

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

THE ECONOMIC CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

(By Gandhiji)

Q. What in your opinion ought to be the basis of India's future economic constitution? What place will such institutions as savings banks, insurance companies etc. have in it?

A. According to me the economic constitution of India and, for the matter of that, the world should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others. Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness today not only in this unhappy land but other parts of the world too. It is this evil that the Khadi movement is calculated to remedy. Savings banks and insurance companies will be there even when the economic reforms suggested by me have been effected, but their nature will have undergone a complete transformation. Savings banks today in India, though a useful institution, do not serve the very poorest. As for our insurance companies they are of no use whatever to the poor. What part they can play in an ideal scheme of reconstruction such as I have postulated is more than I can say. The function of savings banks ought to be to enable the poorest to husband their hard-earned savings and to subserve the interests of the country generally. Though I have lost faith in most Government institutions, as I have said before, savings banks are good so far as they go, but unfortunately today their services are available only to the urban section of the community and so long as our gold reserves are located outside India they can hardly be regarded as trustworthy institutions. In the event of a war all these banks may become not only utterly useless but even a curse to the people, inasmuch

as the Government will not scruple to employ the funds held by these banks against the depositors themselves. No Government institution can be depended upon to remain loyal to the interest of the people in emergency, if they are not controlled by and not run in the interests of the people. So long therefore as this primary condition is absent, banks are in the last resort additional links to keep the people in chains. They may exist but it is well to understand where we are in respect even of such harmless looking institutions.

Young India, 15-11-'26

The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villages as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villager using the modern machines and tools they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.

Harijan, 29-8-'36

If I can convert the country to my point of view, the social order of the future will be based predominantly on the *charkha* and all it implies. It will include everything that promotes the well-being of the villagers. It will not exclude the industries mentioned by my correspondent so long as they do not smother the villages and village life. I do visualize electricity, ship-building, iron works, machine-making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependence will be reversed. Hitherto the industrialization has been so planned as to destroy the villages and village crafts. In the State of the future it will subserve the villages and their crafts. I do not share the socialist belief that centralization of the necessities of life will conduce to the common welfare when the centralized industries are planned and owned by the State.

Harijan, 27-1-'40

OUR IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME FOR BHOODAN WORK *

I will now take up the question of how we should organize our efforts in order to accelerate the pace of our work. This movement, as you are aware, started about two years ago in Telangana. The friend who gave us the first donation in the village of its origin is present here in this conference. The Harijans of the place asked for eighty acres of land and on my suggestion that someone should come forward to satisfy their demand he offered them one hundred acres. You can meet this friend and learn from him how and in what atmosphere the whole thing originated in that village. To me this appeared to be a signal from God, and I decided to start the campaign. It is evident that in the absence of this pointer I could not have thought of this solution of the land-problem. Even if it had occurred to me I could not have made bold to undertake it, because it meant collecting crores of acres and in all conscience I could not presume that I would be able to rouse the people to an active sense of duty to an extent necessary for this purpose. My friends and colleagues too, had I consulted them, would not have advised me to take up this programme. All the same I took it up with faith in God and decided to try my hand at it. Thus I began to ask for land.

And as I went on with the campaign, each day that passed brought out hidden meanings and disclosed new possibilities of this movement. Thus I grew in my own understanding of its vast potentialities and had what I may call a vision — a new revelation of the power of non-violence. However a doubt still lingered — not in my mind, but in that of others : It was feared that the success in Telangana might be due to the special conditions prevailing in that part, and may fail to repeat where conditions were different. Soon afterwards I was required to go to Delhi following an invitation from Pandit Nehru and I decided to avail myself of the opportunity it provided to see how it worked under changed conditions. I set out to Delhi on foot and all along the way I explained the message of *bhoodan* to the people. The result was that the people showed the same enthusiasm for it as they had done in Telangana. It proved that the conditions in Telangana were no way special and the reason for the success was rather to be found in the fact that time-spirit itself was in its favour.

After Delhi I undertook to tour Uttar Pradesh. Here I asked the workers to fix a target of collection for the province and pledge themselves to achieve it. The Uttar Pradesh workers who were very few in number worked heroically and put in tremendous efforts for ten months without any respite, and as work proceeded it was found that the pledge was not beyond fulfilment. Today, as you know, they have announced in the con-

ference that it is well-nigh fulfilled. Not only that, they have now decided to raise their quota from five lakh to eleven lakh acres. This was in Uttar Pradesh.

Then I thought if I continue to tour the country in this way, I will get two to three lakh acres every year, but at this rate, in five to six years which I would need for touring India I will have collected at the most ten to twenty lakh acres only. Collecting ten to twenty lakh acres, however, cannot solve the problem. Times were moving fast and if we did not keep pace with them and solve the problem within a specified time, our efforts would be in vain ; that is, though we might succeed in bringing help and relief to some, here and there, yet we would fail in achieving our object of ushering in a new social order based on justice. It was therefore evident that somewhere we must concentrate and try for the full solution of the problem. And I felt that Bihar should be an ideal place for this experiment. It was neither a very big province nor a small one. The reserve of goodwill among its people, I thought, will be — if not greater — not less than elsewhere. Besides, it was the place from where Buddha preached his message of Ahimsa to the world and my faith suggested to me that it must therefore prove specially favourable for this new experiment in Ahimsa. With these considerations in my mind I decided to try for the full solution of the land-problem in Bihar. And the decision was made known to the people the day I entered Bihar.

Our initial experience in Bihar was not quite encouraging. It appeared as though we had come up against a rock. But it did not depress me. For two months, in spite of our best efforts, the results were very meagre, so much so that in the Saran District we could raise only a thousand acres in spite of the fact that our President, who hails from that district, himself issued an appeal urging the people to do their utmost for the success of *bhoodan* in Bihar and specially in Saran. There were days when we got only two acres or three acres. Nevertheless I persisted in my determination in making Bihar a test-case for proving the efficacy of *bhoodan* as the weapon for working out the socio-economic revolution. And when I entered the Gaya District, I resolved that this district, which was the scene of Lord Buddha's austerities and which is sacred to crores of Hindus as the place where they offer *Sradha* to their forebears, should be asked to collect one lakh acres as the first instalment. I expressed this feeling to the workers who approved of it and accepted to work for it. You know that this has borne fruit, and encouraged by this their success the workers have now fixed their target at four lakh acres.

Meanwhile I have been reflecting over the situation to find out how best we should plan our efforts so as to achieve the maximum result in

* This is the second half of Shri Vinoba's speech on March 9, at the Chandil Sammelan.

the minimum time; and experience has led me to the conclusion that for some time we should concentrate all our energy on Bihar, and even in Bihar on a few selected districts. If these districts succeed in solving the land-problem in their respective areas without recourse to legislation, albeit with the help of the Government, there is no reason why the same should not happen in other parts of India. These districts will serve as an example to the rest of India, which will strengthen the faith of the workers and the people in the practicability of this programme. And once this faith is brought into existence and begins to work as an active impulse the problem will be solved in no time.

I want therefore that for a year from now you should give all your time and energy to this thing, each in his province. And this you should do in the spirit of dedication, leaving everything else—even good things. I am not telling you anything new. It is a recognized precept in *bhakti-marg*—the way of devotion. The devotees are asked to abandon not only what is not virtuous but also what is virtuous. The Gita says: Come to me as thy sole refuge abandoning all *dharma*s. This is a characteristic of the way of devotion that it demands total dedication. And our way is a way of devotion, for we seek to introduce love and harmony into the society, which cannot be done except through devotion. We want to generate love. Then this becomes our chief duty for which we should be prepared to abandon all other smaller duties.

Next I want that while you organize work in your respective provinces, a few workers from every province, who can be spared for the purpose, should also come to Bihar for two or three months. It will benefit us in two ways. First, the presence of these workers in Bihar will improve the atmosphere of this place which is at the moment highly contaminated by political rivalries. Secondly they will learn how to work under such atmosphere which will be useful to them when they go back.

Thirdly I want that Bihar workers should also concentrate the greater part of their effort on the few selected districts. If they do so and are able to achieve complete success in those parts, that will give a tremendous impetus to our work. People ask me whether it would be in the interest of *bhoo*dan work, if I thus remain tied to Bihar. Was it right strategy? I say to them that it would undoubtedly help the cause of our movement if we can accomplish our work in a given area within a specified time and present the same as an example before the people. The practicability of our programme will have been vindicated and the rest will then be merely a matter of time and the number of workers required in proportion to the quantity of the work to be done. The need of the hour therefore is to produce such an example as early as we can.

I had told the people of Bihar that I would not leave this province until the problem

here was finally solved. But I want that the next conference should not meet here again. I will therefore request the workers of this province to fulfil the quota of 32 lakh acres and thus enable me to proceed to another province.

We had decided to collect 25 lakh acres by the time of the next Sammelan. Supposing that Bihar alone is able to collect 32 lakh acres, our pledge will be more than fulfilled. This revolution will then spread to other provinces and our work will be easily and swiftly accomplished. It cannot be that while Bihar does so much, other parts of India will just look on and remain where they were. That is against human psychology. Human society is after all a unity and a change in one part must affect the rest.

(Abridged from Hindi)

ETIQUETTE FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS

To The Editor, *Harijan*.

Sir,

I have seen your editorial note in the *Harijan* of 18th April. I am glad you have taken up the cause which is dear to many Andhras. Andhras do not want that they should preserve their State at the cost of the poor man by forcing drink on him. As you have rightly pointed out, the Constitution clearly lays it down that the State shall *endeavour* to bring about Prohibition of the consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs injurious to health. Contravening this directive principle of the State policy and a fundamental Article of the Constitution, is certainly not endeavouring to bring about Prohibition.

I wish to bring another point to the notice of your readers and that is also a constitutional one. The point is this: Mr Wanchoo, when he visited the Madras State in connection with the separation of the Andhra State, was acting in the capacity of a public servant. As such he is bound to respect the Constitution and not whisper a word against it. He has been an experienced Judge and should be expected to know his job and his limitations. I hold that whatever be the rights and privileges a legislator or a common citizen may have in respect of differing from or propagating against the existing Constitution, a Government servant is bound by the Constitution and cannot infringe it. In view of the clear wording of Article 47, Mr Wanchoo was not free to suggest, as he did, in his recommendations giving up of Prohibition for the creation of a separate Andhra State. I believe that this is a clear infringement of the rules of conduct of a public servant. I would suggest that other public servants do not copy this example.

Nellore, 11-5-53

V. RAGHAVIAH

[It is for Government to see how far the view of the correspondent is tenable in law. However it is very necessary that public servants should not give vent to views and opinions which are against the Constitution or any way contrary to accepted State policies.]

15-5-53

— M. P.]

HARIJAN

May 30

1953

WE REQUIRE A NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Shri M. P. T. Acharya writes as follows regarding the economic policy that is adopted by the Union Government at present :

"Pandit Nehru like Marxians and capitalists takes production of wealth as automatically going (distributed) for consumption, while money prevents distribution, consumption and even restricts production activities. There is not only enough money to "go round" but also enough money to start producing all things. It is thinking in a vacuum—no relation to realities. If consumption could be increased within the set-up, there would be no misery and no socialist and communist and other subversive movements in the West or the East. Even advanced countries cannot solve the problem. Pandit Nehru starts where Europe started 50 years ago. There were more chances of sale abroad than now which enabled England, Germany and U. S. to expand their industries. Now markets inland and abroad are destroyed and will be destroyed more and more.

"Unless we recognize that Capitalist and Bolshevik economy will not work, there will be no solution. But they try to combine the worst features of both Bolshevik and Capitalist economy as "solution", making things worse. Both are made for reduced consumption only in spite of increased production of useless things."

The criticism is not a new thing so far as the observations made in it go. But it becomes important in the context of Government economic policy today. It clinches the few most vital issues that we cannot ignore in our present situation. These are :

1. Is it wise or any way really helpful for us today to go the way of the West in industrialization evolved by it in the last century of the dominance of colonialist or imperialist economy ?

2. Do we recognize that colonial or foreign markets are daily fading away in the modern world politics and that self-sufficiency has to be the key-note of economic policy of nations today ?

3. Have we realized for us that mere emphasis on production at any cost does not solve our economic problem, but that we are required to forge out a new policy for our national economy, which should be a naturally distributive system of production, which will therefore not create the evil capitalistic concentration but will distribute the purchasing power produced in the largest possible number of hands and over the widest area ?

4. Do we acknowledge that to tackle the problem of unemployment, which is in other words our basic question of food, cloth and shelter for all, the way of concentrated and centralized production is a failure and that only the way

that Gandhiji tried to show us through Khadi and Village Industries Economy can solve it ?

This is the topmost question of the day, not only for us, but also for the West as well. As markets are growing scarce and scanty, the armed nations might either quarrel amongst themselves for whatever of them are still open, or they turn the way of the New Economy of peace and contented happiness that Gandhiji foresaw for the world. For example, the editor of *The Sower* (Summer, 1952) a quarterly bulletin representing a small band of fundamentalist economic and social thinkers in England, writes about British economy as follows :

"Our British economy cannot endure on its present basis much longer. Since the pre-war primary-producing countries are now moving as rapidly as possible towards a reasonable self-sufficiency Britain has no option but to move in the same direction. The present condition of the textile trades is a clear warning of that fact. In the new world order that is rapidly developing Britain will not be able to secure the markets necessary to maintain its present economy with its huge demand for imports of food and raw materials.

"As the collapse of the present war-producing economy proceeds, and unemployment rises in volume, the Government will be only too glad to assist every effort to increase self-sufficiency in the localities, while the development of crafts, home and small industries and a local agro-industrial economy, will stimulate the growth of local genius, local co-operation and local self-government which in turn will increase the level and extent of personal responsibility, and so pave the way to a veritable economic and spiritual democracy."

Shri Wilfred Wellock, one of this band, writes in the same number on this central question of rebuilding Britain, under the title *Decentralization*. The reader will find this reproduced elsewhere in these columns. Let us not forget that, when we are furiously striving to rebuild India, we do not lose sight of the fundamentals of our situation, as there is every danger to do so in our haste to tread the beaten path of industrialized West with its hectic glow and alluring glamour.

8-5-'53

By Bharatan Kumarappa

WHY PROHIBITION

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INDIA MUST LEAD

Mr W. A. Scharffenberg, Executive Secretary of the International Temperance Association, addressing Madras Legislators (March 24), quoted at the outset Gladstone's words that "it is the duty of Government to make it easy for the people to do well and difficult to do ill" and said that whenever he asked people why they drank, they replied that drink was available and so they drank. He expressed the view that if they could not get liquor they would not drink.

Experience in U. S.

Mr Scharffenberg narrated how total Prohibition came into force in U. S. formerly and said that in a certain place a person who had taken alcohol from a liquor shop committed a murder. The people around, coming to know that the man committed the murder while in a drunken state, demanded that the shop should not be allowed to operate in that area. So the shop shifted from that district. When the shopman tried to open a shop in another district, the people there came to know under what circumstances he came to that place and in turn demanded that the liquor shop should not be allowed to open in that district. Thus each district began to spurn liquor shops and 27 States had thus declared Prohibition. A Prohibition Bill was then taken up by the Congress and 75 per cent of the States endorsed it. Prohibition thus became a Federal Law. The liquor interests—dealers and manufacturers—were disappointed and they organized what was called the Association for the Repeal of the 18th Amendment (Prohibition Law). They in America had Prohibition for 13 years and Mr Scharffenberg said, it could not be said to have failed.

Reviewing how Prohibition ceased to be a Federal Law, Mr Scharffenberg said that two circumstances arose. Firstly, there was a sort of indifference on the part of the temperance forces in the country. Once Prohibition had become a Federal Law they stopped their work and many societies closed. They failed to launch a continuous education programme. Secondly, the liquor interests tried to permeate among the people the idea that Prohibition could never work; that it was a failure; and that there was illicit drinking. They influenced big officers and made them fight for the repeal. "This was a Federal Law and I am very happy that India did not make that same mistake, and the responsibility of enforcing Prohibition is not vested in the Federal Government. How would your State police officers like the Delhi police officials come down here and enforce Prohibition laws? It does not work and could not work. These men, belonging to the Federal Government in U. S. thought they were big men and, not caring to enforce the law, they leaned more and more towards the men who appointed them—politicians who were endeavouring to develop an opinion against Prohibition."

Finally, he said, one party came to the front and promised a national referendum on the issue of Prohibition. Only a minority exercised their votes. A majority of them, like the poor peasants, did not vote. They never believed that Prohibition would be repealed in U. S. And yet Prohibition was repealed. But it was not correct to say that it was repealed by the votes of a majority. According to the speaker, a majority of the people was against drink and in favour of Prohibition.

Recent Trends

At present, Mr Scharffenberg said, an interesting development was taking place in U. S. The liquor interests did all they could to promote drinking in all sections of society. They were advertising through all mediums. They went too far and a reaction had now set in that something should be done about it. A Bill was introduced in the Congress last year that advertising of liquor over radio and other such media should be banned. It was lost by one vote. Another Bill of the kind was now being intro-

duced and he would not be surprised if it was carried through this time. He said that more women were drinking today in U. S. than ever before and there was a feeling among the public that something should be done about it. There was the drinking habit among the student population also. It was also stated that about 75 per cent of road accidents happened when the car drivers were in a drunken state and also public feeling was aroused against them. The feeling was again growing against the liquor industry. Whereas previously about 75 per cent of liquor was purchased and consumed at the bar and 25 per cent taken home, the ratio had now reversed. Trade interests said that liquor had food value and it was also repudiated. Civic organizations had been started to educate the people on the evils of drink and to do propaganda for introduction of Prohibition. At the annual conferences of such functions no liquor was served and they took only orange juice. "I merely mention this," he said, "to show that a feeling is developed in U. S. against drink and I wish to put that idea across. We must take courage in this matter of Prohibition and India will set an example for the entire world to follow in this regard with her religious conviction, cultural ideals and realistic outlook in life."

Proceeding, Mr Scharffenberg said that during the last Presidential election in U. S., on a reference made to them by the Temperance Association both the Republican and Democratic Parties did not consent to the liquor interests sponsoring their conventions over the radio. That was a definite victory for the Prohibition forces in U. S. At the Republican Convention, President Eisenhower would not allow liquor to be served. During 1951 in 48 States, 1,653 Bills were introduced in the Assemblies calling for control, restriction and prohibition of liquor trade, and "we have in the U. S. what we call the local option to introduce Prohibition. Though by the amending Act, Prohibition as a Federal Law was repealed, there was provision that every State had complete authority over that question." If a State wanted to have Prohibition it could secure the support of the Federal Government for protecting it from the dealers in illicit liquor. After his tour, Mr Scharffenberg said, he was going to suggest that big business corporations should send out to India only persons who were not addicted to drink. He would make the same suggestion regarding Ambassadorial staff to this country also. He said he was ashamed to say that Washington itself was quite wet. According to statistics, the largest number of crimes was committed in Washington.

"I believe," Mr Scharffenberg said in conclusion, "that you in Madras and the people in Bombay will set apart an example for the nation. Let every one of you here take a positive line and permeate the spirit that you are cent per cent for Prohibition and make an immense success of it."

Some Questions Answered

Mr Schaffenberg, replying to questions, said that from what he studied in Africa and other countries, the personal income and savings of a man went up once he gave up the drink habit. The standard of life of the family also consequently rose. He also mentioned that in the report submitted recently by a committee appointed by the Government in America to investigate into crimes, it was stated that crimes in the Prohibition period were less. There were also more cases of illicit distillation after the repeal of Prohibition. Even now cases of illicit distillation were more in number in the 'wet' areas than in the 'dry' areas.

Asked whether the Church advocated drink, Mr Scharffenberg said that there was a general impression that all Christians drank. Really Christians were not permitted to smoke or drink. But there had been many cases of clergymen drinking. There was, however, a happy change coming among the Christians in U. S. A national

Council of the Churches had been set up and they tried to promote Prohibition. The clergymen were required to preach one or two sermons in a year for total abstinence.

In U. S., Mr Scharffenberg said, they were endeavouring to take the whole question of Prohibition out of politics. An educational programme was necessary to propagate Prohibition. If people understood how injurious drink was for the body, they would not have anything to do with it. "Legislation must be reinforced by education; or rather education must be reinforced by legislation", he said.

To a question "if Prohibition has succeeded in Madras State", Mr Scharffenberg said, he had just come to the place and he was trying to gain information. As such, it would not be possible for him to give an opinion on the matter. He added that only 15 per cent of the people in India were addicted to drink. India had an ideal background for successful implementation of Prohibition. If similar conditions obtained in U. S. they would have national Prohibition without doubt.

Mr Scharffenberg said that for every rupee the Government collected on liquor, they would have to spend Rs 14 on prevention of crimes of accidents, etc., the causes for which could be traced to drink.

World Prohibition Movement

Efforts are now afoot to set up an International Commission for the prevention of Alcoholism throughout the world with 150 members, Mr Scharffenberg told a representative of *The Hindu*.

Mr Scharffenberg was asked whether, in the light of objections to Prohibition in India, including financial considerations like loss of revenue to the State, he would advocate Prohibition or recommend temperance or moderation, restriction in the hours of drinking etc.

Moderation no Solution

He replied that the word temperance meant moderation in all things that were good and total abstinence in all things that were evil. "Certainly, no one will dispute the fact that alcohol is a destroyer of health, of happiness and of mental stability and hence is very evil," he said. "Therefore, we stand for total abstinence from all alcoholic beverages for the individual—and for national Prohibition, complete Prohibition for the State and the nation."

Mr Scharffenberg did not believe that moderation would solve the problem, stating, "Moderation is the school in which the alcoholic receives his first lesson. Alcohol is a habit-forming drug, a depressant and a poison."

Liquor Revenue a Myth

Dealing with objections emanating from revenue considerations Mr Scharffenberg said that these were to be found in other countries also. Liquor interests endeavoured, he said, to make people believe that the Government could not exist without liquor revenue. He said, "The liquor traffic has never been able to pay for itself. If we charge to the liquor traffic everything that should be charged to it, it would go bankrupt. The idea that the revenue benefits the people is a myth." Explaining himself Mr Scharffenberg said that as the consumption of liquor went up in one area, the crime rate therein increased. They would have to employ more police, more asylums and more orphanages and operating costs also would go up. If all this were charged to the industry, the loss of health and in mental balance, wrecked homes, etc., they would find that drink was not worthwhile. In Bombay, he said, crime had been reduced by 21 per cent in 1952 compared to the previous year.

In conclusion, Mr Scharffenberg said that Prohibition, to be effective, must be reinforced by a strong and continuous educational programme for total abstinence which should begin from the primary school stage.

(From *The Hindu*, March 26, '53)

SOCIAL INSURANCE ANALYSED

(By M. P. T. Acharya)

Social Insurance scheme (unemployment and sickness benefit) was introduced for the first time in Germany as early as Bismark's time. It was introduced in England only after the first world war.

It was introduced when there was no great unemployment. But the conditions of receiving the benefits were so severe that it took plenty of trouble to get the benefits. Owing to red tape, many were disqualified from receiving the benefits on flimsy grounds.

When I was employed as travelling salesman in Germany in Kaiser's time, I was also compulsorily insured against unemployment and sickness although a foreigner. The fees were taken out of my pay envelope and paid to the Government by my firm. When I became ill, it was not easy to get my illness benefit. So I found it better not to struggle for it. The Company threatened me that unless I reported myself and took out a medical certificate from the insurance (Government nominated physician), I would be considered as absenting myself without reason and would be discharged. As I was alone and ill, I could not go to the doctor but had to engage a private doctor at my own expense. Even if the Government doctor presented medicines, I could only get 2nd and 3rd rate medicines at Government expense, which were poor in efficacy.

After the first world war, many private insurance companies gave the same services as the Government as regards medical treatment. In a way they competed with Government medical service by offering better doctors, better medicines and more expensive treatment for the whole family against payment of a monthly fee. The result was that although all employees were compulsorily insured with the Government, they insured themselves with these private companies and took medical service only from them. There were such insurance companies for every strata of society.

When after so-called stoppage of inflation, big unemployment started with deflation, the Government had to pay out more and more money as dole. The number of months for which the doles were paid depended upon the number of years of employment. The lesser the years one was employed, the lesser the number of weeks or months for which one could get full doles. Later on, the doles decreased and finally no doles were paid unless one could show one had no means of living (so-called "means test"). Even with full doles, one could not feed oneself. One employee told me that he had paid so much as unemployment insurance fees for so many years that if he could have kept all that, he would be running his own shop—and he would have no more doles to collect.

In spite of all the difficulties made to collect doles, unemployment grew (some unemployment creates more unemployment!) and unemployment funds ran out, the Government had to lend

money to pay out and the administration ate up at least 40% to make the necessary inquiries and tests. It was not incumbent upon the Government to prove that the applicant had means, but it was the aim of the applicant to prove that he had no means. After fighting hard and long against Government judges and lawyers and then chicanery for the few pennies they should get as doles, they gave up the fight as hopeless and tried to look for other means to eat.

State insurance is based on the same principle as any private insurance, although it is supposed that the State makes charity out of humanitarian principles. It must also collect fees (premiums). So long as more persons pay the fees or premiums than have to get the benefit, the principle will work. But if the Government has to pay out more money than it can get out of insurers (it is promised, of course, that the insurers will get the benefits!), then the State will try not to pay. If it paid it will become bankrupt. The Insurance companies provide against such risks by making more people pay premiums by putting their life's length shorter than it would be and if one or two die in spite of that they can afford to pay and still add to their own profits. Even then, they try to evade payment. If, however, more people began to die than contributed premiums, the company would become bankrupt.

Paul Lafargue, the son-in-law of Karl Marx wrote if by calculating the probable death, an insurance firm can make tremendous profits, why should not one be able to arrange the life of society so "scientifically"? He had written a pamphlet called "The Right to Be (leisure) Lazy" against a pamphlet "The Overwork"—work unto death—exacted from wage slaves. He had pointed out that Socrates exclaimed: What can come out of a State but lies? Although prices and wages cannot be adjusted, they go on changing and repeating phrases: Basic wage, minimum wage, living wage, just wage, fair wage, equitable wage and just price, fair price, equitable price and market price. Even Socialists and Communists think they can be adjusted but only under their own State. They know how to do the trick. The market price of labour is what one wants to pay and the market price of goods is what one wants to demand and take. Goods are like revolvers: your money or your life! Later on, they will call them a social wage and a social price, a socialist or communist wage, and a socialist and communist price.

Instead of a Welfare State, they will call it a Social State, a Socialist State or a Communist State. Exploitation and misery must continue.

It will all be only State Welfare against Society; Strong and powerful State under which none will breathe.

In Russia, there is no unemployment insurance because only 40 million persons are employed. Since to pay unemployment insurance would make the State bankrupt, their theory is there is no unemployment in Russia. But 20 mil-

lion persons are working free in slave labour camps, dying by inches owing to overwork and under-nourishment.

Originally Socialism was associated with humanism as a revolt against labour conditions. Nowadays, it is no longer associated with humanism. Their so-called socialist economy has no place in it for humanism: People must support the new Capitalism dying for it. The party and the State on the capitalist basis have to be maintained at all costs. Socialism and Communism are only new labels for the same old thing—they must maintain Capitalism.

INDIA, CHINA AND RUSSIA

Sir,

In the Parliament, Pandit Nehru did well in pointing out that it is not fair to compare India's economic achievements of 5 years with Soviet Russia of 35. To an admirer of China, he replied that "there was no comparison whatever between India and China as to building activities. The great works that were being undertaken in India were far greater than in China."

It is a welcome statement to come from the Prime Minister. Today, there are two mutually reinforcing processes going on in the country. Some of the opposition groups are indulging in belittling India's achievements, their eyes always riveted on instances of scandals, nepotism, wastes and failure. Thus they create what Pandit Nehru calls an "atmosphere of depression" in the country. On the other hand, there is another process complementary to the first in which the Government including the Prime Minister have been fully participating: a constant, parrot-like, uninformed reiteration and admiration of Russian and Chinese "achievements", thus creating an atmosphere of enthusiastic reception of Communism. Communists and persons like Dr. Kumarappa, some professors and editors of the "bourgeois" Press have been indulging in both. The combined result of these efforts and processes has been that among a vast section of influential people, there is a rejection of India and their minds have been prepared for accepting Russo-Chinese "liberation". That is the worst that could happen to a country, its past traditions, present labours and future hopes.

In point of fact, India's achievements have not been unimpressive. Since independence, she has set up a democratic constitution and met not quite unsuccessfully the refugee problem. Even in the economic field she has made big strides. The general index of production which was 117 in the beginning of 1952, was 127 in the first 10 months of 1952. Thirty-five industries showed increased production. Record production was registered for cotton textiles, jute-goods, coal, cement, iron and steel....

In terms of what Pandit Nehru calls "other dividends" cultural, spiritual, and political—we have not killed 2 million "bandits"; we have not set up one party dictatorship; we have not instituted thought-control; we do not make

people confess ; we have not become a satellite of a foreign country.

Yours truly,
Ram Swarup

[The correspondent is right in warning us against looking with eager eyes towards China, Russia etc. It is unfortunate that it should be so in some quarters and after a full generation of brave and robust self-reliance that we learnt from Mahatma Gandhi. But that is not the chief point. The main point we have to remember in India is that ours is a peculiar and special problem. Our problem is to find out a way of self-reliance and democratic agro-industrial economy which by its very nature will be decentralized, basing itself on the dignity and freedom of the individual and humanity at large. Our weapons will have to be peaceful and democratic. Our ways and means will have to touch not a few that live and can get work in our few cities, but they will have to touch the wretched lives and killing unemployment of millions of our poor people who live in the villages. Our problem is peculiar from this point of view. It is also peculiar because it does not want to blindly imitate Capitalism or Bolshevism, but wishes to find out a new way of life that is demanded by our culture and civilization and in the wake of the aftermath of the two World Wars. We have to play this urgent and important role which history has destined for us. It is also our debt to the Father of the Nation who has given the above message of a new world order based on non-violence and truth to be brought about in this world and through India which was his chosen field of activity.

1-4-53

— M. P. J

DECENTRALIZATION

(By Wilfred Wellock)

Once the decision to adopt a reasonably balanced economy has been taken, the road to a qualitative civilization lies wide open. The key to economic security and freedom from the fear of falling markets and a collapsing economy having been procured, Britain would be able to go all out in the pursuit of the good life for her people both as persons and as a community.

To this end she would find that it was necessary to decentralize the large industrial towns, numerous industries and a considerable number of industrial concerns. The aim would be to erect social units which combined agricultural and industrial pursuits, and which were of such a size that every member of them would be able to embrace them in his thought and imagination. Likewise most of the industries would be small-scale, so that every worker in them would be a partner in the production undertaken, and therefore carry a measure of responsibility for their success, including the contribution of ideas for improving the quality, design and utility of whatever was produced.

This would be a return to the day of small things, albeit with much valuable new knowledge. It is called for because in the long, and in many ways perilous, journey of the last two centuries we have discovered that human greatness is most manifest and the growth of human personality most pronounced, where responsibility and creative opportunity are most widely distributed, namely, in societies where the social, political and industrial units are small.

Other changes would be the re-establishment of the ancient connection between agriculture and industry, and some adjustment of a country's population to its food-producing capacity. History teaches with powerful emphasis that

civilizations begin to decay when their population merge in crowded cities. Cut off from nature, industrial responsibility and community relationships, people tend to assess their wealth and well-being in terms of money, and more and more to live by their wits.

In due course the newly integrated social units would be organized into regional areas, each region comprising a few local units. The industrial enterprises in the various villages would be so arranged by consultation as to ensure a considerable measure of self-sufficiency in the regional area. A system of local and regional councils would control the economic life and the general health and well-being of the combined area. The political life of the community would thus arise out of its economic life, which is as it should be. In addition, new industrial techniques would be developed to meet the needs of the new economy and the demands of a qualitative civilization, while a new educational system would familiarize the young with those wider social and spiritual values and horizons which lie within man's power of attainment, and help them to prepare to enter upon the wider freedom of creative living.

In these conditions and on these lines the people would increasingly find their basic satisfactions in creative occupations, in vocational and civic responsibilities, while the habit of devising and applying the best means to social and other vocational ends, would be carried into every sphere of human activity, whence the whole of life would become purposive and vital. People would live much more simply, with less waste, with fewer goods but better.

Thus would the pitfalls which have bestrewn the course of the Industrial Revolution be bypassed, while functioning at the creative level would produce communities of great spiritual strength and fortitude. Equally important, a nation would arise which would win the friendship, respect and goodwill of the whole world, which would constitute a spiritual security of infinitely greater potency than any military security.

(Reproduced from *The Sower*, Summer 1952).

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By Mahatma Gandhi

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