

# HARIJAN

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(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

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TWO ANNAS

## FOREIGN MISSIONS IN FREE INDIA

(By Gandhiji)

I

[A number of years ago a Press Correspondent had asked Gandhiji what the future of Christian Missions in India would be under India's own National Government. The answer by Gandhiji was reported in the papers and obviously it created a great storm of protest from the missionaries. Gandhiji while noting this replied to it in *Young India*, April 23, 1931 as follows:—Ed.]

Correspondents angry or curious have sent me clippings from the Press or their comments on what has been ascribed to me by interviewers on the subject of foreign missionaries. Only one correspondent has been cautious enough to ask me whether I am correctly reported. Even George Joseph, my erstwhile co-worker and gracious host in Madura, has gone into hysteria without condescending to verify the report. That is the unkindest cut of all.

This is what a reporter has put into my mouth:

"If instead of confining themselves to humanitarian work and material service to the poor, they do proselytization by means of medical aid, education, etc., then I would certainly ask them to withdraw. Every nation's religion is as good as any other. Certainly India's religions are adequate for her people. We need no converting spiritually."

I have given so many interviews that I cannot recall the time or the occasion or the context for the statement. All I can say is that it is a travesty of what I have always said and held. My views on foreign missions are no secret. I have more than once expounded them before missionary audiences. I am therefore unable to understand the fury over the distorted version of my views.

Let me re-touch the statement as I should make it.

'If instead of confining themselves purely to humanitarian work such as education, medical services to the poor and the like, they would use these activities of theirs for the purpose of proselytizing, I would certainly like them to withdraw. Every nation considers its own faith to be as good as that of any other. Certainly the great faiths held by the people of India are adequate for her people. India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another.'

Let me now amplify the bald statement. I hold that proselytizing under the cloak of

humanitarian work is, to say the least, unhealthy. It is most certainly resented by the people here. Religion after all is a deeply personal matter, it touches the heart. Why should I change my religion because a doctor who professes Christianity as his religion has cured me of some disease or why should the doctor expect or suggest such a change whilst I am under his influence? Is not medical relief its own reward and satisfaction? Or why should I whilst I am in a missionary educational institution have Christian teaching thrust upon me? In my opinion these practices are not uplifting and give rise to suspicion if not even secret hostility. The methods of conversion must be like Caesar's wife above suspicion. Faith is not imparted like secular subjects. It is given through the language of the heart. If a man has a living faith in him, it spreads its aroma like the rose its scent. Because of its invisibility, the extent of its influence is far wider than that of the visible beauty of the colour of the petals.

I am, then, not against conversion. But I am against the modern methods of it. Conversion nowadays has become a matter of business, like any other. I remember having read a missionary report saying how much it cost per head to convert and then presenting a budget for 'the next harvest'.

Yes, I do maintain that India's great faiths are all-sufficing for her. Apart from Christianity and Judaism, Hinduism and its offshoots, Islam and Zoroastrianism are living faiths. No one faith is perfect. All faiths are equally dear to their respective votaries. What is wanted therefore is living friendly contact among the followers of the great religions of the world and not a clash among them in the fruitless attempt on the part of each community to show the superiority of its faith over the rest. Through such friendly contact it will be possible for us all to rid our respective faiths of shortcomings and excrescences.

It follows from what I have said above that India is in no need of conversion of the kind I have in mind. Conversion in the sense of self-purification, self-realization is the crying need of the times. That however is not what is ever

meant by proselytizing. To those who would convert India, might it not be said, 'Physician heal thyself'?

## II

[This is from an article 'What is Neutrality' *Harijan*, 30-12-1939; or see page 140, Gandhi's Book, — *Christian Missions, Their Place in India*. — Ed.]

In free India every religion should prosper on terms of equality, unlike what is happening today. Christianity being the nominal religion of the rulers, it receives favours which no other religion enjoys. A Government responsible to the people dare not favour one religion over another. But I should see nothing wrong in Hindus congratulating those who having left them may return to their fold. I think that the Christians of free America would rejoice at the return to their ancestral Christianity of Americans of the slums — if there are any in America — temporarily calling themselves Hindus under the influence of a plausible Hindu missionary. I have already complained of the methods adopted by some missionaries to wean ignorant people from the religion of their forefathers. It is one thing to preach one's religion to whomsoever may choose to adopt it, another to entice masses. And if those thus enticed, on being undeceived, go back to their old love, their return will give natural joy to those whom they had forsaken.

## III

[This is from the report by Shri Pyarelal of a discourse some friends had with Gandhi. See *Harijan* — 7-1-1939 or *Christian Missions, Their Place in India*, p. 288. — Ed.]

"What is the place of Christian missions in the new India that is being built up today? What can they do to help in this great task?"

"To show appreciation of what India is and is doing," replied Gandhi. "Up till now they have come as teachers and preachers with queer notions about India and India's great religions. We have been described as a nation of superstitious heathens, knowing nothing, denying God. We are a brood of Satan as Murdoch would say. Did not Bishop Heber in his well-known hymn 'From Greenland's icy mountains' describe India as a country where 'every prospect pleases and only man is vile'? To me this is a negation of the spirit of Christ. My personal view, therefore, is that if you feel that India has a message to give to the world, that India's religions too are true, though like all religions imperfect for having percolated through imperfect human agency, and you come as fellow-helpers and fellow-seekers, there is a place for you here. But if you come as preachers of the 'true Gospel' to a people who are wandering in darkness, so far as I am concerned you can have no place. You may impose yourselves upon us."

## FOURFOLD PROGRAMME FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

(By S. N. Agarwal)

Our Enemy No. One is the ever-yawning gulf of unemployment and underemployment in the country. A lasting solution of the Unemployment puzzle consists in bringing about a few radical reforms in our economic and educational systems:

*Firstly*, far-reaching land legislation has to be enacted in India with a view to achieving land redistribution on a vast scale. According to Acharya Vinoba Bhave's calculations, about five crore acres of land should be distributed among the landless labour within a few years providing employment to one crore families. According to the Planning Commission's own recommendations, an absolute ceiling on land must be imposed as early as possible and the real tillers of the soil should be made the owners of land.

*Secondly*, our industrial structure must be re-oriented boldly in order to decentralize the consumer-goods industries. Unless we follow a courageous policy of revivifying the small-scale village and cottage industries in India, the aim of providing full employment to the millions of poverty-stricken people would remain an empty dream. To try to develop small-scale industries without in any way curtailing the scope and expansion of large-scale industries would amount to toying with the vital question of liquidating enforced idleness in the country. We must, of course, harness the benefits of modern science for making our small-scale and cottage industries as efficient as possible. But without a strong will and determination to rehabilitate the displaced cottage and village industries in our country, all talk of economic planning for establishing a Welfare State would be regarded as "sound and fury signifying nothing".

*Thirdly*, our educational system must undergo complete over-hauling so that our young men and women may be able to work and learn and earn in our educational institutions instead of merely learning and yearning for employment as at present. The Basic system of education, as visualized by Gandhi, ought to become the very foundation of our future educational structure. During their student days, our young boys and girls should not only receive education in the so-called academic subjects like history, geography, science and civics, but should also receive training in a few handicrafts through which they can earn their livelihood after completing their courses in schools and colleges.

And *lastly*, we must learn to patronize Swadeshi goods produced by our own neighbours. Instead of grumbling about their higher prices, we should purchase the cottage products in a spirit of patriotism and fellow-feeling.

Let us not under-estimate the strength of our Enemy Number One. It is a standing



challenge to democracy and peaceful transformation of society. Time is of the essence. The problem of unemployment, poverty and hunger has to be tackled with a *sense of urgency*. Delay would be suicidal and disastrous. We must wage war against unemployment in a crusading spirit; it should be regarded almost as a "Do or Die" mission.

(From A.I.C.C. Economic Review, May 15, '53)

## SCIENCE AND BIRTH-CONTROL

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

A very interesting question was posed by Prof. A. V. Hill in his presidential address to the British Association this year. He was replying to a question which the Duke of Edinburgh had raised in his presidential address the previous year. The Duke had asked: "It is our duty as citizens to see that science is used for the benefit of mankind. For, of what use is science if man does not survive?"

In the course of his reply Prof. Hill tried to show how science qua science is a pure activity which can be used for good as well as evil and therefore a judgment of its activities in values is not the function of the scientist as scientist; but as a citizen he might well go into it as every good citizen should do.

And he illustrated his remark by quoting how modern medicine helped to indirectly increase population by lowering the death rate and thus created problems of food etc. In the same way we may go further and add as an illustration that to meet this problem of increasing population science devised birth-control devices and along with their questionable good gave birth to evil in the shape of dangers of illicit or immoral sexual relations and over-indulgence again requiring control over them. The question thus persists:

Can science claim immunity from being judged ethically? Can it simply rest content with merely saying, here is some piece of pure knowledge which can help you to check birth; you may make or mar yourself with it, which is none of our concern? Is this not a form of irresponsibility? As a human and social activity, should not science weigh the pros and cons of its own doing in terms of total human welfare? Should not science be humble enough to bow to other disciplines like ethics, psychology etc., which also are relevant here? Or should science hold the prerogative of working in a vacuum of its own,—in its own exclusive seclusion? Briefly speaking, is science too sacrosanct for an ethical judgment?

Nobody says or believes that procreation is to be unrestricted—that there should be no rational way nor law to govern it. Rather, man in his progress through history felt the need of and has had such governance and the world has had the know-how too to govern births in

various ways, including abortion, which man in his wisdom ruled out as evil. The point is that all these have a moral and social meaning and significance also. The mechanical way of contraceptives also should have it. However scientists speak of that only in the name of science and propagate it. Is it proper and scientific even? How is the way of self-restraint not scientific, unless we hold science to be a peculiar inquiry in the mechanical know-how of things only? Unfortunately today the common belief is like that and it is therefore that contraceptives are considered to be scientific and self-restraint not scientific but religious.

By the way, we may well ask, is not religion also a science in its own way? The spirit of methodical inquiry into Truth is not peculiar to physical sciences alone; it is the common way for all inquiry by the human mind. So also ignorance and superstition as also fact and fiction are to be found lurking in all human quest, whether in the realm of the material or the abstract. Therefore it is not scientific to say that only methods of mechanical devices of birth-control or family planning are scientific and others not.

However a 'perilous illusion' is created in the popular mind that these devices of birth-control are scientific and hence should obviously be taken as good and acceptable, and those who speak against them are not scientific. Prof. Hill, in another context, notes the danger of such a "perilous illusion" possible in the popular mind and warns us in following terms:

"To use the general prestige of science as a bait to attract attention to pronouncements on other topics, for example on politics or religion, is a disservice both to science and the public.... Scientists for the most parts are quite ordinary folk. In their particular scientific jobs they have developed a habit of critical examination but this does not save them from wishful thinking in ordinary affairs, or even from misrepresentation or falsehood when their emotions or prejudices are strongly enough moved."

For example, the demographer when he parades his statistics forgets that he deals with questions of politics and psychology and thus goes into questions not of fact only but of values as well. Similarly also when he recommends birth-control methods he is touching delicate problem of sexual and social relationships, which he does not care to go into as he holds them as no part of his job.

We should clearly note this limitation of modern science and its unwitting bias in favour of materialism and agnosticism and not allow our mind to be clouded by the "general prestige of science as a bait" to attract undue attention to such pronouncements which really should come from social, political and religious philosophy, to which sciences like demography etc. should be humble enough to aid and assist.

# HARIJAN

June 20

1953

## NO CAUSE FOR MISGIVING

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

Shri Mirabehn a few weeks ago wrote an article raising certain points about the Bhoodan Movement as it goes on at present. It was headed as "My Misgivings about the Bhoodan Movement". Obviously, it drew attention, specially in the North, and the issues raised in it were discussed in the Press by various competent people. Mirabehn replied to all the comments and criticisms that appeared in the Press, restating that her misgivings still remained, or as she put it, "rather increased". It is unfortunate that it should be so. I hope, they will die away with further study of and contemplation over the matter; and I suggest it would be much better if she actually sees how the Movement works in Bihar, under Shri Vinoba's directions. I say this because, after perusal of both of her articles, I have felt that what she says as her misgivings are really not so, but are a few suggestions to the sponsors of the Bhoodan Movement and her articles show no cause why there should be any misgiving as such about the Movement, because, really speaking, she has raised no fundamental point against the Bhoodan Movement *per se*.

She made the following chief points in her articles:

1. Little or nothing is said of the needs of cattle and trees by the advocates of the Movement;
2. Proper statistics and accounts of the gifts are not made available to the public;
3. The quality of the land donated is often bad; a very large percentage of it is not of proper quality;
4. Fragmentation will be increased, the more so because even persons with very small holdings are invited to donate even a little; and
5. The distribution of the land received should be not only among the landless but also among the semi-landless as well.

The reader will easily see that these points are such as should raise no controversy nor cause any misgiving regarding the fundamental need and object of the Movement. At best they show what meticulous care Shri Mirabehn would herself like to give in a work of this nature. She expects the same from all others and it is no way wrong. But there is a limit to it and maybe it might not come up to one's expectation.

Coming to her suggestions, as I said, they raise no serious or fundamental objection against the Movement. For example, cattle and trees and many more other matters of such nature are

always there to be attended to in any programme for the rehabilitation of our agricultural population. They are always there in any scheme of agricultural reform, requiring no separate mention. They come in automatically as the work evolves and develops.

Undoubtedly accounts must be well kept. But there are accounts and accounts and their nature is governed by the kind of work one may be doing at the moment. One may perhaps be too meticulous for the beginning stage of a growing mass movement.

Regarding the nature of the land donated, surely it is no way a reflection on the movement; it is, if at all, one on the donor. And we know that human nature is what it is. Even as far back as the time of Nachiketa, we see that he had to complain against his father who gave away old and dry cows, which was not good. But that is surely not an argument against *go-dan* as such. So also, land of whatever quality, if it changes title in favour of the community and for the poor landless, may not be refused, though one may well say to the donor that his was a bad gift so far as he was personally concerned. Bad land can be and has to be reclaimed and put to its best possible use.

The question of fragmentation is not *created* by Bhoodan and is no way encouraged by it as well. The point is otherwise: Just like a poor man's pice given in charity and for a noble cause, a poor man's piece of land is also very valuable as a pure and noble gift. It is in wholesome contrast to the bad land-gifts; it gives a moral and spiritual tone to the Bhoodan. No way does it mean that the small piece will remain as that in the ultimate redistribution. It should be enough that the sponsors of the Movement know of the dangers of fragmentation to be guarded against when allotting land to the landless. Reshuffling of fragmented land is surely to be done even by the State.

Similarly the question of giving land to the semi-landless also can no way be controversial. If more land comes forth, it can be undertaken. The aim proposed by the sponsors is to see that a landless family gets at least 5 acres. The semi-landless also are or can well be included in this target. But they are at least better placed in comparison to the wholly landless who therefore come first. It would not be proper to conclude therefrom that the semi-landless are to be excluded. They also might well have their 5 acres quota made good, if enough land comes forth. It is this that should rather be looked up and a concerted and country-wide effort made to get maximum Bhoodan.

I may not reply to Shri Mirabehn's queries any further, and end with saying again that these queries which she has raised should cause no misgivings in any manner and they are such as can be well thrashed out in a conference of the Bhoodan workers and as when these demand their time and attention.



A word at the end to the workers. I hope they will appreciate the queries raised by Mirabehn and try to meet them with care and attention. Let us be clear to ourselves that the Movement aims to achieve a silent revolution in the distribution of land in the country. It is a part of the process that has set in in our country during the Gandhian era. During the course of the freedom movement public opinion got educated enough regarding some of the most pressing problems of reconstruction, viz., that under Swaraj we shall have no Native States, that absentee landlordism and Zamindari will be removed; that the poor will be helped to come to their own as respectable citizens in the new economy of Swaraj, etc. The Constitution of India put these fundamental ideas of reform as part of itself. Thus was started a process of a silent revolution to be followed up by us now. Late Shri Sardar Patel, through the device of Instrument of Accession, roped in the Princely order to surrender their titles in the larger interests and for the greater glory of the nation. Shri Vinoba has devised the Instrument of Bhoodan to settle the question of the Zamindari and absentee landlordism; this must be fully worked up for the nation's onward march. There remains the question of capital concentration also in a few private hands and for their narrow profit. We have to find out a peaceful way to reform this undesirable state of things also. My point is that the Bhoodan Movement must be viewed in such a larger perspective and as continuing the silent revolution that Gandhiji started a generation ago. There should, therefore, be no cause for any misgiving about its aims and objects. It is a new item of the Constructive Programme that came to us under the stress of the forces born of our new situation. It must be considered as an integral part of the Nation's Constructive Programme. That great saying of the Gita which Gandhiji often applied to Khadi and such other constructive activities may equally well apply to Bhoodan also — स्वल्पमप्यस्य धनस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् (Even a little of this righteous course delivers one from great fear). It should therefore cause no misgiving to us.

8-6-'53

By Mahatma Gandhi

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## GANDHIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

(By Khandubhai K. Desai)

Shri Acharya commenting on my article raises two issues: "Unless the Trade Unions aim to abolish capitalism, take over all the works and run them for the benefit of the society, they would have to function merely as adjuncts of a capitalistic system, and thus be a partner in the loot."

The second observation Shri Acharya makes is this: Taking over of production and distribution by the State is not enough; where the State becomes the employer, the trade unions are organized to help the State in looting.

In this connection he cites the example of Russia, where strike is considered as 'treason'. Shri Acharya, therefore, concludes that so long as the employees and the wage system continues, this evil cannot be cured.

One has properly to understand Gandhiji's conception of relationship between the employer, employee, and the community to reply to Shri Acharya's assumptions. In Gandhiji's view labour and capital are both co-partners in the field of production—one supplies the capital and the other supplies his labour. Labour is in fact worker's capital; without the combination of the two no production is possible.

However, so long as the worker is not conscious of his contribution, he is not treated fairly and suffers under the exploitation of the employer. On the other hand, when the worker is conscious of his contribution he refuses to be exploited.

Gandhiji also desired that the employer would never be a party to the loot of society in collusion with the workers. Gandhiji, therefore, desired that the employer shall behave in a manner as if he is a trustee and not the sole owner of the wealth that he possesses.

It may appear that this is an idealistic picture and difficult to realize in practice. Gandhiji was too practical not to realize this. He, therefore, encouraged the labour movement and strengthened it on the one hand to stand against all injustice by the employer, and on the other hand tried to make both employer and employee subservient to the needs of the Nation. He, therefore, emphasized on settlement of disputes by arbitration, which is after all the reflection of the public mind—eschewing thereby dictation either by the employer or the employee; and simultaneously he made all endeavours to persuade the capitalist to substitute the service motive instead of the profit motive.

When an employer fully understands and follows this ideal, he will behave more as a trustee than as a profiteer. It is possible to conceive an employer as abusing his status to exploit workers or the community, but the same charge can hardly be levelled against the workers who even now receive a wage which is hardly adequate to enable him to maintain a suitable

standard of life. Even then Gandhiji took sufficient care that the worker may not develop a craving for money. In the constitution framed for workers, he advisedly used the words "to secure remuneration for the workers having regard to their work." During the war years, he discouraged the tendency of the employers who distributed a monthly bonus and advised the workers not to fall a victim to such a tendency. The final safeguard devised by Gandhiji in this connection was that a worker, however powerful his organization may be, cannot dictate his terms of employment and in case of dispute the society shall have the final voice. It is for this purpose that he advocated adherence to the principle of arbitration for settlement of disputes.

Thus, as shown above, Gandhian Labour Movement keeps away from the Western exploiter-exploitee formula and aims towards the welfare of all concerned. This is, however, not an easy task and requires education of the employers, the workers and the society on correct lines. Adoption of these principles will ultimately result in the good of all.

### PROHIBITION AND ILLICIT DISTILLATION

(By Gopaldas Patel)

Prohibition has been in force in the Bombay State for well over three years now. It is a favourite argument with some anti-prohibitionists, in their campaign to discredit this reform measure, that it has led to an increase in illicit distillation. A few even went so far as to allege in the Bombay Legislature that every house is a small distillery! The argument is intended to suggest that prohibition should be scrapped in order to stop such malpractices.

It would not need much scrutiny to show that the suggestion is fallacious in the extreme; and this was pointed out in a previous issue of this paper with telling evidence of the American experience in this regard. There is no prohibition in America and yet illicit distillation is being practised there on a very large scale. An idea of just how large it really is will dispel any doubt regarding the falsity of this argument. It will therefore interest the readers to peruse the extracts which are reproduced below from the *New York Times* of April 16, 1953. One should however take care not to fall in the equally grievous error of concluding from these facts that the Government could discourage the production of illicit liquor by lightening the taxes. Because even in countries like America where drinking is so common no one has any doubt about its evil effects both on individuals and on the society as a whole. And therefore no Government in the world would ever think of preventing illicit liquor by reducing the prices of licit liquor. All are agreed about the need to put severe restriction on the production and consumption of alcoholic drinks and other intoxicants. The point to be

noted here is this that the greedy are sure to go into any trade, — licit or illicit — if it promises a good return, without any regard for morality or social well-being, so long as there are no effective social and moral restraints to curb them. The society and the Government therefore have to evolve those other restraints for weaning them away from this evil. It is totally wrong to think that it springs from prohibition. It has nothing whatever to do with prohibition. To scrap prohibition in order to eradicate this evil will be like jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. The following are the extracts from the report in the *New York Times* referred to above:

"The Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Division of the Internal Revenue Bureau has reported that its agents destroyed 10,269 stills and seized 5,700,599 gallons of fermenting mash in 1952. It estimates, however, that for every still seized ten continued to produce untaxed whisky, resulting in a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars to the Federal Government each year.

"The liquor industry estimates that 25 to 50 per cent of the liquor consumed in the United States is bootlegged by large and small operators. It notes that about 61 cents of each dollar spent for legal liquor goes for Federal, State and local taxes.

"The Federal tax on whisky has risen from \$2 per hundred proof gallon in 1937 to \$10.50 per gallon. The last increase in the tax was in 1951 and since then the increase in alcohol tax revenue has been only 1.9 per cent, although the tax increase was 16.77 per cent.

"Since 1943 the tax on distilled spirits has climbed 162.5 per cent and the number of stills seized by Federal agents has increased 59 per cent, with mash seizures rising 119 per cent.

"In one country in North Carolina fifty four stills were observed from the air and later destroyed. Five days after the destruction thirteen had been replaced.

"Small moonshine stills represent a low capital investment, but a large still in a metropolitan center may cost \$100,000 to build. A still capable of making 1,000 gallons of whisky a day costs \$10,500 in taxes for each day it escapes detection."

(From Gujarati)

### MONEY — THE MECHANISM OF EXPLOITATION

(By M. P. T. Acharya)

It is complained that centralized industry products compete with and dislocate village production. That is because centralized industries can manufacture cheaper. But so long as villagers use city money and trade among themselves with that money and the villages cannot give better value or quantities for the money, centralized industries will invade the village with their goods. The common market and money between village and city will make the invasion possible and inevitable.

Radhakamal Mukherjee and others have pointed out that when British textiles first came to India and the village weavers found that they could earn more by selling foreign textiles than by weaving, some went as agents of foreign textiles and abandoned weaving thus becoming richer than village weavers soon. So much so, these foreign textile agents began to form a separate caste marrying only among themselves!



Of course centralized industries after destroying village industries will raise the price of their products higher and higher till they make enormous profits by mass sales.

The village proletariat will be hired by and will go into centralized factories. Formerly in all countries, the city factories had only seasonal workers from the villages who lived in the villages better than in cities but who wanted to earn some extra money when they had nothing to do in the villages, i.e. on the field. Today they depend only upon hiring themselves out to centralized organizations for their existence.

What they earn is not enough to maintain themselves, but they have no other go. If the employers have to provide them with food, clothes and housing, it would cost them much more to hire them than the wages they pay. Therefore, if the villages would provide them with free food, clothes and housing, they would be better off in the villages than by hiring themselves out to industries in the cities and they would settle down in villages. Otherwise they would move to towns for jobs. After all people do not care for money but it is made necessary to purchase things (exchange for things). Money cannot be eaten or worn. What they want is certainty of eating, not even proper eating. For workers who hire themselves out, there is no choice. All work is alike, useless or useful, nefarious or beneficial to society. The chief thing is to earn some money and to eat something. *Responsibility must make workers to refuse to do useless or nefarious work.* But there is no choice for them even if they could use judgment. Our system is hiring system.

So long as food and other village products are sold for city money and to the market, the villages will suffer. But if the villages instead of supplying raw products and goods to the market provide for the needs of the villagers, the whole top-heavy system which pumps more than it gives will collapse. Otherwise villages will suffer and be destroyed, not only under the present system but also under a Bolshevik system or any system of government. It is useless simply to complain against centralized industries. One must act. Otherwise one can go on grumbling and villages will go to rack and ruin all the same.

There are schemes afoot for (new fields for investment) establishing so-called co-operative organizations by banks in the villages. They will make life more miserable than now, although they will cease to function after creating misery—creating a desert. They are only hesitating because of the risk of lending money to millions of peasants who are practically paupers.

If goods are not in the market, banks cannot fatten. So if goods are withdrawn i.e. not sold for money, banks will die of inanition.

## THE NEW DANGER

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

There was a time not very long ago in our country when Hindus and Muslims fought with each other using cow-slaughter and music before the mosque as reason for indulging in that painful fratricide. There is a change in the situation after the formation of Pakistan, though the unity which we wished to see established between the two communities has not really been achieved; the task still lies before us and remains as urgent today as in the past.

In addition to this old task, however, it seems we would soon be called upon to face a new one of a similar nature. The situation is developing when we may find Hindus fighting the Hindus led by narrow sectarian loyalties. The movement launched by the Dravid Sangh in Madras for breaking Hindu idols is a case in point. If the followers of this group do not believe in idol-worship nobody is going to compel them for it. But it is not so, for they themselves worship idols of their own gods and goddesses. Their iconoclastic fury is directed only against the gods of their supposed enemies, the Aryan Hindus and they have announced their determination to break and desecrate the idol of Ganesha. The non-Brahmins in the South have long been nursing a feeling of grievance against the Brahmins and the relations between the two have been far from happy for many years past. It has had its origin in the social and political rivalry. It is this feeling of antagonism which is now expressing itself in insulting and desecrating the idols of the opponent. It is an indication of the malady of casteism, which lies hidden in our mentality, coming out in this manner. It is a dangerous development. Its intrusion into the religious sphere enhances its capacity for mischief and makes it still more dangerous.

The Hindu religion sanctions idol worship and Hindus worship the idol. But Hinduism makes it clear that the idol is only an image and not the Deity. The Deity is seated in the heart of every one of us and the image is only a symbol to remind us of Him. Therefore the breaking of the idol should not really matter much, because in itself it is no more than the destruction of a material thing. But then it hurts the feelings of the worshippers and that is what is really aimed at in this campaign. Otherwise it signifies utter lack of good sense and faith in God which does nobody any good.

How are we to meet this mischievous impertinence? The most effective way to check it would be for the people to ignore it by remaining completely calm and silent. Just as abusive words are spent away without any effect if we do not pay heed to them and refuse to be provoked, in the same way this movement would stop automatically if it is ignored and allowed to exhaust itself. Like children breaking their toys they

might well be tolerated to break as many idols as they can purchase. It will mean brisk trade for the idol-makers. Or in the event of these refusing to sell them because of the profane use of their ware, the breakers will have to learn to make idols themselves, which too will be an acquisition of an art to them. Anyway, the idol-worshippers should remain completely indifferent and calm. They should know that while this cannot insult their Deity, any angry retaliation or counter-provocation on their part certainly will. We should rather pray God to give wisdom to idol-breakers so that they may learn to keep to the path of virtue and not be led into such unseemly anger. We are happy to note that Shri Rajaji is following this wise policy.

This agitation in Madras holds out a lesson for the country which it will do well to learn. The old malady of communalism seems to be raising its ugly head in new forms. Shall we now let ourselves fall into the snares of linguism and casteism? The white populations in Europe and America are fighting over the differences of colour and economic classes. Shall we also fight one another over our differences of languages and castes? Let us return a clear and decisive No to these questions. This is the lesson of this agitation in Madras. We have not yet fully eradicated untouchability. The evil of casteism has gone deep into our society. We have to beware of these evils and steer clear of them lest we should fail to achieve not only social and economic equality but also stand to lose whatever political equality we have. In a society ridden with various social diseases like casteism, the attainment of independence has also the effect of aggravating these evils in the body politic and pushing them to the fore. Let us remember that these evils were the reason for our political subjection and we can preserve our independence only by keeping them away. Our independence and the political equality it has brought us can be a powerful weapon for fighting these evils and to that end should it be used. Failing that, our very independence can be an equally powerful weapon for internecine conflicts and our eventual destruction as a nation.

3-6-'53

(From the original in Hindi)

By Mahatma Gandhi

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## SAMPATTI-DAN AND INCOME-TAX

(By Maganbhai P. Desai)

A concession granted this year to those who pay income-tax exempts them from the payment of tax over the portion of the income they might donate to registered charitable institutions—to the extent of 5% of the total income, or Rs 100,000/- whichever may be less. Income-tax will be assessed only on what remains after deducting the donated portion.

This reminds me of Shri Vinoba's demand for *Sampatti-dan*. He demands 16% of the earnings. However we would have quite a huge sum at our disposal if every one donated only 5% i.e. a twentieth of his income for which relief from tax has been granted by the Government. I asked my friend Shri Vithaldas Kothari, Professor of Economics at the Gujarat Vidyapith, to find out the estimated figure for this sum of money. The following is the result of his inquiry based on authoritative sources:

" Year	Total National Income (in crores)	Taxable Income (in crores)	Percent- age
1931-32	Rs 1,889	217	12.7
1946-47	Rs 5,580	566	10.1

On the basis of the 1946-47 figures we will have twenty-eight crores of rupees at the rate of 5% of the earnings from the income-tax payers."

Imagine how much constructive work can we do, how many more welfare programmes can be implemented if we could command this huge sum of money every year for the service of the poor. That would enable many more institutions to come into existence and do their work without being worried for money and therefore with great efficiency. The *Sampatti-dan* Yajna from this point of view appears to be of very great value and deserves to be seriously considered. Besides, if persons concerned thus donate a portion of their taxes instead of trying to evade the payment by falsifying or hiding the accounts, it will also initiate a very welcome change in the psychology of our moneyed classes.

1-6-'53

(From Gujarati)

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