VII

MORE PLAIN FACTS ABOUT KHADDAR

Though I find that there is not much substance in what Mr. "Khandeshi" has said in reply to my "plain facts about Khaddar" and that his main points have been answered in what I have already written on the subject in the Chronicle yet in order to clear any possible misunderstanding of my views I would like to give a somewhat detailed reply to Mr. Khandeshi if the gentle readers would have the patience to follow me further in the discussion of this subject of vital importance to the nation.

Mr. Khandeshi begins his reply by saying, "'No advocate of Khadi has ever said that Charka has 'materially' improved the condition of the poor people.'" Here is at least one Khaddarite who openly admits that the Charka does not 'materially' help the poor.
Why then this fuss about the *Charka*? Why is all the nation's constructive energy and money sought to be concentrated on this quite ineffective spinning wheel and why are the poor people of India asked to make considerable pecuniary sacrifice for buying *Khaddar*? Should we not rather find out 'the true way of materially helping the poor' and concentrate all our efforts on that?

I incidentally referred to the charge brought against the British that they destroyed our *Charka* industry. The charge is so common and it has been so widely and insistently preached in our country that Mr. Khandeshi need not have taken the trouble of referring me to Dutt's Economic History of India. My intention in referring to the charge was to draw the attention of my countrymen to the real truth about the matter. I did not deny the historical fact that the hirelings of the East India Company often practised inhuman tortures on our craftsmen: but their attack was mainly directed against the weavers, how is it then that the weaving industry is still flourishing while the *Charka* could not hold its own?
Whatever might have been the methods adopted by the over-zealous Company officials to suppress our cotton industry, it was the cheap products of the British mills which really ousted the spinning wheel; and the handloom weaving survived to the extent it has done because it took the help of the mills themselves by weaving mill-yarn. Let an American historian speak how British craftsmen were ruined by the advent of machinery:

"The craftsmen found the competition of the factory too much for them, as the machine made things much cheaper, if not better, than their handwork; consequently, many artisans were ruined by the labour of the 'iron men', as the machines were called. A series of riots broke out against the 'iron men'; many machines were destroyed by mobs, and Hargreaves (inventor of the spinning-jenny—1765) himself was attacked by the rioters. But it was all in vain. The artisans were soon forced to give up their hopeless struggle against machinery."—Modern and Contemporary Europe, by J. S. Schapiro.

My contention is this that in India the immemorial Charka really disappeared because the yarn produced by it could not compare in price with mill-yarn. Technical skill in spinning which is now being sought to be revived was not wanting at the time when spinning had to be given up, yet the
Charka could not compete with the newly-started mills which by this time have greatly multiplied their productive power. Speaking about the possibilities of the Khaddar movement in Mysore, the Director of Industries observed:

"The spinning of yarn by hand had died out less than 20 years ago and several old women well remembered the days when they were employed in spinning yarn in their girlhood. The spinning wheels were still stored up in their offices and the occupation was only given up because there was no demand for the yarn."

That is the crux of the whole question, 'there is no demand for the yarn' and the Khaddarites under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi are leaving no stone unturned to create an artificial demand! Showing that the Charka was a futile cry Mr. Venkata-subbiah of the Servants of India Society observed:

"The extinction of the Charka is due to the existence of the mills. Attempts are now being made to revive the Charka, but I believe that it is only an artificial stimulus that is being given. The reason for this is that whereas a Charka spinner gets only an anna and a half for his work for eight hours, the same spinner at the mills gets a rupee. The mill-produced cloth is much cheaper and better."
I do not deny that there are still isolated places not only in India but all over the world where people spin and weave their own cloth as a domestic industry. The current of modern life has not yet reached them, they are still holding to the simple primitive type of life and persisting in their old modes and habits. But their number is very few and gradually dwindling. The Khaddar movement may have added a few more to their number, but they are rather the exceptions which prove the rule. The avowed object of the present movement is to help the poor people to supplement their slender income by spinning and the Khaddar organisations all over the country are chiefly engaged in disposing of the yarn obtained from the spinners.

While admitting that industrialism is already upon us Mr. Khandeshi would say: "Thus far and no further." This appears like the divine fiat. Let there be light and there was light! I have shown that big machinery and large scale production is indispensable if we would remove the deep poverty of our people. I do not ignore the evils, but I have said that big machinery does
not necessarily imply all the evils of industrialism. The evils are being corrected everywhere. Mr. Gregg in his book gives a dark picture of industrial life in the West which, however, was true only in the early days of industrialism. Since the Factory Act was passed in England in 1833 things have rapidly advanced. Writing of the condition in the West towards the close of the 19th century Dr. Ludwig Stein of the University of Bern observed:

"The philanthropic phase of social politics is now over. The protection of the labouring classes against an inadmissible expenditure of their working powers, against substances prejudicial to health in their work, against prolonging the periods of work beyond the point sanctioned by society, against massing of the labouring classes in hygienically unsound localities, against injuries to the coming generation in the form of child labour and the labour of woman—all these just requirements of society have to-day, thanks to our sharp social sensibility, come to be generally accepted."

Now the factory workers in the West live a life which is a luxury in comparison with the wretched life lived by our agriculturists. In America the labourers often earn enough to keep their own motor-cars! England is preeminently an industrial country, but the
general condition of living there is beyond the dream of the average Indian. All these are capitalistic countries. Socialistic Russia has held before the world the ideal of a novel solution of all the evils of industrialism. India also will solve the problems in her own way. How can the evils be overcome unless one enters into it?

The United States of America is the leading industrial nation of the day. Only sixty years ago she was mainly an agricultural country and her condition was as bad as ours. But she has combined specialisation in manufactures with agriculture and in this way she has been able to utilise her economic resources to the fullest extent. This is the secret of her economic and political strength. India also must proceed on this line and once her political serfdom is ended her progress will be marvellous.

Mr. Khandeshi refers to the Charka as a healthy recreation and refresher. I wonder whether he has ever spun himself or is labouring under a hypnotic charm. Spinning is at least as much tedious as any other work and people take to it only with a view to earn
something, to supply some want. The leisure hours of our labourers and agriculturists should be devoted not to such work but to true recreation by study, rest and enjoyments; only under these conditions they can hope to grow to their full human stature. Writing of the present condition of the labourers in the West an historian observes:

"In the past, when labour was performed by slaves or serfs, leisure was enjoyed only by the very few wealthy persons. But now that machinery is superseding human labour, it has become possible for millions to enjoy a certain degree of leisure. The work-day is gradually being shortened to eight hours, holidays are more frequent, and vacations more general. This gives opportunities of recreation and culture to many who, in the past, were sunk in misery and ignorance."

My statement that Charka stands in the way of village reconstruction has given a shock to many as it has been the fashion since the days of Non-co-operation to regard Charka as being synonymous with village work. I purposely gave that shock so that it might serve as an eye-opener. It is said that Khaddar workers incidentally do such work as treating the sick, people with medicine, teaching the alphabet to the illiter-
ate, removing the bane of untouchability, and so forth. But all these things could have been done better if the energy of the workers had not been mainly taken up by the sterile Khaddar work, and those functions not made secondary. Then, what is true village work? You cannot organise the villagers simply by distributing medicines to them or opening primary schools or libraries. The essence of village work is to bring a new light, a new awakening, to rouse in the hearts of the villagers the desire to raise the standard of their living, to make them dynamic and to induce them to combine with one another to change and improve their condition in every possible way. All this is not done by Khaddar which, on the contrary, teaches people the virtue of poverty and reconciles them to their lot by adding a few annas to their miserable monthly income. The Charka is truly an opiate and not a renovator!

Mr. Khandeshi gives me a parting advice not to criticise Khaddar without knowledge. I can assure him that I have read more of Khaddar literature and seen more of Khaddar work as well as the actual condition of our
poor people than he and his friends fondly imagine. In my turn let me tell *Khaddarites* of Khandesh as well as other places that if they truly desire to be the friends of the poor and aspire to serve our great Motherland they must have an open mind and not fixed ideas and notions, they must not blind themselves by theories and fads, but squarely look at facts and figures and, what is most important, they must always have the sincerity and the courage to give up their pet schemes and plans and even to demolish ruthlessly the works of their own hands if they be found to be detrimental to the true interests of the country. This is a great and difficult act of sacrifice which Mother India expects of all her sons at this critical juncture in her history.
VIII

THE PROBLEM OF POVERTY

The poverty of the people of India is appalling and on account of this they cannot make progress in any direction. All nation-building activities such as education and sanitation which are essential for the welfare of the people require large sums of money to be spent on them. A people suffering from chronic starvation and lowered vitality cannot expect to grow to their full moral and spiritual stature. That England has practically freed herself from epidemics and all preventible diseases, that America has provided for the efficient education of all the people irrespective of caste, creed or sex, that Japan has been able to compete with the foremost Western countries almost on equal terms, all these have been possible on account of the vast wealth those countries have at
their disposal to devote to the well-being of the people. If the Indians are to show the best that is in them, nay, if they are to live, the deep and widespread poverty of the people must be removed in the first instance.

India with her immense natural resources and a people having abundant vitality and creative power was once the richest country in the world showing extraordinary activity and progress in all departments of life; but now she is the poorest. It is not our purpose here to describe the rich and prosperous life in ancient India nor to enter into a detailed discussion of the complex causes that have led to her present pitiable condition with all the political, social and moral evils attendant on the abject poverty of the people. The material causes of India’s poverty can be brought under two heads, India is not producing sufficient wealth and India is being bled white by a foreign rule and foreign exploitation. The first and foremost necessity is to stop this bleeding and to increase India’s national income by an organised development of agricultural as well as industrial resources of the country.
Agriculture which occupies more than seventy per cent. of the people of India is still in the primitive condition. "It cannot be gainsaid" as was admitted by Lord Reading, the former Viceroy of India "that the average standard of production and the general level of rural welfare in India is lower than that prevailing in other countries where for some time past there has been marked concentration of agricultural problems." Thus, for example, the yield per acre in rice is 6,232 lbs. in Japan, 2,610 lbs. in Egypt, 1,330 lbs. in India. The average yield of wheat per acre in India reaches only 11 bushels. By adequate fertilization the yield can be raised to 38 bushels per acre. The application of science is the key to the improvement of this great staple industry of India.

Then the vast industrial possibilities of the country are lying untapped. Bihar alone is in a position to export both iron and coal to her heart's content and yet retain enough to build up an iron and steel industry that would supply indefinitely half the world. In the matter of industrial development the native
state of Mysore stands as an object lesson to
the rest of India. One of the several causes
that have made the state of Mysore the most
forward in India is its vigorous industrial
policy. The success of the gold mines yield-
ing enormous profits and the concomitant
employment of thousands of people set the
Mysore Government seriously to the task of
building up the now accomplished industrial
Mysore. The Kavery scheme to generate
electricity was undertaken in the early
eighties, which has from the very beginning
proved a highly remunerative project. Then
followed in the regime of Sir M. Visweswarya
an all round progress of Agricultural and In-
dustrial developments. The second biggest
dam in the world, the Krishnaraja Sagara,
which has within itself potentialities of great
benefit to the future generations of Mysore was
built. The dying cottage industries were reno-
vated. Factories were established as a model
for the people to copy. Soap factories were
started and the silk industry which was in a
very crude form was brought in line with the
modern standards. The success of the Tata
Iron and Steel Works encouraged His High-
ness the Maharaja to start the Bhadrabati Iron and Steel Works. The products manufactured are Charcoal Pig Iron, C. P. Menthaul, Denaturing grade Menthaul, Methyl Acetone, Acetate of Lime, Wood Tar, Wood Preservative, Black Paint, Wood Tar Pitch and Cast Iron Pipes. A market has been steadily built up for the above products in India and foreign countries namely, England, the Continent, America and Japan. The management is conducted mostly by local talent and thousands of people are employed. Mysore has illustrated beyond doubt what India can do to remove the poverty of the people if she has the management of the affairs in her own hands. But it is not to the interests of Great Britain that India should develop industrially and so she is compelled to depend mainly on agriculture and that even of the most crude and primitive type.

As regards the exploitation of India by the British we cannot do better than quote the following description of it given by Prof. A. Demangeon of the Sorborne University.

"India is the typical colony for exploitation. Immensely rich and thickly populated, she represents for the masters at once a fortune and a
defence. It is through India that the British Empire assures her destiny. India is the halting place of British Commerce to the Far East. India gives the fleet places of support for the sea-route. India recruits for the Army legion of high-spirited soldiers; native contingents fight for Great Britain in China and South Africa. During the Great War, India supplied more than a million men of whom more than a lac were killed. India is for Great Britain an enormous market; two-thirds of her importations come from English sources; she furnishes 51 per cent. of the wheat production of the Empire, 58 per cent. of the tea, 73 per cent. of the coffee, almost all the cotton. An immense British capital is invested in Indian mines, factories, plantations, railways and irrigation works. India pays the interest on probably 350 million pounds sterling. India keeps busy an army of British Officials whose salaries she pays and whose savings go every year to Great Britain. She pours into British coffers the interest on her public debt, the pensions of old officials, the Governmental expenses of her administration. More than 30 million pounds sterling a year is the estimate of the sums that India pays in the United Kingdom to her creditors, her stock-holders and officials. At that we do not know how much she brings to the merchants who trade with her and the shippers who transport her goods. Never was the term exploitation better employed."

With this enormous persistent drainage of the wealth, with her natural resources undeveloped, with millions of persons who are chronically under-employed it is no wonder that India has reached the lowest depths of
poverty and hardship. To add to her misery the population of the country is increasing giving more mouths to feed and if the population had not been controlled by disease and an extraordinarily high death rate life in India would have been still more miserable. The poor agriculturists of India cannot make any provision for future scarcity. On the other hand their indebtedness is terribly heavy and is put down at between Rs. 600 to 800 crores! The failure of crop for a year or two at once plunges them into terrible famine and as they have to depend almost entirely on the rains for their crop and as the rains are naturally irregular chronic famine and starvation has become the inevitable lot of the majority of Indians.

But apart from those material causes of the poverty of India there is also a moral cause which on account of its subtlety easily escapes our attention though it has been a fundamental factor in determining our present fallen condition and abject poverty. A distortion of the great spiritual ideal of ancient India has led the people to regard poverty itself as virtue. For centuries the
people of India have been taught that this life on the earth is a Maya, a falsehood, that all its joys and sorrows are transitory and unreal, that the enjoyment of life degrades one spiritually and that the sooner one can escape from this life of falsehood the better for his soul. This teaching of asceticism and Mayavad has done immense harm to India. The attempt to push Mayavad upon a whole people resulted in their losing all zest in life; the higher movement of life was choked in them and the vital being thus suppressed began to move in narrow channels, for example, the family life confined to the husband, wife and children, the life of petty service and so forth. People were not attracted by the higher plays of life. Mayavad is all right for a limited few who by their nature are capable of deriving some benefit from it; but it should not have been so vigorously preached to the masses.

It is the impact with the vigorous races of the West with their passion for life and for the joy of life that is helping the Indians to shake the spell of Mayavad and asceticism. The national movement coming on its wake
has induced the Indians to study their past and to reinterpret their ancient culture casting off the dead weight of custom and tradition. We are now realising that the neglect of life and the undervaluation of the joys of life were no part of the great ancient teaching of India. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita have taught us to make the best use of life by developing it to its fulness and to make the life of this earth and in this body to be the basis of a higher spiritual and divine life. Thus the Isha Upanishad says: "By renouncing (the base movements of life) thou shouldst enjoy...........Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years." In the Gita "the great command to Arjuna given after the foundation and main structure of the teaching have been laid and built, 'Arise, slay thy enemies, enjoy a prosperous kingdom' has not the ring of an uncompromising altruism or of a white, dispassionate abnegation; it is a state of inner poise and wideness which is the foundation of spiritual freedom."

If we consider the ancient scheme of Varnashram we find that though Moksha or spiri-
tual freedom was regarded as the ultimate aim of life, people had to develop their body and soul through earthly enjoyments *Kama*, and for this they had to acquire the necessary means, *artha*, though of course all their activities were to be guided and controlled by spiritual motives, *dharma*. Thus *Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha* constituted the fourfold ideal of life. The life that we find depicted in the Ramayan and Mahabharat and in the great monuments of classical sanskrit literature does not show that poverty and bareness was ever regarded as an ideal in India. The aesthetic satisfactions of all kinds and grades were an important part of Indian culture and they were made instruments of spiritual development. It is only when the life-force of the Indians had began to decline in the course of time that Acharya Shankara appeared with his teaching of the renunciation of life and *karma*. It is a very happy sign that in modern India we are rapidly outgrowing the ascetic teaching of Shankara and returning to the Vedic ideal of a prosperous joyful divine life even on this earth.
But unfortunately a reactionary movement has already set in and this also has had its immediate origin in our contact with the West. This time it is not the Indian asceticism with its high spiritual significance which is being vigorously preached to the masses but the doctrines of the Christian Monks of the middle ages in Europe, who regarded a bare, poor, ugly, ascetic life as the highest virtue and suffering as a necessary means of salvation. Poverty and suffering were always regarded as evils in India on account of their soul-killing and demoralising effects though some times good might come out of them as out of all evils; but they were regarded as being virtues in themselves by the preachers of Christianity. Blessed are the poor, blessed are they that mourn—these were the tenets of their teaching. The so-called Christian races of modern Europe escaped the disastrous effects of this wrong view of religion by divorcing religion from their life. But in India religion is bound up with the life of the people, the teachings of our saints and sadhakas have the profoundest influence on the mentality and conduct of our masses. At
the present day in India there is no one man who has greater influence on the masses than Mahatma Gandhi. But Mahatma Gandhi has been influenced more by the teachings of Tolstoy and the Bible than by anything Indian. He has been aptly called the Christ of the Indian Road and has vigorously held up before the people of India the medieval Christian ideal of poverty, suffering and gloomy asceticism. In his Ashram at Sabarmati the first vow that the disciples have to take is that of poverty. A man may have to cheerfully accept poverty and suffering as a necessary evil in the performance of his duty, but when they are held up as ideals in themselves they have a great depressing effect upon the life of the people.

The remedy that Mahatma Gandhi has prescribed for improving the economic condition of the people is quite characteristic. The Charka is the very symbol of poverty. No one will deny that the vast masses of our people are most miserably poor and that they must be given sufficient employment so that they may earn a decent livelihood. But how does the Charka help? By working whole
day on the Charka a man cannot earn more than Rs. 5/- a month. How can a man live on this income unless he be a world-shunning saint and an ascetic? With five rupees only as his monthly income a man cannot have sufficient food and clothing, a sanitary dwelling place, facilities for self-development, adequate means for properly educating and bringing up his children, provision for the future, treatment in case of disease and such other things which are necessary for a decent human life. If the Charka be wholly inadequate, as it actually is, to meet the essential needs of life how do you hold it up as the means of the economic salvation of the people? It will be said that the ideal is not to depend on the Charka but to make it only as supplementary industry for leisure hours. Supplementary industries are certainly needed and the various dying cottage industries should be revived wherever possible and strengthened by modern devices; they should be encouraged consulting local needs and possibilities—but the simple formula, “Charka for all” cannot at all meet the needs of the situation. The Charka must be judged
not from the ease with which it can be universally adopted provided every one in the country consents to wear Khaddar leaving aside cheaper and better-made mill-cloth, but from the actual amelioration in the condition of the people it can bring about. If as a sole occupation the Charka can hardly give more than Rs. 5/- a month, as a supplementary industry it cannot generally give more than a rupee and this paltry addition to the income of our people cannot bring any material change in their condition. Apart from all theoretical considerations what economic help the Charka has actually brought to the poor people will appear from a consideration of the reports of the various authorised Khadi organisations in the country. There is no better Khadi worker in India than Babu Rajendra Prasad in Bihar or Srijut C. Raja-gopalachari in Tamil Nadu. In Bihar the spinners have earned at the rate of less than one rupee a month on the average; in the Gandhi Ashram in Tamil Nadu they have received wages at the rate of less than ten annas per month. And this is said to be the
only solution of the economic problem of the masses of India!

No, the deep and widespread poverty of our masses cannot be alleviated unless we increase the wealth of the country by large scale production through machinery. Our people seem to have a dread of machinery and large scale production on account of the evils attendant on industrialism. But big machinery does not necessarily imply all the evils of industrialism. The evils are bound to disappear. Unless one enters into it, how can the evils be overcome? The different ideas and schemes suggested in Europe show that the people are trying to correct the defects. Why should the Indians wait until other countries solved their problems so that they might imitate afterwards?

While other countries are trying to give living wages to their labourers—by living wages is meant at least Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 a month—and to reduce their hours of labour to a maximum of 6 to 7 hours a day, the friends of the poor in our country are leaving no stone unturned to increase the monthly income of our toiling masses from Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 and that by
compelling them to work even in their leisure hours! No country in the world is giving up machinery on account of the evils that may arise from it but are trying and that with more and more success to remove those evils in their own way.

It is the tendency of the Indians towards poverty which is really responsible for the cry against machinery. But our leaders do not seem to realise that by raising this cry they are helping the very interests of the British Imperialists, which they are out to destroy. Our British rulers do not want that India should have full industrial development but that she should remain mainly an agricultural country thus providing an eternal market for the industrial products of Great Britain.

Removal of foreign rule with its attendant exploitation, reduction of expenditure on the army and the civil administration, a national mercantile marine; improved railway transport; the inauguration of other less costly means of transport such as canals and waterways for the development of internal trade; application of science and technical skill to
agriculture; extension of large scale production through machinery; organisation of suitable cottage industries with modern devices and methods; facilities in banking and insurance; co-operative organisations for sale and purchase and other purposes; technical education; modification of the whole university system; improved sanitation; a good thumping tariff to protect Indian industries—these measures and others would alleviate the poverty of the Indian masses if the people themselves would give up the false ideal of poverty and bareness being a virtue in itself, if they were inspired by the determination to improve their conditions and were prepared to make the necessary sacrifices of custom, prejudice and quasi-religious beliefs.
IX

MORAL VALUE OF THE CHARKA

Mr. Nair, a member of the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati has sought to give a new turn to the Khaddar controversy by proposing not to oppose me with facts and figures which, he says, are most misleading but to lay stress on the moral and spiritual aspects of the Khaddar movement. I must confess that here I am in my elements as I am constitutionally more a philosopher and a spiritual seeker than a mere politician or an economist. I also feel that no amount of facts and figures and arguments I produce will convert those with whom Khaddar is more a matter of faith and religion than of reason and economics. It seems to them that giving up Khadi means giving up Gandhi, giving up Bapu, and they have certainly not the heart to do that. But my position is quite clear.
My respect for Mahatma Gandhi does not stand on such an uncertain footing as the Charka. The Mahatma may commit Himalayan blunders in the field of politics and economics, still he will occupy a very high position in the hearts not only of his own countrymen but of all people on account of the high moral ideal he has held up before the world in his personality and character. He has rendered a great service to the cause of humanity by pitching moral force against brute force, not only in theory but in the practical solution of problems that are troubling the race. It is true that he has not been able to achieve much success; but his very attempt is a great contribution to the future possibilities of the human being. The causes of his failure are obvious. His appeal is not to the brute in man, but to his soul. But of how many men on earth can it be as yet said that they have at all a soul to respond? In most people the soul has not yet emerged, they live a physical and vital life with a crude superficial play of the mind and reason and they must be dealt with by physical and vital forces however much these
may have to be backed by moral force to which Mahatma Gandhi has given the name Soul-force. In a world as it actually is at present, a Mirabeau, a Bismarck, a Mussolini has a far greater chance of success in dealing with human beings than our simple, honest, non-violent Mahatma Gandhi. Count Mirabeau was even more revolting in his moral character than in his ugly personal appearance—yet he became the greatest political figure of Europe in his time and inaugurated a historic revolution which sent across the world the ideals of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,—great ideals which are now bidding fair to create a new higher order of humanity.

It is really the personality of Mahatma Gandhi with his great sacrifice and moral force that is preventing people from seeing the utter futility of the Charka. But if we allow our personal and moral predilections to cloud our vision about the true interests and well-being of the country we shall be untrue to our great Motherland who is higher than even the highest of her sons.

Mr. Nair would fain dispense with facts and figures which seem to him to be
most misleading but he himself cannot resist the temptation of quoting facts and figures which appear to him to be in support of his own cause. Thus he cites the fact of Britain's imperialism which has truly become a standing menace to world peace and also quotes the figure of unemployment in that country. But Mr. Nair forgets that there were war and imperialism in the world even before the advent of modern industrialism and that England enslaved India at a time when all English people were wearing Khaddar and every English village was humming with the music of the spinning wheel. As long as there are greed and lust and passion in human nature man will find out some excuse or other for war and for exploiting weaker people under the moral pretence of trusteeship. The number of the unemployed in Great Britain is not due to large-scale production through big machinery but to the capitalistic system. We do not believe, like our young leaders, that the Russian brand of Socialism or Communism is the panacea for all evils. But the Socialistic theory and the Russian experiment have shown beyond all doubt that large-scale pro-
duction does not necessarily imply all the evils of industrialism. The difference between Capitalism and Socialism does not lie in large-scale production but in the manner of distributing the wealth produced; both agree that there should be the production of plenty of wealth and this is also the clear injunction of our ancient Indian Scriptures. So we must fully utilise the resources modern science has placed in our hands to immensely increase the wealth of our country; and the problem of distribution India will solve in her own way according to her national tradition and genius.

I have already shown beyond doubt that spinning does not and cannot bring any real amelioration in the economic condition of our poverty-stricken masses. So Mr. Nair raises another plea that the Khaddar movement has fostered the spirit of Swadeshi and brought about a great national awakening. A little consideration will show that this plea also cannot stand. The Khaddar movement has not brought any awakening, it is rather the awakening caused in the country by the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs and by the general post-war awakening all over the world
that was utilised and exploited to re-introduce the use of Khaddar in India. A true spirit of nationalism and Swadeshism was first created in India by the partition movement in Bengal, but the spinning wheel had nothing to do with that movement. On the other hand the great political ardour and enthusiasm shown by the Indian people during the Non-co-operation days was damped by the programme of spinning and selling Khaddar. It was the narrow and rigid cadre of the so-called Constructive Bardoli programme, with Khaddar as its chief item which really killed the Non-co-operation movement. But even now disillusionment has not come to our people. That "Constructive" programme, though it has been able to construct nothing for these eight years, has been again adopted by the Congress in Calcutta by a overwhelming majority under the spell of the personality of Mahatma Gandhi.

Since 1920 no less than fifty lacs of rupees have been spent on Khaddar, but not only the villagers, the peasants and the labourers remain as miserable and unorganised as ever, the Congress itself,
the power house of national work is in a moribund condition. Mahatma Gandhi has even gone so far as to say that the Congress is a bogus organisation consisting of self-appointed delegates! If this huge sum of money and the energy and enthusiasm spent on the Khaddar movement had been devoted to true constructive work, to the organisation of the people into small co-operative groups or samghas to improve their condition in all possible ways according to local needs and conditions, the whole nation by this time would have throbbed with a new life and the problem of finding a sanction for Swaraj could have been easily solved. But that was not to be. Fifty lacs of rupees collected from the poor starving people of India have been wasted to satisfy a fad of "the greatest living man in the world"!

The Charka is at most one of hundreds of handicrafts practised by our people to earn a livelihood and to think that spinning has any specific power to awaken the soul or to create the spirit of Swadeshi and nationalism is pure superstition. It may shock our Khaddarites to know, nevertheless it is quite true, that
there are many spinners and weavers who supply us with pure Khadi, but themselves prefer to wear clothes made in Manchester.

But what about Bardoli? Was it not with the help of the spinning wheel, asks Mr. Nair, that Mahatma Gandhi organised the peasants of Bardoli who have saved the honour of India in the recent no-tax campaign? I hope my readers will forgive me if I indulge here in a little plain talk. We have of late heard so much about the great victory of Bardoli that people have naturally come to believe in it. But when did the fight take place at Bardoli? Both sides were preparing and surveying their own forces and their opponents; the Government gave an ultimatum, but before the date of that ultimatum expired a compromise was brought about through negotiations, in which all the demands of the Government were practically fulfilled. In no sense of the term can that compromise be called a victory for the peasants or a defeat for the Government. That the Bardoli campaign has created no impression on the Government is apparent from the fact that two more taluks, in the same Presidency are again
up in arms against assessment; in one case, it is said, the tax has been raised forty per cent! In Bardoli itself the fate of the peasants is still hanging on the balance. So the less we speak of the great victory of Bardoli the better, for self-deception does good to nobody.

At the same time I do not grudge in the least to render unto the brave peasants of Bardoli their due. When all over the country our politicians were ceaselessly talking, touring and lecturing and drafting and holding big congresses and conferences and processions as signs of "activism", the peasants of Bardoli courageously stood up for their rights and under the guidance of an able band of workers showed a solid front to the bureaucracy, showing the possibilities of a great mass movement in India. But what has the spinning wheel to do with all this? In the programme of constructive work drawn up for Bardoli just after the compromise Sirder Vallabhai Patel gave prominence to the boycott of foreign cloth and the introduction of the Charka, showing thereby on the face of it that that programme has yet to be
carried out there though Bardoli has been preparing for Civil disobedience under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi since 1920. If we free our mind of the Charka-complex and analyse the Bardoli situation in the spirit of a scientist we find that whatever success has been achieved there has been due to the facts that the peasants had a real grievance against the Government, they had able leaders and workers to mobilise and organise them for a fight, the political situation in the country was quite favourable the Government being unwilling to irritate the country for the sake of the Simon Commission, the whole country stood by Bardoli paying a subscription of more than 4½ lacs of rupees and offering every kind of help that might be required. Under similar circumstances a "Bardoli" campaign can be successfully organised everywhere without any preliminary "discipline" and "training" through the Charka.

My view will be completely borne out if we consider the three great Satyagraha campaigns undertaken in Bengal in recent times. In Midnapur the peasants refused to pay tax until the Union Boards were
abolished and they won; they did not, like the peasants of Bardoli, halt with a compromise. Patuakhali also won a real victory. At Tarakeswar the Satyagraha campaign ended in an honourable compromise, the Mohunt agreeing to abdicate, though it was most unfortunately spoilt by the short-sightedness of our own people, the Brahmin Sabha of Bengal. Yet the splendid organising power that the young men of Bengal showed at Tarakeswar was unique, and the peoples' spirit of resistance was unconquerable. It may not be known to all that it was the organising ability shown by the workers of Bengal in the Tarakeswar campaign which really upset Lord Lytton and precipitated the Bengal ordinance which by itself has dealt a severe blow at British rule in India. In none of these great campaigns of peaceful Satyagraha was it necessary to prepare the workers or the people through the Charka and our national leaders will do well to take note of this carefully when they talk of “Bardolising” the whole country.