adopted by the *Vanaspati* Manufacturers without a legal injunction.

CHAPTER VIII

* FOR SALE-A PACIFIER

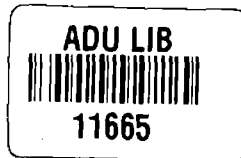
To satisfy a baby's greed an easy going mother gives it a pacifier to suck. This pacifier gives the child no nutrition but just the satisfaction of appearing to feed. In the same way our *Vanaspati ghee* users have got their desire to use something which appears like ghee, and the *Vanaspati ghee* makers satisfy such consumers vanity by giving them something which does not provide the nutriments of ghee and at the same time satisfies their vanity. But while the mother does not charge the child anything for putting the pacifier in its mouth, the *Vanaspati ghee* makers grow fat on the profits they earn out of their consumers. *Vanaspati ghee* is not ghee at all unless it has some equivalent of the vitamin A as is contained in the dairy product. At best *Vanaspati* can be termed an equivalent of indigestible vegetable oil, if it is hydrogenated to the extent sufficient to make it appear solid like ghee. Hydrogenation confers no special quality on pure vegetable oil other than the fact that such hydrogenated oil forms a convenient adulterant for ghee. What distinguishes ghee from vegetable oil is its animal origin and the vitamin A is more or less exclusively of animal origin. *Vanaspati* which claims to be "vitaminous" therefore, can only be vitaminised from animal sources of oil rich in vitamin A—shark liver oil. In a vegetarian country like ours, where many of the consumers have an aversion to animal food

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—February 1947

other than dairy products, to sell freely *Vanaspati* without disclosing the animal sources of its vitamin, is a fraud on the public.

Besides, at the Nutrition Conference held at Hotsprings it was pointed out that the free use of vitamin concentrates is injurious. If therefore, *Vanaspati* is vitaminised by concentrates taken from cod liver oil or shark liver oil such concentrates will also be injurious. Then again, for hydrogenation a catalytic agent is necessary. The usual catalytic agent that is used is nickel, and traces of nickel have been found in hydrogenated oil, and nickel, not being a mineral which the human body needs may, though taken in minute quantities, prove to be poisonous in the long run. Dr. V. N. Patwardhan, Director of the Nutrition Research Institute, Coonoor, stated at the Indian Science Congress last month that his researches revealed that *Vanaspati* adversely affected the growth and reproductive function of animals.

People in different parts of the country have been used to different kinds of vegetable oils-mustard, til, cocoanut, etc. and according to Ayurvedic tradition, all oils are not of equal benefit to the human body. The value differs from oil to oil. For instance, almond oil is declared to be a brain tonic and nourishing for the body while groundnut oil, though it may have fat content, is said to be injurious for the brain. Sarson, til and co-coanut oil are infinitely better from this point of view than groundnut oil. Most of the *Vanaspati* factories use mainly groundnut oil or cotton seed oil. These are inferior oils and therefore, even as a substitute fat from ordinary oil, the users of *Vanaspati* do not get the best of vegetable oils. By legislation, which

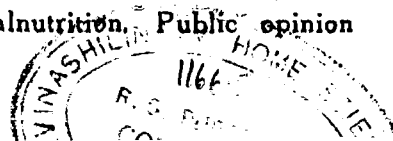


seeks to guarantee to consumers poor food products, it should be made compulsory on the part of *Vanaspati ghee* makers to declare on their labels clearly and unmistakably, the sources from which the product is made, including of course, that of the vitamin.

These facts being as they are, it passes our understanding as to why *Vanaspati* should be prepared unless it be to provide oils in a suitable condition for soap making and other industrial purposes. As things are, vegetable oils pressed by ghanis are superior to *Vanaspati* in their digestibility and purity while there is no comparison with natural dairy ghee; and yet capitalists are investing Rs. 4 to 5 lakhs on machinery imported from abroad, for exploiting the susceptibility to vanity of a small section of our population, mainly urban.

We understand about 27 new factories have been allowed by the Central Government to be started, most of them in Madras and Bombay. Is this the understanding and solicitude the Central Government has for the exploiters, irrespective of the welfare of the population or is it their enthusiasm for rapid industrialization that is carrying them beyond their depth or is it a carry over of the British "Fleece India" policy, as establishing these 27 factories will mean to Great Britain business of over a crore?

We would suggest that a government that seeks the welfare of the people would not stop short of banning this type of exploitation at the cost of the health and sentiments of the people. In the name of industrialization the country should not be ruined, especially the constitution of a people who are already victims of malnutrition. Public opinion



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should be educated to deal with *Vanaspati ghee* producers as traitors to the land, and if the government reflects the popular mind we should soon have no such fraud practised on the people.

CHAPTER IX

* SCIENCE RUNS AMUCK.

Early this month the foundation stone of the National Chemical Laboratories was laid at Poona. We trust the scientists will turn their ingenuity to help the small man.

Village industries have been struggling on their own merits against an artificial current set up by the paddles of large scale industries. In season and out of season propaganda is carried on against the small producers. Real progress and the best utilization of natural resources are best achieved through village and cottage industries, and large scale industries are wasteful though all scientific laboratories are focussed to help them.

We have previously drawn attention to the way the bullock ghanis and dairies are being crushed by financial interests pushing up oilmills for the production of Vanaspati, and how even the Central Government is helping on this programme by sanctioning new mills and shutting their eyes to the evils caused by mills and mill industries.

In spite of scientific evidence to prove the injurious effects of using polished rice on the health of the people, the rationing machinery has been used to distribute only polished rice regardless of the consequences to the people. Why could not our popular government follow the healthy lead given long ago by Travancore by banning all rice mills?

Since last November the Central Government has been circularising all the Provincial Governments to discourage hand processed sugar. A scientific approach to this question will indicate that thousands of acres of the best lands can be brought under the cultivation of cereals etc. if we can utilize palm trees growing wildly in the jungles and on waste lands. Palm gur and sugar can be obtained from these and such a programme will be complementary to the introduction of prohibition, as it will afford employment to thousands of displaced tappers. But then the strongly entrenched sugar-mill interests are opposed to such a scheme as it undermines their industry. The Government seems to have ears only for such.

Nutritional experts tell us that gur is a wholesome food containing minerals, vitamins and sugar, while mill sugar is a simple chemical for producing energy and because it lacks the ingredients necessary for its own assimilation it draws the needed material from other items of food taken. Hence the Americans term the white sugar a "devitalising food." Even as between hand processed sugar and mill sugar the former is more than ten times richer in iron contents. In spite of this in favour of hand processing of sugar the Central Government wants the hand process discouraged. In many places factory made white cube sugar is outside the ration. So the rich can buy without any limit but their purse.

The ever obliging Provincial Governments only need the sign to take drastic measures. The U. P. Government by its Khandsari Sugar Control Order of November '46 is dealing a death blow to both Khandsari Sugar and Deshi Chini producing industries.

The trend of events seems to be such that we shall end by hanging ourselves with "scientific" ropes. Our Governmental machinery appears to be set to destroy the industries of the common man by the introduction of labour-saving devices which may be otherwise termed "employment reducing instruments." Is it scientific to introduce such in a country teeming with unemployment and under-employment?

At Layllpur Agricultural College the Principal is a specialist in *maida* production. They have various kinds of electric machinery to remove all nutritive elements from wheat leaving purely starch behind. There is a revolving electric bakery also. The objective is to produce white bread, slices of which will be uniformly patterned like a honey comb. This can best be attained with the whitest *maida*. Should we not more scientifically and truthfully designate this Principal as "a specialist in food destruction"? Is there any place for such in a famine stricken land?

We in India, seem to be possessed with a mania to destroy all nutrition provided by nature by the use of mills—white rice, white sugar, hydrogenated oils. Is this where science is leading us?

CHAPTER X

• BOYD ORR, DODD AND OURSELVES

A few months ago Lord Boyd Orr was invited to advise the Government of India on the Food Problem. Considering the extent of food shortage and the chances of increasing food production he held we could be self-sufficient in food only if the problem were treated on a war basis. He stated, "India has got to throw herself into this drive for increased food production with the same enthusiasm and the same energy as she would if an enemy were at the gates. The enemy is at the gates—the enemy of hunger". It is on this advice that our Food Ministry has built up its hope of reaching this goal by 1951.

Is the condition precedent present? Is Government machinery going all out to meet the situation? Under war conditions every other objective is eclipsed by the predominant emphasis given to the war effort. Austerity and self-control assume command and banish self-indulgence and extravagance. Let our leaders set the pace and indicate their earnestness. This cannot be done by orders of Rs 1,000 worth of *Rasgolas* from Calcutta or bringing musicians from Kashmir for garden parties. This state of affairs is a denial of the existence of the very basis on which Lord Boyd Orr's optimism was built. The man in the street cannot visualise thousands of tons of food shortage in this vast country but he can appreciate a situation which makes the leaders tighten their belts.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—July 1949

There is hardly any co-ordination between the various departments. Each one is hibernating in its own water-tight compartment. Even high placed non-officials at the centre with access to the ministers concerned are unable to obtain selected seeds or manure or other technical aid from the Agricultural Department, while the Food Department concerns itself with paper propaganda. It is but natural, as these departments are presided over by the hidebound civil servants whose knowledge of field work is practically nil and whose prospects are tied on to effluence of time rather than to any criterion of efficiency. Hence all that they are concerned with is the passing of time. In this art they are masters. Therefore one of the preliminary steps must be to place men who know their jobs, not files at the head and set before them a definite target of attainment in a given time. When they fall short of the target, they should not be promoted to a bigger job, as is the case now, but just "sacked" for good and all. Perilous situations call for stern measures.

A little later on Mr. Norris Dodd, successor of Lord Boyd Orr as Director General of the U. N. Food and Agricultural Organization, sounded a more pessimistic note. He thought the situation could be improved in about 10 years so as to reduce the present imports of food of 4 million tons to about 1½ million tons.

He further ventured to advise our highly paid "modern, scientific and progressive" arm chair technical experts. He wanted to limit mechanization to the breaking of new land and terracing to avoid soil erosion and suggested that instead of going in for extensive use of fertilisers they should utilize clover crops for their nitrogen restoring and

water holding properties. He felt confident that only by observing these principles and by control of soil erosion by strict limitation of forest cutting and with the extension of tube well irrigation could India eventually solve her food problem.

He was quick to recognise the folly of attempting "to revolutionise long established agricultural practices by the adoption of large-scale farming methods of the West." There is a world of difference in the principles governing Agriculture as an industry and Agriculture as an occupation. In America Agriculture is as much an industry as the Motor Industry. So the principles that enter into their consideration are much the same. While in India the circumstances surrounding agriculture are fundamentally different and call for a different set of principles in dealing with them. For instance, cooking in a hotel follows certain considerations of cheapness of materials even at the cost of quality but this is not so when a mother cooks for her children. In the former, cooking is an industry while in the latter case, cooking is a profession. This difference has to be borne in mind while dealing with Agriculture in our country and not try to import capitalistic principles where capital is scarce and labour is in abundance.

PART II

Land Management

CHAPTER I

* BALANCED CULTIVATION

The basic cause of food shortage is the departure from the village economy of self-sufficiency. Our custom has been to grow in every village material to meet all its needs, and to afford a reserve for a year or two in cereals. The advent of money economy broke through this rampart of safety. Even the growing of cereals had become a money crop. Farmers sold their food material and hoarded their notes which could not command foreign market in grains with the result that now we face famines every year. The only remedy is to resort to balanced cultivation of land.

Every village should determine what food materials, fodder and other necessities like cotton and oil seeds it requires and concentrate its production on these, not for the exchange market, but for its own use. Every plot of ground must be earmarked for growing a particular crop, not according to the whims of the farmer but according to the dictates of the needs of the village, as determined by its council or Government, which will authorise such use of the land by a system of careful licensing.

The food question, which has assumed serious proportion now, does not promise an immediate solution. The

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—June 1946

problem is twofold. Immediately, there is a calories shortage and there is also the long standing shortage of protective foods. The first problem may find a solution but the second one is going to present difficulties.

It is ordinarily presumed that an acre of land provides more calories through the production of grains than through any other food. But, apart from the question of calories, the grains are very poor suppliers of protective food factors. Therefore, if we aim at getting these factors from cereals only, huge quantities of grains will be required. On the other hand, if the grains are substituted and supplemented by foods like fruits and vegetables, milk and its products, gur, nuts and oilseeds, etc. the protective food factors required to make up a balanced diet may be obtained through lesser quantities of these types of food than through grains alone. Even the supply of calories per acre is greater in the case of gur and of the root vegetables like potato than in the case of cereal grains. Thus, a balanced diet may be a double blessing and may offer the solution to our problem. It reduces the per capita requirement of land and at the same time, it supplies the body with all its requirements in their correct proportion so as to keep it fit and healthy. It is calculated that the per capita land available in India, at present, for food cultivation comes to about 0.7 acre. This very land, which is found to be too inadequate to meet our requirements in food according to the present distribution of cultivation, becomes sufficient in the re-ordered system of agriculture. In this manner the land of the locality should be so distributed for the purpose of growing crops as to provide its population with all the needed materials for a balanced diet, clothing and all primary necessities. This aspect of the question should

be thoroughly investigated and a definite plan chalked out and enforced by licensing farmers to grow only certain crops on their lands. The following table shows land distribution for balanced cultivation for a population of one lakh.

	Ozs, per day	Calories.	Lbs. per annum	Per Lakh of Population			Percentage Land distribution
				Land required (in acres)	For Seed & Waste 15% extra	Total	
I Diet							
Cereals	16	1600	365.00	43,400	6,510	49,910	65.2
Pulses	2	200	45.60	5,400	810	6,210	8.0
Gur.	2	200	45.60	1,200	180	1,380	1.8
Nuts	1	145	22.80	2,600	290	2,990	8.4
Oil	$\frac{1}{2}$	—	11.40	3,000	450	3,450	
Ghee	$\frac{1}{2}$	255	11.40	—	—	—	—
Milk	12	240	273.75	—	—	—	—
Vegetables	8	48	182.50	1,600	240	1,840	2.4
Potatoes, Tubers	4	100	91.25	1,000	150	1,150	1.5
Fruits.	4	52	91.25	900	135	1,035	1.4
II Clothing							
Cotton			12.50	7,500	1,125	8,625	11.3
Total	2860			66,600	9,990	76,590	100.0

This table provides for a balanced vegetarian diet of 2860 calories per day for the average person and allows for the growing of cotton for 25 yards of cloth per annum per head. For non-vegetarian diet 6 ozs. of milk may be substituted by 4 ozs of meat or fish and one egg.

In addition to food and fodder it must try to produce raw materials suitable for village industries rather than for factories. For example, instead of growing thick rind sugar-cane or long staple cotton, as demanded by the factories, soft rind sugar-cane as can be crushed by village kolhus for gur-making and short staple cotton as required for hand-spinning should be grown. The surplus land can be utilized to supplement crops needed by surrounding districts. Land utilized for sugar-cane for the factory, tobacco, jute and other money crops should be reduced to the minimum, or even eliminated altogether.

There should be differential land taxes, etc., to regulate the price of agricultural products as between themselves and in their relation to industrial products.

Commercial crops such as tobacco, jute, sugar-cane etc. are doubly wasteful. They reduce the food production for man as well as for animals which would otherwise have got their fodder from food crops.

Primary products like cereals and milk should not be allowed to be used for commercial purposes for obtaining starch and casein.

Unless we tackle, in all earnestness, this question of balanced cultivation with a view to self-sufficiency all pious wishes to avoid famine of food and cloth will be in vain.

It may be mentioned here, that what has been outlined above is the correct end of planning to begin with. From there, we have to proceed, step by step, to public utilities, key industries and large scale production. To commence with the last mentioned is to build the pyramid from the apex.

CHAPTER II

* (1) IS IT NARROW & SELF-CENTRED ?

One of the common criticisms levelled against the "Balanced Cultivation" that has been suggested as a means of meeting our deficits in primary necessities is that such a plan is narrow and self-centered. The critics say that the world has shrunk and we cannot live to ourselves. They suggest we should have a world wide view point which will enable us to take advantage of production methods evolved in other parts of the world and that we must look upon the whole human race as one family.

We fully endorse the sentiment and the final goal of the critics and our methods are calculated to lead to that very destination. If a person wants to fly from Delhi to Madras he has to get up from his chair, walk on foot to the car at the steps of the house and drive on the earth to the aerodrome and again walk on foot to the gangway and climb by steps into the plane before he can begin flying. It would be childish to argue walking is primitive, motoring is slow and so these should not form any part of your journey and that you must fly from the start to the finish. The critics referred to above are in a similar position.

If we wish to avoid global wars and live in a friendly atmosphere, the scramble for primary necessities should cease. Every nation should produce its principal articles of food and clothing. Trade there can be, but only in surpluses in exchange for such articles as cannot be

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—August 1946

locally produced. This is the first step towards world brotherhood. It may appear as primitive as walking but it is a condition precedent to flying and so is neither narrow nor a step backwards.

If each nation is to be self-sufficient in primary needs then as far as practicable like charity, self-sufficiency should begin at home. Every unit, big or small, should strive to become self-sufficient in such articles. This is the only way to assure the world of all its needs. When we fail to do this, we give rise to deficit areas that occasion famines and cause distress not only to itself but to its neighbours also.

About three decades ago, a torpedo fired into the hull of an ocean liner would send it diving into the depths. To safeguard this now they have divided the hull into several watertight compartments. If a leak is sprung into one such, the ship as a whole may take on a list, but it will not sink. It is no use arguing that we must keep the hull as a whole and not divide it into so many compartments. Safety of the whole and its interest lies in so subdividing it into many watertight compartments. Similarly also, the peace of the world can only be evolved by the removal of the cause of dissension—scramble for more and more trade—from its several component units. Such a course is not self-centred but is the result of a world wide outlook,

As yet the human race has not developed that far sightedness which alone will entitle it to be treated as a family. Does Great Britain look upon the expansion of Germany with the fraternal love of an elder brother? This foraging for necessities has saturated the international air with hatred and suspicion and we have yet to travel

a long way before the world can be looked upon as one unit economically. Mere reduction in the time taken to go from one end of the world to another does not reduce its size. The world will be small only when we feel closer to each other drawn by love and fellowfeeling which also, is absent today.

* (2) PUTTING THE CLOCK BACK

A news agency report states that Prof. Einstein has sent a message to the people of our land warning us that chemical fertilizers and tractor ploughing will ultimately bring in loss of soil fertility causing incalculable and irreparable harm to the country eventually. Curiously enough the bearer of this message is Dr. Amarnath Jha himself.

Great many experts before Prof. Einstein have advised Western farmers against the use of these instruments of a short sighted policy. Our country is always about a century behind. What has been discarded by Western scientists, our experts cling to as the last word in progress. It would not matter much if our scientists were left to hold their antiquated views in their laboratories, but the tragedy of it is our vested interests have used them for propaganda purposes and have induced our Government to squander crores of public money on importing tractors and establishing fertilizer factories.

As it is the pressure on land is such that it is not able to provide adequate food for the people. What we need is a programme of rational use of land combined with provision of ample fuel resources to release farm yard manure for the fields. Instead we are faced with converting, what is today a reasonably fertile soil, into desert land by our greed for quick returns. No doubt the use of fertilizers will stimulate the soil into yielding more for a time but

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—July 1948

soon, like the energy of the drunkard, it will disappear, making the second state worse than the first. Shall we be guilty of killing the goose that lays the golden egg ?

If it was merely Prof. Einstein's personal view it may be dismissed lightly. This opinion is the result of extensive use of fertilizers and tractors under very favourable conditions both in the U. S. A and Australia.

We may remind our readers that not long ago Mr. Collin Grant Clark, the Australian economist, invited to advise our Government, said that he would develop India on the basis of cottage industries regarding the factory as a necessary evil. Surely these men cannot be accused of being fanatical Gandhites trying to put the clock back ! Shall we heed the call of wisdom based on experience or go our own way to destruction ?

The impact of the West disintegrated our industrial set up. Is it left to a national Government to convert our fields into deserts ? May God forbid.

CHAPTER III

SOIL FOOD Vs DRUG

In human nutrition people recognise the difference between staple food and drugs. Usually the staple food is eaten in large quantities and it contains all the elements necessary for the human body in the right proportions or nearly in the right proportions. Milk for instance will contain fat, proteins, calcium and vitamin A besides other similar ingredients. But, if for any reason, the body of a patient needs more vitamin A than is found in milk because of some diseased state of the body, then to augment this need, vitamin A may be administered in the form of some liver products, such as shark liver oil or cod liver oil. We recognise, therefore, that an ordinary wholesome food differs from medicines. The medicines are administered in small doses according to the needs of the particular patient and his condition. An old man may take a different dose of medicine from that of a middle-aged, the latter would need a different dose from that of children.

Again certain drugs are used as stimulants when individuals want to go beyond their energy provided by nature by indulging in dances at night clubs. Such individuals stimulate their bodies to meet the extra demand of energy by taking injections of morphia and other such drugs. For the moment they appear to be full of vitality and energy, but a time comes when they suffer from the reaction of the stimulants. Therefore all persons desiring to lead a normal life without overstraining the nervous or

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—September and October 1947

muscular system, will content themselves with a healthy use of energy produced in the normal food.

Medicines are indicated in the case of the existence of pathological conditions, while stimulants are harmful to the body as they overtax the system. Thus the staple food, medicine and the drug each has its own place and cannot be substituted one for the other. Food for the normal person, medicine for the sick person and the drug for the over indulgent.

Similarly, in plant life too, we have these stages. Plants, like animals, need food. They draw this food from the air and the soil through the medium of water. If the normal food that the plant requires is deficient in a particular aspect, that deficiency may be made good by a proper diagnosis and prescription. Also plants can be stimulated like human beings with drugs. But that is an unnatural situation. In nature much of the mineral substances needed by plant life is provided in some assimilable form by micro-organisms in the soil. These micro-organisms take organic matter and present them in an assimilable form fit for the plants. In the normal way, the animals feed on vegetation and after assimilating that which is needed for the energy and growth, they pass out the rest back to the earth and these micro-organisms in the soil, convert such material back into plant food, and so goes on the cycle in nature. Any interference in this by men can only be justified by the circumstances.

The natural staple food of all plants is farm yard manure and other organic matter. Such manures have in them certain elements termed auxins which help better assimilation of the food just like vitamins in human food

help in the biochemical process. The auxins are indispensable for plant life, just as vitamins are indispensable for human beings, and farm-yard manure and other organic matter are rich in these auxins,

Where the mineral contents of the soil may be deficient owing to flooding and washing away of certain mineral salts, it may be necessary to supply that deficiency by introducing certain chemicals. But this is a process which is analogous to medicine to the human body. Just as medicines can only be administered by a qualified doctor after a careful diagnosis with a prescription suited to the particular conditions of the patient, similarly, this method of adding chemical fertilizers to the soil should only be done after a careful analysis of the soil and the requirements of plant life to be raised on that soil. Without such proper prescription given by a soil chemist, to freely use chemical fertilizers would be as foolish as a layman administering medicine to a patient, and it may be equally tragic in its results. Artificial fertilizers, therefore, are not plant food but they are medicines to the soil.

Just as the human system can be stimulated beyond its normal performance by drugs such as morphia, similarly plants also can be subject to an unhealthy enhancement of their growth and production by the use of drugs. Chemical fertilizers can produce this effect; but it is an unhealthy, short-sighted and unnatural state of affairs.

If our agricultural food production is to supply the normal requirements of the human body, the plants from which we draw that food must also be healthy, normal and well-fed. Any artificial stimulant or artificial feeding will naturally affect our food, as we depend upon, specially

in our country, so largely on plant-life as food. Hence it becomes imperative that we should watch the food given to these, the medicines administered and the drugs supplied. If there is any undue dose at any stage it will ultimately tell on the health conditions of the human being.

New Zealand grows most of its food supply on soils manured by chemical fertilizers and it was found that the people of New Zealand were subject to catarrh, influenza, septic tonsils and dental caries. Therefore, Dr. Chapman of the Physical and Mental Welfare Society of New Zealand carried out some experiments in Mount Albert Grammar School Hostel, and subjected over 60 boys, teachers and staff, to experimental feeding. The food was changed from the "chemically grown" fruits, salads and vegetables to articles produced on farm yard manure, and he reports, "There is a marked physical growth and freedom from other common ailments, and their dental conditions have improved. It may be noted here that during the last war, when young men were examined for recruiting, over 40% of the New Zealanders were found to be unfit because of defective teeth. This experiment gives the warning that if the health of the people of India is to be what it should be, we must beware of chemical fertilizers. This is purely from the point of view of our food.

Looking at it from the needs of the soil, chemical fertilizers increase the acidity of the soil. Parts of Bengal and Bihar have already suffered from this. To make the fertilizers effective, it is necessary to apply it at a suitable depth and not as a top-dressing. Application of manures at some depth involves deep ploughing and copious irrigation. In our country, where the major portion of the land

is subject to the vagaries of the monsoon, it would be a pure gamble to plough deep and manure it with expensive manures only to find at the end of the season that the rains have failed. Our farmers are not financially well off enough to take the risks of this type of land treatment. As we have already indicated earlier, before artificial fertilizers can be used on any plot of ground a very careful analysis of the soil and its requirements have to be ascertained. This involves a wide spread, well trained, expert staff of agricultural chemists who could function as "soil doctors". Before we have such a personnel available at every plot of cultivable land, it will be sheer folly to put artificial fertilizers in the hands of the farmers. It will be like handing in poisons—drugs like opium, morphia, etc.—into the hands of ignorant patients without any control as to its use. Therefore, even if we wish to introduce fertilizers as medicine, the condition precedent to such a course will be the introduction of agricultural chemists in large numbers. In our country we have not got physicians even for human beings in sufficient numbers. Where are we to find soil physicians in greater numbers?

With these facts before us we regret to notice that our ill-advised Central Government is pushing on with the promotion and extension of artificial fertilizer factories. In Bihar at Sindhri, a scheme for artificial fertilizer factories, involving foreign machinery to the extent of Rs. 12 crores and other buildings and equipment running into a further 10 crores, is being pushed forward. We hope better counsels will prevail and the suicidal scheme will yield place to carrying on researches on more healthy lines which will provide a considerable amount of the organic matter that is going to waste today as suitable manure to our fields.

Only such a course will provide us with health giving food and save us from the unscrupulous exploiters who, regardless of the harm they are causing the people, consider accumulation of wealth the only objective in life.

CHAPTER IV

* MANURES AND FOOD

Few people realise that the quality of the health, growth and reproduction of plants, animals and human beings depends a great deal on the quality of manures that are fed to the soil. When we put manure into the soil we are feeding the soil and to the extent the soils are fed the produce of the soil will also be nutritive, and the products of the soil are usually the basis of the requirements of animals and man. The cycle is not complete here. If the soil produces good food for animals and men that food when digested and returned back to the soil again is also a better soil food. Thus the circle of goodness goes round and round rising in a spiral for the benefit of plants, animals and human beings. There is an old saying, "who feeds well manures well". We may put in a complement of this, "Who manures well feeds well", thus completing the whole process.

With the deterioration of our soil technique the farmers also have deteriorated in their health and with the deterioration of their health they have not the energy nor the staying power to cultivate well. They have not been as manure-conscious or selected-seed-conscious as they should be for decades with the result that our whole agricultural produce has gone down in quality and quantity. We have to resuscitate our agriculture. Many have thought it fit to solve this problem by the introduction of mineral or chemical fertilizers.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—March 1949

A Stimulant

Mineral fertilizers do not feed the land. They merely excite it to a certain extent like a stimulant and thereby they apparently increase production without a proportionate increase in the nutritive values, with the result that mineral fertilizers progressively deteriorate the health of animals and men as the food products on fertilizers are not products of a soil that has been fed but one that has been merely stimulated. This effect has been brought out by many experiments which have led to the following conclusion:—

1. Animals fed with wheat grown on land fertilized by farmyard manures were notably stronger though their weight may be less than those nourished with grains grown on lands fertilized by chemical manures.

2. Hens brought up on feeds grown on farmyard manures laid more eggs than those brought up on feeds from minerally fertilized lands, though the latter were heavier, yet the larger number of the former more than made up in quantity as well. The birds brought up in the former way stayed out of their pen longer than the birds brought up on the latter feed, thus bearing witness to their greater vitality. Even the vitality of the eggs of the hens fed on grains from farmyard manure was greater in that larger percentage of such eggs were hatched and few of them were spoiled by keeping.

3. The manure produced from the refuse of poultry fed from grains raised on farmyard manure also was very effective compared with the manure of birds fed on grains raised on fertilizer lands, showing that the quality of the manure itself is influenced and improves new growth in the

form of seed and feed. In this way the farmyard manure promotes a cycle which leads to a constant improvement from generation to generation.

Apart from these experiments it was also noticed that when animals are given a chance of choosing between feed that is grown on artificial fertilizers and the feed grown on farmyard manure, they instinctively prefer the latter.

A Danger

In our country scientific fertilizing of our land by mineral fertilizers is an impossibility as we have not got sufficient soil chemists who can analyse samples of soils sufficiently extensively to be able to feed the soil accurately even if artificial manure is to be resorted to. Any excess feeding of the soil with such minerals creates diseases of all kinds. Many experiments have been carried out which show the danger of an excessive mineral content in the soil. The data obtained by Prof. Rost of Mannheim, demonstrates that an excess of potassium in the land is likely to lead to diseases such as thrombosis (coagulation or curdling of the blood) as well as to gangrenes. He observes, "In connection with the potassium nitrate fed animals, they showed a tendency, a pronounced inclination in successive generations towards thrombosis". He also states that in recent years thrombosis has increased in human beings to about four times its earlier prevalence.

Disease Resistance

The many experiments that have been carried out show that the seeds and better still the leaves of plants fertilized with stable-manure increase the capacity for disease resistance when fed to animals as compared with seeds and leaves of minerally fertilized plants; thus showing that the manures not only improve the soil structure

but the consequences of manuring project themselves far into the animal kingdom reaching out to man himself. Therefore it behoves everyone of us to take care that such food as we eat is grown on land fertilized with farmyard manure and not with chemical fertilizers, especially where there is a danger in our land of unscientific application of fertilizers for lack of soil analysts. It is not only the farmer who is interested in the manure, but perhaps to a larger extent, the consumer should be made conscious of this as it is he who is likely to suffer by food raised on artificial fertilizers.

Medical Use

Taking advantage of this effect dieticians are now treating their patients on food which is grown on farmyard manures which are generally called "Biodynamic products". Such feeds are said to affect the functioning of the stomach and intestines favourably. A German dietician writes, "I have recommended these products to patients with main stomach trouble and sluggish intestinal activity and they have been fortunate enough to get over these ailments without medical treatment." "My wide experience, as a dietician with many patients, has convinced me that especially with raw-food diet the biodynamically treated products are preferable in every way to those which have been manured with chemical fertilizers."

Gheimrat Abderhalden, the famous physiologist, states "In connection with various illnesses of man and animal it has frequently been desirable to trace them back to the method used in fertilizing food plants". Though we may not be able to say anything very definitely yet in regard to these matters it is clear that soil bacteria do play an important part in relation to our health. We have, therefore, to consider whether it is worthwhile to disturb the interplay

of soil organism by bringing in nitrogen in the form of potassium nitrate and by using lime and phosphoric acid, as these disturb and hinder the working of the soil bacteria."

The Government of India is spending over 20 crores of rupees in a fertilizer factory in Bihar and in Travancore also a large fertilizer factory has been established. It is time that the Food Department takes up the cause on behalf of the consumer. Already our people are emaciated by diseases of malnutrition. Need we worsen the health of our people by introducing chemical fertilizers? This is a grave responsibility. We hope the Health Department also will combine with the Food Department and set things right in the Agricultural Department.

CHAPTER V

* RYOTS OR TENANTS

Many of the popular ministries have been attempting to regulate the relationship of the zamindar and the cultivator. Generally speaking, the zamindars are merely renters or absentee landlords. They have no immediate contact with the land, neither do they concern themselves with the actual cultivation of crops. The methods suggested to habilitate the cultivating farmer on his own land have often taken the form of either the government buying the land, compensating the zamindar and giving it to the cultivating ryot, or confiscation to the State of large estates and splitting them up into small private holdings.

It seems to us that it is not necessary, in the first instance, to confiscate the land nor would it seem essential to compensate the zamindar. The course that should be adopted would seem to be to place the cultivable lands in villages, to whomsoever it may belong, under a system of balanced cultivation, by which the requirements of the village for a balanced diet and other primary necessities will be produced in the required quantities. Under this scheme the land will be licensed for growing the products that are necessary to ensure the needs of a group of village with a population of about 50,000. Such lands, when licensed, should be cultivated by the actual owner. If any of the lands so licensed remain uncultivated for a period of 2 or 3 years without adequate reason, such lands should

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—August 1947

revert to the State and the State can then redistribute those lands amongst the villagers, who are willing to utilise the land to produce commodities according to plan, for balanced cultivation.

This method ensures that no land lies idle and at the same time it would also, in the course of a few years, bring back the holdings from absentee landlords to the cultivating peasants and ensure that commodities are forthcoming to meet the needs of the people, and that land is not allowed to lie uncultivated merely because of absentee landlordism.

Legislation in regard to this might not meet with much opposition as attempts to confiscate lands might. The latter savours of violence, while the former is ahimsak. We commend this suggestion to those provinces which are seriously thinking of meeting the shortage in commodities by increased production.

CHAPTER VI

⊛ MECHANISATION OF AGRICULTURE

One of the characteristics of mankind is adaptability to environment. The lower orders of creation live and have their being under the conditions ordained by nature. Man alone amongst the creations of nature can, within limits, control his environment. To the extent we are able to do that we could be said to have advanced from the jungle animals. Many of us, who are too lazy to find out things for ourselves and who have too much inertia to take an active part, take the easier course of imitating those who have controlled their environment.

With the advent of Swaraj all types of people in India are anxious to mould our surroundings in a way that will indicate advance in the various walks of life. With the great desire to become rich quickly, we are inclined to imitate the ways of the United States of America, forgetting that the conditions in America are so vastly different from those prevailing in our country. If the Americans have set up a pattern of life and have gone about conditioning nature to fit into this pattern, it does not follow that that same pattern and the same methods will apply to our country. There is a great deal of effort made from various quarters to import all things American. This tendency may spell ruin to our country, especially in connection with the efforts made to increase production through agriculture.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—February 1949

The conditions of land and land management in America reflect a set of circumstances which do not prevail in our country. The United States has barely 6% of the world's population while it contains about fifth of the cropland of the world. This indicates that America has enough land to be wasteful in their agricultural methods. Their greed to produce more does not take into consideration the loss in fertility of the soil. As soon as land shows any decrease in fertility, they can easily shift on to more productive land. Therefore they are still at the stage where pioneering conditions prevail. Under such circumstances the recuperative power of the land does not enter so heavily into the equation. They can afford to ignore land as an organism. Under such circumstances they have taken to mechanization. Of course, they can produce a great deal with mechanical power when it is calculated on per capita basis.

In India, on the other hand, our land is considerably limited. It has to feed nearly one fifth of the world in population. Hence we cannot afford to be wasteful in our methods. The recuperative power of land becomes a very important factor in our calculations. When we cultivate a piece of land we are taking certain elements out of it and those elements go to innervate us. The land recuperates itself through various means within a certain time. We have to allow that time as well as rotate the crops grown, so as to fit into this cycle. This is a highly technical proposition, as this recuperation conditions the pace of our production from land. If we produce larger crops by more intensive cultivation we shall be reaching the stage of exhaustion sooner, after which the land will become fit only for jungle growth or will remain a desert. Hence it

will be necessary for us to draw on our resources with considerable thought.

We may say, in some respects, America is in the position of a rich man's son who draws on his capital in addition to his income for his current requirements, while India is like a self-made person who is to equate his expenditure with his income. Therefore, the rate of production in India has to be well-balanced with the possibilities of the soil conditions. In America they are constantly converting cultivable land into grass land and forests with the depleting fertility, and drawing on better lands by reclamation. Lands that have been dislodged are open to the menace of erosion which washes away the cultivable soil. Because of their constantly drawing on virgin soil, it becomes increasingly important to use tractors. While they use tractors they also have access to the necessary fuel in their land. If we produce food on the basis of mechanization while the needed fuel for the motive power is not available in India, we shall be in a very precarious condition. Our bullocks would have died out and at a time when fuel—crude oil and kerosene—is not available, we shall have to die like flies, as bullocks for the needed power, cannot be grown overnight.

Our methods have not been suited to the conditions of our country. Our agricultural practices are largely conditioned by the vagaries of the monsoon. In attempting to control this the authorities have tried, in some parts, schemes of irrigation based on power. Where electricity is available cheaply electric pumps are used for irrigation. The effect of this has been, we have been drawing on a very small fraction of the water that is showered on the land during the monsoon, estimated at about 6%, while the

balance runs waste into the sea; and even out of this 6% the benefit is for the rich. Those who can afford to instal electric pumps draw whatever water is available for their own fields. The poorer sections lose even that which they have, as their own wells and tanks, to which alone they have recourse, dry up as the pumps work. With the advent of the pump the sub-soil water level sinks too deep for the wells and tanks to function. Not only this, but even old trees die out as the sub-soil level reaches below the level of their roots. These dried up trees are cut down and the land is exposed to erosion.

The drawing on sub-soil water in this manner may not affect the land in cases like the Gangetic plain and the river deltas which are sometimes even water-logged; but in most parts of the country where the water table is already low, it will have a very adverse effect. Conditions in our land, therefore, indicate that what is needed is, not the more intensive exploitation of the sub-soil water, but the conservation of the major part of the water that runs waste into the sea. In other words, more than electric pumps, we require small dams put across streams, rivulets and rivers to hold back some of nature's gift in store. Here is one instance where the much vaunted mechanical aid in the form of electric pump foreshadows ruin and desolation to the countryside.

What we can learn from America is their agricultural practice which is strongly backed by the government. Their scientists are there to carry on research in a comprehensive way to produce fruits, vegetables, food grains, animals and poultry; while in our country all that the corresponding department does is to produce by mixed breeding immediate

results. They have not attempted still the long term practice of breeding up from the local stock.

Again, in the land management itself, the American government keeps up the services in contour farming, strip cropping, terracing, sinking tanks, etc; but our government up to now, has only planned on huge schemes much beyond the capacity of the country to bear and they are still on paper largely. The American scientists emphasise prevention rather than cure. They are able to forecast the advent of plant diseases and warn people to take preventive measures. We, on the other hand, wait till the crops have been destroyed and dole out remedies which are more expensive than the crop itself.

These instances only show the need for a comprehensive, well-thought-out plan, unrelated to the greed of vested interests, bearing closely on the natural conditions that prevail in our country and which will be within the pattern of life indicated by nature for a tropical country like India, dependent on the monsoon. At present, the schemes that have been put out do not give any signs of having taken such a comprehensive view of our needs. So we must warn our farmers from taking a step in the dark with promises which will prove to be short-lived.

CHAPTER VII

⊛ ELEPHANTS TO THE RESCUE

Amongst the many problems facing the country one of the common ones is the reclamation of cultivable waste lands. The Central and Provincial Governments have obtained crores worth of equipment for this purpose. They are all imported tractors, bulldozers etc. Their upkeep is also a strain on our exports as the fuel as well as spare parts have to be obtained from abroad. It is agreed on all hands that these can only be used to open up the land.

The situation being what it is, it can be to some extent relieved if our Government Officers will turn to the elephants for aid. A great many of these faithful animals had been maintained by the ruling princes and zamindars. With their dwindling income they would be glad to part with these animals. Each elephant will cost about Rs. 20/- to Rs. 25/- for daily maintenance as against several times cost for the maintenance of tractors. They can do practically all that a machine can do though at a lesser speed and will be more in keeping with our economy. The difficulty is lack of resourcefulness in the departments concerned. We have not developed the necessary "accessories" of an elephant—ploughs, harrows etc.

We trust an effort will be made to conserve our precious foreign exchanges by utilizing our local resources to the fullest extent possible.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—April 1949

CHAPTER VIII

* THE REAL SOLUTION

Speaking at the Food Conference Premier Reddiar of Madras stated that the Government will have to take the responsibility of making grain available to about 25 to 30 million people in his province alone. Why is India in this predicament four years after the war? Is there no body to hang for this?

At the same Conference Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said, "The solution of our problems depends upon increased food production. For some reason or other enough attention and energy has not been paid in the past towards the realization of this end which has never been in dispute."

In an agricultural country the Agricultural Department should stand between the people and starvation. The money spent on this department is like an insurance premium guaranteeing against food shortage. If in spite of spending enormous amounts of the tax-payer's money the citizen periodically faces starvation, there is something wrong somewhere and the guilty party has to be liquidated forthwith.

As it is we are thinking of palliatives to meet exigencies and not of a satisfactory solution when we are asked to import more food and to export other articles to get food.

In an old country like ours the pressure on land is already great. Priority should always be given to food produc-

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—June 1948

tion. The Indian Delegation to the seventh session of the International Cotton Advisory Committee recommends that in view of the short supply position of long staple varieties of cotton (mill raw materials) the existing acreage should be expanded. In other words cultivation of other crops is to give place to long staple cotton. Such is the position in regard to Virginia Tobacco also. Then where are we to grow more food?

What explanation has the Agricultural Department? Has an enquiry been called for? As far as we are aware this department is more or less absorbed in producing materials for mills leaving the food producer to fend for himself. In New South Wales, in the Murrumbidge Irrigation Area, they obtain an overall rice yield of 1.75 tons per acre and it is reported that even 4 tons to the acre have been obtained under ideal conditions. In Victoria they obtain 430 cases of tomatoes per acre. What has our Agricultural Department to show against these achievements?

A time has come when the Agricultural Department should be reorganized. The work connected with raw materials for mills and commercial crops should be detailed out to another "Land Exploitation Department." This department should be maintained solely from contributions and taxes laid on beneficiaries and not from general taxes. The section concerned only with the growing of food for the people should be entrusted to the Agricultural Department which should not be allowed to dabble in any other problem.

The Department should be presided over by a food grower and not by an I. C. S. officer. Such a head of the

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Department should be given not a money remuneration but a plot of ground to live on.

Only then we shall know where we stand in this vital matter and the Agricultural Department can truly watch the interests of the Agriculturist and the citizen.

CHAPTER IX

*(1) YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE

The Cinemas have made familiar the alternative the hold-up-man presents. In his case the demand is for the one or the other.

In case of the Vanaspati Mill there is no alternative. It demands both money and life!

In 1947/48 there were about 1 crore of acres under groundnut, 21% of the production of which went to the Vanaspati Mills. That means 21 lakhs of acres were earmarked for these mills. These lands can grow Jawar and two acres of Jawar land will easily support a family of five. Hence the pressure of the Vanaspati Mills last year put out 1½ lakhs of families *i. e.* more than half a crore souls had their food taken out of their mouths by these mills. Besides during the period India had imported over 130 crores worth of food stuffs. Is this not a subsidy to mills to release food lands for raw materials?

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—April 1949

* (2) BIRTH CONTROL WITH VANASPATI

The evil effects on the health of consumers of Vanaspati have been under investigation for over a year. In the Central Assembly the Food Minister stated that one of the investigating Scientific Research bodies has arrived at the definite conclusion that in the third generation the use of Vanaspati reduces productivity and eyesight in rats. May this not be a valuable contribution of our many Vanaspati Mills to our population problem ?

PART III

The Cultivator and Consumer

CHAPTER I

* THE DOWN-TRODDEN.

The real producers of wealth are those who co-operate with nature and through the operation of natural forces transform various elements into such shape as to make it possible for human beings to satisfy their immediate needs. This type of operation is the normal working of agriculture. The farmer, who prepares the land, sows the seed, nurtures it and ultimately harvests, is the real producer of wealth. Man and nature, which latter includes air, water and land, combine together in these operations.

In olden days, when man lived in comparative isolation, there was no legal proprietorship on nature, but as time went on man began to claim ownership of the land. As population began to increase society created values in land. These values being ultimately a creation of society it follows that land itself must be a social asset used for the purposes of society and not for individual profit. From this it follows that a person can cultivate land for his own use and any surplus should be controlled by society. Therefore, private property in land is an anti-social arrangement. It is also an unnatural situation.

Not only has the present social organization allowed misappropriation of land, but it has also provided sanctions

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—February 1949

for individuals to exploit the land for their own benefit. This has resulted in several types of injustices being showered on the weak by the strong. A great many influential and educated people own land and they are using it to exploit the labour of the weaker ones. In many cases, this has resulted in not giving the workers on the land even the status of the animals with which the cultivator performs his operations. For all practical purposes such field labourers are slaves bought at nominal cost by the land owners. Legally these may not be called slaves. They are usually merely styled debtors. The debt itself is, a small one of Rs. 40/- or Rs. 50/-, incurred very often for the marriage of the debtor. With this petty amount the land-lord purchases practically a lifelong right over the bride and the bridegroom and their progeny!

In most cases these loans are never repaid. The debtor is illiterate and ignorant. He gets no receipts for any amounts that he may have returned, with the result that he is at the tender mercies of the land-owner. Hardly any credits are given by the landlord sufficient enough to work out the debt. The debtor labours and labours, year in and year out, loyally to serve his faithless master, getting a mere pittance in return. Occasionally such labourers are given a set of clothing once a year at the time of festivals, such as Deevali. The rate of remuneration differs from place to place, but it is generally given in kind in amounts hardly sufficient to maintain the labouring families in a healthy condition. The result is, in some cases, labourers are put to much stress as the *gobris* of Gorakhpur.

These *gobris* collect cow dung at certain seasons of the year, wash out the undigested grain passed out by

the cattle, dry these grains, grind them and prepare their food from the flour. From about half a dozen heads of cattle they can glean, during the season, about a maund or a maund and a half of grain. They say that although there is not much difference in the taste of grain from the natural produce, yet it has a "heating" effect on the body.

Again, in some parts of our country, the landlords let out such near-slave labourers to other employers and receive in return the daily hire for such workers, as though these workers were so many cattle hired out!

In other parts of the country we come across still more degrading conditions. The field-labourers live in houses situated on land owned by the landlords. So that they are depending on their landlords for, not only work, but also shelter. Even ordinary dailywage labourers are accommodated in this fashion and if any of them dare to question the order of the day and ask for a higher return, they face the danger of being left homeless, as the landlord would evict them without mercy and perhaps attach their few belongings in lieu of the loan granted to them. This leaves the farm labourers hopelessly at the mercy of the landlord.

Not only such landless cultivators suffer from these various disabilities but are also placed on a level with dumb driven cattle when they are branded on the thigh with the initials of the landlord to whom they belong. This identification mark subjects the branded one to be dependent on his landlord only for work, because if at any time he thought of leaving him and seeking work elsewhere, under another landlord, an inspection of his thigh will immediately, reveal that he is a labourer run away from his 'lawful' master.

The landlord, from whom such a labourer sought work, would immediately send back the refugee to his old master

In this manner our real wealth producers, who are the feeders of society, are being down trodden. They are deprived of liberty. They are sunk in poverty. They know no light of learning. There is hardly a ray of hope in their lives. Such is the fate of those on whom depends the culture of our nation, the economic life of a whole people and the good name of society. It is no use thinking that they form only a minority. but the very existence of such a group damns the claims we make of being an independent country. What is independence that does not break the shackles of the least of us? What is Swaraj which does not bring light and hope to the remotest? Where is self-sufficiency when some are being oppressed?

At the moment great many reforms are being introduced but as long as we leave this section of society untouched, we cannot be said to have attained complete independence. This will be the acid test of real freedom, that every man should be free to work, choose his work, get enough to eat, clothe and be sheltered from the weather. He should have freedom to think and act as long as he does not injure his fellowmen,

Until the Britishers left our land a great many of us were engaged in all manner of public work. We used that as a lever to throw down the British, but now many such workers are searching the debris for the spoils rather than continue the work that they were doing formerly. If we do not turn our attention for righting the wrongs of the down-trodden we shall lose all the privileges we possess sooner or later and those who labour for the suppressed

will develop a power which will give them the right to lead the nation.

Gandhiji emphasised Harijan Seva work. A great many of the people were described as Harijans. They obtained freedom to worship in temples. They have been granted legal approach to wells, but there remains still the dignity of human being restored to them. It seems now that the Congress has been relieved of the fight with the British, it ought to turn its attention against social evils and injustice. We have been fighting an outside enemy. The fight within is much greater.

Our country is like a man who has developed malaria by being exposed to mosquito bites. The man has now put up a net to keep the outward enemies from poisoning his blood. This is the situation with the British quitting India. Now we have to turn our attention to the parasites in our blood stream which keep up the fever. This fight for the purification of our body politic has to be a determined and sustained attack on that which poisons us otherwise we shall succumb to this internal ailment. Outwardly the disease of slavery continues. Shall we rise with sufficient courage to undertake the cure by sponsoring the cause of the down-trodden?

This work cannot be done by an appeal to the government, to the forces of Law and Order, Police, Army, etc. This work has to be done by those of us who are strong by standing by those who are weak and taking upon ourselves the duty of sponsoring the cause of the underdog. Many former Congressmen are looking for a programme of work. Here is one that should appeal to the patriotic and to the strong. By so doing we shall be sublimating

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the protective nature endowed on manhood. We shall build our new-born nation on a firm social foundation of equality and self-respect restoring to everyone the dignity of a human being—a temple of Gods.

CHAPTER II

* THE MILITARY AND FOOD SHORTAGE

Since the attainment of independence there appears to be a definite tendency towards increasing armed forces. The recruits to the army are drawn mostly from rural setting. They have frequently been drawn from peasant stock. While at home these young men have been brought up on a frugal diet, may be one meal a day. This starvation level in itself, has often driven them into the forces where they are given two "nastas" and two square meals per day, in addition to being introduced to such habits as smoking and perhaps even drinking. In the usual parlance this may be called "raising the standard of living". Such raised standard is maintained at the cost of the public and it also means a greater draft on the existing stock of food grains. Therefore, the mere increase in the forces would mean a shortage of foods as the consumption increases.

On the other hand, these recruits, while they were on the farm, would have been producers and in so far as they have run away from production it is a strain on our food supply. Thus we see increasing the armed forces means decrease in the productive forces and a strain on the existing supplies

Rich countries have been able to maintain large armies by drawing on the supply of other countries even to the danger of starvation and famine in the supply countries,

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—March 1949

but India is not in a position to command such resources. Hence she has to pay through the nose for imports of food stuff to make up the shortage caused by increase in armed forces.

Thus armed forces are largely parasitic in relation to food. If we wish to check this to any extent it will be necessary to draft in their man-power into our food production. A good deal of the energy and time of the military forces are non-productive, if not destructive. Their energies during peace time could well be channeled into production of food. Though it may not be possible to completely make up the shortage caused by armed forces, such an effort will at least ameliorate the evil.

During the foreign rule the officers preferred to stay in big cities in specially constructed cantonments. Now there is no reason why such sites should be occupied. Army units may well be stationed away from the civil population, in cultivable waste-lands and with the enormous resources and engineering skill at their disposal they could be made to bring in cultivable waste under the plough. It may be possible for them to grow most of their requirements by way of food grains and vegetables.

This method of occupying the armed forces during certain seasons of the year has many advantages. It relieves the housing problem, as the houses in cantonments will be available to the civil population. It will enable the young men in the army to be trained in up-to-date agricultural practices, as the military forces can be properly staffed and the young men in the army, who are probably potential farmers, will be made manure-minded and better-seeed-minded. These two defects in our conservative farmers can

be corrected. Above all, a certain amount of the food shortage could be made up. Perhaps, if justification were possible, some part of the increase in military expenses could even be justified if these forces take up production without making undue inroads on the existing stock of food materials. We hope, therefore, that the military authorities will be agreeable to such an agricultural spare time occupation being given to their men and in co-operation with the Agricultural Department, be able to some extent, defend the country against its great enemy, starvation,

CHAPTER III

* NERO FIDDLES

Under the Presidentship of Sir Herbert Stewart (Vice Chairman of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research) the Indian Central Tobacco Committee have passed a scheme for the development of Virginia Cigarette Tobacco in Bihar. They had decided to open a number of Research Stations on tobacco at Rajamundry, Anand, Bihar, Guntur etc. They are to publish pamphlets in provincial languages for the dissemination of information about improved methods of cultivating tobacco and they are arranging for demonstration by cinematograph films. The Imperial Tobacco Co. (India) Ltd. has given two studentships of £ 500 per annum for training in tobacco cultivation abroad.

When people are dying on the pavements of Calcutta of starvation and the country is facing a famine of great intensity should this tobacco cultivation in the interests of the Imperial Tobacco Co. be the preoccupation of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research? A Government pledged to the welfare of the people should reclaim all such land for food cultivation. It should transfer the services of Sir Herbert Stewart and officers of his ilk to the Imperial Tobacco Co. and not waste the taxpayers' money in subsidising the business of British firms promenading in India as "India" Ltd. "The whole programme of work of this I. C. A. R. is of this nature. If it is not tobacco it is long staple cotton or thick rind sugarcane for the mills or groundnut for export.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—May 1949

This is the secret of the so called efficiency of the mills-to steal the taxpayers' money through public services. Such work, especially at these critical times, reminds one of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning.

CHAPTER IV

* ANOTHER RISING MENACE

In rural areas milk is already in short supply. If we sincerely desire the welfare of the people, our attempt should be to find out ways and means of increasing the supply. No doubt the cities are dependent on the villages for their milk. If an organization can be brought into being where by the cities can run their own dairies in selected areas and be independent of the existing supply from the villages, that in itself will alleviate the distress in the rural areas. Of course, alongside of this programme, we must have the long range programme of increasing the milk productivity of the cow by selective cattle breeding.

Wherever people are in distress we always find somebody willing to take advantage of this distress. There are people willing to rifle the pockets of dead soldiers. Thus the distress of somebody presents an opportunity to someone else to take advantage of. At the present time the short supply of milk has provided a golden opportunity for the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board to carry on its destructive work. Mr. H. Miles, its commissioner for India, is anxious to push forward to the villages and create the tea habit in the villages. This would imply that by tanning the insides of the villagers and satisfying their hunger by decreasing their digestibility we can automatically lessen their demand for milk. This is a real menace to the health of rural India. In a vegetarian country the animal protein from

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—February 1947

milk is an essential constituent of the diet. Any habit, which is calculated to decrease this is harmful to the villages and is anti-social.

Papers carry advertisement "drink tea for stamina" which being a lying propaganda must be stopped by the government, taking the necessary steps to control the advertisements. Indian consumption of tea in 1928/29 was 48.8 million pounds and it has risen in 1946/49 to 130 million pounds. This is an increase of about 266 per cent and yet they are carrying on a campaign of increasing tea consumption still further. Whatever may be said for tea for the well-to-do who are overfed, it is difficult to support the cause for tea in villages. The work of the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board, therefore, is a menace to the rural areas which are already starving and suffering from malnutrition. We trust the popular governments will do what lies in their power to prevent any irreparable damage being done by the formation of habits which will be injurious to the growth and strength of the village people.

CHAPTER V

* RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Now that the political wash consequent on the British leaving India is dying down, the Governments are thinking in terms of Rural Development once again. Therefore, it will be necessary for us to consider the lines on which this work could be done. In the main there are three forms in which this programme may be approached.

1. We may look upon the villages as possible sources of raw material supply to the mills situated in the towns.
2. The rural population may be regarded as the main consumers or markets for the production of towns.
3. The village may be looked upon as an entity in itself, affording complete facilities for the development of the individuals composing the population of the village.

1. As Sources of Raw Material

When the village is looked upon as producer of raw materials for the towns and cities, the whole economic order is shaped according to the town dwellers. Often the villagers are exploited and do not enjoy all the fruits of their labour. The fields are utilized for growing crops which are not directly connected with the needs of the villagers.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—November 1947

The regulation of crop-growing is done by the price mechanism in which money plays the leading role. Under the pretext of placing more purchasing power in the hands of the villagers, the towns make the villagers do what the town wants even though it may ultimately prove to be inimical to the interests of the villager. Raw material crops, such as long-staple cotton, sugar-cane and tobacco, drive out food crops and the people are left to face starvation in spite of having much purchasing power in their hands, which latter also may be represented by inflated currency tokens.

Under this system of Rural Development the villages cannot flourish. Their interests are secondary to the requirements of mills and town dwellers. Unfortunately, the present day economic order encourages people to proceed on these lines.

2. As Markets

Similar to the type of Rural Development that we saw in the first instance, attempts are being made to convert the villagers into consumers of the production from towns. Here again the price mechanism is allowed free play and the villagers are driven to buy town made goods as being cheap. Apart from our own towns, this outlook is one in which foreigners also are interested in making our enormous population into an insatiable market for their products. Articles such as polished rice, mill-ground flour, tea, coffee, sugar, preserved foods, vanaspati oil, rubber shoes, mill cloth etc. are being dumped on the villagers against their own interests. In this way again the villagers are being deprived of their opportunities of employing themselves in various industries and in processing of food.

Thus their field of work is restricted and the pressure on land is increased.

In the above two methods of Rural Development the needs of the villagers are not the deciding factors and much less is the consideration of opportunities for the development of the citizen's personality.

3. Personality Centred

We have to consider whether the material interests of towns and cities are more important than the interests of the villager himself. If not, the first two methods of Rural Development will have to yield place to a system that will centre, not on the material production and distribution alone, but on making the villager into a worthy citizen of a democratic state. We look upon work as a means through which an individual could be educated. Of course, in the process the individual will also be producing articles for his own consumption. The villager has to be an entity in himself. To this end the whole social, economic and political structure will have to be moulded to enable the citizen to develop himself from childhood to old age. The village economy ought to be a training ground in the various phases of human development.

Social: The needs of society in the form of water-supply, communications, health and hygiene, disposal of waste, satisfactory housing, etc. will have to be looked after by the people themselves. Education of the children through a craft, to train them for the art of living in logical method and good conduct with moral considerations as background, will also be a duty falling on the people.

Economic: The people will have to organize themselves in such a way as to enable them to produce all their

requirements in food, clothing and shelter. For this purpose, the land available may have to be apportioned according to the needs of a balanced diet, with reference to the quality of land, and availability of water. They should raise cereals pulses, oil seeds, fruits and vegetables, and dairy products to supply, as far as possible, the whole needs of the village, and where there is a surplus, that surplus could be exchanged with other neighbouring localities for articles which they require.

The processing of these agricultural productions will provide a considerable amount of occupation to persons who are not required on the land. Pottery, Tanning, Oil pressing, Gur making, Spinning and Weaving, Carpentry and Blacksmithy will provide outlets for people's requirements in art and for a fuller expression of their emotional personality. Fairs and festivities should also be organized to enable them to, not only market their goods, but also produce a culture based on village life.

Political: The control of all these aspects of life will have to be done on a democratic basis by the organization of village panchayats which will not only control the social and economic life, but will also mete out justice and to some extent raise funds necessary for the administration and execution of an overall plan for all the activities of the village or locality.

Conclusion

Unless we take to the third method of Rural Development with our interests centred on the villages, it will be futile for us to hope to be able to solve our problems in a democracy, as the people will not be sufficiently educated to bear this great responsibility. While our country is

preparing plans for our future, it is necessary for us to bear these different aspects of Rural Development in mind, so that the plans that are made out now will bear fruit according to our requirements in due time, without creating further complications, not only in our country, but also in relationship with other peoples of the world. Our form of Rural Development, therefore, will in the main, be based on self-sufficiency. So long as every member of the society aims at this ultimately, there could be no shortage of goods, especially in primary necessities, and there should be no commerce and trade in such articles if we wish to establish peace among nations.

Such a scheme of Rural Development will not be a patch work made by Government officials according to the whims of the various departments, but being based on self-help and local contribution in labour and in kind, it will be an ideal training ground in the art of living which is a laudable end in itself.

PART IV

The Economics

CHAPTER I

⊛ (1) THE COW ECONOMY

There is a good deal of talk today about protecting the cow from the slaughter house. It is good that people are becoming conscious of the great evil that indiscriminate slaughter of cattle has brought to our country. On the purely short sighted view, the need for milk in a vegetarian country being important, it gives a premier place to the cow as a feeder of the nation. Apart from that it also provides the bullock which is the motive power with which the farmer produces from the land. The importance of this aspect of the question has been fully realised in conferring divinity on the cow and raising cow-slaughter to the level of a religious question. However, because of fanaticism, the very same zeal on the one side has created cussedness on the other side and we often find conflicts between different sections of the population centred around cow-slaughter. Therefore it now becomes necessary to ascertain exactly the place of the cow in India and give it a national approach.

With an artisan the tool that he uses becomes almost an object of worship. In fact, in India we have a definite festival *Sastra Pooja* devoted to this ceremony. Man recognises his economic dependence on the means of production. Just as an artisan depends on his tools, similarly

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—October 1947

the farmer depends on the cow, and if we may extend the economic sphere, we may say the cow being the means of producing food, becomes the centre of the economic organization of man, especially in an agricultural country like India.

Apart from this aspect, when we look upon the cow as the producer of the bullock, the importance of the cow is enhanced. She now represents the centre of our economy. We may call our economic organization, where the cow contributed towards motive power, transport, food production, etc. as a "cow-centred economy" in the same manner as England and other European countries were, not long ago, horse-centred economies.

During the last century England drifted from being a horse-centred economy into a coal-centred economy and from being a coal-centred economy she is fast moving into an oil-centred economy. These stages are very important to notice as the fate of the world itself depends on the source from which we obtain our power.

In the cow and the horse-centred economies we have unlimited sources as we could breed as many bullocks and horses as we needed and, therefore, there being no restriction on the amount available, it does not arouse anybody's greed or jealousy; but coal and petrol being limited in their supply and quantity, uses of such sources of power lead to friction amongst nations as the source dries up. It is now well recognised that these global wars are in no small measure due to different nations seeking to get control over oil fields. Hence the coal and oil economies lead to conflict amongst nations. Unlike these two, the cow and horse economies are, comparatively

peaceful economies. Therefore, in a wider sense we may say that when we break through a cow-centred economy we are really causing cow slaughter, *i. e.* in other words when our actions are inimical to the existence of the cow-centred economy, we are not in the company of the protectors of the cow. For example, when we use coal and oil as our source of motive power we are really banning the cow from our economy. When we are making asphalted roads, which are not in the interest of animal traction, we are also guilty of breaking through the cow-centred organization. This aspect of the question is much more vital to us than the mere slaughter of the four-legged and two-horned animal.

We wonder how many of our friends who stand up against cow slaughter can show their hands clean of bovine blood from the higher interpretation. The "Cow" like Khadi is symbolic of a way of life. "Cow slaughter", therefore, would signify making impossible that way of life. We hope that those who stand for cow protection will realise the extensiveness of the cause which they stand for, and will whole-heartedly support this wider application of the principle.

* (2) THE COW

The Cow Conference, held at Amritsar, recently laid great stress on the place the cow holds in our rural economy. Apart from the preservation of the cow as an animal, we have also to consider the steps to be taken to build up the economy symbolised by the cow. We cannot take up isolated items and concentrate on those without consolidating village life on all fronts

From this broader approach any encouragement given to the cultivation of long staple cotton for mills tantamounts to the destruction of the cow, as the seeds of long staple cotton are not available as cattle feed because of the fuzzy short staple cotton being left unlinted on the seed. Owing to this the bullocks are deprived of their protein diet. Our villages are dependent on these animals for the satisfactory working of their economy.

The opening of *Vanaspati Ghee* mills again cuts across this economy. It deprives people of a wholesome article of diet—vegetable oil—and replaces it by indigestible hydrogenated oils and sets up unfair competition with the "telis".

The building of expensive roads, surfaced with asphalt, cement etc., while being wholly unnecessary for the village economy, takes away the part time transportation employment of the bullocks. Such roads encourage draining the villages of their products. They are harmful to the unshod animals and dislocate the self-sufficient village economy.

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—November 1946

It is not necessary to multiply instances. The cow symbolises a way of economic life just as much as the internal combustion engine and the lorry typifies another way of economic life. The choice is before us. We may choose the one or the other but we cannot make a hotch potch of it. If we decide in favour of the cow we have to take up that economy in all its aspects.

It is imperative that the Provincial Governments, that are now seriously thinking of rural development, should clear the issues and declare for a definite line of action. No haphazard attack on this problem will solve it.

CHAPTER II

* THESE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

It is a scandal that crores of rupees should have been spent on the researches carried on by the so-called "Agricultural Colleges" of India and yet the production of rice per acre in India is 939 lbs. as against 3909 lbs. in Japan. Similarly, the production of wheat is 774 lbs. in India as against 2010 lbs. in Japan. India is subject to repeated famines. Is it any wonder? Does not the situation call for an enquiry into the working of these Agricultural Colleges? Crores of public money have been sunk in these colleges and in their researches. Why then is our production a mere fraction of that of other countries?

The answer is fairly clear. A great deal of first class research work has been done by these institutions but not on food production. They have concentrated their work mainly on evolving long staple cotton suitable to be used in textile machinery, on juicy but thick rind sugarcane for the sugar mills, on growing tobacco for the Imperial Tobacco Co. etc. If they had done any researches in food grain it has been only to fill show windows at Exhibitions as an apology to justify their existence.

Under these circumstances is it not right that the cost of running these institutions should be charged to these beneficiaries instead of being saddled on the impecunious farmers? To be honest they should call these colleges

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—October 1946

"Mill Raw Material Research Institutes". It is no us masquerading under false name only to sponge on public money.

The real agricultural colleges must be situated in rural areas, their buildings etc. should be in consonance with their surroundings and keeping with the standards prevailing among the people they profess to serve. The Principals and Professors must themselves be cultivating farmers. They may well be allotted a certain acreage out of the produce of which to support themselves. Their activities must be confined to the needs of the people-being chiefly limited to food production, short staple cotton and such other materials in demand in the villages. They should take the lead in the supply of selected seeds and in grain storage. The medium of instruction should be the language of the locality. The students themselves would then be prospective farmers instead of job-seeking city young men whose one need is a degree of some kind. The whole policy needs to be reoriented if famine prevention is our goal.

We would suggest an enquiry committee should be set up to investigate the working of all existing institutions from the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research downwards and to recommend the reorganization of these institutions in such a way as to concentrate their efforts on fighting famine. Money spent on such researches will be truly and effectively a famine insurance.

CHAPTER III

* FOOD INDUSTRIES

The Government of India has been surveying the possibilities of helping industries connected with food processing. Such industries number about forty. In some agricultural colleges also a great deal of expensive equipment has been installed for carrying out researches on these lines. For instance, to help the bakers and confectioners, they have researches carried on in making *maida* out of wheat. They are also helping in the preparation of semi-processed foods, such as cornflakes, pressed rice, puff wheat, etc. These are all food products which are mainly used by the rich. When a country is suffering from lack of food materials and when rationing is the rage of the day, it would seem criminal to prepare *maida* out of whole wheat. Preparation of *maida* is tantamount to destruction of the food values in the cereals. If Government has the means, time and energy to dabble in these activities, would not such efforts be better concentrated on the ways and means of conserving food, rather than in destroying it, and in helping the starving masses, rather than pandering to the taste of the over-fed city folks, in educating the public in the proper utilization of the materials available, rather than in the production of fancy foods ?

The encouragement given to the Vanaspati Ghee manufacturers is certainly destructive. Vanaspati Ghee has been proved to be indigestible and without any advantage

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—January 1947

over the common oils produced by telis. It certainly is no substitute for ghee. To call Vanaspati 'Ghee' is a fraud on the public and the Government has no business to encourage such profit seekers at the cost of public health. Shifting of the demand from pure ghee to Vanaspati is also dealing a death blow to dairy industry which is so essential to vegetarian people, who require above all things, certain amount of animal proteins in their diet.

Again, biscuit making raises the availability of food materials from the poor to the rich, who are usually the consumers of biscuits. When there is a deficiency in food, biscuit production should also be stopped.

The Government will do well to call a halt to its programme of putting "food processing on the map" and advise the planning panels appointed by the Central Food Department for the development of food industries connected with sugar products, confectionery and the flouring, milling and biscuit industry, to seek other channels of usefulness to the people.

CHAPTER IV

⊛ PRODUCTION *Vs* DESTRUCTION

There is a great deal of talk about increasing production and improving the standard of living of the masses of the country. These are being bandied about at every convenient occasion. But what these phrases mean is never defined. These words are little more than slogans to capture the imagination of the unwary and to convince the unthinking public, which is generally carried away by much talking.

In a country where people are starving and where there is not enough cloth to go round, these phrases should carry the meaning of providing at least the mere necessities of the people—food and clothing. Our effort should, therefore, be directed towards giving two meals a day where one cannot be obtained today. And our effort should be to enable the people to clad, at least against the weather, if not to satisfy their æsthetic sense.

Industrialists appear to be more concerned with developing their industries than with the needs of the people, for they say that if India were to develop her industries on a permanent footing, the Government must follow a policy of export drive, even though we might have to suffer some privation for some time, and it is their firm conviction that the industrial development of India could not be put on a sound footing unless the products of Indian

* *Gram Udyog Patrika*—July 1947

industries were exported abroad. They recommend our Government to base their proposals on the principles of an expansionist policy of production advocated by Lord Keynes,—‘the more you eat of the cake the larger it becomes’. They believe that social objectives of the Finance Member could be fulfilled only by such a policy. The hope that ‘the more you eat of the cake the larger it becomes’, however absurd it may seem to the common sense of ordinary mortals, it can easily be made feasible by these demi-gods, who eat the cake no doubt, but the cake is not theirs but others. Herein lies the secret of this apparent miracle. Of course if they merely ate other people’s cake, their own cake ought to remain constant. But the method of doing this is generally to bite off from the other people’s cake a larger piece than you can eat. That of course ‘makes their cake grow larger’.

The methods adopted by the present types of large scale industries have been anything but progressive. They are using science to destroy rather than create. This being so, it would be well to examine the proposition how to increase production. When we, with the help of rice mills, produce unwholesome polished rice, can we call it increasing production? Is it not destruction of the production of the paddy by the farmer? Similarly when sugar mills produce white sugar from sugar cane juice and thus provide a less nutritive product, and perhaps devitalise the wholesome juice of the sugar cane, again would we be using the term ‘increasing production’ correctly? Is this also not an instance of destruction of nature’s gifts? There can be an increase in production over what is found in nature, if man’s efforts result in an increase not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. When a farmer sows a seed and reaps

a hundredfold because of his effort, we are justified in saying that the farmer has increased production. But when we look around at most of the efforts of mill-owners and measure their output and compare it with nature's generous gifts, we can only say that the machines have been utilized by man for destruction rather than production, much less for increased production.

Shifting crops :

In Bihar and in large sections of the U. P. thousands of acres have been brought under cultivation of sugar cane. Formerly these lands were not waste lands. If they had been waste lands and the sugar cane was an addition to the general production, we would be justified in calling it an increase of the sugar cane cultivation. Biharis used their lands for rice cultivation and consumed hand pounded wholesome rice; but now the crops have been shifted, with the result that they cultivate sugar cane and are dependent on Burma for their rice. And Burmese rice comes polished—that means with all the nutrition removed—as pure starch. However much the sugar cane crop may have been increasing the bank balances of mill owners, can we, by any stretch of imagination, lay claim to having increased production when we drive the masses of people from the nutritive rice of their own cultivation to devitalised, polished rice imported from outside? This shifting of crops from food to raw materials for mills is not only a disservice to the country but is injurious to the health of the people. It is not 'increasing production,' when we are shifting the crop from food to long staple cotton for the mills and to tobacco and groundnut for export. At best it can be pilfering and not production. This is the kind of "increase'

that has been taking place in the country and which has led to considerable distress to the people in meeting their primary needs.

In the same way, in Malabar, the former rice lands have been converted into coconut groves and these coconut groves are producing coconuts, not for human consumption, but for oil for soap mills. Is producing 'Lux' soap, in however large a quantity, an increase of production, when this is done at the cost of people's staple food? The people, who were formerly cultivating rice, are at present being given polished rice imported from Brazil. Hence, in the final analysis, the mill owners' efforts have resulted in the provision of Brazilian polished rice to the people who were once eating wholesome, unpolished rice of their own production and converted those rice lands into raw material for soap making. Is this increased production? And is this striving to 'raise the standard of living' of the masses? We can well see that the mill owners have eaten some cake and at the same time the stock of their cake has increased. But what is the state of the common people?

When crops have been shifted deliberately from the production of staple food to raw materials for luxury goods, is it any wonder the country is facing famine after famine? If we really strive for greater production, our endeavours should have by now, brought us to a more satisfactory supply of our primary needs. But when we look around we find that "the country today is suffering from the acutest shortage of food. It is an irony of fate that India, which is primarily an agricultural country, is now dependent upon imports of food stuffs to feed her population". Should we wonder at this stage? The fact cannot be belied and the

deduction that our efforts, such as they have been, have resulted in decreased production, cannot be missed.

Standard of living :

In a country suffering from un-employment and under-employment, even the method of production should be such as to solve this great problem. Methods we have adopted so far of 'increasing production' have invariably led to increased un-employment. What is known in Western countries as 'labour saving devices' can be better expressed as labour displacing devices, or in other words, devices for creating un-employment. In resorting to these large scale methods of production, mill owners have adversely affected the standard of living of the masses. Our famines are becoming perennial, even at times when nature's contributions have been generous. Is this not an indication that with all this much talk of increasing the standard of living we are really lowering the standard of existence ?

People express the hope that the " industrial progress and the prosperity of the 400 million people are inter-related, and that they would not want any industrial development if the 400 million people are going to be in a bad way," "progress must bring progress to all the people and not to a few chosen ones", "we have to think in terms of the masses of this country" etc. We invite their attention to the facts of the case for increased production that have been stated above, and we would like them to consider whether we can increase production of the type they envisage by centralized methods of production in consumption goods. Let them take stock of the increased distress that has come to our land in the wake of our efforts put out in that direction in the past.

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4. SURVEY

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to be pigeon-holed as most such reports are, but should be given effect to without delay."

"The committee has made practical suggestions on all the industries. The curious must procure the report and study it"

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*** A Plan for the Economic Development of the N. W. F. Province, pp,36**

(with supplement)

By J. C. Kumarappa (E) 0-13-0 0-3-0

Sir Mirzā Ismail writes :—" I should like to compliment you on the very lucid manner in which you have dealt with the various questions relating to the industrial development of the Province. You have approached the whole problem in a direct, matter-of-fact and eminently practical way".

*** Survey of Matar Taluka**

By J. C. Kumarappa (in press) (E)

Kaka Saheb Kalelkar writes :—" The report is presented to the public as an authoritative document on the economic condition of a typical taluka of Gujarat. The reader will find that the statistics presented here in careful schedules are even more eloquent than the main body of the carefully worded lucid report itself. It is a vivid picture of the slow

We are all one with those who want to advance the cause of the masses and strive for the progress of the country. But we would submit that this must be done scientifically, not merely to satisfy the greed for acquisition of wealth for a few. So far as we have seen, science has been harnessed, not for production but for destruction. May we hope that with the advent of Swaraj the point of emphasis will shift from material production to the welfare of the people ?

CHAPTER V

MARKETING

The Marketing Departments organized by the Government have shown no solicitude for the real welfare of the people. Even organizations run by Christians have shown a lack of grasp of the fundamental principles that should govern such economic devices.

Marketing is the means of exchanging production. In the process of marketing if the values fall, the device is defective and may even be harmful. In judging such values, money cannot form the criterion. Especially in necessities, values can only be judged by the purpose an article serves. If a farmer has cows and produces good milk, the value of that milk is the nutrition it is capable of providing which cannot be measured by money. If a marketing organization is so designed as to draw out every drop of milk, perhaps even without leaving any for the calf or the children of the farmer, it is doing a great disservice to the community, however much of money it may put into the pockets of the farmer. An ounce of milk is an ounce of milk, whether it be consumed by the farmer's child, or by the Governor of a province. Simply because the latter is able to pay more money, to deprive the calf or the farmer's child of that nutrition is criminal. Here money is used to confuse values and we have to beware. In many places, famines and deficits have been caused by such mixing up of values. In such instances it will be a national service to disband the marketing organizations.

* *Grām Udyog Patrika*—August 1946

Properly used marketing departments should be
valves to retain nutrition for the producer and his neighbours
and help in the exchange of any surplus for other values
that satisfy felt wants without being overweighted by
money considerations.
